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Remembering New Philadelphia

ABSTRACT

New Philadelphia was located in western Illinois about 25 miles east of the Mississippi River, and developed as a small multiracial and rural community from 1836 onward. It is the earliest known town in the United States to have been planned and legally founded by a free African American. Remnants of this town, which was founded by Frank McWorter, survived into the 20th century. From 2004 to 2006, a collaborative research project and summer field schools in archaeology, supported by the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates program, helped to explore several lots throughout the town site that once belonged to residents of both European American and African American descent. Analysis of landscapes, archaeology, and the documentary record has helped to develop a more comprehensive picture of life in a rural frontier community and past dynamics of class, gender, ethnicity, and racism.

Introduction

New Philadelphia is a unique place with a remarkable story about race, freedom, and everyday life on the Illinois frontier. It is the earliest town known that was founded, platted, and registered in a county courthouse by a freed African American. Throughout the course of the town's history, from the middle of the 19th century until its final demise in the early 20th century, the town existed as a multiracial community. Archaeologists, historians, descendants, and local community members are presently engaged in discussing life in New Philadelphia, as well as debating the role that race played in the town's history. The research program has helped to coalesce a unique partnership of a variety of interest groups, including descendant family members, the local community, and scholars from various disciplines. At the same time, other stakeholders are challenging the value of the research program and its intellectual contributions to understanding 19th-century life on the western frontier.

The archaeology project developed in 2002 as a partnership between the University of Maryland,

the University of Illinois, the Illinois State Museum, and the New Philadelphia Association, with the goal of implementing an historical archaeology program that would help make the New Philadelphia story part of the national public memory. The local community, which includes descendants and non-descendants, invited the development of a research program, and the University of Illinois at Springfield provided initial seed money under the guidance of Vibert White (now at the University of Central Florida) to begin a preliminary archaeological survey. Later, with the aid of a National Science Foundation grant (No. 0353550), Paul Shackel, Terrance Martin, and Christopher Fennell began to explore additional histories of the entire community, from its founding in 1836 through its eventual demise in the Jim Crow era. Using historical information, oral histories, and archaeological data, archaeologists are investigating the physical and social development of the town and exploring social relations there.

Project leaders recruited a diverse body of undergraduate students, and created a unique learning experience for both the students and the local community. Students learned scientific methods in excavating an historic site, while also discussing historical and contemporary issues of race and racism on the local and national levels. The goal was to make the archaeology project socially relevant by critically analyzing and exposing racism in the past and the present. It is important that a color-conscious past is created, rather than a color-blind past. Recognizing cultural and ethnic differences is important in order to provide a richer perspective of the past and the present. Exploring the multicultural past of New Philadelphia also allows an opportunity to examine and promote a diverse present in the local community. Student and community interaction were encouraged, while making both groups more aware of the historical issues related to race and racism in a region that is known to have been hostile toward African Americans (Loewen 2005).

Many of the results of this research in, and the explorations addressing issues of social justice are presented in this volume. Anna Agbe-Davies

explains the significance of civic engagement in such historical and archaeological research projects. Later in the volume, Abdul Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter) concludes with a commentary in which he discusses the heritage of Frank McWorter and the town, and the challenges of such research endeavors from the perspectives of a descendant and a scholar of black studies.

Race, Freedom, and Speculation in Early Illinois

Illinois became a state in 1818 with about 40,000 residents, over one-third of them living in the greater American Bottom, a flood plain on the east bank of the Mississippi River in southwestern Illinois. In 1818, many of the enslaved north of the Ohio River resided in Illinois, in the American Bottom, as well as another area in southeastern Illinois known as the “salines,” where saltwater springs allowed for the production of salt for harvest and export. State law required that these enterprises cease operations by 1825 (Simeone 2000:25; Klickna 2003:15–18).

Illinois was a northern state with a majority of its citizens from the Upland South, which included Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Carolinas as the principal sources of immigrants. By the early 1820s, however, northerners began their steady influx into the new state. On 2 August 1824, the citizens of Illinois defeated a referendum to legalize slavery. Black Codes passed in 1819, 1829, and 1853 restricted the rights of African Americans and discouraged their settlement in the state, however (Simeone 2000:157).

With the ending of the Black Hawk Wars in 1832, American Indians were permanently pushed west of the Mississippi River. European American settlement increased significantly, and the first part of the 1830s was characterized by wild land speculation and capitalist ventures. Many towns were platted in Illinois, and some of these incorporated, with the peak occurring from 1835 to 1837. The Panic of 1837 brought a halt to many of those speculative dreams across the United States, however (Davis 1998:236; Biles 2005). While New Philadelphia developed as a small rural town and survived into the 20th century, many other communities vanished from the landscape within a few years or a few decades of their initial founding. Others existed

on paper only, and never developed into tangible settlements. Several archaeology projects have been successful in identifying and recovering information about early town development and abandonment on the Illinois frontier (Mansberger and Stratton 1997; Mansberger 1998; Mazrim 2007). The New Philadelphia project fits within this genre of studies of the histories of early Illinois towns that no longer exist on the landscape.

The Development of New Philadelphia

New Philadelphia is situated about 25 miles east of the Mississippi River, with the closest major port towns being Hannibal, Missouri and Quincy, Illinois. Unlike many of the other platted towns that developed in the 1830s, New Philadelphia was legally founded by a free African American, Frank McWorter (Walker 1983). Born near the Pacolet River in South Carolina in 1777, his owner and father, George McWhorter, relocated him to the Kentucky frontier in Pulaski County when he was about 18 years old. George McWhorter later purchased additional properties in Kentucky and Tennessee, and left Frank behind to manage the farm. Historian Juliet Walker’s (1983) biography of Frank McWorter reports that he established a saltpeter mining operation in Kentucky while he was still enslaved.

In 1799 Frank married Lucy, who was also enslaved in Pulaski County. They had four children while enslaved: Judy, Sallie, Frank, and Solomon. In 1815 George McWhorter died without making any provisions for Frank’s manumission. By 1817 Frank had saved enough money from his mining operation to purchase his wife’s freedom for \$800. Since Lucy was pregnant at the time, this action ensured that their son Squire would be born free. Two years later Frank purchased his freedom from George McWhorter’s heirs for the same sum (Matteson 1964:2). The 1820 Federal Census listed him as “Free Frank.” He continued to live in Pulaski County while expanding his saltpeter operations. After he and his wife were free, they had three additional children: Squire, Commodore, and Lucy Ann (Matteson 1964:1; Walker 1983:28–48).

In 1829 Frank traded his saltpeter enterprise for the freedom of his son, Frank, Jr. In 1830

Free Frank decided to leave Kentucky, and he acquired a quarter section (160 ac.) of land in Pike County, Illinois from Dr. Eliot, sight unseen. Free Frank, Lucy, and their freed children arrived in Hadley Township in the spring of 1831, after spending the preceding winter in Greene County, Illinois. The McWorters were the first settlers in that township, and other settlers began to join them two years later (Chapman 1880:216–217). An early history of Pike County explained that “the first white man in Hadley Township was a colored man” (Thompson 1967:151). When he moved to Illinois, Frank was forced to leave three children behind, along with their spouses and children (Walker 1983).

By 1835 Free Frank purchased his son Solomon’s freedom for \$550 (Walker 1983:89). Several citizens from Kentucky and Illinois vouched for Free Frank’s character in order to pass a legislative act changing his name to Frank McWorter, taking the surname of his father and former owner, while changing the spelling of that name by dropping the *h*. The act also gave him the right to “sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, purchase and convey both real and personal property in said last mentioned name” (*Laws of the State of Illinois* 1837:175).

The Illinois legislative act made note that in 1836 Frank had laid out the town “which he calls Philadelphia, and understanding and believing that the said Frank has laid out the town intending to apply the proceeds of the sales for the purchase of his children yet remaining slaves, two young women about twenty years of age—The said town is in handsome country, undoubtedly healthy” (General Assembly Records 1837) (Figure 1).

New Philadelphia, which was at times referred to as Philadelphia, comprised 20 blocks, with most containing 8 lots that measured 60 × 120 ft. each. In total the town had 144 lots, along with streets and alleys. The community’s two main thoroughfares, Broad and Main streets, were platted as 80 ft. wide, secondary streets were 60 ft. wide, and alleys measured 15 ft. wide (Figure 2).

From the beginning of the town, both whites and blacks purchased town lots, although the Panic of 1837 brought an end to broader scales of land speculation in Illinois, and supplies of materials and labor also decreased significantly



FIGURE 1. MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NEW PHILADELPHIA. (IMAGE BY C. FENNELL, 2008.)



FIGURE 2. MAP SHOWING BLOCKS AND LOTS IN NEW PHILADELPHIA (ENSGN 1872: 84).

(Davis 1998:272–273). The panic was followed by five years of economic depression, and McWorter only sold a few lots during this era.

Many towns established during the 1830s disappeared or never developed. New Philadelphia survived, however, and by the late 1840s the town lots began to sell (Walker 1983:122–127). By the 1850s rumors spread about the possibility of a railroad crossing Pike County. The place began to bustle, and the town attracted craftspeople, merchants, and laborers.

Frank McWorter died in 1854 at 77 years of age. While he saw his land speculation begin to pay off, the height of the town's development was over a decade away. Before he died, however, he purchased freedom for himself, his wife, his four children, and two of his grandchildren through his entrepreneurial activities. His will also provided for the purchase of six of his grandchildren who were then enslaved. His sons Solomon and Commodore carried out the provisions of his will (Matteson 1964:10; Walker 1983:163).

The 1855 Illinois state census lists New Philadelphia as a small rural town with 58 people living in 11 households. The community included a Baptist preacher, a cabinet-maker, a laborer, two merchants, two shoemakers, a wheelwright, and four farmers (Walker 1983:131). About one-quarter of the town's residents had been born in Illinois. The town's population grew steadily and peaked in 1865 at about 160 residents (King 2007).

Four years later the railroad bypassed the town by about a mile, and people began to leave for cities like Chicago and St. Louis, as well as migrate west of the Mississippi. The reason for the railroad bypassing the town remains an object of some speculation at this point. In this volume, however, Christopher Fennell shows that the railroad company expended considerable resources to route the line north of the town. They built on an upward slope, and the railroad needed a booster engine to push the cars through the area. The railroad also placed a depot in a rural area without any surrounding community to provide amenities for such a facility. Fennell's research also shows that residents used the town of Barry to ship cattle, even though a depot called Hadley Station was closer to New Philadelphia. In the 20th century the railroad realigned the rail line about one-half mile south where cars and engines could traverse a more even grade in the topography. While there are no explicit indica-

tions of racism found in the railroad records and newspaper accounts, there is strong likelihood that structural racism and greed played a role in the original alignment of the railroad.

By 1880, the number of residents in New Philadelphia had fallen to about 84 individuals (and 17 households), almost half its size when compared to the 1865 state census. In 1880, Chapman (1880:740–41) wrote in his history of Pike County that “[a]t one time it had great promise, but the railroad passing it a mile distant, and other towns springing up, has killed it. At present there is not even a postoffice at the place.” The depopulation of New Philadelphia follows the trend for the rest of Pike County. While the county experienced rapid growth before the Civil War, expansion slowed in the 1870s, and by the end of the century urban areas and western lands drew people away from the county (Smith and Bonath 1982:74–76). In 1885 the size and layout of New Philadelphia changed dramatically. Blocks 1, 10, 11, and 20, as well as the eastern halves of Blocks 2, 9, 12, and 19, were declared vacant and no longer part of the town. The property was returned to agriculture (Walker 1983).

About eight households and a blacksmith shop remained in 1900, and by the 1930s the town was virtually abandoned. Throughout most of the town's history the African American population fluctuated between 25 and 35%, significantly higher than that of the township, county, and state (King 2007). One of the original families that settled in the town, the Burdicks, still owned several acres of land, and rebuilt their house in the late 1930s. That house was occupied until the 1990s. Although the town is completely abandoned today, the land serves as a reminder of what was once there—a biracial community that flourished before the Civil War and slowly withered during the Jim Crow era.

Remembering New Philadelphia

New Philadelphia is now an archaeological site covered by agricultural and fallow fields, as well as prairie grass. The Burdick house, built in the 1930s, survives and is surrounded by a stand of trees. A few exposed foundations are still visible at the surface. Currently, the former town site is divided among several landowners, and they are all sympathetic to

the archaeology project. One landowner moved several cabins and sheds to the site from other locations in Pike County in 1998, and placed them on exposed foundations. One of these structures, a log cabin, dates to the mid-19th century, and the other cabin and sheds date to about the beginning of the 20th century. The buildings do not fit exactly over the foundations, although from a distance their presence creates an imagined built landscape. We do not know if log, or frame and clapboard structures sat on the visible foundations, nor is the exact height of each original building known. The imported structures have been there for about a decade, and their presence, now unquestioned, has come to be considered historically authentic (Figure 3). While community members have a sense of the reconstructed character of the landscape, many of those from outside the community see it as accurate and part of the historic landscape. The associated meanings of that landscape, however, make an African American history anchored in a place (Pike County) and in time (from the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries).

The history of the entire town and awareness of the McWorter family have never completely vanished from the memory of the local community. While New Philadelphia transformed from a bustling, small, rural town to a less-urban and sparsely inhabited community by the turn of the 20th century, it still maintained its identity,

and a New Philadelphia schoolhouse became the focus of all of the community's activities. Built across the road from the town proper, that integrated schoolhouse operated from about 1874 until the 1940s, with both white and black students. It served as the community's second schoolhouse, the first being located in the town proper. In this volume, Emily Helton describes the role the 19th-century school played within the town. Oral histories related to the schoolhouse in the town proper often refer to the other school building as the "Negro Schoolhouse." The archaeology team thought it would be important to locate the remains of the structure in order to communicate an important story about the town's commitment to education, even though it was clearly a segregated education. The second schoolhouse served as a social center where community members gathered for festivals, funerals, and meetings. Helton discusses the archaeology involved in finding the schoolhouse within the town, and explains the importance of the role of education in the New Philadelphia community.

After the integrated New Philadelphia schoolhouse fell into disrepair in the 1960s, and area residents continued to leave for larger communities and cities, local historian Grace Matteson began gathering stories of the multiracial town. She also used personal records loaned by Mrs. Thelma Kirkpatrick of Chicago—great granddaughter of Free Frank. Matteson (1964:18–19) also recorded several oral histories from former residents of the community. Less than two decades later, Helen McWorter Simpson (1981), great-granddaughter of Frank McWorter, wrote about her family members, and described life in New Philadelphia and her experiences of returning to the family farm. Soon after, Juliet Walker (1983) published a biography of Frank McWorter which covers the period of his early days of enslavement in the Carolinas and in Kentucky to his founding of the town of New Philadelphia. In 1988, Walker successfully placed Frank McWorter's gravesite on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of only three gravesites in Illinois placed on the National Register. The other two gravesites belong to Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas.

Several historical archaeology projects have been carried out in and around Pike County (Smith and Bonath 1982; Esarey et al. 1985;



FIGURE 3. THE IMAGINED LANDSCAPE WITH CABINS AND SHED PLACED ON EXISTING FOUNDATIONS IN NEW PHILADELPHIA. (PHOTOGRAPH BY P. SHACKEL, 2005.)

Phillippe 1985) in the past several decades, some even noting the importance of New Philadelphia. When the archaeology team arrived at the site in 2002, local land surveyors Marvin and Tom Likes donated their time, located the original town plat, and imposed the town plan over the existing topography, marking the boundaries of the town, including its streets and lots. This work guided the initial archaeological survey in the fall of 2002 and the spring

of 2003—directed by Joy Beasley and Tom Gwaltney (Gwaltney 2004). Their survey and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) work are described in depth in this volume. Beasley and Gwaltney helped to conduct a systematic walk-over survey and the piece plotting of over 7,000 artifacts, which allowed them to identify a large concentration of artifacts found within the lots bordering the town's two main streets—Broad and Main (Figure 4). These artifacts are mostly

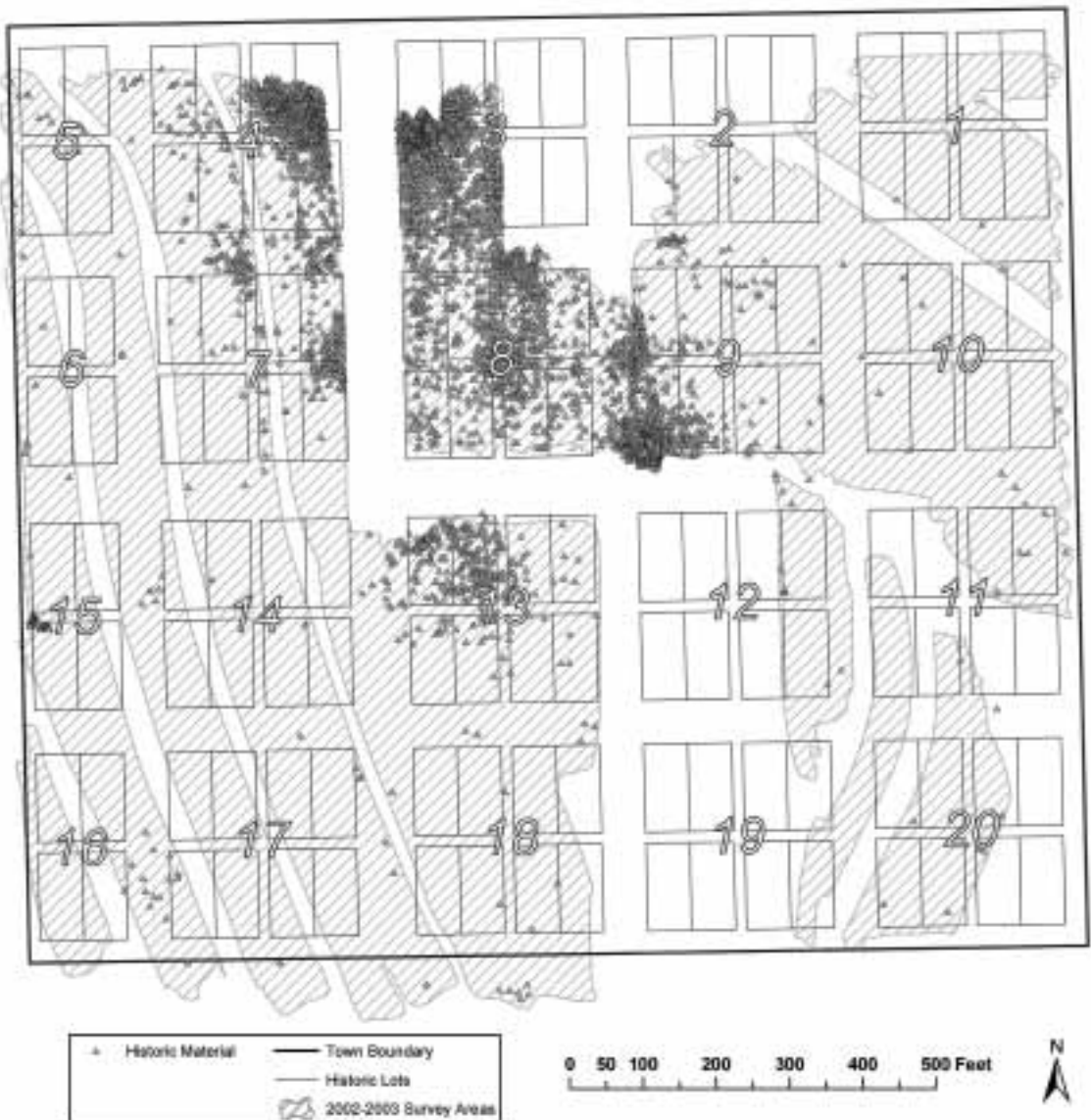


FIGURE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS LOCATED DURING THE 2002 AND 2003 WALK-OVER SURVEYS OF THE NEW PHILADELPHIA TOWN SITE. (IMAGE BY T. GWALTNEY AND J. BEASLEY, 2009.)

nails, ceramics, and bottle glass, indicating that most of the town lots served domestic purposes rather than being craft or industrial sites. Some of the town's businesses, like blacksmithing, were conducted on the town's northeastern edge (Gwaltney 2004). Davis (1998) notes that it is common in Illinois to find industries in the eastern portions of towns, as the business owners took into account the prevailing winds. The survey work by Beasley and Gwaltney gave a good baseline from which to begin thinking about how to develop this project's methods and research design.

In 2004 the team began work on a three-year National Science Foundation grant for training undergraduate students in archaeological techniques. Each field season was started with a three-day geophysical survey directed by Michael Hargrave (U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory). Hargrave surveyed the areas that had the highest densities of artifacts found in the systematic walkover survey, which consisted of the areas around Broad and Main streets. The archaeological evidence indicated that this area had been inhabited, and the geophysical work narrowed down the potential areas for excavation. Hargrave used two geophysical techniques—magnetic field gradiometry and electrical resistance. He created a geophysical map with cultural features (as well as other discrete disturbances) that appeared as anomalies. These anomalies are spatially discrete areas characterized by geophysical values that differ from those of the surrounding area. In this volume, Hargrave explains how the technique proved useful, allowing the archaeology team to make the best use of its time by selecting for excavation areas where he identified anomalies. The results of the geophysical survey helped to focus the team's field methodology by enabling it to concentrate on a few discrete areas for excavations.

Freedom, Struggle, and Community

Peripheralized groups are not usually part of consensus histories, although archaeology is one way to highlight the achievements of these groups and incorporate them into the national public memory (Little 1994; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Leone et al. 2005). Since

the development of historical archaeology as a discipline, the archaeology of African American life has focused primarily on plantation life and bondage. These studies continue to be prevalent today. Recently, there has been a new emphasis that focuses on social uplift and achievement. These stories include the archaeology of the Underground Railroad (Levine et al. 2005), as well as survival and prosperity in a racialized and segregated society (Mullins 2004). These types of stories appear to have considerable public support from the descendant communities (McDavid 2002; Leone et al. 2005).

The collaborative research concerning New Philadelphia addresses such subjects of success and freedom. When dealing with many different stakeholders, however, it is sometimes difficult to establish a coherent message for the place. Trying to change the way people view the history of any place does not come quickly, nor does it come easily. For instance, New Philadelphia has always been referred to as a "black town" or an "all-black town." Scholars have debated the definition of "black town." These discussions include the color of the founder, as well as the percentage of African Americans needed for a place to be an all-black town (Walker 1983:164–165). Cha-Jua (2000:5–10) points out that histories have traditionally seen black towns as oddities in the national story, and that there are many scenarios associated with the founding of black towns.

Typically, black towns are often African American settlements that developed after emancipation, most of them west of the Mississippi. They tended to be racially segregated towns. Nicodemus, Kansas is probably the best-known example. Many people have used this model and assumed that New Philadelphia was a black, segregated town throughout its history, without critically evaluating the census records beyond 1855. People believed that since an African American founded the town, and many family members of the original founder lived in the surrounding community, by extension, New Philadelphia must have been a black town.

Charlotte King (2003) performed detailed census-data research prior to the team's fieldwork, and discovered that African Americans constituted about one-third of the town's population from the 1850s into the 20th century. Robin Whitt's (2003) initial research into the town's

deeds also found that both African Americans and those of European descent were purchasing property in New Philadelphia during the same time period. Initially the findings were a bit surprising, since they countered local public memory. The team gradually discussed these results with community members and descendants. Some stakeholders were surprised, and some were very doubtful of these findings because it challenged their traditional memory and understanding of the place. At that point the team got the sense that some people thought outsiders had no right to challenge and change their local history, even though the researchers had been invited by the local community to research the place.

Local communities have increasingly resisted becoming laboratories for anthropologists and historians, and, as a result, scholars have developed various strategies to develop more amenable relationships (Robinson 1996:125–138). It has become necessary to reach out to all interested communities and democratize research to make sure that it is accessible to the local, descendant, and scholarly communities. Ian Hodder developed a similar strategy with his excavations at Çatalhöyük (Çatalhöyük Project 2007). Placing the archaeology on the web where it can be accessible to all stakeholders and scholars allows for a kind of transparency that permits others to see how questions and conclusions are developed. Scholars from other disciplines also claim that the democratization of data is helpful in bridging the gap between scholars and community (Sawicki and Craig 1996:512–523), and some caution about the dangers of the data being used to construct alternative views (Elwood and Leitner 2003:139–158). From the beginning of the project, all of the major researchers involved in the archaeology project agreed that all data should be accessible to the researchers as well as to the public. It was believed that all could benefit from this joint collaborative project, and the transparency and sharing of data could help promote the work at New Philadelphia. The more the historical and archaeological data are used, the better the case to make the place a part of the national public memory. All agreed to this vision early in the project.

All work is now posted on the Internet, including the archaeology, geophysics, newspaper

archives, oral histories, and deed, census, and tax records (<<http://www.heritage.umd.edu>> follow the links to New Philadelphia, and <<http://www.anthro.uiuc.edu/faculty/cfennell/NP/>>). This type of transparency has created a new understanding with the various stakeholders, of what researchers do and how they do it. The team shares its research questions and findings as soon as they develop. Research papers are posted after peer review, and field reports are posted within two months after the end of the field season. This democratization of data helps facilitate the dialogue, and increases trust with many of the interested parties.

Despite the team's best efforts to be transparent, differences still remain between the academic research and the memories of some of the stakeholders who support the project. For instance, the New Philadelphia Association web page states that the town was a place "where black and white Americans lived together peacefully on the antebellum Illinois frontier" (New Philadelphia Association 2007). It is difficult to support their interpretation of frontier Illinois history. The Association claims that there is no evidence to prove that violence and/or racism existed in New Philadelphia; therefore it must have been a place where people of different color and backgrounds coexisted in a serene environment. The team would argue that the place is unique because of the integrated nature of the community; negative evidence does not necessarily prove that racism did not exist, however. Racism can occur in overt ways, but also in many subtle ways.

Understanding the larger context of the town on the Illinois frontier provides some clues about race relations in frontier Illinois. For instance, when Illinois became a state in 1818, its constitution stated that enslaved persons owned by French citizens could be retained in bondage. The state constitution allowed indentured servitude, whereby African Americans were contracted to work for decades. The offspring of indentured servants had to serve until they were 21 years old (males), and 18 years old (females). Enslaved people could also be brought into the salines region in southern Illinois to work in the production of salt until 1825 (Davis 1998:165).

Black Codes passed in 1819 and 1829 restricted the rights of African Americans and

discouraged their settlement in the state (Simone 2000:157). African Americans were denied suffrage and could not immigrate into the area without a certificate of freedom. They could not assemble in groups of three or more without the risk of being jailed and flogged. They could not testify in court, and slaveholders could not bring enslaved people into the state to free them. An 1845 Illinois Supreme Court decision terminated the institution of slavery in Illinois for all time. State delegates voted to deny suffrage to blacks, however. Additional Black Codes passed in 1853 prohibited the settlement of African Americans in the state. While Illinois opposed slavery, it refused equality to African Americans (Davis 1998:413). So while neighbors may have worked together in order to survive on the frontier, racism still affected those African Americans that settled in Illinois, including New Philadelphia.

There also seems to be a type of amnesia regarding some of the more recent violent acts against African Americans in the region surrounding New Philadelphia. For instance, newspaper and several oral accounts of Ku Klux Klan disturbances in the post-World War I era are well known. Cross burnings threatening African American road workers, and mysterious disappearances of people after Klan night rides are chilling stories. These oral histories compiled by Carrie Christman and discussed later in this volume, reveal the violence and prejudice African Americans faced in 20th-century Pike County. An African American descendant and member of the New Philadelphia Association is also quite clear about the racism his family endured while living in the town. There are also oral traditions that surrounding communities became sundown towns—meaning African Americans were not allowed in the community after the sun set. The creation of these sundown communities in the region is well documented by James Loewen (2005), and only discussed by the area's most elderly residents. Christman provides an overview of her oral history work, and describes the town's social relations and issues related to race and racism in the community.

The legacy of racism on the landscape is obvious. Many African Americans left the county in the 1920s and 1930s. When Pike County residents were asked how many African Americans now live in the county, most

counted the number on one hand. The 1990 U.S. Federal Census indicates that 6 African Americans claimed Pike County as their home, out of about 17,000 total residents. Because of the local addition of a new correctional facility, more recent census data is somewhat unreliable. By 2000 there was an increase in the number of African Americans in the county, although all but one was over 18 years of age. There is not strong evidence of many African American families residing in the county. Still, members of the local white community still prefer to tell only the story of peaceful coexistence.

Traditions and Archaeology

Less than one percent of New Philadelphia has been excavated, but over 65,000 artifacts have been recovered and are now curated in the Illinois State Museum. Plans are moving ahead with the New Philadelphia Association to preserve and commemorate New Philadelphia. In 2005 the New Philadelphia town site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation Officer of Illinois and the National Park Service agree that the town is nationally significant, and the archaeology has the potential to tell the story of western migration, and settlement, consumerism, and diet on the western frontier. The site is now nominated to be designated as a National Historic Landmark, and the Archaeology Conservancy may help purchase a portion of the site in order to save it from future development.

Archaeologists have uncovered a wide range of material culture and archaeological features that date from the 1840s and 1850s, such as cellar pits, cisterns, wells, and storage features. The stone foundation of a house constructed at the turn of the 20th century is also a significant find. Local legend indicates that while the town thrived until the 1860s, the routing of the train line to bypass the settlement led to the rapid decline of New Philadelphia. While the eastern portion of the town lands were returned to agriculture, the 1880 federal population census indicates that about 84 people still lived in the town. The construction of a house dating to about 1900 indicates that while the town's population declined, at least one family continued to invest in the community by building a new dwelling (Burdick 1972).

When comparing the archaeological remains from early 19th-century sites in Illinois, it appears that many forms of material culture become homogenized among sites, and earlier material cultural differences become indistinguishable (Mazrim 2002:268; 2007). The same scenario appears to be true at New Philadelphia. A review of the material goods shows that all residents have the same types of material culture, and could access local merchants for consumer goods such as refined earthenwares. Archaeological studies from the region show that most people from the Upland South (including states like Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Carolinas) had diets with a high proportion of swine and chicken, along with wild game like white-tailed deer, rabbit, squirrel, and fish. Cattle, sheep, and chickens are important, but they are less significant when compared to hogs (McCorvie 1987:67). Cornbread and salted and smoked pork became staples (McCorvie 1987:257). The production of small cash crops allowed farmers to buy necessary staples such as sugar, salt, coffee, and manufactured goods. When these people migrated west and north they brought these traditions with them.

Using population and agricultural schedules from the U.S. federal census, Claire Fuller Martin and Terrance Martin examine how farmers around New Philadelphia adhered to traditional Upland South, Midland, and Northern agricultural practices. They show the place of origin of the farmers and compare this variable with the types of crops and livestock those residents raised. They find that regional differences in farming practices did exist. In a second article, Terrance Martin and Claire Fuller Martin also explain that there is not always a strong correlation between dietary patterns and a household's place of origin. For instance, one household with residents who had immigrated from the Northeast had an equally high proportion of beef and pork in the residents' diet. Another household, whose residents came from the Northeast and the South had a larger cattle biomass, however, which is expected from northerners. Another resident from the South did follow the expected Upland South pattern. While New Philadelphia residents brought with them traditions that were most commonly found in their former home regions, it becomes difficult at times to use pattern recognition to predict the

place of origin of any particular household in mid-19th-century western Illinois.

The local community and descendants are active in promoting the archaeology and preservation of the site. In 2005 the New Philadelphia Association worked with the archaeology team to help support the McWorter family reunion at the archaeology site. Over 50 McWorter family members attended the site event, first taking a tour of the family cemetery, and next viewing the archaeological excavations in progress. They saw features being excavated, and the students shared with the family members and visitors the importance of the entire site, and its place in the national public memory. Many McWorter descendants have taken ownership of the project and are now taking charge of the cleaning and restoration of the town's African American cemetery. In this volume, Charlotte King discusses her observations on recording grave markers and material culture remains in the cemetery. Based on her research on this African American cemetery, she draws connections between several items found in the cemetery and the continuing development of particular African cultural traditions. To the casual observer, broken bottles and animal bones distributed on grave sites, and trees growing in and around the cemetery in a random fashion may make the place look unkempt, when in fact their placement was intentional and they have spiritual and symbolic meaning.

Democracy and Archaeology

The democratization of knowledge in research, practice, and teaching are an important part of this project. The work at New Philadelphia has challenged some of the long-held memories of the place. For instance, while New Philadelphia was thought to be an all-black town, historical research shows its biracial composition with at least 200 different family names associated with the place. Also, many believed the town had all but disappeared by the 1880s, but the archaeology and oral histories illustrate that New Philadelphia continued to exist as a small community into the 20th century. The team believes that these findings—the varied and extensive family lineages, and the longer-than-perceived time depth of the town—help to expand the history and ownership of the place. Including all of the descendants and extending the era of significance

of the town into the 20th century help create a more inclusive past, and lay the foundation for an all-encompassing present. Expanding the ownership of the public memory of the town assists in developing broader community support for preservation and commemoration of this nationally significant site.

Some descendants have not greeted project findings warmly, however, since the findings challenge their traditional perception of the place, and possibly what they perceive as their exclusive ownership of its history. For instance, throughout the project there have been claims from one descendant about the team's attempts to steal family history and inability to accurately portray past racial tensions. This family member does not feel that the team is correctly representing what she feels is the most important story of the place, that of the founder of the town. Meanwhile, other family members see the archaeology project as a way to promote and preserve the story of their family and the town. They see expanding the base of support as essential because they feel that the legacy of freedom, a powerful story rooted in the history of Frank and Lucy McWorter, is a profound message, and an important concept to promote. One such family member, Abdul Alkalimat, provides a commentary in this volume that addresses these issues from the perspective of a scholar in black studies.

The project has moved ahead with its efforts, working with the local and descendant communities to present a past that highlights the daily life of people who settled in this biracial town. While not pretending to be the last word on the history of New Philadelphia, project efforts, with input from the larger descendant and local communities, will build a better understanding of this town. It is hoped that the stories connected with this place become part of the national public memory. The desires of the local and descendant communities for preserving the site are truly varied. But there is a common ground to start from—all believe that it is important to save and remember the place, and all will work toward building consensus.

Acknowledgments

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant

No. 0353550. The Research Experiences for Undergraduates program sponsored the archaeology program from 2004 to 2006. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation. The College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and the Graduate School at the University of Maryland provided financial support. In 2005 the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign archaeology field school also participated in excavations and laboratory work. The walk-over surveys in 2002 and 2003, and the 2004 to 2006 field seasons received tremendous support from the New Philadelphia Association. The Illinois State Museum provided research and laboratory facilities during the project. I appreciate the comments provided by the Carol McDavid, Jamie Brandon, and Joe Joseph.

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