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# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CIVIL WAR SITES WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Rolonda Teal

*Stephen F. Austin State University*, [rolondateal@gmail.com](mailto:rolondateal@gmail.com)

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# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CIVIL WAR SITES WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

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CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CIVIL  
WAR SITES WORKING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

By

ROLONDA DENISE TEAL, Master of Science in Anthropology

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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May, 2018

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APPROVED:

---

Dr. Pat Stephens Williams, Dissertation Director

---

Dr. Ray Darville, Committee Member

---

Dr. Brian Oswald, Committee Member

---

Dr. I-Kuai Hung, Committee Member

---

Dr. Dayna Bowker Lee, Committee Member

---

Pauline Sampson, Ph.D.  
Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

The objectives of this project were to determine the ways in which National Park Service (NPS) sites with a Civil War component are connecting or not with African American visitors and non-visitors. In order to meet the overarching objectives, two approaches were used which consisted of direct contact with the NPS sites and administering a site-specific questionnaire. Multiple attempts were made to contact 81 national parks, monuments, battlefields, historic sites, and other type park designations. Of the 81 sites, 55 national park units responded to an eight plus two sub-question questionnaire. Interpreters at each site were asked about interpretive programming currently in existence; as well as programs that once existed but are no longer available. Additional information sought from the questionnaire included: type of programming offered, length of time program existed, success rate of programs, and annual percentage of African American visitors to the sites.

Additionally, NPS interpreters were permitted to make comments on any of the questions as well as other information they wanted to share regarding challenges and successes when trying to establish sustainable relationships with African Americans. Using a mixed methods approach, NPS staff comments were analyzed qualitatively through a three-step process which included open, axial,

and selective coding. Through selective coding, it was determined that the central phenomenon that affected NPS's ability to connect with African Americans revolved around the issue of 'noncommitment'. Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire suggested that some NPS sites have never purposefully tried to make meaningful connections with African Americans or have tried in the past but failed for various reasons.

A second questionnaire, designed for African American residents residing in the community of North Gulfport, Mississippi located near Gulf Island National Seashore (GUIS), indicated that more than half of the 40 participants had visited GUIS at some point, mostly with family members, and would "very likely" visit again since they felt safe while there. This implies that some African Americans from North Gulfport are visiting GUIS; however, they are not being enticed to participate in park activities outside of church and family gatherings.

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank those National Park Service sites that took the time to respond to the questionnaire which was a critical part of this research. Without their input, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to gain an understanding of how park units are currently attempting to connect with people of color. Through this experience, I have learned that there are many people in the park ranks that are truly dedicated to ensuring cultural diversity and creating welcoming attitudes for nontraditional visitors.

I would also like to thank the community residents of North Gulfport, MS for their willingness to participate in this research. A few of the individuals, upon learning I was a graduate student, agreed to answer questions so they could, “help a sistah out.” Their eagerness to help will always be remembered and appreciated.

I am sincerely grateful to my advisors, Dr. Pat Stephens Williams, Dr. Ray Darville, Dr. Brian Oswald, Dr. I-Kuai Hung, and Dr. Dayna Lee. They not only provided me with guidance but also encouraged me to complete the process during those times when I thought the work would never end.

My desire to return to school would not have happened were it not for the encouragement and advice of Dr. Janice Hutchinson. She has been the back upon which I stood at times when I felt I was sinking.

I must also take this time to acknowledge several people whom I met while living in Nacogdoches. Each touched my life in different ways. A very special thanks to Jeffery Williams who suggested I attend SFA for my graduate program. Without that suggestion I would likely have chosen some other university to attend. Thanks also goes to Jeri and Adel Mills, Sarah Fuller, Amy Brennan, Samuel Rhodes, and Nate Casebeer.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the support of my family whose love I felt throughout this process as with all other academic work. My mother, Ellen Loran, has always been in my corner and served as a consistent source of inspiration. Other family members, sisters (Toscia, Stacey, and Pam), brothers (Edward and Joe), aunts (Terry, Linda, Sandra) and uncle (C. W.) provided both emotional support and financial assistance. I am forever grateful to each of you.



## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers, Velma Oliver and Sybil Woods, who were both educators and instilled in me, at an early age, the power of knowledge.

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## Prologue

Laurel Richardson (2001) stated, “No writing is untainted by human hands” (p. 34) meaning that my 15 years of experience as a student worker, ethnographer, and contractor with the NPS cannot be ignored, but rather enhances my contribution to this research project as a person who has lived within the phenomenon under study. I viewed my personal experiences as a critical component of the analysis of data. Although including oneself in the interpretation of data is not a positivist methodological approach, it is an important factor when using constructivist grounded theory. It allows the researcher the dual distinction of understanding and relating to the participant’s experiences. Thus, my life experiences, “are also possibly experiences of others” (van Manen, 1997 p. 54). Acknowledging the role of the researcher, within the research process, helps to validate methodological credibility (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

As an African American child, my family took summer vacations in which we sometimes visited national parks. Once when we were traveling, the police pulled us over. I remember the expression of concern on my father’s face as he said to my mother, “I wasn’t speeding.” When the officer approached the vehicle, he

asked my father for his license and registration as he would have asked anyone else. Once everything was verified as being legitimate, my father asked the officer why he had been stopped. The officer replied he believed the vehicle was stolen. At the age of 11, I remember wondering why the officer thought it was a stolen vehicle. It wasn't until years later that I realized how unusual it must have been for the officer to see an African American man and woman sitting in the front seats of a 30-foot motorhome in the 1970s. I tell this story as a way of highlighting the experiences of some African Americans in trying to reach a park site. I also relate this story to illustrate how those type incidences can influence my interpretation of data.

Once we arrived at any park unit, I remember the lack of people there that looked like me. Many times my five family members were the only African Americans at a site including park staff. It was during my early teens that I decided the national parks were not for me since (at least at the places we visited) interpreters did not talk about African Americans and I did not see any on site. That lack of visual representation was always a source of discomfort for me and allows me the ability to relate to other people of color who have felt the same.

Later, as an undergraduate student, and under the direction of then park Superintendent Laura Soullier-Gates, I assisted in the development of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park's (CARI) Master Interpretive Plan, collected

over 100 interviews of local African Americans through a collaborative community project, organized the Opening Day Celebration at Magnolia Plantation, contributed to numerous meetings discussing cultural diversity, and nominated two sites for inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program. As a result, those life experiences certainly have had an impact on my views about the NPS and how parks should be open to and inclusive of diverse cultural groups. It would be unrealistic to think that those multiple years of park experiences would not taint my analysis of the research data. In an effort to reduce my personal biases, I have tried to be transparent in my methodology and interpretation of the data.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) has identified a need to encourage minority visitation and make the park experience relevant to underserved populations. Freeman Tilden (1977), generally considered the father of American Interpretation, addressed the importance of understanding visitor interests and their decisions to go to a park. As stated by Tilden, “the visitors are unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell, or to show, touches his or her personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position, or whatever else” (Tilden, 1977: 9). If park personnel are expected to “touch” their visitors, then managers and interpreters must understand the needs of their clients. Although Juan Berroa and Robert Roth (1990) were concerned with the ecological knowledge and attitudes of citizens of the Dominican Republic, their observations can be applied to this study when they noted that in order to design an environmental education/interpretive program in the national parks, consideration must be given to the sociodemographic elements of the target group, because they are indicators of the group’s interests and receptivity.

Understanding the values of individuals within a community is critical to an understanding of what is relevant to them. What makes an African American

person or family go or not go to a park? What makes people form a bond with the park that will entice them to be vested in activities that occur there? Simply stated, which values are important to people and how do they mesh with the interpretive themes and atmosphere at sites with a Civil War component? Those are questions that NPS has tried to find answers to for some time. Previous studies have addressed issues of minority non-visitation from broad perspectives. Overall, the body of academic literature has covered themes such as: recreational use patterns and preferences (Johnson *et al.*, 2001; Shiner *et al.*, 2004); NPS management policies (Chavez, 2001; Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002; Makopondo, 2006); minority visitor constraints through studies of visual and media representations (Martin, 2004); and multi-layered issues of race, ethnicity, marginality, and culture (Philipp, 1995; Floyd, 1999).

These studies served a needed role by: (1) providing information that was previously unknown, (2) creating opportunities for park staff to think about and act on the newly identified barriers, and (3) providing a foundation for future research. However, failure to significantly change the demographics of park visitors as noted in NPS publications (Finn, 2015) suggest that other factors exist. One deficiency with the above approaches may be the studies failed to address issues of contested stories and cultural memory. This researcher acknowledges that contested stories and memory were not the focus of the above studies; however, the lack of inclusion of those two concepts left a void in

what we understand about minority visitors. Thus, NPS finds itself as recently as 2017, still trying to identify best practices for increasing audience diversity.

## Gulf Island National Seashore Background

Congress established Gulf Islands National Seashore (GUIS) in 1971. The Park is comprised of 12 areas and includes barrier islands that extend from Cat Island off the Mississippi coast to Walton Beach, Florida (Figure 1). These islands are famous for their white sand beaches which are composed of quartz that is carried by rivers from the Appalachian Mountains. Visitors to the park units have opportunities for camping, fishing, boating, and hiking as well as interpretation of historic events including the Louisiana 2<sup>nd</sup> Native Guards (Native Guards) who were stationed on Ship Island.



Figure 1. Gulf Island National Seashore map.

Comprised mostly of former slaves and Free Creoles of Color, the Native Guards were sent to Ship Island in January 1863. Ship Island is located

approximately 10 miles from the coast of Mississippi. After having arrived only a few months earlier, the Native Guards engaged in a skirmish in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Although a short clash, this event marked the first African American unit in the Gulf Coast to fight Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. An approximate size of some of the units is illustrated through an Image taken directly from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Louisiana Native Guards website (Figure 2).

Upon conclusion of the Civil War, many of the Native Guards joined the 25th United States Infantry Regiment which departed Ship Island in 1870 in route to San Antonio, Texas. Recently, Park Ranger Shelton Johnson rediscovered that members of the Buffalo Soldiers' 9th Cavalry and 24th Mounted Infantry, an exclusive regiment comprised mostly of people of color, were sent to the nation's second national park (Yosemite) to protect it during its formative days. While at Yosemite and later Sequoia National Parks (1899-1904), the soldiers removed poachers and timber thieves, as well as worked to extinguish wildfires.

Interpretation of the Native Guards provided the framework needed in an effort to connect GUIS with a local African American community. Some of the initial questions that formed this research were:

- What aspects of the Native Guards' story is the local African American community most interested in?
- What would they like to hear or see in an interpretive program about African American soldiers?



- Would they prefer ranger-led tours on site or in-community based activities?

In 2013, Dr. Pat Stephens Williams met with Ms. Susan Teel, Chief of Resource Education at GUIIS, to discuss various ways students from Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) might assist the park with data collection designed to improve the overall visitor experience. Several data collection possibilities were discussed, and it was determined that the park's greatest need was to establish a long-term relationship with a local African American community specifically regarding interpretation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Louisiana Regiment Native Guards' (Native Guards) occupation on Ship Island during the Civil War.



Figure 2. Native Guard soldiers ready for a parade on Ship Island circa 1862.

At the request of GUIIS staff, Dr. Stephens Williams asked graduate student Rolonda Teal to help provide some direction for GUIIS that would help them to connect with an African American community. The primary goal, as defined by the park, was to create a relationship with a local African American community so that they would take an active role in the development of, what the park hoped would be, an annual Native Guards Program.

In October 2016, Teal and Dr. Stephens Williams met with Ms. Teal and members of her team for a meeting held at Naval Live Oaks Reserve headquarters. The team, comprised by Ms. Teal, was presented with possible strategies to begin the process of creating a relationship with North Gulfport residents. The community of North Gulfport is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3; however, what is important to understand at this time is that the community was selected based on proximity to GUIIS headquarters and the boat embarkment location for travel to Ship Island. Additional consideration for the selection of North Gulfport was influenced by work previously completed by the researcher.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this project was to discover the ways in which National Park Service sites with a Civil War component are connecting with African American visitors and non-visitors.

Specifically, the primary objectives were to:

1. Identify park units associated with a Civil War theme to determine which have programs designed to attract African American visitors, what those programs are, how long in existence, and the success of each.
2. Determine the component of those programs for potential use by other similar sites.
3. Identify, through a questionnaire, how to connect to North Gulfport's adult population to assist GUIS in forming a long-term relationship with the surrounding community.
4. Develop recommendations and a template for NPS sites that want to create meaningful relationships with underserved populations.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Situating the Study in the Literature**

In their book on grounded theory method, Glaser and Strauss (1967) advised that the researcher should not engage with existing literature but should approach the research with fresh eyes, so as not to impose dominant theoretical constructs on the phenomenon being researched. They believed literature reviews conducted prior to data collection biased and inhibited theory from inductively emerging from the data. However, since the original conception of grounded theory, different approaches have addressed engagement with literature, allowing for a more supportive relationship to develop between the literature and theory development. Strauss and Corbin (1998) proposed introducing the literature strategically in grounded theory studies and only at the appropriate time.

This literature review was approached by examining NPS publications that addressed diversity, inclusion, and visions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Additional consideration for the literature review was given to publications that helped explain African American attitudes towards the Civil War and challenged that prevent them from visiting national park sites. Lastly, literature reviews were conducted on works that discussed diversity training and cultural sensitivity.

## **Influences on National Park Service Visitation Rates**

Johnson et al., (2001) examined the roles of race, gender, and urban living and their effects on park visitation. They found that with regards to race, African Americans were much more likely than whites to express concerns about personal safety. In terms of gender, women had concerns about personal safety, deficient restroom and visitor facilities, recreational costs, and insects. Lastly, they found urban living did not influence outdoor recreation participation. Philipp (1995) also examined race as an influence on park visitation rates by investigating groups of African Americans and European Americans with a focus on the appeal and comfort levels of socio-economically similar groups in recreational settings. He concluded that appeal and comfort were viewed differently with African Americans feeling less comfortable in outdoors settings.

Chavez (2001) offered various management and planning strategies for visitor contact. One suggestion was to develop recreational opportunities that would support large groups of visitors. Specifically, Chavez highlighted findings that Hispanic visitors tend to recreate in large groups (Chavez, 2001). Additionally, Chavez suggested park sites use appropriate language when disseminating information to minority groups. In addition to visitor contact strategies, park visitation rates are also affected by the lack of effective partnerships as discussed by Makopondo (2006). He addressed the challenges

and strategies to creating racially inclusive partnerships in recreational activities. He identified four principle strategies when creating partnerships with underserved audiences which included: involving key community leaders and organizations at the onset of any project, identifying the interests of the target groups, developing programs that are culturally relevant, and showing commitment in developing relationships between the agency and target community.

Rodriguez and Roberts (2002) conducted a literature review regarding ethnicity, gender, and social class in recreational spaces. They discovered gaps in recreation literature with few studies addressing issues of: people with disabilities, the elderly, user conflicts, and meaning/place attachment. Shortly after Rodriguez and Roberts (2002) noted recreational literature deficiencies, Martin (2004) reviewed advertisements deficiencies in Time, Ebony, and Outside magazines. He wanted to determine if there were racialized spaces in recreational activities. He concluded that wilderness, recreational, and leisure areas are “socially constructed as the exclusive domain of Whites”. In addition, Martin found that the advertisement in those four magazines either failed or rarely depicted images of African Americans engaged in recreational activities such as hiking, camping, canoeing, and swimming. That lack of images, he felt, was a way of saying – without saying- African Americans do not participate in outdoor activities such as those offered at a national park.

## **The National Park Service's Future**

### **The Vail Agenda.**

*National Parks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Vail Agenda* (Vail Agenda) (1992) is a report based on the results of a symposium held in Vail, Colorado in 1991.

Participants were divided into groups who addressed four areas of park management and policy including: organizational renewal, park use and enjoyment, environmental leadership, and resource stewardship.

The second paragraph of the report addressed the primary concerns of the NPS at that time. The report found staff was inadequately trained and lacked information and resource management/research capabilities. Another concern was the dilution of the budget although there were increasing responsibilities. In addition, there were threats to the park's resources that went beyond park boundaries, and there were communication issues "between field personnel and regional and headquarters management" (NPS, 1992, p. 1).

Recommendations from the study suggested: the NPS budget could not keep up with the increase in visitation numbers resulting in a need for more monetary investment; there should be assistance given to public and private parties outside park boundaries to help with the quality of visitor experiences through gateway communities; and there should be outreach to schools and community groups. However, there was no clear vision as stated by park historian William Brown (1991) on "how the national park system as an institution should fit into an

evolving society. Nor was there a strong, direct appeal for public support.” Brown concluded there was a need for a national crusade to help the parks reach their goals.

At the end of the symposium, then NPS director, James Ridenour stated, “It is clear to me that we will need an ongoing commitment and process to keep our collective feet to the fire to make sure that our efforts do not just generate another report to gather dust on a shelf” (McDonnell, 2008, p.10). The Vail Agenda report was successful in creating changes within the NPS such as promoting collaborations with outside entities and increasing scientific research in terms of environmental needs, but overall only a few of the recommendations were adhered to by management (McDonnell, 2008).

### **Rethinking the National Parks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

The National Park Service Advisory Board members, in 1999, were asked to examine the mission of the Service and prepare a report that focused on a new direction for the future. Published two years later, this report sought to describe the NPS from a social, political, and economic stance. In addition, it addressed the need to make greater social connections so that park units were viewed as important not only ecologically but also culturally. The report concluded that the NPS needed to increase its educational component by offering programming that: linked park units to broader historic themes, allowed for public discussions



of history, explored the history of native groups related to a site, created a culturally diverse work environment, and encouraged collaborative efforts with local and state officials, and other outside agencies (McDonnell, 2008).

### **Discovery 2000.**

Just prior to the publication of *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Robert Stanton, the first African American appointed as Director of the Park Service, held a conference in St. Louis, Missouri, entitled “Discovery 2000.” What made this conference unlike previous ones was the purposeful inclusion of non-traditional Service attendees. Stanton invited representatives from agencies on the federal, state, and local levels as well as American Indian tribal representatives. Perhaps, due to Stanton’s status as an African American director, there were more people of color present than usual (McDonnell, 2008). The stated purpose of the conference was to: inspire and invigorate the Park Service, its partners, and the public as it transitioned into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to develop new leadership within the parks (McDonnell, 2008). Upon conclusion of the conference, the Advisory Board made several recommendations to include: “encouraging a public exploration and discussion of the American experience, acknowledging connections between native cultures and the parks to ensure no relevant chapter in the American heritage experience remains unopened” and to improve NPS’s capacity by, “developing new organizational talents and abilities

and a workforce that reflects America's diversity” (NPS Advisory Board, 2001, p.2). Although different than typical NPS conferences, the same issues that had previously been discussed at similar conferences and symposiums resulted in inaction on behalf of park management (McDonnell, 2008).

### **A Call to Action.**

According to Claire Finn (2015), an attempt by the NPS “to become inclusive is difficult to pinpoint chronologically.” The Service published *A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement* (A Call to Action) (2011) in which an action-based plan was introduced to “commit to actions that advance the Service towards a shared vision for 2016 and our second century” (NPS, 2011, p.1). The second century vision included four themes of which two are important for this research: Connect People to Parks and Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence.

The theme of Connecting People to Parks is concerned with finding out what the communities value, their social/economic history and how to help with community sustainability. Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence directs staff to adapt to the needs of visitors and potential visitors while also allowing for employees to think outside-the-box to reach Park Service goals. As pointed out by Finn (2015), there were several prior NPS documents that

influenced the creation of *A Call to Action*, the first of which was published in 2007.

Former NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis (2009 - 2017), who was primarily responsible for initiating *A Call to Action*, insisted the NPS move from using numbers and data about diversity to real action (Jarvis, 2014). Simply put, the NPS needed to “commit to concrete actions that advance the mission of the Service” (NPS, 2011). Largely based on Jarvis’ direction, the Advisory Board met and produced a report in 2012 designed to engage the NPS with urban populations. It advised the Service to engage in a bottoms-up instead of a top-down position when working with local communities. The report also identified positive practices to assist with that direction by suggesting parks consider community-based ideas versus ideas that came from within the Park Service and promote mutually beneficial relationships with urban communities.

In addition, Jarvis supported the introduction of the Find Your Park/Encuentra Tu Parque movement in 2015, whose purpose was to engage younger audiences and people of color at park units. The Find Your Park campaign was an all-out effort to bring national attention to the diverse recreational opportunities available in the multiple national parks as well as a preparation for the Centennial celebration. The NPS Centennial occurred while Jarvis served as Director and he tried to prepare for this monumental event by asking NPS units to identify what they hoped to accomplish through the celebration. According to Finn (2015), who

conducted a survey of the forms, NPS sites were asked to complete, “they were filled out to varying degrees, with some barely filled out at all” (p. 63). Finn concluded that the Centennial planning was not about commitment by NPS units as Jarvis had wished, but was instead a, “compulsory and regularly slow (partially in relation to funding) NPS procedure” (Finn, 2015).

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills.**

After *A Call to Action*, the NPS published another report to address minority visitation issues. Entitled, *21st Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills* (2013), which will be referred to as the Vision Paper, this report sought to better understand “the desires of audiences, the needs of society, and the public service mission of the NPS” (p. 10). Based on Tilden’s (1957) principles, the authors of the Vision Paper particularly focused on Principle One which states, “Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile” (Tilden, 1957, p. 9). The Vision Paper further outlined strategies needed by employees to achieve Tilden’s objectives as well as those of the NPS. Some of those strategies included:

- letting go of the traditional role of primary expert
- considering personal biases
- taking informed risks
- partnering with community members to reach underserved audiences
- embracing what visitors bring to the process of interpretation
- encouraging and planning for repeat visitation and involvement

- valuing process over product.

In addition, the Vision Paper developed a chart that allows for the comparison of traditional interpretive skills with desired skills (Figure 3). This Image was taken directly from 21<sup>st</sup> Century NPS Interpretive Skills (p.17). As illustrated, the NPS is calling for innovative ways of reaching underserved audiences. They are giving permission to interpretive and educational personnel to step “outside the box” and find creative ways to bring relevancy to national sites for a constantly changing American population.

Traditional Skills of 20 th Century Interpretation provided the foundation for:	21st Century Interpretation further expands on traditional skills for:
creating effective interpretive products	thinking about interpretation as a process as well as a product
developing site-based, site-themed interpretive talks and programs and media for visitors	looking for ways to work directly with visitors/audiences/ communities to identify needs and interests that are advanced by relationships with park content/ideas; identifying multiple stories and connections with other NPS sites and beyond
providing quality site-based interpretation for an authentic in-park experience	nurturing audiences as self-directed, with the ability to learn anytime, anywhere, on site, in the community, or online
functioning in the role of expert and a catalyst for audiences to find understanding and meanings	valuing the role of interpreter as facilitator and collaborator
providing authoritative and accurate communication	perceiving the experience of learning as multi-dimensional, social and interactive
crafting memorable stories and take-home messages	crafting programs that also function as catalysts for discussion and for depth of thinking for multiple audiences
Closely linking educational programs to formal, curriculum-specific content guided by measures of success associated with formal education	experimenting by creating programs that focus on modeling intrinsically-motivated, open-ended learning that support individual abilities and socially positive behavior <sup>6</sup>
offering expert presentations	embracing the notion of informed risk-taking and creative experimentation with two-way communication

Figure 3. New strategies for interpreters as they seek to diversify visitor demographics.

## **Collective/Cultural Memory**

### **Theoretical Development of Cultural Memory.**

Cultural Memory is the basic concept that a collection of memories is shared by a common group. This group can be defined by categories based on family units, racial designations, cultural activities, and common interests. Cultural memory is concerned with how individuals and groups remember and commemorate past events. Additionally, it seeks to find meaning and understanding of how groups share their collective values and beliefs (Olick & Levy, 1997; Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Yerushalmi, 1982). Cultural memory, then, is constructed, shared, and disseminated to future generations through both small and large group interactions.

Depending on the scholarship, one finds many definitions of the words “collective or cultural memory.”

1. A 'collective memory'--as a set of ideas, images, feelings about the past-- is best located not in the minds of individuals, but in the resources they share. There is no reason to privilege one form of resource over another-- for example, to see history books as important but popular movies as not” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994).
2. Collective memory ... should be seen as an active process of sense-making through time" (Olick & Levy, 1997).

3. Foote (2003) states that “culture refers to collective beliefs and values, the social conventions and traditions that bind individuals to a group or community. They are values that build gradually, change slowly, and sweep from generation to generation.”

There is no standard definition of the term cultural memory; it appears to alter in scope as new scholarship is added. Over the years, cultural memory has been applied to studies regarding power and politics (Ranger & Hobsbawm, 1983; Bodnar, 1992; Schudson, 1992; Kansteiner, 2002), media and communication (Zelizer, 1992; Koselleck, 1985; Young, 1993; Kuhn, 2002), archaeology (Assman, 1998), and ecology (Barthel *et al.*, 2014). A common thread amongst the various nuances of the meaning and processes of collective memory is that social groups remember past events in different ways, placing values of importance on different actions, symbols, and people.

Collective memory has its origins in the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Although he never used the term collective memory, Durkheim argued that if a society is to preserve social unity and cohesion, then it must have a connection with the past. Durkheim’s work (1912) focused on traditional religious practices in which he observed that rituals were an important part of preserving traditional beliefs and values. Through rituals, there was a transformation from individuality to a shared group experience based on a shared act. Religious rituals were thus a point of binding the community through a



common experience which he referred to as a “collective effervescence” (Durkheim, 1912). Although he believed that the collective ritual process connected the community’s past to the present, he felt it was mostly due to individual memory.

Durkheim’s student, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), was the first sociologist to use the term collective memory. His work is considered the foundation for social and historic remembrances studies. Halbwachs differed from his teacher in that he claimed that individual memory is understood only through a group context that might include families, organizations, and nations. Halbwachs further argued that groups construct memory over space and time while individuals do the work of remembering. In other words, it is the groups that construct the memory and the individual who carries those memories forward (Halbwachs, 1950).

Perhaps the most important concepts to understand are that cultural/collective memory is concerned with what people remember, how those memories change over time, and the importance of the memories in their everyday lives. It is in this vein that this project seeks to understand how to connect GUIS with local African Americans constituents to create a activities about African American soldier’s involvement in the Civil War.

## **Frederick Douglass' Warnings About Civil War Memory.**

One of the earliest studies to address Civil War memory and African Americans was conducted by David Blight (1989) who examined a speech by the abolitionist Frederick Douglass in January 1883 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. Douglass focused his speech on how to preserve the American memory of the Civil War. Specifically, he wanted the public to consider Emancipation Day as a national celebration and not just a day recognized by former slaves and their descendants. After the Supreme Court overturned the Civil Rights Act of 1875, Douglass felt betrayed by his country and believed it was slipping back to a time quite reminiscent with slavery. Douglas' speech, given when the nation was trying to recover from the national divide created by the Civil War, addressed what he argued was the most important issue - slavery. While most Americans wanted to forget about the past and move forward, Douglass cautioned the nation that, "it may shut its eyes to the past, and frown upon any who may do otherwise, but the colored people of this country are bound to keep the past in lively memory till justice shall be done them" (Douglass, 1888, p. 6). For the remainder of his life, Douglas continued to speak and write about the importance of a national embrace towards celebrating freedom from slavery – a memorialized day that is celebrated by all Americans.

In many respects, Douglass wanted the war to stand for nationalism in which African Americans were considered equal citizens. In another speech given by

Douglass at the Freedmen's Memorial in Washington, D.C. (1876) he praised President Lincoln as the great liberator of the Negro. For Douglass, it was not that Lincoln was such an extraordinary man as it was his connection with the liberation of slaves. Perhaps, what most concerned Douglass was the increasing popularity of the Lost Cause strategy that became prominent shortly after the conclusion of the war. With a Lost Cause philosophy, enslaved peoples were viewed as content and happy. In other scenarios, they were celebrated only as dutiful, faithful servants to their masters (Pitcaithley, 2002; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Gallagher & Nolan, 2000). Seldom was the role of slavery considered as a factor in provoking the war (Pitcaithley, 2002). In both the North and South, the Lost Cause strategy helped ease the social consciousness of the country by allowing citizens the option to view the war as a dispute over states' rights and constitutional authority versus an issue over slavery.

Douglass rejected this version of history and chose instead to cling to a Victorious Cause which was concerned with issues of justice and equality and a portrayal of slaves as something other than contented people. Douglass' additional concerns were on what he viewed as the possibility for a national forgetfulness in which peoples' memory of the Civil War would change over time and become a memory based on whatever was the popular sentiment of the nation. With a Lost Cause strategy and the desire to forget and move on, Douglass believed there would be no national remembrance of the war and

what is stood for but only opposing memories that would divide the nation (Douglass, 1975).

### **What Former Slaves Thought About the Civil War.**

One of the earliest indicators of the collective memory of enslaved peoples about the Civil War can be found through examinations of the Slave Narratives which were conducted between 1934 to 1941 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Through the Federal Writer's Project more than 2,000 interviews were conducted with former slaves throughout the country. This collection of interviews has been criticized as having substantial problems by some scholars (Woodward 1974; Webber, 1978). The basis of the criticism stems from the logic that many of the informants were children during the war so therefore had faulty or exaggerated memories of what happened. Still, the narratives hold valuable information as to thoughts of what the war symbolized for former slaves. Analysis of the narratives helps increase an understanding of the beginnings of a collective African American memory of the Civil War.

There appear to be three prominent memories associated with the war as expressed by ex-slaves: (1) it freed the slaves; (2) President Lincoln and Union soldiers were heroes; and (3) the war was a terrible thing for slaves. An initial impression is that memory one and three seem to contradict one another. How could the freeing of slaves also be equated with something terrible? To further

investigate how that could be requires looking at the comments of some of the people interviewed during the WPA project. Memories that the war freed the slaves or that gloried Lincoln and Union soldiers are found in the following comments: George Kye, a former slave from Arkansas, worked for soldiers in the Confederate Army during the war. He recalled that one day a Federal soldier came up on horseback and said, "Let me tell you, black boy, you are as free now as old Abe Stover [plantation owner] his own self." In response, Kye was so excited he jumped from the wagon to the back of the mule (as cited in Berlin, 2007, p. 230).

Isaac Adams, a former slave from Louisiana, remembered that his enslaver went to Arcadia (a community in South Louisiana) one day, "and came home and told us the War was over and we was all free" (as cited in Berlin, 2007, p. 232).

Freedman Felix Haywood recalled a line from a song he and others would sing: "Abe Lincoln freed the nigger with the gun and the trigger" (as cited in Mellon, 1988, p. 344).

In a final example, Arthur Williams told of how he found out about his emancipation. His enslaver rode up on a horse while Williams was working in the fields and told him, "The damn Yankees is freed you" (as cited in Mellon, 1988, p. 347).

What is suggested through these accounts is there was a direct association, for some enslaved, between the Civil War and emancipation and that President

Lincoln and Union troops were influential in their liberation. These memories of events were then passed on to their descendants and became part of the second generation of Freedmen's cultural memory.

While many Freedmen associated the war with liberation and something positive, there were others who believed the war caused suffering and changed their lives in a negative way. Mellon (1988) suggested that former slaves interviewed for the Federal Writer's Project were influenced in their testimony by the effects of the Great Depression. They were experiencing hunger, lack of work opportunities, and nearly impossible ways of obtaining land and resources needed for agriculture. Therefore, the interviewees may have expressed a fondness for a place that they remembered as providing sustenance, shelter, and other resources. Regardless of the reasons for how the former slaves responded, their collective memory of the war was that it was a negative event and support of those views are found in the following comments:

Aunt Adeline reflected upon her thoughts after being told by Union soldiers she could leave the plantation. "I did not want to leave to go anywhere" recalled Aunt Adeline, "... I wanted to stay in the only home that I had ever known. In that way, that placed me in a wrong attitude. I was pointed out as different" (as cited in Mellon, 1988, p. 346).

Cato, a former slave from Texas recalled that Yankee soldiers came by to set him free but he told them, "that so long as I live I got to stay by Miss Adeline [his

former owner] and that unless somebody forces me away I ain't gwine to leave...I got no complaints to make, I want to stay by Old Miss til' one of us die” (as cited in Berlin *et al.*, 2007, p. 261).

William Matthew after learning he was free was told to get off the plantation immediately. Matthew reminisced, “You see a lot of cattle in de field eating grass wit' a fence round dem, an den somebody open de gate an' say, “Git!” Dat's how we was. No money, no nothin' – jes' turn' loose wit' out nothin” (as cited in Mellon, 1988, p. 348).

Based on the above testimonies, not every Freedmen thought freedom provided better opportunities. For some, the plantation represented a sense of home. For others, it was place that they were forced to leave without any preparedness. Yet, whether the memories were of difficult or of good times, those remembrances of former slaves were transmitted to their descendants. Within African American culture there are differing memories about the Civil War and what it represented. Between African American and European American cultures there are also differences in remembrance about what the war represented and its causes. There are no known studies indicating the percentage of African Americans who believe the Civil War was fought to free slaves versus some other reason.

### **Contested Memories/Stories.**

It is those opposing memories that concerned Douglass and are still concerns today for National Park employees. Whose story gets told and how? Are people of color included in the decision-making processes? From an interpretive programming standpoint, disagreements about story selection, content, and presentation format can cause rifts between interpreters and the very groups they are trying to reach. This can lead to contested memories/stories which occur when two or more groups or individuals disagree about what occurred and how an historic event should be interpreted. Contested histories are similar with the Rashomon effect which is basically a contradictory interpretation of the same event as witnessed by different people. The phrase derives from a 1950 Japanese film "Rashomon" in which the accounts of witnesses, suspects, and victims of a rape and murder each tell a different story when questioned by authorities (Ferrari, 2016).

Within African American culture there are differing memories about the Civil War and what it represented. Between African American and European American cultures there are also differences in remembrance about what the war represented and its causes. It is exactly those differences in memory that make finding relevancy and increasing underserved audience participation at park events challenging. As stated by scholar Nikki Finney (2014), "African Americans invest a degree of trust in the "truth" inherent in those memories that they may



not give to “facts” as expressed by “legitimate” institutions and popular media” (p.56). Collective community memories then, as described by social anthropologist Paul Connerton (1989) are clearly different from the more specific activity of historical reconstruction, which is more dependent upon evidence than is social memory.

Because the NPS requires parks to present historically accurate information, it can present challenges for staff members who are trying to create long-term relationships with African American residents. Should staff at GUIS interpret the Native Guards with emphasis on slavery or should the story reflect the sentiments of some nearby Confederate sympathizers who believe slavery, as a cause, was not a factor? Should multiple versions of the same story be told?

During the symposium *Co-creating Narratives* (2014), various educators, professionals from the NPS, and museum curators discussed strategies they have used in the past or are presently using at their sites. When discussing Civil War events, interpreter John Hennessy suggested telling multiple stories of the same event. While at Manassas National Battlefield Park, he has interpreted the war from the perspective of a soldier, a southern woman, and an enslaved man. According to Hennessy, “No one objects to hearing the three versions ...” (Hennessy, 2014); however, he suggested only focusing on one aspect of the story can be problematic.

At the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum, staff sought to engage youth in understanding the significance of that event. They held weekend workshops training high school students how to interpret the Holocaust while working as Youth Ambassadors. Basically, museum staff, just as Hennessy had done, challenged the notion that there could be only one narrative to a story. Staff members encouraged the students to write their own narratives in which they related their experiences to those of Holocaust survivors (Nickleson, 2014). In another example, students were asked to interview elderly soldiers and, instead of creating an essay from the interviews, they created short videos using their smartphones. This approach led to electronic skills building and was available at minimal cost because 80 percent of American teenagers aged 12 to 17 have access to or own a smartphone (Madden *et al.*, 2013). Many of those teens are African Americans and Latinos.

In a final example, the Booker T. Washington National Monument (BTWNM) located in Virginia honors the life of Booker T. Washington who although born a slave was later an advisor to the President of the United States. Beginning in 2000, staff at the park decided to host a Juneteenth Celebration on park grounds. They began by advertising in the local newspapers, writing articles about the meaning of Juneteenth, and making announcements over the radio. Information was also made available through the park's website and the websites of tourism agencies throughout the state. Local food vendors were also invited to

participate. At the first event, there were 300 people in attendance. As of 2015 the event had grown to include as many as 1,100 people.

In the early years of the event, a Gospel concert, along with food and craft vendors, and tours in the historic area with skits were all that was offered. Yet, people still came because for most, Juneteenth was an event they already celebrated with family and friends; others came because they desired to know more. After a few years of the celebration, park staff noticed the absence of children, so they redesigned the program to attract young people. Examples of programs for children included: a Kids Village where they made crafts, a pony ride, face painting, and other hands-on activities. The additional focus on children made an impact on visitor demographics (C. Mays, personal communication, March 8, 2016). Within a few years of successful events, the park partnered with neighboring towns to help them create their own Juneteenth activities.

### **Challenges for National Park Service Managers**

National Park Service managers and interpreters are faced with multiple challenges as they attempt to attract African American visitors. Some United States citizens do not believe they have a connection to national parks, battlefields, or places that interpret acts of violence. Demographically, the greatest number of people who visit Civil War and most National Park sites are European Americans (Taylor *et al.*, 2011). The NPS conducted a Comprehensive

Survey of the American Public in 2009 in which 4,103 people responded to a 15-minute telephone interview. Results of the survey indicated that of all the visitors in 2000 to NPS sites, 74% were white, non-Hispanic compared to just 11% for African American visitors (Taylor *et al.*, 2011).

The literature review suggests there are several factors that contribute to the challenges some park sites will need to address if they are to develop programming that will satisfy the needs of multiple audiences. Some of the current challenges park staff are faced with, in no order of importance, include: changes in park interpretive ideology; addressing staff's own personal biases; issues of perceived or real racial bias; African American attitudes regarding bodies of water; park/vacation fees; and lack of knowledge about the park and its resources.

### **National Park Service Staff and Personal Biases.**

One challenge for managers and interpreters and one that was also outlined in the Vision Paper (2014) is the need for staff to consider personal biases that can impede management from reaching goals to attract ethnically diverse visitors. In other words, if park staff does not value cultural diversity, they will be less likely to implement programming that supports diverse viewpoints. As argued by Carolyn Finney in an NPS publication on racial inclusion and the urban push (2015), the NPS now has a "strong desire and need for actual change, not

just *lip service* to it, after years of stagnant visitor race/ethnicity statistics.” The Urban Agenda, initiated by the NPS, is a focus on urban parks that are trying to connect with urban populations and stay relevant. Through this and similar programs, park employees have been asked to, “fully represent our nation’s ethnically and culturally diverse communities” as well as “create and deliver activities, programs, and services that honor, examine, and interpret America’s complex heritage” (NPS, 2015). Personal biases, without self-reflection and commitment to change, can keep the Park Service immobile in terms of demographic diversification.

In conjunction with personal bias is a concern about the quality and frequency of diversity training available to NPS staff. To address that concern, Anderson and Stone (2005) measured the knowledge, awareness, and skills of park and recreational specialists in North Carolina regarding cultural sensitivity. Using M. L. Wheeler’s Education and Training Model (1994) Anderson and Stone (2005) collected a sample of 470 individuals which included males (n=262) and females (n=208) who worked in some aspect of the recreation profession. Most of the respondents, 81.1%, were European American with African Americans comprising 14.8% of respondents. The researchers concluded that there was a high level of cultural competency among recreational professionals in the areas of awareness and knowledge; however, those competency levels dropped when participants were asked specifically about skill levels such as the ability to

communicate with a specific cultural group. For example, one question on the survey asked, "I can speak at least basic phrases (e.g., hello, yes, no) in Spanish" to which an average of only 2.78% of respondents answered in the affirmative (Anderson & Stone, 2005, p. 64).

The overall results of the study are perhaps best summarized by Anderson and Stone when they wrote,

There appears to be a need to design training strategies that would move beyond parks and recreation professionals being aware and knowledgeable of cultural differences to knowing *how* to connect and build relationships with members of diverse groups.

Multicultural skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to communicate with individuals from diverse groups and to match recreational interventions with the needs and desires of their clients (Anderson & Stone, 2005, p. 66). The italics were added by the researcher.

Like Anderson and Stone, other researchers have attempted to identify degrees of cultural competency among recreational and other professionals such as Pope-Davis *et al.*, 1993) who concluded from their research that individuals who are multiculturally competent,

consider and evaluate factors such as the effect that the sociopolitical system has on people of color in the United States, have a knowledge

base concerning cultural and racial groups, and are able to implement a wide range of appropriate responses to patient needs (p. 839).

A decade prior to the work of Pope-Davis *et al.*, Sue *et al.* (1982) categorized multicultural competencies into three areas: (1) beliefs and attitudes, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills. The beliefs and attitudes area, also referred to as awareness, is the awareness individuals have regarding their own cultural heritage, values, and biases, and how those biases affect their relationships with people of color (Sodowsky & Taffe, 1991). The knowledge area refers to the appreciation and respect shown to other cultural groups with an overall goal of acquiring more information about specific cultures. The final category of skills refers to the behaviors used while interacting with diverse groups such as the ability to communicate based on the group's communication style.

The conclusions of Sue *et al.* (1982) were to make a call for action to the Multicultural Counseling and Development and the American Association for Counseling and Development to change basic managerial structuring to one that is genuinely committed to diverse representation of its membership; is sensitive to maintaining an open, supportive, and responsive environment; is working toward and purposefully including elements of diverse cultures in its ongoing operations; and one which is authentic in its response to issues confronting it (Sue *et al.*, 1982, p. 7).

The above studies seem to suggest that park personnel must consider ways to connect with underserved communities in ways they may not have considered before. These may include: learning how to communicate (at least basic phrases, in the language of the group), understanding the sociopolitical context of minorities in the United States; and making a commitment to addressing issues that prevent African Americans and other underserved populations from participating in park activities.

### **Racialized Spaces.**

A second challenge for NPS managers is overcoming feelings of racial bias, real or perceived, as expressed by some minority visitors to park sites. As recently as 2015, accusations of discrimination and racial profiling against African Americans were made at Yosemite National Park. Per Golash-Boza et al., (2015), there was a scholarly event held at Yosemite where a multicultural group of women had been invited to participate. The eight academics, four Europeans or Hispanics, and four African Americans arrived at the park where they had been told to inform park rangers at the gate that their fees were waived because they were researchers participating in a special event.

The European and Hispanic Americans provided the information at the gate and entered without problems; however, the four African Americans researchers were questioned, required to fill out forms; and the research center they were



trying to get to was called for verification. One of the scholars was questioned about her college degree, university affiliation, and asked to provide a faculty identification card. Due to complaints filed by the African American visitors, Yosemite National Park began an investigation into the incident. It is conditions such as those described above that contribute to low visitation rates and feelings of not being welcomed at national parks by some African Americans. How can they be expected to become repeat visitors when they had trouble entering the park during the initial visit?

One of the greatest problems in attracting African Americans and other minority groups to national parks is the perception of space and how it is or should be used (Carter, 2008; Finney, 2014; Eichstedt & Small, 2002; Lutz & Collins, 1993; Virden & Willits, 1999; Elmendorf *et al.*, 2005). As noted by Carter (2008),

Blacks view space as raced and most spaces as White, spaces in which to be on guard. Whites view most spaces as normal (i.e. unraced), which is to say they too subconsciously perceive them as White. Whites are so accustomed to unproblematically occupying most spaces that they are unaware that spaces are Coloured (p. 268).

Dana Tanner, co-owner of the country's oldest African American travel agency, resonates Carter's observations when she stated, "Europe has never

been a major destination for African-American vacationers” (as cited In Carter, 2008, p. 273). Her assertion was based on years of experience and observations. Tanner’s comments are further supported through data from the National Household Travel Survey (Hu & Reuscher, 2001) which recorded that while 23.4% of White leisure travelers visited Europe, only 7.7% of African American leisure travelers sought it as a destination; conversely, 79.9% of African American travelers visited the Caribbean, compared to 15.2% of Whites (Hu & Reuscher, 2004). The world and its various spaces are arranged along the lines of race leading to the practice of creating racialized spaces. Lutz and Collins (1993) studied *National Geographic* periodicals to see how United States citizens’ views support the debate that places, or spaces are racist. The researchers concluded that White places are perceived by Blacks as being unwelcoming thus Blacks tend to find those places unattractive. The crux of the above studies indicate that many Americans view spaces in terms of race and that for African Americans those spaces that are considered white are unsafe and unwelcoming.

### **Vacation Costs.**

A fourth obstacle for managers is the perception by African Americans and others that the total cost of fees associated with a park visit that also include lodgings, gas, and food will not be affordable. Ostergren *et al.* (2005) conducted

a national survey under the direction of the NPS Social Science Program in which 3,515 people were asked several questions pertaining to visitation rates, fee topics, and fee strategies. They found that people with lower incomes and limited education (less than college degree) viewed high entrance fees as a deterrent to park visitation. Race, ethnicity, age, income, and education, they discovered, were all significantly related to the perception that entrance fees are too high. The researchers concluded that the perception that entrance fees are too expensive is linked to outside factors related to total trip cost which were not directly related to entrance fees or park activities (Ostergren *et al.*, 2005).

As of 2017, the NPS has proposed increasing entrance fees to highly visited park sites during peak seasons. The proposal would affect 17 national parks where entrance fees would increase to \$70.00 per car, \$50.00 per motorcycle, and \$30.00 per person on bike or foot (NPS, 2017). Although the proposal is currently under review, such a dramatic increase in entrance fees is likely to have a further effect on cost perceptions for potential visitors to national parks.

Although African American visitors to GUIs will not be affected by the proposed fee increase, they are affected by fees associated with boat travel to Ship Island where the Native Guards were stationed. Access by the public by way of water transportation is either done privately or through chartered services. The boat ride is an approximately 22-mile roundtrip. It is likely that few African Americans in the region own boats and none own water vessel charter

companies, therefore most local residents, and especially those whose visit requires an overnight stay, will rely on the chartered ship excursion (BoatInfoWorld, 2016). GUIS officially supports Ship Island Excursions for carrying visitors to the island which cost a rate of \$29.00 per adult and \$19.00 per child from the ages of 3 to 10. For a family of four the ship excursion alone would cost from \$77.00 (2 adults and one child over the age of 10; one child under the age of 3) to \$96.00 (2 adults and two children over the age of 10). These numbers do not reflect other factors such as food, possible lodging, and gas. While GUIS staff is aware of the boat fees having the potential to be problematic, currently they have not identified alternative solutions.

#### **Lack of Awareness of the National Park Service.**

A final challenge for NPS staff attempting to reach underserved audiences is a lack of awareness by some African Americans about park sites and their functions. In 2011, the NPS released “National Park Service Comprehensive Survey of the American Public” which was designed to evaluate the racial and ethnic diversity of park visitors and non-visitors. Many of the African American non-visitors who responded (66%) chose “just don’t know that much about National Park System units” as the primary reason for not visiting compared to White (56%) non-visitors (Taylor *et al.*, 2011, p. v). Lack of knowledge about park sites ranked highest followed closely with concerns of hotel and food cost (56%)

which was tied with concerns about time and distance to a park site (48%) for African Americans.

Prior to the research of Taylor *et al.* (2011), a study conducted by Lawton and Weaver (2008) at Congaree National Park in South Carolina, also addressed non-visitation by African Americans. Taylor *et al.* surveyed 455 local adult residents in Columbia, S.C. of which 231 respondents had not visited the park and 204 people had visited. African Americans accounted for almost half of the residents who had never visited Congaree National Park, but only 13.2% of those who had visited (Lawton & Weaver, 2008).

Additionally, Lawton and Weaver identified that the greatest barrier for non-visitation out of a potential of 11 categories based upon a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 5 *very important* to 1 *not at all important*, was, “I just haven’t gotten around to it yet, but would like to visit” was reported by 3.56% of respondents. That response was followed by 3.02% of respondents who selected as an answer, “I don’t know where it is”, and 2.83% stated, “I have never heard of it before.” Possibly one of the greatest aspects of this research was the discovery that regardless of age, gender, education level, and household income, the most important consideration given as to reasons for not visiting Congaree National Park was procrastination. The researchers concluded that, “Apparent procrastination was the main reason given for non-visitation—a constraint rarely considered in the existing literature—with one dominant cluster of non-visiting

residents clearly indicating this as the reason for their behavior” (Lawton & Weaver, 2008, p. 79). An issue to pursue with GUIS staff is how knowledgeable are local residents about the site’s existence, especially for community members who have resided in the area for more than 5 to 10 years.

### **Social Judgement Theory**

Social Judgement Theory is about attitude changes in which people can be pushed or pulled into accepting new attitudes. Developed in 1961 by Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland and later expounded upon by Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif, social judgement theory proposes that persuasion is a two-step process in which individuals hear or read a message and then place the content of that message in a range that matches their own beliefs (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). In the second step individuals adjust their attitudes either towards or away from the original message. The theory is concerned with the idea that people bring prior attitudes to a situation and this prior manner of thinking distorts the way they perceive social messages. The key word in the definition is attitude, which is measured in terms of latitudes or ranges. Latitudes or ranges describe the way in which attitudes are found acceptable or objectionable to the person. When an attitude is deemed neither acceptable nor objectionable, “then the individual is considered as being in the Latitude of Noncommitment” (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 218).

Within social judgement theory, there are three levels of latitudes: Latitude of Acceptance (statements and ideas that the listener finds acceptable), Latitude of Rejection (statements and ideas that the listener finds unacceptable or objectionable), and Latitude of Noncommitment (statements and ideas that the listener neither accepts nor rejects). To further clarify the theory, the sentence, “The National Park Service strives to tell the stories of all Americans” (NPS, 2017) will be used.

Based on Latitude of Acceptance, the above sentence implies that NPS staff is genuinely concerned with developing programs and conducting outreach that attracts various American demographics. From the open coding it was revealed that park entities such as Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site had a focus on interpreting Native American history; however, they also included talks on the role of the United States Colored Troops. Because management at the site accepted and believed in the sentence – we serve all Americans, they were able to move forward towards achieving the goal of inclusivity. When Latitude of Rejection is applied to the sentence, staff members are in opposition to the statement and may use site location or the need for additional research as justifiers for inaction. In essence, they do not believe that it is appropriate to try and tell the story of ‘all Americans’ at their specific site. The final level, Latitude of Noncommitment when applied to the sentence, indicates no commitment one way or the other. Staff members are aware of the lack of diversity of visitors and

programming however will not take necessary steps to correct those deficiencies. This is not to imply that those staff members are not engaged with their work, but simply do not see the need to change the way things are currently done.

The challenge then for the NPS is to provide training for staff members at sites that exhibit Latitudes of Rejection and Noncommitment, which is evidenced by the lack of programming options that include diverse populations. Since SJT is concerned with attitudinal changes, the NPS must proactively work from within to gradually expand thinking around what it means to tell the stories of a diverse American population. As stated by Finn (2015), “if national parks are not actively combating the idea that they are unwelcoming to people of color through interpreting inclusive histories and working to lessen individual employees’ ingrained biases, the NPS will not achieve its goals of inclusivity and relevancy.”

### **Unconscious Bias Theory**

Unconscious Bias (UB) refers to *biases* that happen automatically. It is a prejudice in favor of or against a thing, person, or group. It is considered a bias that is outside of an individual’s control and is triggered by the brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by an individual’s background, cultural environment and personal experiences (Storey, 2017; Navarro, 2017). In the past two decades, over 5,000 studies were conducted that addressed biases in terms of hiring and evaluation practices, lack



of employment diversity, decision making, and patient-client relationships (Dasgupta, 2013; Glicksman, 2016; Stone, 2011; Martell & Guzzo, 1991; Navarro, 2017). The principle component in assessing UB is through the Implicit Association Test (IAT) which was conceived as a means of testing attitudes around race, gender, sexual orientation, and national origin.

In recent years, Unconscious Bias Theory has been criticized as not addressing the core issues that create certain biases. For example, psychologist Sylvana Storey (2017) has proposed that, “Fear and power are at the heart of keeping things the same. So as to address fear and power we need to plough into the root of emotions. Once we know where the emotions stem from then we can begin to plant the seeds for new behaviors.” Storey argued that the basis of biases is fear – of the unknown, of change, of loss of power. Unconscious Bias testing, she felt, was a waste of time as this process has been shown to, on occasion, “reinforce stereotypes” and “increase defensiveness”.

While it can be argued, as Storey has done, that other factors contribute to individual and organizational biases, what is apparent, as stated by Finn is that “various forms of bias and discrimination exist in the NPS and exist in complicated and overlapping ways” (Finn, 2015, p. 52). Through constructivist grounded theory analysis, it has been determined that the main theme that ties all the other categories together is the core category of noncommitment. Noncommitment suggests that the NPS must begin to host facilitated

discussions, training sessions, and create some form of accountability that can act as first steps in exploring internal biases and discrimination.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Study Areas

There are two primary study areas associated with this research. The first area included NPS sites having a Civil War interpretive component; and the second area included the community of North Gulfport, Mississippi (circa GUIIS). The NPS study area consisted of 106 sites that represented battlefields, monuments, historic parks and homes, seashores, and memorials and were identified through an NPS website entitled *The Civil War*. These areas are located throughout the United States and represent a total of 31 states. These NPS sites served as data collection points and were concerned with: NPS programming for African American visitors, length of time of programs, if programs were meeting institutional goals, program relevancy, and challenges for staff.

The second study area consisted of four locations concentrated in the City of Gulfport, Mississippi. These sites were chosen by driving through the community and observing places where community members gathered or where there was frequent visitation by community members. The study area included the following sites: Timms Snowballs, the Oak Tree, King's Food Mart, and McInnis BBQ. The first three sites were identified while working on the Deepwater Horizon-MC-252

Incident Response Traditional Cultural Properties Inventory during the Summer and Fall of 2011 and the final site was chosen while conducting fieldwork during April 2017.

The researcher entered the community and drove along major thoroughfares in the area. While driving, notice was given to places where people were gathered outside such as at King's Food Mart, the Oak Tree, and Timms Snowballs; or where there was frequent traffic of people such as at McInnis BBQ. The address or street name of those locations were jotted down in order to revisit the site at a later time. The selected areas served as data collection sites which were concerned with obtaining information about: demographics, preferences, and visitor experience. All sites are located approximately 17 miles from the excursion boat to Ship Island and 25 miles from GUIIS headquarters located in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

### **The National Park Service's Civil War Sites**

The Yellowstone National Park Act signed into law on March 1, 1872 established the first national park. A little more than 30 years later, the Antiquities Act of 1906 was created to preserve historic landmarks, prehistoric structures, and objects of historic interest. Almost a quarter of existing NPS units were established through this Act. A mere 10 years later, the Organic Act (August 1916) established the NPS which at that time oversaw 14 national parks, 21

national monuments, and two reservations (Hot Springs and Casa Grande Ruin). In 1935, through the Preservation of Historic Sites Act, the Service created, "a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States" (Historic Sites Act 1965). Two additional acts, the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, established wilderness, scenic, geologic, cultural, and recreational areas that increased the overall units and holdings of the NPS.

Currently, the NPS consists of 417 areas covering more than 84 million acres in every state and the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands ("Frequently Asked Questions", n.d.). In recent years, the NPS published an Internet list of sites identified as having an interpretive component related to the Civil War (Appendix A). A total of 106 sites were listed. Those sites were varied in terms of physical location, interpretive mandates, and recreational opportunities. Of the identified 106 sites, a total of 79 were included in this study. Several of the sites were removed from the list; reasons for removal are discussed in the Data Collection section of this research.

### **The Community of North Gulfport, Mississippi**

The City of Gulfport is the second most populated city in the state of Mississippi comprising an area of 64.2 square miles of which 7.3 square miles

are water (Figure 4). The city was founded by two railroad men, William Hardy and Joseph Jones, and incorporated in 1898.

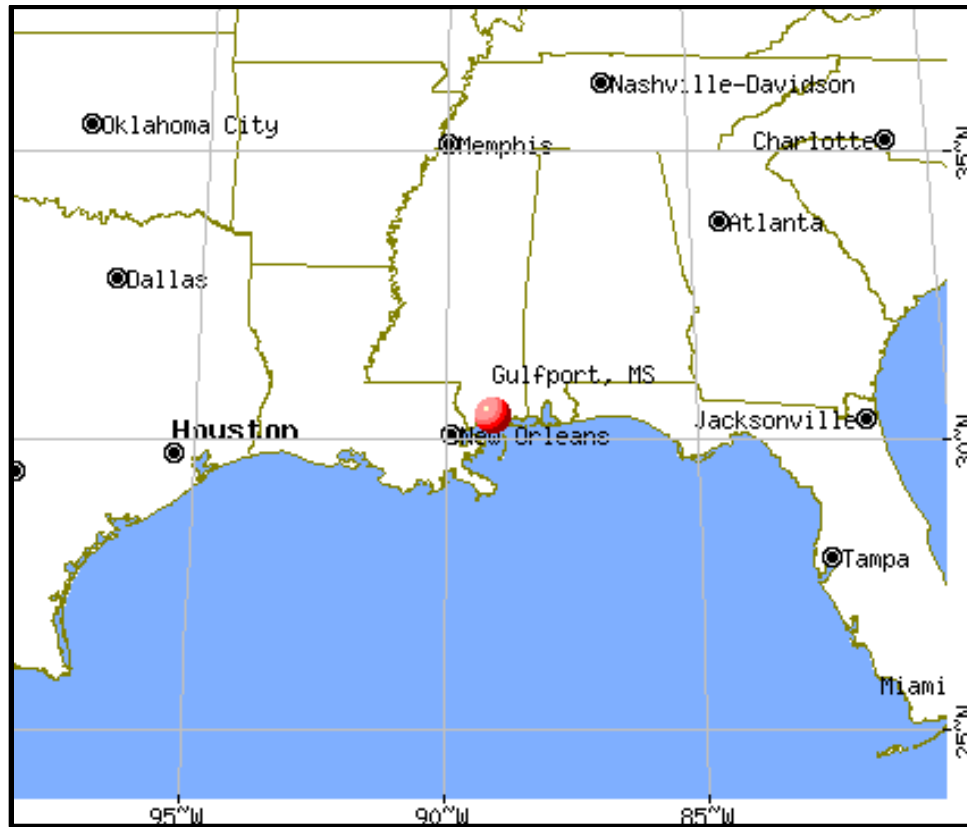


Figure 4. Location of the community of Gulfport, MS.

Gulfport has grown steadily since that time and as of 2010 boasts a population of 67,793 people. City residents have lower annual household income (\$37,610.00) compared with state (\$39,031.00) and county (\$42,000.00) incomes and the highest rate of poverty (24.6%) (U S Census Bureau, 2010). Educational attainment indicates city residents are more likely to have a high school diploma (83.8%) and a Bachelor's Degree (20.2%) when compared with

the county in which 80.2% had a high school diploma while 17.5% held a Bachelor's Degree. Further comparisons with the State of Mississippi indicate 81.5% of the population had a high school diploma and 20.1% had a Bachelor's degree (U S Census Bureau, 2010). Many of the state residents were African American (37%) which closely mimicked the city's demographics with African Americans constituting 36.1% of the population (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative demographics for Mississippi, Harrison County, and Gulfport.

Age	Gender	Race	Marital Status	Household Income	Population	Education	Below Poverty
State	Under 18 25.5%	W-59.1% A-37.0%	M=53.5%	39,031	2,967,297	HS or more 81.5%	24.0%
	65 and older 12.8%	AI-5% AS-0.9% H-2.7%				BD or more 20.1%	
County	Under 18 24.5%	W-69.7% AA-22.1% AI-0.5% AS-2.8%	M=51.1%	42,000	194,029	HS 80.2% BD 17.5%	22.6%
		F-50.3%					
City	Under 18 25.0%	W-56.9% AA-36.1% AI-0.4% AS-1.7% H-5.2%	UNK	37,610	67,793	HS or more 83.8%	24.6%
	65 and older 11.6%					BD or more 20.2%	

Age: Under 18, 65 and older; Gender: F=Female, M=Male; Race: W=White, AA=African American, AI=American Indian, AS=Asian, H=Hispanic; Marital Status: M=Married, UNK=Unknkown; Education: HS=High School, BD=Bachelor's Degree.



The following section on the community of North Gulfport is based on information from the Deepwater Horizon-MC-252 Incident Response Traditional Cultural Properties Inventory Final Report (Teal, 2013). Largely due to its location, 17 miles from Ship Island and 25 miles from park headquarters, and the researcher's familiarity with the region, this community was chosen for data collection based on finding issues of relevancy between the park and local residents. Gulfport, when viewed as a collection of cultural pockets, has a predominately African American community commonly referred to as North Gulfport located in the northern portion of the city. Within North Gulfport are two sub-communities, Turkey Creek (purple) and Forrest Heights (green) (Figure 5). The following sites were identified during the Teal 2011 fieldwork season and were used as data collection points: Timm's Snowball, King's Food Mart, the Oak Tree, and McInnis BBQ all of which are located within a few blocks of one another.

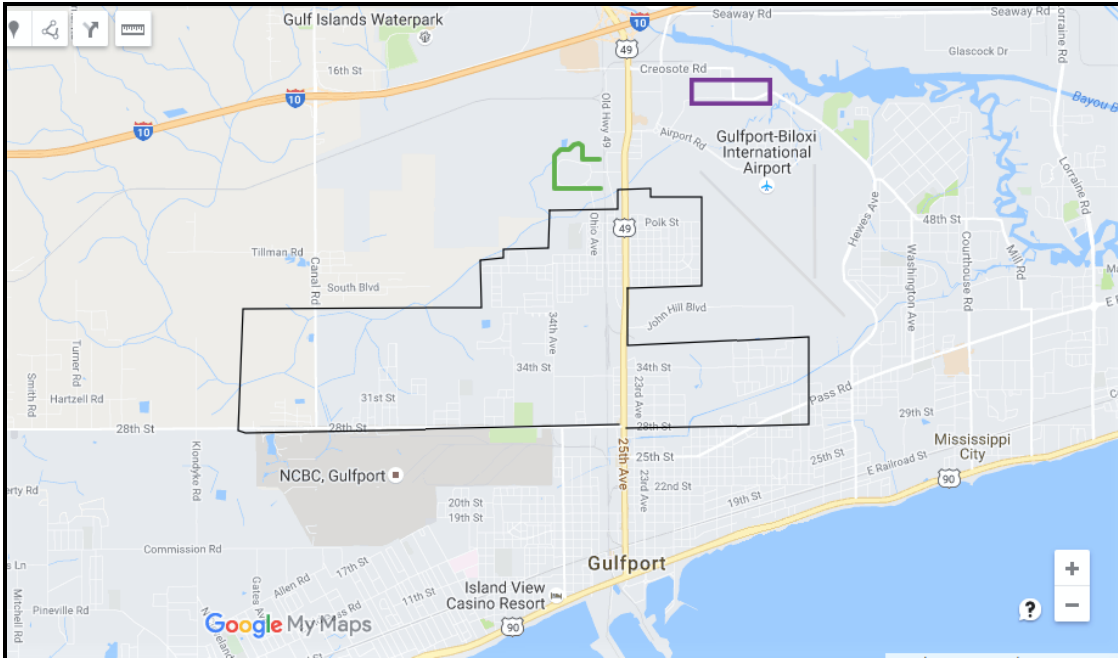


Figure 5. The community of North Gulfport in three sections.

### **Timm's Snowballs Collection Site**

As a youth at age 9 in the 1950s, Lonnie Timm opened a snowball stand located at the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Highway 49. It is one of the most popular community gathering spots in the area. Lonnie's stand specializes in handmade snowballs and offers over 30 different flavors. The entire site consists of approximately a 20'X15' area easily visible from the highway. Although not the original structure, this stand has cultural and historic significance for African Americans in the community. For retirees, this is the place to go to just get out of the house or to chat with friends. Some of the retirees who frequent this spot formerly worked with city municipal departments

in the capacity of policemen, firemen, and maintenance. During spring and summer months, the stand is one of the most popular places in the community (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Lonnie Timm's Snowball Stand.

### **King's Food Mart Collection Site**

A second place that almost all community members have engaged with is Kings Food Mart. Although not a fully stocked grocery, this convenience store is one of the few places where residents can purchase basic food items such as bread and milk, as well as alcohol and tobacco all within walking distance of their homes. Like Timm's Snowballs, Kings Food Mart also serves as a social

gathering place (Figure 7). These social gathering spots are culturally significant to the community because they act as areas facilitating rites of passage and community interaction. Almost no one grows up in the community without going through the doors of the store.



Figure 7. Kings Food Mart from two angles.

### **The Oak Tree Collection Site**

A third data collection site, located on the corner of Louisiana Avenue and Van Buren Street is where some retirees and unemployed adults in the community sometimes gather. This site is located on an abandoned lot where residents have placed chairs and tables under a large Oak Tree. Community members gather here beginning in the early morning and the crowd changes in size throughout the day with most residents arriving at the tree in the evenings. Demographically, people who congregate at the Oak Tree are 21 years of age and over. There is a mixture of males and females, many of whom grew up in North Gulfport.

## McInnis BBQ Collection Site

The final data collection site was on the corner of Arkansas Avenue and Jefferson Street. McInnis B BQ provided respondents from both genders who were mostly working-class residents (Figure 8). Although there were no questions on the questionnaire that addressed occupational status, it was clear, (while at the site) that several of the customers were there on lunch break since they were dressed in city uniforms and business attire. A few of the customers arrived in company vehicles that associated them with construction work. This site was chosen due to its location to other chosen sites as well as for the number of community members who frequented the food stand.



Figure 8. McInnis BBQ Stand is a popular place to purchase a hot meal.

## **Data Collection**

There are two different questionnaires associated with this project. The first questionnaire, which relates to the first objective of this research, was designed for members of the NPS interpretation team at the identified 106 park sites. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data regarding: programming options, African American visitation rates, recreational preferences, challenges, and examples of successful programs. The second questionnaire, designed to meet Objective 2 of this research, was intended to gain knowledge about: community demographics, visitation to park site, recreational preferences, and experiences from North Gulfport residents and was administered to 40 participants.

## **Individual Questionnaire for the National Park Service**

While conducting preliminary research, it was found that eight of the NPS units were named after African Americans (Booker T. Washington National Monument, Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, George Washington Carver National Monument, Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, and Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, and Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site). There were nine sites that had a strong focus on some aspect of African American history to include: African American Civil War Memorial, Boston African American National Historic Site, Brown vs. Board of

Education National Historic Site, Lincoln Memorial, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, and Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.

At the onset of making phone calls to NPS sites that had African American names or were focused on African American interpretation, it was discovered those sites did not have challenges in attracting that demographic group. As stated by one interpreter at Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, “they attract people from around the world.” At Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, the researcher was informed that their challenge was in attracting non-African Americans to the site. Based on those and similar phone calls, it was decided to remove similar sites from the list created by the NPS since they were already doing work in the target market. Based on this criterion, of the original 106 sites, 17 were removed from the list of units to be contacted leaving 88 sites for potential inclusion in the study.

Again, based on the list of Civil War interpretive sites, an additional seven sites were excluded from this study since they were considered subunits of a larger park system. For example, at National Capital Parks East (DC), there are four subunits: Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site, Fort Dupont Park, Fort Foote, and Fort Washington Park. The Carter G. Woodson site was removed based on its African American name and the remaining three units were removed

because of their subunit status. Other park units that were eliminated included: Golden Gate National Recreation Area which had three sites (Alcatraz Island, Ft. Point National Historic Site, and the Presidio of San Francisco); Natchez Trace Parkway which had Natchez Trace National Historic Trail as a subunit; and lastly, National Capital Parks East whose subunits were Fort Dupont Park, Fort Foote, and Fort Washington. This further narrowed the data collection sites included in this study to 81 units (Appendix A). A final site removed from the list was Gulf Island National Seashore because it was the site on which the research originally focused and due to the lack of communication as briefly discussed in the introduction section of this paper. Once the above units were removed, a total of 80 parks remained for inclusion in the study. Through purposive sampling, phone calls to the selected national park sites were made by the researcher during normal hours of operation which for most parks were between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Except when asked by park personnel to call back on a weekend, all phone calls were made Monday through Friday.

Data for this portion of the research were collected through an eight-question questionnaire that consisted of two sub-questions and a comment section. At each of the 81 park units, interpreters were contacted by phone and asked to participate in the research project. At park units where no one answered the phone, a message was left that stated the scope of the project and contact information. A second call was made to those units in which a message had



been left in an attempt to collect data. The second phone call, made at a minimum of one week but typically two or more weeks from the time of the first call, was intended to allow park staff to respond when time allowed. After two messages were left and after waiting an additional two weeks from the time of the second call, those NPS units that did not respond were identified as having missing data (n= 25). Missing data questionnaires were removed from the data analysis portion of the research.

For those NPS units that did respond to the questionnaire, their verbal responses were noted on paper in the comments section of the questionnaire. This approach formed the basis of the mixed methods methodology and allowed for gathering of information as to how NPS units form relationships with African American visitors and potential visitors. Data size (n =56) influenced the selection of short comments versus narratives since the sample was too large, beyond 20 participants, for a traditional grounded theory approach.

Of the eight plus two sub-questions, only two were open-ended. Those two questions sought answers about programming that tended to attract or not attract African American visitors. Participants responded to four yes/no questions, two multiple choice questions, and two 5-point Likert scale questions (Appendix B). All data, except for the comments and open-ended questions, were entered into an SPSS (Version 24) statistical analysis program to produce quantitative data.

## **Individual Questionnaire for North Gulfport Residents**

Data collected from community residents consisted of an English language questionnaire. A nine-question questionnaire was administered to 40 community residents in the North Gulfport area. No youth, individuals under the age of 18, were included in this study. The questionnaire included information that addressed (1) community demographics, (2) visitor experience at GUIIS, (3) willingness to revisit, (4) interpretation preferences, and (5) comfort level while at GUIIS (Appendix C). As a courtesy to GUIIS, it was decided to collect as much data as possible within two days of fieldwork conducted on April 27<sup>th</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The questionnaires were administered on Day 1 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. On Day 2, the surveys were conducted between 10:00 am until 3:00 pm for a total of nine hours over two days.

All participants who responded to the questionnaire did so voluntarily. The questionnaire was handed to some individuals and read by the researcher to others. There were no criteria for who was handed the questionnaire versus those for whom the questions were read. If participants wanted to answer the questions on their own, they were provided an opportunity to do so. All questions were multiple choice except for two- both of which involved gathering of demographic information regarding gender, age, and education level.

## **Field Data Collection North Gulfport**

The selection of data collection sites was influenced by prior research conducted by Teal (2013). The four sites were all contained within the boundaries of North Gulfport and were selected due to a high frequency of community visitation. Gaining entrée refers to the process of identifying appropriate data collection sites, as well as the negotiation process involved with site owners that would allow the researcher to speak with willing participants (Polit & Beck, 2013). At each of the four community sites, the owner or representative was explained the research being conducted, and asked permission to recruit participants on-site. At the Oak Tree site, the property owner gave permission for research to be conducted there.

A convenience sampling method was utilized to collect field data which allowed for voluntary participation in the research. Members of the community were approached and asked to participate in the research. Most of the 40 questionnaires were read aloud to the respondents and their answers recorded on paper. In a few instances, participants chose a self-administered format by completing the questionnaire as an individual without the assistance of any other persons.

Field data collection proceeded in the following manner: on Day 1: King's Food Mart, located on the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Ohio Avenue; the Oak Tree, located on the corner of Louisiana Avenue and Van

Buren Street; and Timm's Snowball, stand located on the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Highway 49. A total of 21 completed questionnaires were collected the first day. On Day 2, a total of 19 questionnaires received responses from participants at King's Food Mart, Timm's Snowball, and McInnis BBQ located on the corner of Arkansas Avenue and Jefferson Street. No data was kept on individuals who declined to participate.

### **Incentive Tool to Participate in the Research**

Incentives were given to community participants in the form of Stephen F. Austin State University, Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture souvenirs. Souvenirs consisted of: ink pens, frisbees, drinking cups, koozies, and forestry literature and brochures. The incentives were designed to give something back to the community, in a small way, for sharing their thoughts with the researcher and as an act of appreciation. Participants that completed the questionnaire were offered one incentive of their choosing.

### **Grounded Theory Method as Analysis Tool for This Study**

Grounded theory is a qualitative research strategy in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants in a study (Creswell, 2009). It is used to provide insight into how meaning takes place within social settings and how people position themselves within their social worlds (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory,

as a research approach was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in *Awareness of Dying* (1965). When Glaser and Strauss developed the method, they did so to explore the process of dying and its effect on the life and quality of care for terminally ill patients. Their process was later refined in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory has been used within the social sciences and across disciplines such as psychology, education, and nursing (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Researchers using grounded theory do not begin with a theory which they try to prove or disprove, but instead start with an area of study and wait for the theory to emerge as data is gathered. In other words, grounded theory seeks to build a theory rather than to test an existing one. It is characterized by two primary attributes: the constant comparison of information which is designed to identify codes, categories, and themes through data analysis; and theoretical sampling which includes the identification and selection of data sources that can be used to explain the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006; Hallberg, 2006). These approaches, when combined, assist in the development of a substantive theory that explains a social phenomenon as viewed through the experiences of the people operating within that social setting (Creswell, 2007).

Over time, grounded theory has changed in methodology as researchers have expanded on the theory to address additional concerns. The dialogue surrounding the correct methodology for grounded theory has taken several

directions, each with philosophical implications for how the research should be conducted (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Kath Melia (1996) suggested that by understanding the differing worldviews and methodological positions, a researcher can develop better insights as to how to approach research and how to justify choices.

Clearly, there are differences between the various grounded theory methods. Classic and Straussian grounded theory believe there is objectivity associated with a post positivist assumption, while constructivist grounded theorists believe that a constructivist paradigm allows the researcher to discover meaning by placing themselves within the data collection and analysis process (Taghipour, 2014). For this study, a constructivist grounded theory method was chosen due to its ability to develop insight into how NPS sites with a Civil War component can make meaningful connections with African American communities, and its ability to identify the core meanings that challenge or limit the engagement of such NPS sites and their ability to serve underrepresented populations.

### **Constructivist Grounded Theory Method**

When Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later Strauss and Corbin (1998) refined grounded theory, which was still based on a positivist assumption, it essentially disregarded the influence that the researcher plays during the research process.

However, Kathy Charmaz, a former student of both Glaser and Strauss, created another version of grounded theory known as constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000), which stated that “neither the data nor the theories are discovered” but instead that researchers “construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). Additionally, Charmaz advocated for movement from the methodology of Straussian Grounded Theory towards a more flexible procedure that would allow the researcher to “raise questions and outline strategies to indicate possible routes to take” (Charmaz, 2006, p. xi).

Arguably, the strength of a constructivist approach is that it includes the researcher as an important part of the research process. It sees the researcher as a co-creator in identifying meaning rather than as a person who is objective and simply reporting the facts (Mills & Francis 2006). The focus of a constructivist paradigm in grounded theory is to place the researcher in a position of interpreter and co-creator of the collection and analysis of the data. It essentially acknowledges the researcher’s voice has having an active and potentially powerful role in shaping and presenting data thus representing the phenomenon of study through the co-creation of meaning (Charmaz, 2006). From an ontological stance, constructivist grounded theory recognizes that subjective experiences construct social truths; and that constructivism values

multiple realities that strive to find commonalities through individual narratives (Charmaz, 2006).

Since comparisons between data are essential in identifying and categorizing concepts when using constructivist grounded theory, it is necessary for the researcher to “draw upon personal knowledge, professional knowledge, and the technical literature” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 84). The exploration of narrative, in-depth deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning, and acknowledging the researcher’s voice in the gathering and analysis of data are linked with a constructivist grounded theory approach. It was those factors that became important in choosing this methodological design for this study.

Corbin and Strauss (1990) defined analysis as the interplay between researchers and data. While they proposed some general procedures for analysis when using grounded theory, they did not propose rigidity in adherence to those procedures but emphasize creativity. Data analysis in grounded theory involves three types of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that coding represents data that is broken down, conceptualized, and reassembled to reveal theory.

The first step of analysis involved the researcher attempting to identify and code significant situations or events within the data. Coding enables researchers to assemble similar events, happenings, and approaches. Coding also enables large amounts of data to be reduced to smaller fragments of more manageable



information (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A list of initial themes was generated during the open coding process. During phone calls with park staff, comments made outside of the questions were noted in the comments section of the document. The questionnaires were placed in alphabetical order by site name and each comment made by park interpreter per questionnaire was recorded under open coding. After approximately 10 phone calls with responses, it was noticed that certain words or phrases were repeated by respondents. This allowed long comments to be reduced into general descriptors of action, facilitating comparison between different features of the data. For example, some respondents when talking about the type of programming offered may have stated they offer a contraband camp program and provided additional information about how visitors responded to the program. Since the information was not an audio or visual recording and could not be written in its entirety, only key words were used. In this example the key word entered under open coding was contraband camps. This method was also used with the words UGRR, slavery, school groups, and Centennial celebration.

Once all words, phrases were entered in the table, Word 2016 highlighting feature was used to identify similar concepts. This provided a second layer of analysis by which to explore implicit meaning derived from the comments of NPS staff. By returning to original sources, initial assumptions made from the coding process can be challenged and possible bias addressed (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990). Returning to the research question, how are NPS sites connecting with African Americans, sub-questions were added at this point. Those sub-questions were: What type of activities are the sites offering and what gets in the way of being able to offer activities? Revisiting data with the sub-questions also encouraged new interpretations of NPS staff comments, and the development of new codes that encompass plurality of meaning. Deep immersion in data, and repeated reading of comments fostered another way of examining NPS activities, and how such activities impacted the ways they reached-out to potential and current African American visitors.

The second stage in grounded theory involves axial coding, which begins the process of reassembling data that was broken down during open coding. The categories and subcategories generated from the open coding process are further scrutinized. The goal is to systematically develop and relate categories for more precise and complete explanations about the phenomena of study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). From open coding two questions were asked: What type of activities are the sites engaged in? and What are the issues that complicate engagement with African Americans? An attempt to answer those two questions led to the development of the axial codes.

In the final stage of grounded theory, selective coding is applied and used to refine and integrate categories for theory development. Focusing on the original research question, a theoretically-based description of how NPS sites are

connecting or not connecting with African Americans should be captured. After reviewing the axial codes, the researcher sought a word or group of words that would capture the essence of those axial codes succinctly. The results of the coding process will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### **Theoretical Sufficiency**

Theoretical saturation is traditionally understood as a fundamental feature of grounded theory that signals the study's completion. Saturation occurs when no new data can be generated from the original codes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical saturation is intended to generate a loose theory that leaves no gaps in the coding process. However, the assumption that saturation of codes and categories automatically concludes a study has been criticized since it implies that all considerations have been exhausted (Dey, 1999, p. 116-117). It is virtually impossible to create a large enough sample size to achieve theoretical saturation when working from a grounded theory position. As noted by O'Reilly and Parker (2013), developing insight into the processes used within saturation, as opposed to some external indicator of completion, is a plausible approach to overcome this obstacle. Theoretical saturation was reached in this research once all the comments made by NPS respondents had been compared with information garnered from the literature review as well as with my own personal experiences working in varying capacities with the NPS.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **The Constant Comparison Method**

Throughout the coding process a constant comparative method was utilized in which the objective, as defined by Charmaz (2014), was to “compare data with data, data with code, code with code, code with category, category with category, and category with concept” (p. 342). Examples are provided throughout this chapter to demonstrate how codes and categories progressed until theoretical sufficiency occurred. Comparison constitutes each successive stage of analysis, with the researcher concurrently collecting, coding and analyzing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). Through simultaneous data collection and analysis, the constant comparative method determines, integrates and clarifies theoretical categories, while also ensuring findings remain grounded in data (Charmaz, 2014). Since the study aimed to understand how the NPS connects with African Americans, the constant comparison method was instrumental in developing an abstract meaning of processes derived from park staff’s qualitative comments provided through the questionnaire.

## Open Coding

Open coding is the initial stage of data analysis in constructivist grounded theory whereby labels are assigned to data in order to create units of meaning based on participant's words. Typically, research participants are recorded while being interviewed. Those recordings are then transcribed and analyzed on a line-by-line basis or through small chunks of text. However, since there was a *comments only* section in the questionnaire, primarily due to the large size of the study, initial labels were derived from comments made by NPS staff as they attempted to clarify some point with regards to the closed-end questions.

The open coding process is mostly descriptive, recounting participants' wording in concise terms. For example, "we are here to serve all Americans" and "this is a Caucasian area" is a significant feature of coding, since it is derived directly from the language of the participants. By repeatedly returning to original sources - NPS comments - initial coding can be challenged and reassessed to encourage new interpretations and the development of possible new codes that have multiple meanings (Charmaz, 2006). For open coding, only a few words were documented instead of entire sentences, resulting in the creation of Table 2. As the study progressed, these codes shaped the development of conceptual categories.

Based on the open coding process and while also referring to the research question, two questions emerged: How was the NPS connecting with African Americans; and How they were not connecting with this target group? These early subsections became significant as the analysis progressed. Since specific ways the park sites were connecting were identified in open coding, an attempt was made to refine open codes and developing succinct categories.

Table 2. Open coding from NPS questionnaire.

<b>Open Coding</b>
Locals do not participate in park activities
No talk about the war
Interpretive information is outdated
Contraband camps
Site mostly used for recreational purposes like picnicking
Held special program for NPS Centennial
Not typically a destination site
No real attempts at attracting African Americans
Trading cards
Programs cut due to staffing and money issues
African Americans do not like information presented
Juneteenth celebration
No African American employees
Must take ferry/plane to site
Facilitated dialogue
African American interpretation is not site focus
Staff relocation issues
African Americans lack knowledge of site
Stage play
Need research on African American history for site
Lack of interest by management
Site located in an historically racist area
Video
African American interpretation only offered on special occasions
Changing image from 40 years ago
School groups visit
We interpret for all Americans
United States Colored Troops
Slavery
Ambassador programs
Partnerships/collaborations
Underground Railroad
Ranger-led interpretation

Colored highlights continued to arrange significant features of the open codes and subject them to a higher level of abstraction (Charmaz, 1983). Colored coding highlighted two processes with regards to how park sites are creating relationships with African Americans: frequent activities (green); infrequent activities (yellow); and two processes for why parks are not connecting: internal issues (blue); external issues (pink). These four codes were useful for comparative analysis between park personnel comments.

Each comment was revisited, then grouped to form new categories. As codes were used to examine various ways parks were attempting to connect with African Americans, alternate headings formed which resulted in more focused codes being used to describe the type of connections. It was determined that the ways in which the sites attempted to create relationships with African Americans could be defined in terms of frequent and infrequent activities (Table 3).

For example, the open codes 'Centennial Celebration' and 'Juneteenth Celebration' were labeled as 'infrequent activity' since these activities occurred one time in a year. Ranger-led tours, videos, and partnerships/collaborations were labeled as frequent activity since they occurred daily, weekly, or monthly. Conversely, the question what gets in the way of creating relationships with African Americans was defined in terms of internal or external issues. For example, NPS comments that were labeled internal issues included such topics as: African Americans do not like information presented, no African American



employees at the site, and lack of interest for diversity inclusion by park management.

Table 3. Open coding categories from NPS questionnaire.

Open Coding Questions	Open Coding Categories
<p style="text-align: center;">How connecting with African Americans?</p> <p>Contraband camps            Site used mostly for recreational purposes like picnicking            Held special program for NPS Centennial            Trading cards            Juneteenth celebration            Facilitated dialogue            Stage play            Video            School groups visit            We interpret for all Americans            United States Colored Troops            Slavery            Ambassador programs            Partnerships/collaborations            Underground Railroad            Ranger-led Interpretation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Frequent Activities</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Infrequent Activities</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Non-connection with African Americans</p> <p>No talk about the war            Interpretive information is outdated            Not typically a destination site            No real attempts at attracting African Americans            Programs cut due to staffing and money issues            African Americans do not like information presented            No African American employees            Must take ferry/plane to site            African American interpretation is not site focus            Staff relocation issues            African Americans lack knowledge of site            Need research on African American history for site            Lack of interest by management            Site located in an historically racist area            African American interpretation only offered on special occasions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Internal Issues</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External Issues</p>

## **Axial Coding**

The second stage of coding requires the researcher to identify relationships among the open codes. Axial coding is an iterative process designed to identify the most prevalent themes emerging from the open coding process (Charmaz, 1983). The term axial refers to a central theme, or axis, around which other data revolves. It is “an analytic tool devised to help analysts integrate structure and process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.123). It is a move from inductive to deductive analysis. The categories developed during this step represent the social phenomena. Once the two categories (how the parks are connecting and what prevents creating connections) were defined, the researcher sought to find a word or words that captured the theme of the open codes. It was surmised that how the parks attempted to connect with African Americans spoke to an action being taken. It demonstrated the parks were offering programs in an attempt to create relationships with African Americans whether those actions were frequent or infrequently offered. Due to this determination, the axial code of ‘actions’ was created as a way of linking the open codes.

The second portion from the open coding concerned things that get in the way of forming relationships between NPS staff and African Americans. Again, issues of budgets, limited staff, site location, and lack of knowledge about park were a few of the concerns expressed by respondents. When those concerns were examined in terms of external and internal issues, efforts were made

towards finding a unifying word or theme that captured the essence of park staff concerns. It was determined the term ‘challenges’ was the most appropriate word to connect the open coding categories. The iterative nature of comparative analysis meant axial coding occurred alongside open coding and open coding categories such as frequent, infrequent, internal, and external. Once the axial coding process was completed, there were two words that seemed to capture the essence of the comments made by NPS respondents which were actions and challenges (Table 4).

Table 4. Open to Axial Coding.

<b>Open Coding Categories</b>	<b>Axial Coding</b>
Frequent Activities Infrequent Activities	Actions
Internal Issues External Issues	Challenges

## Selective Coding

The process here was to reconstruct the comments made by park staff with respect to the underlying axial codes, actions and challenges. As outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 143) selective coding is “the process of integrating and refining the theory.” The purpose of this process was to connect the axial coding in a way that would create a proposition/theory to explain the phenomenon. As such, selective coding assists in the unification of all categories around a central core category. Through the axial coding process, it was determined the words actions and challenges seemed to capture all the open codes in succinct terms. Those words were then used to generate the formation of a central theme that would unify both open and axial codes (Table 5).

Table 5. Axial to Selective Coding.

<b>Axial Coding</b>	<b>Selective Coding</b>
Actions	<b>Noncommitment</b>
Challenges	

During open coding, the color-coded section that corresponded with the question how NPS sites are connecting with African Americans revealed that of the 16 activities (contraband camps, Juneteenth, USCT, etc.) 11 were

infrequently offered. Under the heading *non-connection with African Americans*, there were 15 themes of which 10 were determined to be internal issues within the park service. Based on those results, infrequent activities and internal issues, the researcher concluded that the core phenomenon that seemed to unify the terms actions and challenges was 'noncommitment'. The term noncommitment was arrived at through qualitative analysis and later supported through quantitative data which will be discussed in more detail in the quantitative analysis of the NPS questionnaire.

### **Quantitative Analysis of National Park Service Questionnaire**

Of the 81 NPS sites that were contacted, 26 sites did not respond to the questionnaire and were removed from data analysis. As previously mentioned, there were eight questions with two sub-questions. Since two of the eight questions (six and seven) were open-ended, they were omitted from this portion of the analysis.

Question 1 asked about programs that were specifically designed to attract African American visitors. Of the 55 participating sites, 56.4% (n=31) had programs while 43.6% (n=24) did not. This was followed by sub-question 1b which asked if the site had ever had programming to attract African American visitors. Results show that 72% (n=18) never had programs designed to attract

African Americans while 28% (n=7) had attempted such programming in previous years (Table 6).

Table 6. Percentage of sites without African American programs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	18	32.7	72.0	72.0
	Yes	7	12.7	28.0	100.0
	Total	25	45.5	100.0	
Missing	NAP	30	54.5		
Total		55	100.0		

Question 2 sought information on the type of programming offered that tended to attract African American visitors (Table 7). The choice of programming offered though the questionnaire were: digital/media, festivals, interpretive, music event, re-enactment, and other. Ranger led interpretation attracted the most African American visitors (n=23), followed by some other type of programming (n=16). Programming that constitutes the category “other” included school groups that were brought to the site mostly for hiking activities, and special events such as a music festival.

Table 7. Types of Interpretive programming.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Interpretive	23	41.8	42.6	42.6
	Other	16	29.1	29.6	72.2
	Digital/Media	6	10.9	11.1	83.3
	Re-enactment	4	7.3	7.4	90.7
	Festival	3	5.5	5.6	96.3
	Music Event	2	3.6	3.7	100.0
	Total	54	98.2	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.8		
Total		55	100.0		

The length of time programming had been in existence that was created to attract African Americans was of importance for this study since it indicated the level of commitment to diversity (Table 8). Question 3 suggests there were several sites 57.4% (n=31) that had programs in existence for more than three years while 42.6% (n=23) had programs in existence for three years or less. This suggests that many of the interpretive programs designed to attract African Americans had only been created within the past three years.



Table 8. Length of time, in years, for diversity programs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than year	6	7.6	11.1	11.1
	One year	3	3.8	5.6	16.7
	Two years	8	10.1	14.8	31.5
	Three years	6	7.6	11.1	42.6
	More than three years	31	39.2	57.4	100.0
	Total	54	68.4	100.0	
Missing	No response	25	31.6		
Total		79	100.0		

Responses coded as 1=Less than a year, 2= One year, 3= Two years, 4= Three years, 5= More than 3 years.

Questions 4 and 4b were concerned with the success of current programs and how park staff measured that success. More than 3/4 of the sites, 87% (n=47) reported that the programming offered was successful in attracting African American visitors. In terms of how the success of the program was measured, 31.9% (n=15) of the sites reported that increased knowledge and participation by African Americans was a factor. Unfortunately, respondents were not asked, nor did they provide, comments as to how they measured increased knowledge and participation by visitors at the sites.

Whether there are programs offered at the sites that did not attract African American visitors was the focus of question 5. Based on the responses, 20% (n=11) of the sites had programs that did not attract this demographic group while 80% (n=44) had programs that did attract this group.

The final question asked participants to assess the total percent of annual African American visitors at the site. Sixty-six percent (n=35) of the sites had 10% or fewer visitors from this demographic group (Table 9). These results are consistent with other NPS sites where there are typically low visitation numbers for underserved populations.

Table 9. Frequencies of African American visitors to sites.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10% or less	35	63.6	66.0	66.0
	20 %	15	27.3	28.3	94.3
	40%	2	3.6	3.8	98.1
	50% or more	1	1.8	1.9	100.0
	Total	53	96.4	100.0	
Missing	No response	2	3.6		
Total		55	100.0		

After analysis of the questions was completed, a crosstabs procedure was performed in which park units were named in terms of site type: battlefields, monuments, historical parks, military parks, etc. The crosstab tables examined park type and existence of programs designed to attract African Americans (Table 10). There is a strong relationship (Cramer's  $V = .532$ ) between park type and whether they offered programming to attract African American visitors. National battlefields (25.8%) had some kind of programming designed for this demographic group while National Historical parks (22.6%) had the next highest

number of programs designed to attract African Americans. Those sites designated as a river and recreational area (n=4) had no programming to attract this demographic group. All measures (phi and Cramer's V) were strongly correlated (0.532).

Table 10. Crosstabulation of national site types and diversity programs.

	National Historic Site	National Battlefield	National Memorial	River and Recreational Area	National Monument	National Parkway	National Historical Park	National Park	National Military Park	Sole site
No	7	2	2	4	0	1	4	2	1	1
Yes	5	8	1	0	4	0	7	1	4	1
Total	12	10	3	4	4	1	11	3	5	2

Note. Sole site refers to a single type unit such as: Santa Fe Trail and Civil War Defenses.

A second crosstabs procedure was performed on site type and the type of programming that attracted the most African Americans (Table 11). Site type and the type of interpretive programming offered were strongly related (Cramer's  $V = .438$ ). The programming type offered at historic, battlefield, and historical sites tended to attract the most African American visitors was ranger-led interpretation. Twenty-three of the sites offered ranger-led interpretation. Seven of those sites were at historical parks followed by historic sites ( $n=5$ ). There were 12 historic sites, the largest number in a single category, that offered these programs: digital/media ( $n=1$ ), ranger-led interpretation ( $n=5$ ), re-enactments ( $n=3$ ), and some other type program ( $n=4$ ). Lastly, national battlefields ( $n=10$ ) offered the following: digital/media ( $n=1$ ), ranger-led interpretation ( $n=4$ ), re-enactments ( $n=1$ ), and some other type program ( $n=4$ ).

Table 11. Crosstabulation of national site type and programs that attract the most African American visitors.

	National Historic Site	National Battlefield	National Memorial	River and Recreational Area	National Monument	National Parkway	National Historical Park	National Park	National Military Park
Digital/Media	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Festival	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Interpretive	5	4	1	2	2	0	7	0	2
Music Event	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Re-enactment	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	4	1	2	1	0	2	1	1
Total	12	10	3	4	3	1	11	3	5

## Quantitative Analysis of North Gulfport Questionnaire

Question 1 received responses from 40 participants. Sixty percent (n=24) of the respondents were male and forty percent (n=16) were female who ranged in age from 21 to 86. When survey results were broken into age ranges (20 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, etc.), 15% (n=6) were in the 20 to 29 range (Table 12). The results of the remaining categories are as follows: 27.5% (n=11) were in the 30 to 39, 12.5% (n=5) were in the 40 to 49, 22.5% (n=9) were in the 50 to 59, 12.5% (n=5) were in the 60 to 69, 7.5% (n=3) were in the 70 to 79, and 2.5% (n=1) was in the 80 to 89 age range.

Table 12. Frequencies of ages by decade.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	80-89	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	70-79	3	7.5	7.5	10.0
	60-69	5	12.5	12.5	22.5
	50-59	9	22.5	22.5	45.0
	40-49	5	12.5	12.5	57.5
	30-39	11	27.5	27.5	85.0
	20 - 29	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

The overall results of the questionnaire demographics when compared with the census population of Gulfport are as follows: Fifty-one percent of Gulfport residents are female compared to 40% included in this research. With regards to age, in the City of Gulfport the median age is 34 years, which includes people

under the age of 18 years, compared with 47.1 years (n=40) produced in this survey, which does not include people under the age of 18 years. This data indicates that the survey population is more than 10 years older than the city population.

In terms of education, most respondents 65.9% (n=26) were high school educated, 15% (n=6) people did not graduate high school, 10% (n=4), three of whom were females, had some trade or technical training, 7.5 % (n=3) had attended college, and 2.5% (n=1) had a college degree (Table 13). Results from the census data indicate that in the community of North Gulfport, 82.3% of persons over the age of 25 had graduated high school compared to 65.9% (n=26) included on this survey. In addition, 20.7% of city residents had a Bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 2.5% (n=1) identified in the questionnaire. The median educational level is high school diploma based on the questionnaire was high school graduate.

Table 13. Educational levels of North Gulfport respondents.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Did not graduate H.S.	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Graduated H.S.	27	67.5	67.5	82.5
Trade/Technical	2	5.0	5.0	87.5
Some college	4	10.0	10.0	97.5
College Degree	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	



Of the 15 people who responded to question 3 on Day 1, 20% (n=3) chose “forest,” 20% (n=3) chose “government,” 13.3 % (n=2) chose “lakes/rivers,” and 6.7% (n=1) chose “place I am not welcome.” Seven participants or 46.7% of the group did not respond to this question. It is unclear, at this time, why some respondents skipped this question. Perhaps, in a future study the question can be rephrased.

Questions 4 and 5 were concerned with visitation – had they visited GUIS before and with whom. When asked if respondents had visited GUIS, 37.5% (n=15) participants responded “no” and 62.5% (n=25) responded “yes.” Of those that responded “yes,” 72% (n=18) had visited the park with family members, 20% (n=5) visited with a church group, and 8% (n=2) went with friends. Overall, results suggest that a family-oriented activity will best suit the desires of this community.

Of the 25 respondents that indicated they had visited GUIS, 84% (n=21) would “very likely” visit again, 8% (n=2) were “somewhat likely” to return, and two, a 33-year-old female and 60-year-old male indicated they would “not likely” visit again. A crosstabulation (Table 14) shows that a strong relationship (Cramer’s  $V = .482$ ) existed between gender and willingness to visit GUIS again. Males were ‘very likely’ to visit the site again (88.9%) while females (28.6%) indicated they were ‘somewhat likely’ to visit the site again.

Table 14. Crosstabulation of community member’s willingness to visit GUIS and gender.

		Gender	
		Male	Female
Visit again	Not likely	2	1
		11.1%	14.3%
		8.0%	4.0%
	Somewhat likely	0	2
		0.0%	28.6%
		0.0%	8.0%
Very likely	16	4	
	88.9%	57.1%	
Total		64.0%	16.0%
		18	7
		100.0%	100.0%
		72.0%	28.0%

Question 7 sought to gain a sense of visitor experience in terms of feelings. It allowed participants to select all the words that applied. There was a combined total of 31 answers selected; 47.8% (n=11) of respondents reported they felt “safe,” 17.4% (n=4) felt either “safe and happy” or “excited and happy”, and 4.3% (n=1) felt “disappointed and safe” (Table 15). Only one person indicated they felt “nervous” while at GUIS and two people (8.7%) were disappointed with their visit. Of the 40 respondents, 15 had never visited GUIS and therefore could not comment on this question.

Table 15. Community respondent's feelings while visiting GUIs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Safe	11	27.5	47.8	47.8
	Disappointed	2	5.0	8.7	56.5
	Excited and safe	2	5.0	8.7	65.2
	Safe and Happy	2	5.0	8.7	73.9
	Confused	1	2.5	4.3	78.3
	Excited	1	2.5	4.3	82.6
	Happy	1	2.5	4.3	87.0
	Nervous	1	2.5	4.3	91.3
	Excited and Happy	1	2.5	4.3	95.7
	Disappointed and safe	1	2.5	4.3	100.0
	Total	23	57.5	100.0	
Missing	NAP	15	37.5		
	No answer	2	5.0		
	Total	17	42.5		
Total		40	100.0		

Note. The abbreviation NAP was used for respondents who had never visited GUIs.

Community respondents, through question 8, were provided with four choices for a potential program to be held in the community and were asked to arrange them from most favorite to least favorite (Figure 9). Arranging in order of preference did not work well so the survey was altered on Day 1 so that participants just picked their most favorite choice. The results were that: sixty-five percent (n=26) of the people wanted a “Bar-B-Que” in a community park, 17.5% (n=7) wanted a “gospel concert”, 15% (n=6) wanted to honor the “colored troops” and only 2.5% (n=1) wanted the “Soldiers in the Hood” program.

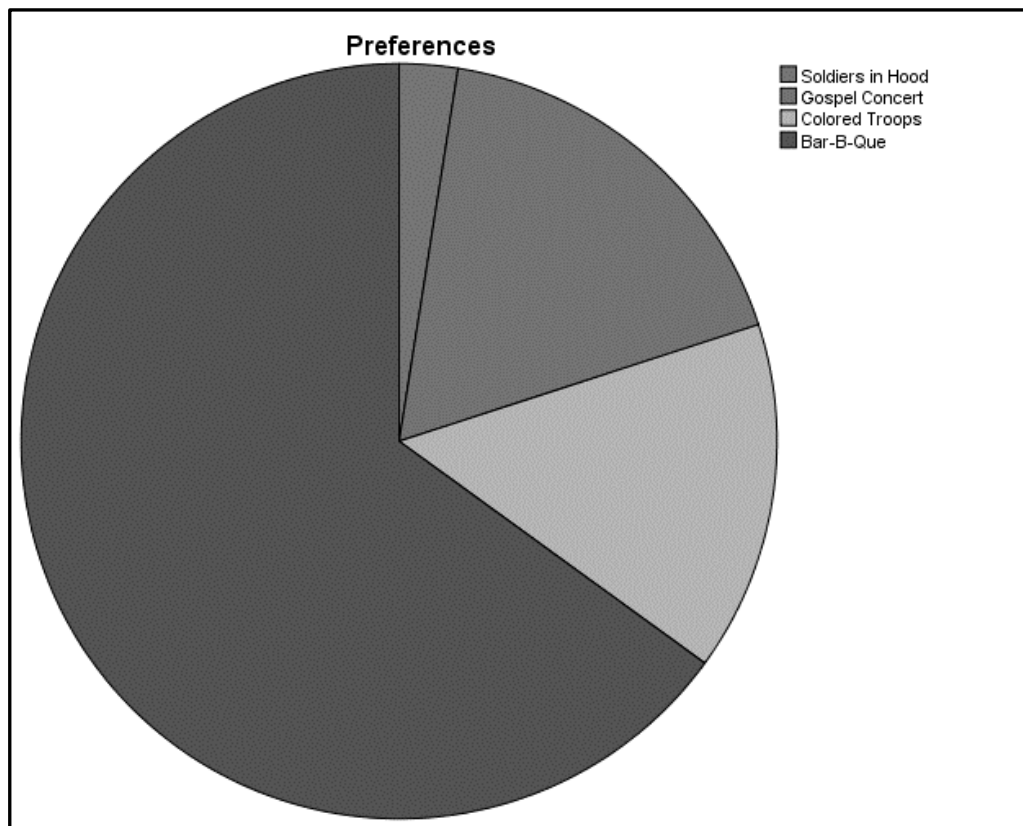


Figure 9. Preferences for programming options offered to North Gulfport residents.

In question 9, participants were asked to choose all the reasons they selected the proposed programs. Of the five choices available, the most common response, “event held in my community” represented 40% (n=16) of the selections. This was, followed by “most interesting” 30% (n=12), “seems fun” represented 22.5% (n=9) responses followed by “already like doing that”

representing 7.5% (n=4), and lastly “new experience” was selected by one person.

Question 10 asked about the best day to host the event. Participants selected as the most preferred time “Saturday” 70% (n=28), 15% (n=6) chose “Sunday,” 5% (n=3) selected a “holiday,” 5% (n=2) chose a “weekday,” and 2.5% (n=1) chose a Friday. In several instances, the selection of a Saturday was followed with comments regarding the ability to make the event family-oriented on that day.

Taken as a whole, North Gulfport residents are knowledgeable about the existence of GUIS and have visited (62.5%) in various capacities. Those that had visited the site were mostly males and 84% expressed an interest in returning to the site since 47.8% felt safe while there. When given an option, 65% of respondents would like to create connections with the park by having a Bar-B-Que hosted in their community and that would serve as an opportunity for family participation. Seventy percentage of respondents chose a Saturday as the best day to have the Bar-B- Que. Lastly, most respondents had a high school education (65.9%) but many did not; only one had a college degree.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMENDATIONS**

### **Relating the Core Category to Other Categories**

Comparisons are essential in identifying and categorizing concepts when using constructivist grounded theory. Because the core category was defined as noncommitment, it is necessary to show a relationship between it and other categories identified during the open and axial coding processes. Table 4 illustrates how the axial coding was derived from the open coding. Upon further examination of the axial codes, unifying concepts were identified and associated with the themes: actions and challenges. Under the category of action were factors that outlined how NPS sites were attempting to create relationships with African Americans. Several sites such as Arlington House, Fort Smith, James A. Garfield, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove hosted special programs for Black History Month and/or for the NPS Centennial celebration. In some instances, NPS staff brought school groups (mostly underserved populations) to the site as a way of exposing them to recreational activities available there. Examples of some of those sites were: Rock Creek Park, Stones River, Buffalo River, Chattahoochee River, Ford's Theater, and Fort Donelson. A few sites held interpretive talks and facilitated dialogue sessions regarding: the Underground Railroad, United States

Colored Troops (USCT), slavery, and contraband camps. Some of those sites included: Cumberland Gap, Dry Tortugas, Fort Larned, Fort Smith, and Shiloh Military Park. Some of the more creative attempts to build relationships with African Americans included: summer concerts, ambassador programs, designing Jr. Ranger trading cards that featured an African American person related to the site, and creating plays with the help of underserved student populations. Examples of those sites include: Chickamauga & Chattanooga, Fort Larned, and Stones River.

All of the above activities constitute an action – how the NPS staff is creating connections and what programs are actually in place. Based on the open coding, it appears there is a commitment on the park's part to establish connections with the target group. However, through repeated visitation of the open codes it was noticed that many of the actions taken were conditional. There were several sites that offered programs only once or twice a year. At a few park units programming included interpretative components that had no true relevancy for African American visitors as commented on by the interpreter at Brice's Cross Roads National Battlefield Site. Other sites spoke of a video available at the Visitors Center that provided an overview of the park, but quickly admitted that the information contained in the video needed to be updated due to racist implications or a failure to mention African American contributions at the site: Fort Sumter, Arkansas Post, General Grant, and Natchez Historical National Park.

Since the actions taken by site staff were inconsistent, knowledgably irrelevant, and sometimes racist in content, as mentioned through NPS comments, it suggested a noncommitment to really engage African Americans at the site. It essentially equates then to empty talk – saying all the right things, hosting once-a-year events, bringing in school groups yet not actually making a commitment to long-term changes in which events that feature some aspect of African American history will be offered daily or weekly – more frequently.

In several instances, the first response of NPS staff, when asked about African American programming, was to say something similar to, “this is a place for ALL Americans not just African Americans.” However, it was many of those same sites that had no programs to attract this demographic group. This suggested a lack of foresight in programming design and site-specific research related to African Americans which could easily be corrected and therefore spoke to a noncommitment by park management to address those known deficiencies.

During the axial coding process, some of the comments that were placed under the theme of challenges were sites that: were located in a historically racist area, had programs cut due to staffing/ money issues, and had experienced staff relocation issues. Those factors spoke to issues that went beyond the site’s direct control and were deemed external issues. Some of those units included: Buffalo River, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Cumberland Gap, Fort Pulaski National Monument, General Grant National Memorial, and Martin



Van Buren National Historic Site. After reviewing the literature and comparative analysis of comments, it was determined that issues such as site location and budget cuts were factors that could potentially be remedied through a committed effort to find solutions. How the sites could employ those potential remedies will be discussed in the recommendations section of this research.

### **National Park Service**

During the coding process, it was concluded that the core category that seemed to capture all of the identified codes, based on NPS staff comments, was the word *noncommitment*. The first question asked staff members if they had programming “specifically designed” to attract African American visitors. This question posed some difficulties for some respondents. For example, there was generally some hesitation before answering the question. In some instances, respondents wanted clarity on the term “specifically designed.” After further explanation was given, it was typically followed with an immediate yes or no response or with the cliché term, “this is a site for all Americans.”

While quantitatively it would appear that most of the sites that responded (n=30) had some type of programming to increase participation by this demographic group, the responses are somewhat misleading. Those respondents who used the cliché phrase – “for all Americans” – typically responded ‘yes’ to having programs. In that respect, the main term “specifically

designed” was overlooked. It was not that the programs were designed for African Americans, but whatever the program in place, it was intended for all Americans, implying respondents answered yes to having programs that were known to have few, if any, African American focused programming options. It gives a false sense of accomplishment regarding attracting that demographic group. It also speaks to the core category of *noncommitment* in that respondents are aware that their current programming entices few African Americans to the site and in some cases are aware that what is being interpretively presented is “outdated”, “lacks relevancy”, or “needs further research.” However, they seldom initiated changes to create opportunities for nontraditional visitors.

The question of “specifically designed” programs was followed with the sub-question, has there ever been such programming at the site. An unexpected 72% of sites never had programs designed to attract African Americans, while 28% had attempted such programming in previous years. Some respondents clarified why the programs no longer existed with comments like “lack of funding” and “relocation of staff who created the program(s).” What makes the sites (battlefields, historical parks, historic sites, river and recreation areas, parkways, and memorials) that have never created programming to attract this underserved group surprising is the amount of energy the NPS has purportedly devoted, in the past decade, in trying to increase visitor demographics. That there are only 18 sites that had dealt with increasing cultural diversity seems to speak to a

noncommitment on the part of staff especially when the NPS has asked through various reports and directives that the sites take action.

Additional support for staff noncommitment is revealed through the data regarding length of time programs were created and in continuous use. Of the respondents, 42.6% (n=23) had been established for three years or less even though *A Call to Action* was published 10 years ago. While some sites have displayed some type of action within the past three years, it is of interest that for seven years infrequent actions occurred and that for some sites there is not currently, nor has there ever been (28%), such programming.

Question 4, which sought to determine the success of current programs, indicates that 87% of the sites believed their programming was successful in serving African American constituents. What was most striking and unexpected about those numbers is that of all the questions asked, this one had the highest response rate in a single category. No other question received the same response by 47 sites. The success of a program was based solely on staff observations since none indicated standards they used to measure success. For 31.9% of respondents, success was determined by increased participation at site activities and increased knowledge. Again, there were no standards for measuring success. As stated by one ranger at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace, they offer distance learning classes on the topics of Civil Rights and slavery but do not

know how successful the program is because no data is kept on class size or how the information disseminates into the communities.

Data from staff comments indicate successful programs were typically one-time, annual, or infrequently offered events. Examples of successful one-time events include: Centennial Celebrations at Arlington House, Appomattox, Chickamauga, and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove hosted a one-time ranger-led program called Kneading in Silence which discussed the life of an enslaved cook named Judah. Examples of successful annual events include: Juneteenth celebrations at Natchez Trace and Rock Creek, a summer camp or concert series offered at Civil War Defenses and Mammoth Cave, the program 4,600 luminaires which remembered the lives of slaves offered at Appomattox. Lastly, examples of successful infrequently offered events include: facilitated dialogue at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg. Interpretation in various forms (videos, first and third person narratives, and storytelling) of USCT were offered at: Ft. Smith, James Garfield, Lincoln Boyhood Home, Monocacy, Natchez Trace, Shiloh, and Tupelo Battlefield.

For the most part, success was measured by the number of participants at an event, especially when compared with a typical day visitation rate by African Americans. In other words, if 50 people from the target group participated in an activity where normally there would be only 3 to 5 visitors, then it was considered

a success based on increased visitation. Success of programs based on increased knowledge was also not measured by park staff but was instead determined, as stated by an interpreter at Fort Sumter, by what the visitor learned upon conclusion of the program. Unless there was a pre-test and post-test or a questionnaire or survey at the end of the program that measured knowledge gained, then how did staff determine which visitors had an increased their knowledge of the site or of the information presented? Only one site, Tupelo Battlefield, declined to answer this question because the interpreter felt there was no data to support an answer.

Overall, NPS respondents believed their current programming was successful despite acknowledging that: there were no or infrequent programs for African Americans; current programming lacked relevancy; few African Americans visited the site; and there was limited or no research regarding African American contributions to the site. How can a program be successful when it fails to meet basic objectives for the NPS as specified through *A Call to Action* and similar publications? Again, when the quantitative data is analyzed in conjunction with the qualitative results from the grounded theory, the core category of 'noncommitment' still seems applicable.

Results indicated 81.5% of the sites offered programs that brought African Americans into the park. Whether it was a battlefield re-enactment, ranger-led interpretation, or a special program, at some point African Americans were at the

site. Even sites that identified as being isolated from communities or not focused on African American history, stated that this demographic group inevitably visited the site even if their numbers were small. What this suggests is that African Americans are actively seeking an experience at the national parks, but staff is unwilling or unable to connect with those persons while they are there in any meaningful way. They appear unable, at times, to encourage repeat visitations, thus the low number of African American attendees at national parks.

### **Racialized Spaces and the NPS**

Racialized spaces are for African Americans places in which they must be on guard – prepared for the expected and sometimes unexpected chance of being harassed solely due to skin color. These are places that, as noted by Lutz and Collins (1993), African Americans find unwelcoming, unattractive, and unsafe. One of the biggest challenges for the NPS in bringing people of color to their parks is the perception of space and what visitors may have to endure to arrive at, participate in, and depart from those spaces. This problem of racialized spaces not only affects the NPS but the entire nation. However, since the NPS is a national institution, it can perhaps be the catalyst for changing the perception of space and who is welcomed in those spaces.

The Vail Agenda (1992) outlined several strategic objectives along with recommendations on how to address those objectives. Strategic Objective 2

specifically addressed the need for the public to access and enjoy park units. As stated in the Vail Agenda, “Each park unit should be managed to provide the nation's diverse public with access to and recreational and educational enjoyment of the lessons contained in that unit ...” (Vail Agenda, 1992, p. 5). As a recommendation to address that objective, the Service outlined one of the goals should be to, “provide technical and planning assistance to public and private parties able to mitigate external and transboundary threats to park unit resources, and to those able to influence the quality of visitor enjoyment and enlightenment through their provision of gateway services.” Although this recommendation focused on gateway communities in terms of providing accommodations for visitors such as lodgings, food, and gas, it could also be interpreted to mean all aspects of influencing, “the quality of visitor enjoyment and enlightenment” to include making it safe for African American visitors to pass through those gateway communities en route to the park unit. Subsequent responsibilities of the NPS are to ensure that each unit feels like a place for all Americans. If the national parks are to be viewed as the backyards of Americans, then people, particularly people of color, must feel safe existing their back door.

Other ways that racialized spaces affects visitation rates can be seen in an unprecedented move in 2017, taken by the Missouri chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) when it issued a travel advisory for African Americans journeying through that state. The advisory,

issued largely in response to the passing of Senate Bill 43, cautioned people of color to be aware that their ability to challenge instances of racial discrimination would be more difficult if not impossible. In concise terms, the advisory suggested that people of color “go at your risk” when traveling through the state. In support of their position, the NAACP cited several instances of discrimination and hate crimes that have occurred in the state which it says has a long history of crimes based on race, gender, and color.

For instance, in May 2017, a 28-year-old African American man named Tory Sanford was arrested while traveling through Missouri on his way to Tennessee. Why he was arrested is still unclear; however, it would appear his crime was simply running out of gas while lost on the highway. After two altercations with jail staff, Sanford was found dead in his cell (Coleman, 2017). According to Nimrod Chapel Jr., president of the Missouri state chapter for the NAACP, people of color are 75% more likely to be stopped on the roadways in the state than are Caucasians (Lowe, 2017). A travel warning naturally affects the state’s tourism industry which as of the time of this writing had only made a public comment that the Missouri Travel Council, “supports diversity in all 50 states and feels unfairly singled out.” What long-term effect the advisory will have on tourism in the region remains to be seen. However, the fact that Missouri and the State of Texas which also received a travel warning from the American Civil Liberties Union are deemed unsafe for people of color who are traveling suggests that any tourism



related organizations in those states will experience decreases in minority visitation rates and an increased inability to attract those demographic groups.

For the NPS, being in a historically racist area arguably has impacts on their ability to attract people of color. For the State of Missouri, the potential impact could affect visitation numbers at six national parks, three national trails, 37 national historic landmarks, and 16 national natural landmarks (NPS, 2016a). To remedy this potentially devastating situation requires the cooperation of the people living near those sites as well as cooperation from law enforcement and tourism agencies. It would require the park unit to educate and persuade the surrounding community to think in ways that some members of the NPS have not committed to themselves. How can you persuade someone to do something that you have not wholly committed to doing?

The NPS has been aware of the need for diversity within its ranks and among visitors for the past few decades. However, only recently, through directives such as, *A Call to Action*, *Find Your Park/Encuentra Tu Parque*, and the Centennial celebration has there been any real attempt to create changes within the Service. As stated by *New York Times* reporter Glenn Nelson (2015), "The National Park Service is the logical leader to blaze a trail to racial diversity in the natural world. It has a high public profile, and its approaching Centennial can serve as a platform for redefinition." As of the time of this writing, the Centennial celebration is more than a year old and only through time will the success of those efforts be

revealed. However, in a recent recap of the centennial, (NPS, 2016), the NPS reported visitation to park sites broke records in 2016 with an overall increase of 7.7% over 2015 visitation numbers. *Realizing the Vision for the Second Century* (2016), an NPS publication, reported: there were 3.2 thousand events created at various sites through the Find Your Park campaign; more than \$70 million dollars was invested in Centennial Challenge projects; and there was an increase in social media followers by 1.2 million people.

What effect those numbers had on an increase in African American visitation is and will continue to be unknown since the NPS does not keep records on visitors by racial or ethnic designations. Yet, those focused efforts, supported with a top-down strategy, certainly put the NPS in the public spotlight in ways that it had not previously achieved. It appears that it was the top-down management strategy that helped the Centennial event reach millennial and multicultural audiences at surprising rates – one in four millennials became familiar with the NPS during 2016.

### **North Gulfport**

After investigating the data from the NPS questionnaire both quantitatively and qualitatively, those results were combined with quantitative data from the North Gulfport community which was helpful in creating a triangulation of information. From the North Gulfport questionnaire, it was learned that 62.5%

had visited GUIS, 72% had visited with family members, and 84% would “very likely” visit again. While visiting at GUIS, 47.8% of respondents reported they felt “safe” while 17.4% felt either “safe and happy” or “excited and happy” and 4.3% felt “disappointed and safe.” This suggests that African American families in North Gulfport are actively engaged with the park and would return because they felt safe, happy, and excited while there. In addition, community residents recommended that GUIS staff engage with them by hosting a Bar-B-Que in a local park on a Saturday. Examining the data collectively alludes to a noncommitment on the part of GUIS to connect with African American visitors since, at least in North Gulfport, they are indeed visiting the site.

If African Americans are visiting national park sites for recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, picnicking, and celebratory occasions like church anniversaries, what gets in the way of NPS staff further engaging visitors by introducing them to the interpretive themes that have defined the site such as slavery, Civil War, women, Hispanics, or any other theme?

The core category was defined as noncommitment since it was determined that at the heart of national parks connecting with African Americans were internal issues and infrequent activities offered at the sites. Internal issues suggest that parks may need to work together in more creative ways to solve common problems, as several examples of successful programs were identified as well as challenges. Success is determined by the researcher and is based on

length of time of program, African American visitation number guessed at by park staff, and diversity in types of programs offered. Examples of successful programs were discovered at Appomattox Court House where staff initiated a program entitled “Luminaires” that occurs each April. This program includes a walk through the slave village to honor the lives of former slaves. In addition, this site sponsors a re-enactment of the funeral of Hannah Reynolds, an African American woman who was killed in a battle at the site. As a consequence of honoring her life, there has recently been an archaeological project that commenced in order to better interpret the place where she lived and its function as a hospital for wounded soldiers (Ernie Price, personal communication, September 20, 2017).

Another example of a successful program comes from Stones River National Battlefield in which staff interprets the USCT, slavery, and contraband camps. They have also formed partnerships with local schools (African American and Hispanic), created a friend’s group, and offer an annual Gospel Concert. Finally, Vicksburg Military Park has created successful attempts at creating diversified audiences through facilitated dialogue offered in partnership with local civic groups. On Memorial D, the site brings the 3<sup>rd</sup> USC Calvary where they perform re-enactments while in period costumes. In addition, there are speaking engagements offered in the community by staff. Arguably, one of the biggest successes for this site was the change in interpretation over the past five years

from glorifying the Confederacy to simply discussing its role in American history. These activities were designed to increase African American participation at the site. Additional success stories can be found at: Civil War Defenses, Ft. Donelson, Fort Larned, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania, Golden Gate, Harper's Ferry, James Garfield, and Richmond Battlefield.

Although there are some success stories, there were also many challenges presented. Several sites had not taken any or infrequent actions towards meeting diversity objectives within the NPS. Reasons given for no or infrequent activities were:

- No talk about the Civil War
- Interpretive information is outdated
- Not typically a destination site
- No real attempts at attracting African Americans
- Programs cut due to staffing and money issues
- African Americans do not like information presented
- No African American employees
- African American interpretation is not site focus
- Staff relocation issues
- African Americans lack knowledge of site
- Need research on African American history for site
- Lack of interest by management
- Site located in an historically racist area

All the reasons given for not meeting diversity objectives were placed under the category internal issues during the axial coding process. Whatever the reasons provided for having no or infrequent activities, goes against the 21<sup>st</sup> Century vision for the NPS.

When Andrew Johnson Historic Site was contacted for the questionnaire, it was learned the site only interpreted his presidency and role as a military officer and governor but did not interpret the Civil War. This is an internal park issue since Johnson achieved his promotion from Vice-President to the Presidency because of Abraham Lincoln's assassination. How can the war not be discussed? How can there not be a pamphlet or kiosk or something that discusses slavery in some way? At Brice's Cross Roads National Battlefield, there is a video that talks about the USCT from both the Union and Confederate position; however, few African Americans visit the site. As stated by the project participant, "people come from all over the world but not African Americans" (Billy Francis, personal communication, March 27, 2017). That comment suggests an inability to attract African Americans visitors; and a noncommitment in figuring out what possible next steps they can take to help attract this demographic group.

At several of the sites, (Cedar Creek and Belle Grove, Andersonville, Arlington House, Fort Pulaski, Martin Van Buren, Natchez National Historical Park, and Sand Creek) an acknowledgement that the African American story had not been told, was only occasionally mentioned, or had only recently been added to the interpretive program speaks to noncommitment. Inclusiveness and relevancy has been a stated goal of the NPS for the past two decades, yet that

few sites have adhered to this direction expresses a noncommitment to serving the needs of all Americans.

A final challenge for the NPS as identified through the axial coding process is budgetary issues. Depending on the objectives and philosophy of the President in office largely influences the budget of the NPS. During the recession of 2008, there were hiring freezes, which affected the parks' ability to provide adequate programming. However, by 2014 and with the focus on the Centennial celebration there was an overall increase of 2.6 billion dollars added to the NPS budget which was to be distributed over a three-year period (Finn, 2015). Much of that money was intended to assist parks with infrastructure and maintenance projects, which left a limited budget for programming design and implementation (NPS, 2016b). Yet, as suggested through the Vision Paper, staff must be willing to take informed risk and think outside-the-box if they are to create more meaningful relationships with a changing American population.

The creative ways some sites have chosen to address monetary and staffing limitations are observed at CARI (African American ghost film), Golden Gate (Outdoor Afro), Brice's Cross Roads and Castillo de St. Marcos (Rhythm and Ribs). At CARI, for example, an African American TV series "Ghost Brothers" brought a film crew to investigate the inside of a slave cabin at Magnolia Plantation. According to the site's resource manager, after the program was aired, there was a noticeable increase in African American visitors. Upon further

investigation, the manager discovered that some of the visitors had come to Magnolia Plantation as a direct result of seeing the “Ghost Brothers” episode. What did this cost the park? Virtually nothing. The “Ghost Brothers” crew incurred all expenses related to filming, production, and airing of the episode. Perhaps, the only expense for the park was having a staff member be present while filming took place outside of normal park operating hours. While it is not known how staff was compensated in this example, surely it did not require more than a few hours of overtime, if that. It is conceivable that staff simply switched hours of work so as not to create overtime expenses. The only other expense for the park may have come from additional paperwork in order to ensure proper authorization for the film crew to be on site.

In another example of sites creatively addressing budgetary and staffing challenges, the Golden Gate Recreational Area, in a collaborative effort with “Outdoor Afro” an African American recreational group, introduced a hiking trip from Lands End to the Golden Gate Bridge. Along the hike visitors are given interpretive information pertaining to African American history. The cost for the park to host this event is unknown but surely is minimal since “Outdoor Afro” participants provide their own transportation and any additional expenses related to a site visit.

What can be gleaned is that some national park units are trying to satisfy diversity directives, even when met with challenges. At other sites, no or



infrequent efforts have been made. Yet, African Americans are visiting parks and engaging in recreational activities in various forms. Based solely on the North Gulfport questionnaire, residents that have visited the site did so in family groups and/or as church members. It implies a deficiency in the way that park personnel interact with those visitors, if at all, once they are on site. That they have made the effort to go to the site indicates some first steps on the part of residents.

As Anderson and Stone (2005) concluded, park personnel have awareness and knowledge about diversity issues; however, skill levels drop when that knowledge must be applied through direct interactions with minorities. This suggests more diversity training is needed which would also help better equip staff members who desire to enter target communities as they begin to create meaningful relationships.

### **Strategies for Connecting with African American Communities**

The Co-creating Narratives Symposium held in 2014 brought together NPS employees and museum curators who not only discussed challenges in attracting diverse audiences but also offered, at times, practical solutions on how to accomplish this feat. Several examples were provided on direct actions taken such as telling multiple perspectives of the same story and engaging local communities by celebrating events that were important to them such as Juneteenth. It is those concrete examples of how to connect with communities

that are essential for NPS sites that are unaware of what steps to take to build sustainable relationships with underserved audiences.

A first step in taking concrete actions is for interpreters with similar interpretive themes to connect with each other. How often does park staff talk to one another about successful or unsuccessful programming attempts? At the onset of this research all NPS sites that had a Civil War component, no matter how small the connection, were identified. In this case it was simply a matter of going to an NPS website that listed sites with a Civil War theme. Next, a questionnaire was developed which sought to identify potential programs that could be further developed at a similar site. This step is comparable to a medical doctor who is having trouble identifying a patient's illness. Doctors would not consult with people outside their profession but would probably discuss a patient's condition with their peers in the likelihood that a peer may have witnessed the same symptoms in another case. The same analogy would apply to park professionals. Amongst themselves, they should ask, what is working? What is not working? What type of programming has been tried that deserves further consideration?

Whether the site's focus is on the Civil War, the American Revolution or Women's Rights, a dialogue between site managers could help to identify next steps while attempting to work with diverse audiences. A site manager talking to at least five to ten managers at comparable sites, could potentially lead to five to

ten new ideas that include direct action steps. Once that list is compiled, the site manager would use it to identify programs that may be applicable for their specific site. Through this step, several examples of successful and unsuccessful programs were identified.

The selection of applicable programs would be based largely on feasibility, logistics, and identified programs that have succeeded at similar park sites. Additional considerations for program selection should include consideration of the target groups collective/cultural memory and historical connection with the site. This is a decision that is left to park staff since only they are aware of budgeting issues, staff size, and an understanding of the target group's history. It would require the site's staff to come together and discuss which of the potential programs would work best at their location. It may additionally require the support of staff that may not typically be directly involved in interpretation matters. For example, maintenance crews, marine biologists, and wildlife specialists may be called upon to assist in these programs in ways that they had not previously been involved, especially when the interpretive staff has few employees. The bottom line is that for the site to be successful in reaching diversity goals, it may require taking informed risks with no one person identified as the primary expert as suggested in the Vision Paper (2014).

Once programs (3 to 5) are identified that the site is interested in pursuing, the third step would be to conduct research that allows park staff to become

familiar with their target group. This step does not require a staff historian but anyone with basic research skills who could conduct internet, library, and local historians searches. If budgeting and staff size allows, research could also include conducting oral histories in the target community. Through this third step, park staff becomes familiar with the people, issues of importance to them (relevancy, collective memory); possible data collection sites are identified; and it provides another way for staff to introduce themselves and park goals to the community. Additionally, during the third step staff may be able to identify key informants. While conducting research, certain names may appear repeatedly (community activists, political leaders, clergy); and community organizations are identified (churches, social, and educational). These individuals may serve as key informants or be able to create snow-ball effect for identifying other important individuals. A final advantage of this step is that it allows the park researcher to become more familiar with the community's physical boundaries which becomes important later when staff enters the community to administer a questionnaire.

By the end of the third step, staff should have a general understanding of the target community's social/economic history, physical boundaries, and key-players. It is at Step 4 that staff meets amongst themselves to identify programming options they want to present to the target community. Their choices are a result of data collected while speaking with other park staff. Based on this research and the researcher's knowledge of the community, four programming

options were presented to community members in North Gulfport (Soldier's in the Hood, a community Bar-B-Que, a gospel concert, and a program to honor Colored Troops) through a questionnaire.

The Soldier's in the Hood program sought to bring various divisions of the Armed Services into the community in which they were dressed in uniforms that spanned various time periods. While in the community, the military representatives would discuss their roles in prior wars, battles, and offer demonstrations of various weaponry such as live-fire. The community Bar-B-Que was intended to bring to community together for a day of fun and food while also allowing park personnel to introduce themselves to the community in a relaxed, informal setting. The gospel concert was included as an option since it had been identified as having some success at other park sites. It could have provided the park with an opportunity to connect with some of the local religious leaders who are often influential in African American communities. Lastly, honoring the Native Guards represented a chance for residents to learn more about African American soldiers and their participation in the Civil War as well as other military events. Borrowing on ideas from Appomattox Court House, residents would have participated in walking several blocks through the community with lighted luminaires to represent soldiers stationed at Ship Island.

In the fifth step, staff members design a short (5 to 10) answer questionnaire. This research asked North Gulfport residents about demographic information,

feelings while visiting the site, and recreational preferences. Each park should determine the specific information they seek from the community. Once the questionnaire is designed and programming choices identified, step six commences which is to identify gathering places in the community that will later be used as data collection sites. One way to identify data collection sites is for staff to drive through the community and note potential places. Where are large groups of people gathered? Where is the potential to get several people together to answer a questionnaire? The selection of sites may include: housing projects, parks, grocery stores, eateries, and/or churches.

Identified NPS priorities from the Vision Paper asked interpreters to reach out to underserved audiences with the attitude that learning can take place anytime and anywhere. *A Call to Action* promoted taking real steps towards diversity instead of just talking about statistics around diversity. Therefore, by entering the local community, park staff becomes more familiar with the people they are essentially trying to attract to the site. It allows for face-to-face connection that is sometimes missed at the site. Recall that several of the North Gulfport respondents indicated they had visited GUIS in the past through family and church gatherings and occasional fishing trips. In that capacity, it is possible that they never made direct contact with anyone on staff. Thus, entering the community is a chance to make an introduction, especially to those that lack awareness of the site and all that it has to offer.

An additional advantage of entering the community is that it challenges park staff to address their personal biases, as well as providing a chance to identify the collective memory of that specific community. Debatably, what has failed with past studies regarding African American recreational preferences is that most research was conducted with an overarching assumption that there was only one type of African American community. What is now understood is there is no monolithic African American set of recreational preferences. That cultural group has diversity within itself. So, while past studies have helped to identify some of the barriers in making meaningful connections, better connections are made when a specific community is the focus. What are *their* needs versus the needs of all African Americans? This research concentrated on people who resided in North Gulfport. Had I entered another community, the chosen activity may not have been a Bar-B-Que in a local park but something entirely different. Thus, parks will need to become familiar with *their* target group with the understanding that what works in one place may be unwelcomed in another.

For some NPS sites, entering the target community can be problematic due to distance, as is the case for Fort Davis, Chickamauga, Pecos, Mammoth Cave. According to John Heiner, Chief of Interpretation at Fort Davis, the closest and most culturally diverse town is located approximately 150 miles from the site. Once in town it would still be difficult to locate African Americans since the area is predominately comprised of European and Hispanic Americans (J. Heiner,

personal communication, April 6, 2017). How then can Heiner establish a relationship with a virtually nonexistent African American community which essentially accounts for only 0.2% of the population of Fort Davis (City-Data, 2017)? Heiner and other sites that are experiencing similar problems may need to investigate ways to bring pockets of African Americans to them. This may include budgeting money that assists potential visitors in arriving and returning from the site and/or outreach to travel organizations that target African Americans. Cane River Creole National Historical Park, working in conjunction with the Cane River National Heritage Area, was able to obtain grant money which offered local schools assistance with transportation to and from the site. This action successfully brought groups of school-age children to the site but could also be extended to adults. Families and single individuals who want to visit the park, but lack transportation would have an opportunity to do so. At Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, management has attempted to tackle transportation issues by creating traveling exhibits which helps eliminate some of the stress visitors may experience when wanting to visit a park unit.

Step seven involves gaining entrée to enter the community. It includes contacting the property owner, who is typically on site, explaining the research, and asking for permission to be there on an agreed day during a specified time. The researcher asked permission of neighborhood site owners on the same day that data was collected; however, it is advised that contact is made, and



permission given prior to data collection day in an effort to save time should property owners not be available. An additional part of this step is collecting responses from the questionnaire which was done over a two-day period, however this process may be longer depending on availability of respondents and the number of park staff collecting data. The questionnaire given in North Gulfport generally took about five minutes to complete. So, the total number of questions influences the amount of time spent in the field. If the selected data collection site does not have a high level of human traffic, this will also influence total field time. There was a total of 9 hours spent in the field during this research; and it is conceivable that no more than another 10 hours would be required to gain a sufficient data size. The principle point of this step is to identify ways the park can connect with the community through what community identified as what they wanted. Each site should determine a target number of questionnaires they want to distribute in the community and work towards that goal which may be accomplished in a day or over a period of time.

Once questionnaires are completed, staff then analyzes the information gathered. A statistician is not needed for this step, just someone with basic math skills and who can identify averages. Step 8 consists of identifying recreational preferences, desired program from the list of ones offered, site usage, demographics, and any additional information the site may find helpful. The researcher entered all data in a SPSS analysis program; however, the same feat

could be accomplished with Microsoft Excel or Access programs. Entering of data and analysis took approximately a week and will vary depending on the total number of participants.

During Step 9 park staff reconvenes to discuss what was learned from the questionnaire. What activities were the target group most interested in participating in with the park? Are they aware of the park's existence? Do they visit and in what capacity? These questions should help influence decisions regarding the final program the park will attempt to do with the community. Once the program (s) are selected, then staff proceeds to initiate those programs. This is, perhaps, best accomplished by reconnecting with key-players, oral history participants, if there were any, and respondents who may have expressed an interest in working with the park. In the final step, staff along with identified key-players take the necessary actions to enact the community's selected program. This includes promotion of the event through radio announcements, newspapers, and social media outlets.

### **Recommendation One: Community-based Initiatives.**

The first recommendation is that the NPS should provide support for community-based initiatives rather than coming up with initiatives on its own. From this research and through personal experience it has been surmised that the National Park Service, in its efforts to diversify visitor demographics, has

often chosen to present programs that attract few, if any, people of color to their sites. That is at least partially due to staff selecting programming options without the input of the target community or cultural group it had hoped to reach. I am reminded of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century vision which suggested that sites should work at, “embracing the notion of informed risk-taking and creative experimentation with two-way communication” as well as the vision for interpreters to identify, “ways to work directly with visitors/audiences/communities to identify needs and interests that are advanced by relationships with park content/ideas” (NPS, 2013, p. 17).

With those statements in mind, it is proposed that every site commit to some action that addresses those two suggestions. One way that this could be achieved, regardless of staffing and budget problems, is through a process discovered while conducting this research. It will be referred to as the “9-Steps” which offers a template for connecting with communities.

- Step 1: Identify sites with similar interpretive theme
- Step 2: Contact staff and ask for 3 to 5 programming examples
- Step 3: Identify and research the target group
- Step 4: Identify possible programs to present to target group
- Step 5: Create a 5 to 10 question questionnaire
- Step 6: Identify gathering places in community

- Step 7: Enter community with questionnaire (offer incentives)
- Step 8: Identify how target group wants to engage with site
- Step 9: Enact program

Although this research focused on sites with a Civil War interpretive component, it is easily adaptable for any theme at any site. For example, if a site wants to increase participation of Hispanic or Asian or American Indian communities and the park's theme is slavery, then they would contact other units that have a slavery component, unveil programming the sites offer, take those ideas to the target community and allow them to pick a program that satisfies the needs of the community and the park sites.

There were several advantages of using the 9-Step process: community input (bottom-up); park-to-park interaction; identification of successful and unsuccessful projects; possible whole staff inclusion in park strategies for connection; staff addresses personal biases before entering the target community; community networking by identifying key-players; limited resources required to complete the steps; and multiple options identified for interpretive programming.

During the proposal phase of the project and in an early effort to attract African American visitors, GUIIS staff stated they purchased several kayaks and canoes. Perhaps a greater understanding by park managers and other site personnel of how African Americans view boat travel in the Gulf, or any other

waterway, may help to increase underserved populations' visitation rates. This statement is not meant to suggest there are not any African Americans who would enjoy a canoe or kayak excursion. However, it does suggest the importance of identifying community needs. From the slave narratives (Berlin, 2007) it was discovered that the enslaved had varying opinions about the Civil War and what it meant to them. It is conceivable that specific African American communities might also have varying opinions which is further support for individual park sites connecting with a target community versus implementing general strategies. Information about African American cultural memory can perhaps best be learned by interacting with the target community in ways that meets the community's needs as well as those of the park.

### **Recommendation Two: Diversity Training.**

The second recommendation calls for diversity training for NPS staff that includes actions beyond listening to a lecture or participating in a workshop. It is a recommendation directly tied to park staff's ability to go into the target communities or organizations to learn more about their preferences for programming. Makopondo (2006) and Sue *et al.* (1982) identified strategies and actions they believed were necessary to create a culturally inclusive environment. Makopondo's four strategies were: involving key community leaders and organizations at the onset of any project, identifying the interests of

the target groups, developing programs that are culturally relevant, and showing commitment in developing relationships between the agency and target community. Many of his strategies are part of these 9-Steps. Sue *et. al.* (1982) concluded a restructuring counseling agencies management is needed to reflect one that is: committed to diverse representation of its membership; sensitive to maintaining an open, supportive, and responsive environment; and working toward and purposefully including elements of diverse cultures in its ongoing operations. Although specifically working with counseling agencies, these recommendations are applicable for the NPS.

During this project the research process was explained to a 15-year park employee. He appeared most impressed by the ability to enter an unknown environment and randomly approach people that there was no prior connection with. He went on to state that, as a white male, he would have felt uncomfortable having to do the same thing. His comments expressed a valid concern and it was appreciated that he openly communicated his feelings and hesitation about entering an African American space. Yet, when there is a commitment to achieving diversity, it may require one to experience some discomfort as well as make a commitment to engage in self-reflection. What are my fears, hesitations in entering an African American space or any other space that is largely occupied by people of color? What can I do to alter my perspective of people who look different than me? What has been my lived experiences with people of color

versus what I may believe interaction with them will be like? Those are the types of questions NPS staff must address if they are to demonstrate a commitment to diversity.

While working with a park unit during its developmental stages, the superintendent invited the researcher to participate in a strategic planning session. The meeting was originally scheduled to take place in a restaurant; however, plans changed when one of the community's key-players (an elderly Caucasian woman) decided that she could not sit in a public place at a table with an African American person present. Plans were changed, and the meeting took place in her home instead so that others (Caucasian friends) would not view me sitting at her table. Imagine my discomfort in knowing she did not want to be seen publicly eating with me. Yet, I participated in the process and am reminded again from the Vision Paper (2014) that as interpreters we must learn to consider personal biases and value process over product. Had I not already gone through diversity training, and had life experiences, I would likely not have been willing to eat with her either. Part of the commitment process includes some uneasiness at times.

### **Recommendation Three: Management Strategies.**

This recommendation asks the NPS to approach establishing community relationships with a top-down management strategy and a bottoms-up

community connection strategy. Over the past decade, several groups have formed, and initiatives created to address diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in visitor demographics. For example, through the Office of Relevancy, Diversity, and Inclusion, ally facilitators have hosted over 120 dialogues since 2016. Additionally, over 1,000 employees have participated in NPS Employee Resource Groups to include: Council for Indigenous, Relevance, Communication, Leadership and Excellence, Employee Empowerment Collective, Hispanic Organization on Relevancy, Advising, Leadership, and Excellence, Innovative Leadership Network, Women's Employee Resource Group, and LGBTQ Employee Resource Group. While on paper and through websites, it would appear the NPS is doing all it can to change negative associations between themselves and people of color, the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government survey found that most people who leave the NPS do so because of, "unhappiness with senior leadership, teamwork, and concerns about a lack of support for diversity" (Repanshek, 2015). According to a NPS website, "Two-thirds of white employees, but only one-third of minority employees feel their agency is doing a good job with diversity". Additionally, fewer than 50% of employees feel promoting diversity is essential to the mission in their agency. A fear of change and a hesitancy to fully embrace diversity are what leads to barriers and effective change (NPS, 2017).



The NPS is a national business and as in most businesses, when a company mandate is issued, employees must adhere to them or risk reprimand, sometimes in the form of termination. Yet, no known individual or site has received any disciplinary actions for failing to meet the stated goals of the NPS. With a top-down management strategy, it is conceivable that accountability measures could be enacted. For instance, park units could be given a time frame for initiating some type of programming to meet diversity actions and then must produce a report that shows what they did, the success of the project, and next steps towards continued relationship building with the target community. For those units that fail to address inclusivity within the allotted time, some disciplinary action should occur.

In order for the NPS to be successful in its stated goals, it must provide some means of accountability for sites that do not strive to tell the whole American story. By this I mean that if a site has an opportunity to interpret African American, Native American, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ), and Confederacy histories but are only engaged in the Confederacy component, then what standards are set by the NPS that holds those sites responsible for not telling the stories of American groups whose cultural history is tied to the site?

A tops-down management approach works better when combined with a bottoms-up community connection strategy while trying to build community

relationships. The term bottoms-up implies inclusion of community members in decision-making processes as early as possible. From this research, a bottoms-up strategy began with the identification of the target community. All subsequent steps were geared towards making direct contact with that community in ways that fostered building long-term relationships. With a bottoms-up approach, staff gains knowledge about the community's history and possible collective memory of the region to include the park site (Step 3). Although selecting programming options to present to the community is carried-out by staff, it still includes a bottoms-up position in that selection of programs is not only based on park feasibility but also community resources. Are there community parks to host outdoor events? Which churches are large enough to feature a Gospel Concert (Steps 4 and 6)? When creating the questionnaire, staff must consider not only the programs they want to offer community members but also any other pertinent information specific to the site that may help increase community visitation rates (Step 5). Staff entering the community to ask residents how they want to be involved with the site, is a direct example of a bottoms-up approach (Steps 7 and 8). Once the program is enacted, either in the community or on park property (Step 9) staff will have identified key-players, brought part of the site's interpretive component to the community through literature, souvenirs, and face-to-face communication, or brought members of the community to the park.

#### **Recommendation Four: Creating Long-term Relationships.**

The fourth recommendation is for NPS staff to use information learned about the community through research, oral histories, key-informants, and the questionnaire to create long-term relationship building opportunities with residents. GUIS will be used to illustrate how a long-term commitment process could commence. Upon completion of data gathering, it was revealed the GUIS complex contained small bodies of water located on the property as well as being bordered by the Gulf of Mexico. During the proposal phase of the project and in an early effort to attract African American visitors, GUIS staff stated they purchased several kayaks and canoes. Perhaps a greater understanding by park managers about African American attitudes towards waterways may have helped staff to make more informed decisions. Instead of beginning the relationship building process with kayaks and canoes, staff may want to increase African American visitation rates by partnering with a local organization or taking full responsibility to offer swimming lessons to residents of North Gulfport. This action would bring people to the site and if conducted in the community; it would give residents a chance to have face-to-face time with park representatives. Hypothetically, community residents would take the swimming lessons, become more comfortable in water, then park staff could introduce them to being in water in a kayak or canoe. Referring to the Vision Paper, 21<sup>st</sup> Century interpreters must learn to value process over product. Although this approach may not reach the

park's stated goal of having the African American community become actively involved in the interpretation of the Native Guards, but it does suggest the importance of identifying community needs. Information about African Americans and how they view space (waterways) can perhaps best be learned by interacting with the target community in ways that may be considered nontraditional.

### **Project Limitations**

Study limitations help generate debate on the research topic and possibly stimulate further research. This study acknowledges four limitations. Firstly, after the researcher and Dr. Stephens Williams met with Susan Teel at the Naval Live Oaks Reserve a break-down in communication occurred. Several attempts were made to contact Ms. Teel to address any concerns she may have had; however, after several attempts, the researcher decided to continue with the research but without a direct focus on GUIs. Data collected from the North Gulfport community questionnaire was analyzed and a summary of results submitted to Ms. Teel to fulfill contract obligations, but the researcher was unable to enact the 9-Steps.

The second and third limitations are partially a result of not being able to work with GUIs staff through the entirety of the project. When the researcher entered the community of North Gulfport to administer the questionnaire, instead of

collecting data on a larger sample of residents, it was decided to get as many respondents as possible in a two-day period instead of having a preestablished sample number. It was learned early in the project that GUIS staff, prior to Susan Teel, had a misunderstanding with some members an African American Civil War re-enactment unit. In an attempt to prevent presenting community residents with false hopes that they could make connections with GUIS, only a snapshot of responses was collected. Had GUIS continued with the project, a larger sample of community residents would have occurred. For example, only 40 residents were given the questionnaire, however according to the US Census Bureau (2010), the area where the four data collection sites were located (Census Tract 24-Block Group 1, 2018) consisted of 817 African Americans. Based on that number, there should have been approximately 240 questionnaires collected to ensure a 95% confidence level and .5% margin of error.

The third limitation concerns the number of NPS sites that did not respond to questionnaire. There were 26 sites that failed to respond although three attempts to connect with them were made per site (Appendix D). On each of the attempts, information about the research project was left either on a voice message or with whomever answered the phone. Why those sites did not respond is unknown; however, it suggests that park units were too busy due to limited staff to participate or that, perhaps, the subject matter was not of interest. Whatever the

reason, the loss of information from 26 parks would have undoubtedly changed the overall statistical analysis.

A fourth limitation occurred due to an inability to enact the 9-Steps with GUIS and the community of North Gulfport. Therefore, further research is needed regarding enacting the 9-Steps process with a park unit and target community from beginning to end. How successful are the 9-Steps in creating opportunities for making meaningful connections with underserved populations? Can the 9-Steps be applied to any interpretive theme and with any cultural group? How would measurable outcomes be defined?

The final limitation and an issue that future researchers might focus on is the collective/cultural memories of African Americans. With regards to this study, researchers might want to examine the cultural groups' collective memories of the Civil War to: increase staff's understanding of potential interpretive issues; provide better outreach efforts and address concerns with contested stories. Fredrick Douglass, more than 100 years ago, warned the nation of a time when it would be divided by opposing opinions of the Civil War and how the war should be memorialized. His warning is now a reality and one that the NPS still grapples with today. Gaining a better understanding of African American cultural/collective memories could also be a focus for NPS research projects that are concerned with issues such as swimming, large bodies of water, wilderness areas, and racialized spaces which visitors may encounter while at a national park.

## Conclusions

This project addressed an expressed objective for NPS to diversify the demographics of visitors, identified a local park (GUIS) that wants to satisfy that objective, identified and contacted two target groups (NPS and North Gulfport) to address creative ways to build community relations, provided potential strategies to satisfy that need, and made four recommendations for NPS staff trying to make meaningful connections with African Americans. Additionally, this project concluded that the primary reason the NPS has been unsuccessful in serving underserved populations is largely due to noncommitment throughout the institution.

Now that the issue of connecting with communities has been addressed, the ensuing question is, what happens next? Johnathan Jarvis, who initiated, supported, and demonstrated a real commitment to diversifying the NPS, has since retired. It is hoped by many that the next park director will exhibit the same level of commitment, that he or she will as stated by Nelson (2015), “use [NPS] resources and partnerships to execute an all-out effort to promote diversity within its ranks and its parks.” Nelson further explored how the diversification of parks should commence. “Outreach should be tailored to minorities and delivered where they log in, follow, Tweet, view or listen. The park service needs to shout to minorities from its iconic mountaintops, we want you here!” For to continue

declaring that national sites are there for all Americans without a real commitment to that statement is nothing more than empty talk.



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## Appendices

## Appendix A: List of National Park Sites with a Civil War Component

1. Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, KY
2. African American Civil War Memorial, DC
3. Andersonville National Historic Site, GA
4. Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, TN
5. Antietam National Battlefield, MD
6. Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, VA
7. Arkansas Post National Memorial, AR
8. Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, VA
9. Battleground National Cemetery (Rock Creek Park), DC
10. Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, KY, TN
11. Blue Ridge Parkway, NC, VA
12. Booker T. Washington National Monument, VA
13. Boston African American National Historic Site, MA
14. Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, MA
15. Brown v Board of Education National Historic Site, KS
16. Brice's Cross Roads National Battlefield Site, MS
17. Buffalo National River, AR
18. Cane River Creole National Historical Park, LA
19. Cape Hatteras National Seashore, NC
20. Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, FL
21. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, VA
22. Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, SC
23. Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, GA
24. Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, DC, MD, WV
25. Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, GA, TN
26. Civil War Defenses of Washington, DC
27. Clara Barton National Historic Site, MD
28. Colonial National Historical Park, VA
29. Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, KY
30. Dry Tortugas National Park, FL
31. Ford's Theater National Historic Site, DC
32. Fort Davis National Historic Site, TX
33. Fort Donelson National Battlefield, TN

34. Fort Larned National Historic Site, KS
35. Fort McHenry National Monument Historic Shrine, MD
36. Fort Pulaski National Monument, GA
37. Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, NC
38. Fort Scott National Historic Site , KS
39. Fort Smith National Historic Site, AR, OK
40. Fort Sumter National Monument , SC
41. Fort Union National Monument , NM
42. Frederick Douglas National Historic Site, DC
43. Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site , MA
44. Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, VA
45. George Washington Carver National Monument, MO
46. General Grant National Memorial , NY
47. Gettysburg National Military Park , PA
48. Golden Gate National Recreation Area , CA
  - Alcatraz Island, CA
  - Fort Point National Historic Site, CA
  - Presidio of San Francisco, CA
49. Governor's Island National Monument, NY
50. Gulf Islands National Seashore , FL, MS
51. Hampton National Historic Site , MD
52. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV
53. Homestead National Monument of America, NE
54. Independence National Historical Park, PA
55. James A. Garfield National Historic Site, OH
56. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial , MO
57. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve , LA
58. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, GA
59. Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, AR
60. Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, IN
61. Lincoln Home National Historic Site , IL
62. Lincoln Memorial , DC
63. Maggie L Walker National Historic Site, VA
64. Mammoth Cave National Park , KY
65. Manassas National Battlefield Park , VA
66. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, VT\
67. Martin Luther King Jr National Historic Site, GA
68. Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, NY

69. Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DC
70. Monocacy National Battlefield, MD
71. Natchez National Historical Park , MS
72. Natchez Trace Parkway , AL, MS, TN
  - Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, MS, TN
73. National Capital Parks East , DC
  - Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site, DC
  - Fort Dupont Park , DC
  - Fort Foote, MD
  - Fort Washington Park , MD
74. New Bedford National Historical Park, MA
75. Ocmulgee National Monument, GA
76. Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site , TX
77. Pea Ridge National Military Park , AR
78. Pecos National Historical Park , NM
79. Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, DC
80. Petersburg National Battlefield, VA
81. Richmond National Battlefield, VA
82. Rock Creek Park , DC
83. San Juan Island National Historical Park , WA
84. Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site , CO
85. Santa Fe National Historic Trail, CO, KS, MO, NM, OK
86. Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, AL
87. Shiloh National Military Park , TN, MS
88. Springfield Armory National Historic Site , MA
89. Stones River National Battlefield, TN
90. Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, FL
91. Tupelo National Battlefield, MS
92. Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, AL
93. Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, AL
94. Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site , MO
95. Vicksburg National Military Park , MS
96. Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, OK
97. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, MO
98. Women's Rights National Historical Park, NY

**Color-Coding Key for NPS sites**

**55 sites that responded to questionnaire**

**8 sites with an African American names**

**9 sites with an African American focus**

**7 Subunits**

**1 Gulf Island National Seashore**

**26 sites that did not respond**

## Appendix B: National Park Service Sites Questionnaire

1. Does your site have a program that is specifically designed towards increasing African American participation in park events?

NO   
YES

- 1b. If No, then answer the following question. Has there ever been a program of this kind at your site?

NO   
YES

2. Please select **only one** type of programming that attracts the most African American visitors to your site.

P1: Digital/Media   
Festival   
Interpretive   
Music Event   
Re-enactment   
Other

3. How long has program (s) been in existence?

P1: Less than one year  One year  Two years   
Three years  More than three years

P2: Less than one year  One year  Two years   
Three years  More than three years

P3: Less than one year  One year  Two years   
Three years  More than three years

4. Would you consider the program (s) a success?



NO   
YES

4b. How do you measure the success of the program (s)? Check all that apply.

Increased participation at park events   
Increased knowledge of park and activities   
Something else   
Explain:

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5. Are there any programs offered that DO NOT attract African American visitors?

NO   
YES

6. Name programs that DO NOT attract African American visitors.

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7. What programs/activities offered attracts African American Visitors?

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8. On an annual basis, what percent of your site's visitors are African American?

- 10% or less
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50% or more

**Comments:**

## Appendix C: North Gulfport Community Questionnaire

### 1. Personal Information:

**Respondent No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** Male  Female

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Education Level:

Did not graduate high school

Graduated high school

Trade/Technical School

Some college

College Degree

### 3. When you hear the term “**National Park Service**”, what words/thoughts come to mind?

What is that?

Forests

Government

Lakes/Rivers

Military

Place I am not welcome

Something else

### 4. Have you ever visited Gulf Islands National Seashore?

NO

YES

5. If yes, did you visit with: (Check all that apply)

Church group

Family

Friends

School group

Other

6. How likely is it that you **WOULD WANT** to visit the park again?

Not Likely

Somewhat Likely

Very Likely

7. While visiting GUIS, did you feel: (Check all that apply)

Afraid

Hopeful

Bored

Happy

Confused

Nervous

Disappointed

Proud

Excited

Sad

Safe

Something else

8. **Preference:** Which of the following activities would **you** be most interested in participating in? (Rate on scale from 1-4, 1 is most preferred and 4 least preferred)

**“Soldiers in the Hood”** – This program would bring personnel from various branches of the military into the community to talk about their experiences as well as that of African American soldiers who were stationed at GUIS.

**“Gospel Concert”** – This program would feature the choirs of various local churches. It would be a one-day event in which

anyone could attend and would be held at one of the community churches.

**“Remembering the Colored Troops”** – This program would include a walk along portions of Martin Luther King Blvd. in which community members carry a lighted candle to honor soldiers who were at GUIS.

**“Bar-B-Que in the Park”** – This event would consist of a fun-day with children’s activities, re-enactors, and music. It represents an attempt to introduce the community to GUIS and would be held in the community.

9. Why did you select your **most preferred** program?

- Most interesting
- Seems fun
- New experience
- Already like doing that
- Event held in my community

10. When is the best time to host preferred event?

- Friday
- Holiday
- Saturday
- Sunday
- Weekday

**Comments:**

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## **Appendix D: NPS Sites That Did Not Respond to the Questionnaire**

1. Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
2. Battleground National Cemetery (Rock Creek Park)
3. Blue Ridge Parkway
4. Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area
5. Cape Hatteras National Seashore
6. Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
7. Clara Barton National Historic Site
8. Colonial National Historical Park
9. Fort McHenry National Monument Historic Shrine
10. Fort Scott National Historic Site
11. Fort Union National Monument
12. Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site
13. Gettysburg National Military Park
14. Governor's Island National Monument
15. Hampton National Historic Site
16. Independence National Historical Park
17. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
18. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park
19. National Capital Parks East
20. Ocmulgee National Monument
21. Petersburg National Battlefield
22. San Juan Island National Historical Park
23. Springfield Armory National Historic Site
24. Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve
25. Washita Battlefield National Historic Site
26. Women's Rights National Historical Park

