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Understanding the Use of Space in an Eighteenth Century
Black Loyalist Community: Birchtown, Nova Scotia

by

Heather MacLeod-Leslie, B.A. (hons.)

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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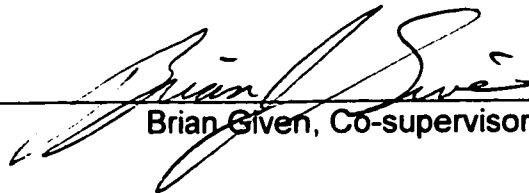
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Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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Abstract

Birchtown, Nova Scotia is a historically significant place in the cultural history of African Americans in Canada and the United States. Its history is not well understood however, recent historical and archaeological investigations have begun to shed light on its development and the people who once lived there. The settlers, suffering under great scarcity, did not leave much material culture behind. This thesis demonstrates how spatial analysis can be used to learn about the intellectual and social conditions of people in the past. Architecture and settlement patterning are of particular importance in this study.

As a method of managing and analyzing the spatial data for Birchtown, GIS and image processing technologies have been borrowed from the field of geomatics. These tools have enabled new information to be identified in Birchtown and demonstrate their benefit as an excellent complement to traditional historical archaeological and anthropological research methods.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been the culmination of the talents and kindness of a great many people. The first people I wish to thank are the co-chairs of my thesis committee, Dr. Brian Given and Dr. Charles Gordon of Carleton University. Without the wisdom, guidance, openness and support these two gentlemen have extended me, this thesis simply might not have been. They are truly excellent teachers. I must also extend a deep debt of gratitude to Laird Niven and Ruth Holmes Whitehead who both openly shared their research with me and offered invaluable support. I would also like to thank the Black Loyalist Heritage Society whose pioneering spirit and passion for the history of the Black Loyalists and their descendents have allowed us to know and respect the importance of Birchtown and the people who created this community. Throughout the course of my academic career thus far, my parents, Don and Sharon McLeod, both writers, have been outstanding and integral parts of the work I have done. Their editorial support, intelligent insights and literary perspective have offered me invaluable opportunities to improve and grow as a writer and thinker and I thank them both for that. I wish to thank my husband, Donald, who has always supported me in my academic quest, for keeping my feet on the ground and for giving me the balance in life that is so essential. And to Mojo, who always makes me smile and helps me keep the important things in perspective.

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Introduction

"In assessing a site's significance, one important question must be asked. How much will we lose in information about its former occupants if we do not conduct excavations? If the amount is quite small, then the significance of the site is not all that great. On the other hand, the danger of losing a lot of knowledge by not excavating makes it more imperative that such a site be dug. What makes one site more liable to information loss than another is the degree to which it is represented in the documents. The less documentation, the more we stand to learn from excavation. Thus, site significance can be measured along two dimensions, time and documentary richness."[1] – *James Deetz*

Birchtown is located on the south shore of Nova Scotia (see Figure 1), some five miles southwest of Shelburne, a historically white community founded at the same time. Settled by Black Loyalists in 1783, Birchtown soon became the largest settlement of free black people in all of North America, with a population of 1,521 (Niven 1998). Black Loyalist refers to those individuals, of African or African-descent, who responded to the Phillipsburg Proclamation of 1779, which promised:

"to every NEGRO who shall desert the Rebel Standard, full security to follow within these Lines, any Occupation which he shall think proper."[2]

Birchtown's settlers may be viewed as pioneers in the quest for emancipation of Africans and African-descendents in North America.

Birchtown thrived for less than ten years. From 1783 until 1791, the Black Loyalist settlers worked to build the infrastructure of their community with little of the support promised by the British government for their loyalty in America's War for Independence. Disbanded troops were to receive land in amounts that differed based on rank, from 1000 acres for a field officer to 100 acres for a private, not counting any allowances that may be made for family members, i.e. acreage for wives and children. Throughout the British territories in the new world, the British government struggled to

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accommodate their subjects with much less land than they had predicted, since they, of course, lost the war. Unlike their white neighbours, many Birchtown settlers waited up to five years for any land to be granted them, and when it did come, it was less than originally promised. Lots at Birchtown reported as ten-acre lots are now known, as a result of the research I have conducted for this thesis, to be less than seven acres. During the time of most intense settlement at Birchtown, the inhabitants suffered through a province-wide famine, lacking not just food, but tools such as saws, hoes, and axes with which to provide for themselves. Many of the people attempted to provide for themselves and their children through wage-labour and indentured servitude. In the case of wage labour, black people were paid less than white people, and so unemployed whites felt they could not compete for work. While blacks did not expect to be paid the same as whites then, the employers took advantage of this and got their work done as cheaply as possible. This situation led to severe racial tension that erupted into North America's first race riot on July 26, 1784 that went on for almost a month (Raymond 1908:265). White people came from Shelburne to beat black people and to burn their homes, especially after free blacks living in Shelburne had fled to Birchtown.

> "Great Riot today. The disbanded soldiers have risen against the Free negroes to drive them out of Town, because they labour cheaper than they - the soldiers" (Marston 1784 in Raymond 1908:265)
> "Later they came and beat him with sticks and drove him into a swamp. Along with others of his colour [David] George sought refuge in Birchtown.... While the force of the riot continued in Shelburne for at least ten days, incursions into Birchtown were reported for up to one month" (Walker 1992:49).

The climate, as well, was very different than what many of the Black Loyalists had experienced who were from the southern regions of the modern United States. The colder, wetter and rockier environment seemed to add only insult to injury, figurative and

literal. In January of 1792, 1,196 Black Loyalists left Nova Scotia and sailed to Sierra Leone under an initiative taken by the English Sierra Leone Company, in a second attempt to establish the independence, autonomy and freedom that had eluded them in the past decade as British subjects in the Americas.

Before leaving, the Black Loyalists sold as much as they could, their land - if they had been successful in being granted any, their homes, if they could find a buyer, dependent upon the conditions of the structure and any goods they didn't absolutely need. Their existence, in terms of material culture, was sparse, their homes, quite perishable and their opportunity for successful establishment of commercial activity virtually nil. This has all translated into an archaeological record that appears quite fragmented and lean. How can we make the most of what we have? How do we learn about the everyday lives of these people with so little to go on? The results of this project are just one possible window onto this information, so we make of it all that we can.

Birchtown was the site of two important firsts in black cultural history in North America, yet we know little of the average person in Birchtown. What was life like, day-to-day? What did Birchtown look like? How did it function? How did the settlers cope with the transition from enslavement and domination to free citizens structuring their own lives? How did their culture influence their responses to the Nova Scotian environment, as compared with their white Loyalist neighbours? Where, exactly, was Birchtown?

For the first time in the history of the New World, freedom was offered, en masse, to the Africans and African descendents who had, for nearly two centuries, endured enslavement and oppression on this continent. After the war, the British government settled thousands of Black Loyalists throughout their empire, but little is known of the

development of this cultural history, these pioneers of freedom and their responses to their new homes.

The National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commemorated the Black Loyalist Experience, but the place of Birchtown, itself. does not have federal designation or protection. Part of the reason has been that a definition of the place. with boundaries, centres and the network of community function that the Black Loyalist settlers began to establish in 1783, was unknown.

In an effort to rediscover this place. its people and their history. archaeological investigations have been carried out by various agencies, such as Nova Scotia Power Incorporated. Saint Mary's University and the Nova Scotia Museum, since 1993 (Niven 1998). However. the most extensive explorations have been carried out by the Black Loyalist Heritage Society (formerly known as the Shelburne County Cultural Awareness Society). In researching this thesis, I have sought to gain an understanding of the settlers of Birchtown through their vernacular landscape,[3] the remains of the homes and objects they left behind and the story they have to tell us about what life was like here. after the American Revolution, for the Black Loyalist people. A vernacular landscape can be defined as the environment created and built by the inhabitants of a place. As a landscape, it is more than just the physical structures, but the community, system and spaces they create. As a vernacular landscape. it is not specifically designed but rather evolved through cultural needs and norms.

The primary historical records available are comprised of memoirs or journals from three Christian missionaries. Boston King, David George and John Marrant. Passing mentions are made in the diary of Benjamin Marston, a surveyor for the crown

who was involved in the delineation of lots at Birchtown during the earliest years. A catalogue of people, known as the *Book of Negroes*, includes information about the people destined for Birchtown. As well, a critically important map, known as the Goulden Map (see Figure 2) was found during renovations of an old home in the neighbouring community of Gunning Cove. It had fallen onto the floor from its hiding place of two centuries in the wall. This folded up piece of paper was nearly tossed away with the rest of the wall debris. Fortunately, the renovator picked it up, unfolded it and found the only known copy of the proposed land grants for the Black Loyalists of Birchtown, Nova Scotia.

There is a comparative lack of documentary information available about the people, architecture and community structure of Birchtown. In this thesis I have attempted to derive new insights into the experiences of Black Loyalists from a spatial analysis of the historic archaeological record of Birchtown. I have also sought to learn about the environment these people created for themselves. First, I investigated social and cognitive dimensions of space in this late eighteenth century black community through the archaeological record of its material spaces and supporting documentary research. Next, I explored the utility of digital image processing and remotely sensed image technology, as well as digital Geographic Information System (GIS) integration and analysis of image, cartographic and ancillary data for archaeological research. GISs combine spatial and attribute data to allow both classes of data to be managed and analyzed together. This project moves a step beyond the spaces of enslavement to a free eighteenth century community. The central question driving my first objective required that I investigate not only the social and cognitive dynamics of space through material

spaces, but also, how the experiences of enslavement and the climate of inequality and its effects manifested themselves in the construction and use of these material spaces in a free environment.

When considering this community through their archaeological remains, one must bear in mind the material, political and economic limitations that these settlers experienced. These people were not only pioneers on a colonial frontier, but were also pioneers in the social fabric of the Western world. They began blazing the trail toward freedom and independence for all African-Canadian and African-American people through their recognition in the British Empire as free subjects under the Crown. Their realities, however, did not reflect this equality.

As mentioned above, I used the spatial analysis approach to examine the historical and archaeological information available for Birchtown. I integrated and managed the various data sources in a geographic information system (GIS). In today's digital world, GIS most often refers to a computer software system. For this project I chose ESRI's Arcview 3.2. The GIS facilitates the examination of spatial data in conjunction with historical data to explore intangible socio-spatial relationships of archaeological features in their cultural and natural environments. This method allows expedient exploration of spatial issues by allowing various georeferenced[4] data sources to be integrated in a matter of minutes, thus enabling quick, repeatable answers and the development of new questions. In so doing, my goal was to develop a preliminary pattern of land use or spatial organization and allow "gaps" in the pattern to be identified and noted as potential sources of further archaeological and historical data.

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[1] Deetz, James *Flowerdew Hundred: The Archaeology of a Virginia Plantation, 1619-1864.* University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville. p.155

[2] Carleton Papers, doc. 2094, Clinton, 3 June 1779.

[3] James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz. "Vernacular House Forms in Seventeenth Century Plymouth Colony: Analysis of Evidence from the Plymouth Colony Room-by-Room Probate Inventories 1633-1685" University of Virginia, 1998.

"Vernacular, folk, or traditional houses are those which have not been designed by architects. but by local builders. Their design may be influenced by formal architecture, but they embody cultural traditions which are a regional expression of the way their builders and users viewed their world within the constraints of their economic circumstances."

[4] Georeferencing refers to assigning geographic data its appropriate place in the real world according to an accepted coordinate system such as latitude/longitude or universal transverse mercator, for example. Georeferencing allows distances to be measured and interdependent geographical features to be analyzed together.

Theory

"[Vernacular architecture]...is the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of a culture, its needs and values – as well as the desires, dreams and passions of a people. It is the world view writ small, the "ideal" environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist or architect with an axe to grind....The folk tradition is much more closely related to the culture of the majority and life as it is really lived...."[1] *– Amos Rapoport*

The built environment, beyond its function of sheltering humans, is a physical expression of the social and cognitive ideals of a culture. The act of building creates spaces, boundaries and routes for movement and the existences of each of these have measurable impacts at different scales, i.e. households, communities or regions. Studying the spatial organization of a community's vernacular built environment offers the opportunity to learn about its social organization and cultural values through more democratic means than the historical documentary record provided for it. This chapter focuses on some of the theories regarding the reflection of social organization, function and cultural values through the arrangement of space in the built environment. Understanding space in this way will aid in the interpretation of the archaeological record at Birchtown.

Human space has physical, intellectual and social facets (LeFebvre:1997; Merrifield:1991; Soja:1989). Labeling of the dimensions of space often differs, but for present purposes I adopted Edward Soja's labels of material, social and cognitive spaces. This tripartite configuration means that the concept of space is more than the simple duality of here and there. Recognition of the tripartite nature of space is a post-modern development. Post-modernism requires explanation of the other, which may be loosely transcribed as the cognitive element of space; that which connects the physical reality with the social reality of a culture. The *fact* of interface between two elements and the

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interface as an element in and of itself, demonstrates the recognition of a previous gap in spatial theory. Previously understood in spatial theory were material space and social space but as the need to label *the other* grew, so did recognition of cognitive space.

A cultural landscape may be defined as a place with an associated use and value that is perceived by a cultural group within a cognized environment. The fact that cultural landscapes can overlap one another, in physical and social space, depends on a tripartite configuration. A place, which exists physically, can play different social roles simultaneously, depending upon the cultural perspective from which it is being cognized.

Archaeology, often associated with the material dimension of space and its components of form, content, container and boundary, requires the integration of information about social and cognitive space to understand the *meaning* of the material record, from an "emic[2]" perspective. Social and cognitive spatial perspectives, in the study of material culture and physical structures, must be taken into account. This methodology is tantamount to Soja's spatiality, whereby the trialectic nature of space is cohesively bound into the "holistic experience" which is the substance of anthropological and archaeological study.

> "These different manifestations of space exist simultaneously and are interdependent; one cannot exist in isolation from any other; changes in one will theoretically result in changes in the others (Soja, 1989:120)." (Delle 1998:38)

Archaeologists Willey and Sabloff testify to the necessity of this methodology when they point out that in studying Cahokia[3], "...the nature of its immediate and supporting settlement pattern and the *socio-political inferences to be drawn therefrom* [emphasis mine]" (Willey and Sabloff 1980:241) were integral in developing an understanding of it.

James Delle, in *An Archaeology of Social Space: Analyzing Coffee Plantations in Jamaica's Blue Mountains*, calls space "...a class of material culture that can be used to manipulate human behaviours." (Delle 1998:36) Not only might space be seen to manipulate behaviour, but is also, itself, a product of human manipulation. The philosophy of Henri Lefebvre acknowledges that space, "[i]tself the outcome of past actions..."(1991: 73), is the result of human manipulation of *things* (material, social and cognitive). Those *things* are comprised of ideas (in cognitive space), objects (in material space) and relationships, both relative and absolute (in social space).

Delle uses the material spaces exhibited in the archaeological record to understand the social inequality suffered by the enslaved African peoples[4] living on Jamaica's coffee plantations in the Blue Mountains. He points out that control of space was used to reinforce the hegemony of the white European elite. When crisis harkened change, the plantation owners used material space to reinforce their place in the socio-economic hierarchy. Platforms, balconies and upper level windows were built to raise the plantation owners and overseers "above" the enslaved people. This increased the overseers' ability to see and watch their charges and to decrease the possibilities for privacy among the enslaved people as they worked (Delle 1998:196). This behaviour demonstrates Soja's spatial holism; i.e. change in the social structure results in change in the physical structure of space.

Control of space, its creation, form and use is a material demonstration of social power (Gordon in Harp & Hofley 1980:461&463). In addition to demonstrations of power and control, social resistance can also be detected spatially. For example, one may cite the creation and use of "hidey holes" under the floors of slave cabins[5] on

plantations in the American South. In such an instance, the enslaved person resisted their position through the creation of a secret or private space, of which the slave-owner had no knowledge. Once such a practice was discovered, the slave-owners began constructing raised cabins for housing enslaved people to disallow creation of such holes without their visual detection (Kelso 1984 in Deetz 1993:140).

There are four broad categories of space: public, semi-public, semi-private and private. The spatial category deemed "suitable" by a culture for a social behaviour can demonstrate the culture's perspective on that behaviour and aid in understanding the mechanisms of social function and control (Rapoport in King 1980:298-9; Conway & Roenisch 1994:23). For instance, in his memoirs, Birchtown pioneer and preacher, Boston King, talks about his personal communion with God in private places. However, these places seemed, by his descriptions and cultural standards, places suited to shameful activity. In a community where religion is an important part of public social life, what does it mean when one who "seeks God" or has not yet been "touched by the spirit" runs and hides in the woods to pray in private or locks the door of his home, once alone, to pray out of sight from others? This is what King relates in his memoirs but it contrasts with the story of his wife's conversion to Christianity, with John Marrant's stories of his followers' intercourses with God, or David George and other black missionaries' stories. The screaming, moaning, fainting, writhing on the floor, etcetera, associated with being touched by the holy spirit and cleansed of spiritual impurities occurred in public or semi-public meetings of individuals, either at prayer meetings in homes or within church buildings, but in the presence of others. Boston seeks God in private and semi-private

spaces. However, it is the act of conversion that appears to require the validation of others. and is thus set in public and semi-public space.

In *The Domestication of the Human Species*. Peter Wilson discusses the importance of vision and control of visibility. In comparing open hunter/gatherer societies with domesticated societies. he states. "....we can attribute the adoption of an architectural environment to the transition from a social order founded on focus to one founded on boundary" (Wilson 1988:57-58). In societies without architecture. visibility is managed by what an individual focuses on or pays attention to. not what is available to be seen. Privacy is created through averted eyes and lack of acknowledgement. however. these mechanisms can be used to offer privacy or for exclusion of others. In both cases. "walls" defining social organization and function for access to and control of information are created by behaviour. In architectural societies. cognitive and social spaces are actualized through physical boundaries. This physical manifestation of space as understood by the members of a cultural group demonstrates the interdependence of Soja's trialectics. Privacy is taken by an individual. not given by others. The ability and degree to which privacy may be taken denotes an individual's control over themselves (Gordon 1980:461 in Harp and Hofley). since privacy may be used to defy or scheme against excluded parties. Walls. fences and other such architectural structures provide tools for the definition and maintenance of private space.

Wilson goes on to say that:

"....delimiting the village in space, planned or not, offers boundary analogies for the definition of a community. The social relations between people receive an increasingly precise spatial – hence visual and material – definition: structure becomes more explicit" (Wilson 1988:60-61).

The Jamaican plantations studied by Delle offer an excellent example of this interdependence between visibility and social and material structure.

Amos Rapoport offers a perspective on spatial understandings of human environments derived from both anthropological and architectural schools of thought.

> "Architecture can provide settings for certain activities, remind people of what these activities are, signify power, status or privacy, express and support cosmological beliefs, communicate information, help establish individual or group identity and encode value systems" (Rapoport in King 1980:299).

In a discussion of the cultural determinants of vernacular architectural form, he writes that there may be, "...no walls or barriers, but these transitions are important and there are rules of passage for negotiating them; they are not easily passed though invisible" (from King 1980:298). Rapoport recognizes the impact of socially prescribed use of space on one's understanding or cognition of their environment, as well as its material form and resultant behaviour. Remembering back to Wilson's observations of the importance of visibility and the impacts of structures such as walls and fences, one can comprehend the prohibitive, protective and network creation and control (information routing) effects of such structures and the demonstration of control over oneself that the construction and use of such features would convey. This principle will be an important one to remember when examining archaeological remains of historic Birchtown.

Among the characteristics of vernacular architecture, Rapoport notes, "....working *with* the site and micro-climate, respect for other people and *their* houses and hence for the total environment..." (1969:5). In the case of Birchtown, as we will see, both of these characteristics of vernacular architecture are significant. The physical microclimate influenced site choice as did, I believe, the social micro-climate. Additionally, expression of respect (for self and others) through architectural means had

more opportunity to manifest itself in Birchtown than in previous environments experienced by the settlers, under slavery.

Socio-economic priorities are often expressed through architecture. Rapoport says that, "...what finally decides the form of a dwelling, and moulds the spaces and their relationships, is the vision that people have of the ideal life" (1969:47). If this is the case, then what might a one room log cabin have to say, as compared to a hall-and-parlour[6] style house? Deetz (1993 & 1998) and Carson (1981) suggest that the balance of effort expended on the construction of a dwelling house reflects the amount of effort that must be expended on economic activity, such as wage labour or agriculture, in order to survive. Where a great amount of effort is required for economic and subsistence success, less can be expended on the creation of a dwelling. Therefore, where impermanent architecture, such as a one room log cabin set on wooden piers upon the earth is built, this can imply that survival pressures are greater than on a neighbour in a hall-and-parlour style or framed house. Additionally, one room, as opposed to two can signify either lower economic status or less pressure for privacy, i.e. fewer neighbours or a cultural norm of "open social space". "Fewer neighbours meant less need for privacy" (Deetz 1998:9). So, in terms of an "ideal life," a one room log cabin may signify independence and a pioneering life-style whose ideal may be self-sufficiency, whereas, a hall-and-parlour style house may reflect an ideal where surplus time will allow for social entertainment within one's home, and perhaps, closer neighbours.

According to Rapoport, vernacular architecture has an "additive quality" which signifies it's open-ended and unspecialized nature (1969:5-6). This, one may suppose, reflects something of the economic limitations experienced by most lay-builders, as

opposed to the grand structures created with greater wealth. There is no great architectural "plan" beyond the fulfillment of personal requirements according to subconscious, culturally determined rules. A class of architecture created by lay-builders that does possess a certain "plan," would be religious or socially significant, such as a church. Again, I defer to Rapoport, who states this point so well.

> "Any emotional or religious surplus, and therefore *material* surplus, which is extremely limited in societies of scarcity, is reserved for these special types of buildings, and then there is always a hierarchy present" (1969:10).

Birchtown was a community in which material scarcity played a significant part in its development. Land was at issue, as were tools and materials with which to create shelters, but religious fervour played a dominant role in everyday life, according to the memoirs of Boston King, John Marrant and David George – all Christian preachers. Places of congregation and worship would, according to the above excerpt from Rapoport, have been important developments for the settlers of this community, to define it socially, materially and spiritually or cognitively. One can imagine, under the hardships these people were forced to endure, discrimination and hate, poverty, famine, ticks, mosquitoes, poor-quality land, lacking resources in every sense, that emotions must have been overwhelming each day. Organization - under a preacher - and protection sought from a higher power, given the prior experiences of these people in slaving societies, would seem to be likely choices for priority and corporate investment of labour and resources. It appears to have been protection of spirit, freedom and home that were the highest priorities expressed through architecture and the organization of space at Birchtown.

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[1] Rapoport, Amos *House Form and Culture.* Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ. 1969 p.2

[2] An emic perspective comes from within a cultural group, as a native participant of the culture would see as opposed to the perspective of an outside observer. Etic refers to this opposing view of a culture, from the outside.

[3] "...the largest prehistoric earth mound complex in the eastern United States" (Willey and Sabloff 1980:241)

[4] Please note that throughout this work I have not used the term "slaves" to describe the Africans and African descendents that worked as slave labourers. Although many use this term, I have come to feel that calling a person a "slave" implies that this is the person's identity and that it does not accord appropriate recognition of the fact that these people had this done to them, that it was not a choice. When a person is called a carpenter or a teacher or a parent it denotes a life choice that is used in the creation of their own identity. People are enslaved, they are not slaves, so while some may find the use of "enslaved people" in place of "slaves" cumbersome to read, at times, I believe it is an important recognition to become cognizant of and not to neglect for the sake of compositional convenience.

[5] I do use the term "slave cabins" because it denotes a recognized architectural form. I do not feel that this is contrary to the disuse of the term "slaves" because it does not refer to people, but rather a physical structure with a socio-political inference, such as "courthouse," "poorhouse" or "hunting/fishing camp."

[6] Deetz, James, 1993 *Flowerdew Hundred: The Archaeology of a Virginia Plantation 1619 – 1864.* p. 35
   Hall-and-parlour houses: "The floor plan is one of two rooms on either side of a chimney, which is indicated by an H-
   shaped hearth....The larger of the two rooms, and the more public, entered directly from the outside, was a multi-purpose space, where people cooked, ate, slept, and engaged in various crafts. The smaller room, the parlor, accessible only from the larger hall, was a more private space and usually served as a sleeping room for the head of the household and his spouse and a place to store and display more valuable items, such as clocks, plate, or special ceramics. Important guests may have been entertained there as well."

Methodology

The development of Birchtown, Nova Scotia's historic vernacular landscape is not fully understood. Since the settlers were black, their activities were neither well documented nor are they self-evident today, as the built environment of the community has been relegated to the archaeological record only. The objective of this project was to examine spatial data in conjunction with historical data with the assistance of GIS software to explore intangible socio-spatial relationships of currently identified archaeological features in their cultural and natural environments. In so doing, I hoped a preliminary pattern of land use or spatial organization would emerge and allow "gaps" in the pattern to be identified and noted as potential sources of further archaeological data. I also hoped that this would increase understanding of the lives and experiences of the people who created this community and what life in Birchtown was really like. I gathered information from historical documents, archaeological excavations, aerial photographs and modern and historic map data.

There were four phases of this research project. The sequence of phases was as follows.

Phase 1: Literature review

The initial literature review consisted of a survey of available documentary data regarding discourse on theories of social, material and cognitive space. I have consulted the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1989; 1991), Amos Rapoport (1969; 1977; 1980), Peter Wilson (1988), Anthony King (1980), Charles Gordon (1980), James Delle (1998) and James Deetz (1977; 1993; Deetz & Deetz 1998). The contributions made by each of these sources aided in interpreting and understanding the cognitive and social ramifications of the material spaces identified as part of historic Birchtown.

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Primary historical documents regarding black culture and material communities also contributed to the understanding of Birchtown's past. Journals and memoirs from three of Birchtown's former inhabitants have offered perspectives on life in Birchtown rooted in the functioning of Christian religion. All three memorialists were Christian preachers, one Baptist and two Methodist. The diary of Benjamin Marston, a surveyor for the colonial government in Nova Scotia following the American Revolution also mentions the goings on at Birchtown in its natal period. Marston discusses issues surrounding land grants at Birchtown and comments on some of the social and personal demeanors in the region, at that time. The Goulden Map (Figure 2), whose discovery was described in the introduction, was a special kind of historical document. Its contribution to this project and the processes it underwent in making contribution will be discussed later.

Secondary historical sources on the West African Slave Trade, as well as cultural history of African Americans and Loyalists provided a great deal of information. Melville Herskovits' 1941 treatise, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, was an excellent source of information on cultural survival and the methods by which it took place in the African American community. This work was an important milestone for the recognition of africanisms[1] in the west and their enculturated acceptance as part of the mosaic of culture in the Americas. Unique forms of worship often associated with Christianity in the black community such as dancing, singing, and public displays of interaction with the spiritual plane and this same "trend" in Christian worship in the white community, can be traced back to spirituality in the African cultures from which enslaved people had come, according to Herskovits.

Walker's *the Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone 1783~1870* was a good source of social history. This book seemed to allot the greater share of its pages to the settlement in Sierra Leone, however, given that the people who stayed in Nova Scotia were not Walker's focus, this is understandable. His work does, however, offer an opportunity to examine the stepped development of a people's identity and political chronicle. Sierra Leone was the second chance for establishment of a free community, a chance to "do things better the second time around." Those Black Loyalists who went to Sierra Leone had the benefit of experience and lessons learned in their attempts to settle in Nova Scotia, and so were better equipped to circumvent or solve problems they had faced once before. Walker does provide, though, an excellent summation of the etic perspective on Birchtown.

Archaeological texts dealing with places of enslavement of Africans and African descendents served as comparative literature for the archaeological record of Birchtown. These sources, primary among them being Theresa Singleton's compilation, *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, provided information on the material background from which many of the Black Loyalist settlers came. These interpretations also aided in the development of a baseline for understanding Birchtown's archaeological sites. They served as a basis for comparison between the organization and structuring of space between spaces of enslavement and spaces of freedom.

Archaeological reports from Birchtown, itself, provided a wonderful chance to track the evolution of understanding about life in the community. Perhaps the most overwhelming sentiment noted was the recognition of the increasing complexity of the site, as evidenced in Figures 13-17, 19-21 & 23-25, and the need for a great deal more

research. This acknowledgement has developed over the years since 1993, the beginning of archaeological investigation at Birchtown.

I also reviewed literature pertaining to the application of geomatics technologies (GIS, remote sensing and global positioning systems[2] (GPS)) in anthropological and archaeological studies. Archaeologists such as Kenneth Kvamme, Scott Madry and Fred Limp, among others, have made massive steps in application assessment of these technologies to archaeological data and provided an important perspective on these technologies for archaeologists and anthropologists.

Phase 2: Image Processing and GIS Database Construction

During this phase of the project, the geographic data were integrated into the GIS for comparison and examination. The process of integration took the lion's share of this time and effort. Data integration into a GIS requires that the data be in digital format and registered to a geographic base. For this project, modern 1:10000 scale base data vectors[3], created by the province of Nova Scotia, constituted the georeferenced source to which all spatial data were registered. The accuracy of these data is +/- five metres, which means that the coordinate of the digital feature (i.e. the line representing a road) is guaranteed to be within five metres, on either side of the actual feature in the real world for a total span of ten metres. Since all of the spatial data utilized for this project were registered using the same base data, their co-registration, that is their accuracy in overlaying one another, was excellent at less than a metre. The two levels of accuracy, five metre base data and one metre co-registration, compound to give a six metre final product[4]. Co-registered data sources with lesser accuracy (more than a metre off the

mark) were older, such as the Goulden Map, and so suffered greater inherent geometric distortion. However, in the case of the Goulden Map, the greater geometric distortion required to allow the map to overlay with the other geographic data was positive because the original map was not geometrically accurate (compare Figures 2, 7-9 & 10). The digital base vectors included elevation contours, roads, river boundaries, shorelines, land cover, land use and modern property boundaries.

The Goulden Map and the aerial photography were both integrated as image data. This meant that the data were saved in raster[5] format, in particular as Tagged Image File Format (or .tif) files. The hard copy format of the aerial photography was scanned on a flatbed scanner at 600 dots per inch (dpi) for the 1989 1:10000 scale true colour[6] image (Figure 3) and 300 dpi for the 1927 & 1928 black and white aerial photography (Figures 4 & 5). The black and white aerial photos were scanned at a lower resolution[7] because of the variability within the photos, such as blurriness, due to age and technology. Scanning at a higher resolution would not have improved upon the data available in the original photo, but would have produced a larger, more cumbersome digital file, in terms of disk space.

Once the aerial photos were converted to a digital format, they needed to be registered to the geographic base data. This involves choosing matching points in the non-georeferenced image and in the georeferenced data source, using image-processing software designed to perform the georeferencing and geometric corrections of image data. This project utilized PCI's Easi/Pace, a Canadian software package. The processing ultimately produces what is commonly called an "image map" which simply means that one can choose a point on a digital image with a mouse in a geographically

intelligent software package and the coordinate values, such as the latitude and longitude, will be returned. One of the primary benefits of georeferencing images, i.e. aerial photos, is that vector data such as roads and rivers and archaeological site maps can be overlaid, assuming that the georeferencing for both data sources are in the same coordinate system. One can then explore, visually, the synoptic natural context of a spatial feature, such as an archaeological site or a road, because everything lines up properly (see Figures 23 – 25).

The matching points mentioned above are called Ground Control Points (GCPs). The distribution of gcps across the span of an image can effect how well the image lines up with the other spatial data, roads and rivers, for example. If the gcps are clustered around a small area, that area will likely fit very well, whereas further away from the cluster, the data will fit less and less well. The ideal then, is to try to distribute the gcps widely and evenly across the image to minimize the distance from a gcp, and therefore the amount of distortion in the fitting or transformation process.

This kind of georeferencing and geometric correction process is called a polynomial transformation. It takes into account distances in X and Y dimensions, that is distances in east-west and distances in north-south. The amount of "warping" the computer will allow between the gcps to make things fit properly depends on the order of the polynomial which can range between first and fifth, five being the most amount of distortion and one being the least. The aerial photos used in this project were registered using a first order polynomial transformation. There is another type of georeferencing called "orthocorrection" which takes into account not only X and Y distances, but Z as well, that is, elevation or topography. The 3-D perspectives of mountain valleys or the

fly-through effects based on data collected on Mars for example, which have become a common sight, are based on orthocorrected imagery.

Orthocorrections were not done for this project. The first reason for this is that the topographic variability is negligible in the study area and, would not have a significant effect on the accuracy of fit of the image data. The second is that orthocorrections build a more static model for transformation and would not necessarily allow for the kinds of distortions required to make old data fit. The fact of the matter is, today's aerial photography systems take a far better picture than they used to, airplanes fly more easily at a constant elevation and the recording media, film, emulsions and digital sensors, are less likely to "blur" or generalize areas. Orthocorrection models are built more for the ideals of today's remote sensing technology, not for when Royal Air Force pilots were strapping cameras to the sides of their airplanes.

Older aerial photos, however, often have information in them that the archaeologist wants, such as a picture of a clearing whose boundaries can be mapped, but which today is an overgrown archaeological site whose boundaries are difficult to detect (compare Figures 3-5). Perhaps an old aerial photo covers the house that, today, is only a cellar feature. Modern aerial photos also make important image maps for the archaeologist who wants to understand the "bird's eye" view perspective of an archaeological community, or the nature of wilderness he or she is expected to hike through to perform a pedestrian survey. Aerial photos are common tools used by archaeologists for decades (Deuel 1969), so as a spatial information source they should be included in an archaeological GIS.

No problems were encountered in georeferencing the modern aerial photo dataset. The historic aerial photos were marginally more challenging due to their lack of colour depth (as black and white images), their poorer resolution (due to age and technology) and their inherent geometric inaccuracies. All of these small factors meant that more than ten gcps were required for the registration and correction of the 1920's air photos, as compared to only seven for the modern aerial photograph. The biggest challenge was the Goulden Map, surveyed and drawn to eighteenth century geodetic standards.

Attribute data, specifically information from the *Book of Negroes* and church records from nearby Shelburne, were managed in tabular format, initially as spreadsheets and then integrated into the GISs tabular functionality. The spreadsheet software used for these data was Microsoft Excel. However, thanks to Laird Niven's[8] generosity, the attribute data were received in digital format, allowing concentration on the image and map data. Mr. Niven also delivered a digital file of the Goulden Map (Figure 2).

The Goulden Map, as a primary historical document, was treated quite differently than the aerial photos in the digital conversion process. Laird Niven, the project archaeologist and seasoned photographer opted to photograph the map and have the photograph developed as a digital file, by scanning the negative. This minimized the amount of handling and exposure to light and other stresses to which conventional scanning would have subjected this artifact. The results were excellent (see Figure 2). The names of the people for whom specific land grants were intended are available directly on the map, integrated with the spatial information. In the case of the Black Loyalist land grants, there are only three names, visible in Figure 12, written for 36 land grants and more than 1500 people. The discrepancy between the number of lots and the

number of people is not the result of huge families, but rather most likely resultant from the unfair and inefficient system of granting lands to the Black Loyalists. In his journal, Benjamin Marston notes the disregard held for Birchtown and its inhabitants by other Loyalists and surveyors[9]. The paucity in the identification of Black Loyalist landholders' lots, however, makes the three names available quite precious.

As mentioned above, this late eighteenth century map was created with late eighteenth century knowledge of geodesy and cartography. The surveyor who surveyed these lots at Birchtown, Benjamin Marston, was not a surveyor by trade, but rather got "hired-on-for-the-job" due to the landgrant crisis after the American Revolution. Not only was there not enough land for everyone, there were not enough surveyors to keep up with the demand. That said, Marston was not incompetent, but his lack of experience and training is a potential source of geometric distortion in the map. It may also explain some discrepancies that have come to light as a result of georeferencing and geometrically correcting this map in the size of lots promised and those actually surveyed. This brings up the point that there are geometric distortions in the Goulden Map that make it difficult to georeference without allowing an increased amount of distortion in the transformation process (see Figure 10) as compared with the aerial photos, even the older ones. I feel confident in the places finally chosen for gcps because, while Marston may not have been a trained professional, he did recognize and record certain features and landmarks in whose identity I am confident. As well, there appear to be vestiges of these original landgrant boundaries in the modern property boundaries, which assisted in the final registration of the Goulden Map. As a result of the distortion in and that required for the geometric correction of the Goulden Map, its registration was an iterative process.

The first attempt at correction of the Goulden Map used thirty-one gcps, as shown in Figure 6. The georeferenced data source, available at that time, consisted of basic modern road, river, and shoreline vectors. The roads were not there in the 1780's, so they could not be chosen as gcps. The rivers, as all rivers do, changed in size and shape constantly, due to forces such as erosion. Additionally, there were only two watercourses, Ackers Brook and Birchtown Brook, both of which were noted to have changed too significantly since the aerial photos taken in the 1920's to be used with any confidence to georeference the Goulden Map, let alone correct for geometric distortions. All that was left to collect gcps with was the ocean shoreline of Birchtown Bay. Rather than choosing the actual shorelines depicted in the modern vector, data a "best guess" was made based on erosional trends noted in the air photo dataset to establish where the shoreline would have been and was generalized in the 1780's. While it was recognized that this would not be perfect, it would be a starting point and it was the best that could be done, given the limited base data that was available at that time. Figure 6 shows that the distribution of these gcps across the span of the image is less than ideal and goes nowhere near the distal end of the landgrants, inland and away from the Bay. This first iteration did not produce satisfactory results. The Goulden Map was positioned in Birchtown, but that's the kindest thing that can be said (see Figure 7).

In the interim between the first and second iterations a most useful vector data source was identified and integrated into the GIS: modern property boundaries from the Nova Scotia Registry of Deeds office. In these, it appeared that vestiges of the original land grant boundaries still existed, though fragmented, in the modern property lines. As well, through the process of gcp collection and examination of the vector, aerial photo

and historical data for Birchtown, the "lay of the land" became more familiar. The combination of increased familiarity with Birchtown spatiality, historical development, and this new vector data source motivated an entirely new gcp selection process. In addition, the new vector source allowed gcps to be collected away from the shoreline and deeper inland, toward the "back" of the landgrants.

Another, and perhaps equally crucial development in the process of georeferencing and geometrically correcting this map was the recognition of a fact which should have been evident in the beginning. The Goulden Map was a tall, wide image, tens of thousands of pixels. However, the area of interest, Birchtown and the Black Loyalist landgrants, constituted only a small portion of the image. The area of it required, by this project, to be spatially accurate, was really quite small, and so the top quarter of the image file corresponding to the area of interest was clipped and saved as a subset. This allowed the computer to concentrate on stretching, for want of a better term, on as smaller area and minimized the surface area that had to be modeled to fit, geometrically. Thus, with a smaller file and an entirely new set of gcps, only seventeen gcps (see Figure 11) as compared to the earlier thirty-one Figure 6), the Goulden Map was processed with another first order polynomial transformation. This was closer than the first iteration, but not close enough (see Figure 8).

Confident in the gcp selection, the order of the polynomial transformation was increased to second and the current and closest version resulted. As you can see in Figure 9, the external boundaries of the Black Loyalist land grants nearly fit. The shorelines exhibit better agreement; the landward end of the Black Loyalist land grants came close to the modern vestige, which mimics its shape. The internal property

divisions were close to the modern lines. The suspicions of the seasoned project archaeologist appeared supported: the modern highway slices right through the middle of the Black Loyalist landgrants.

The archaeological site dataset was created as a simple point dataset in the Arcview GIS software to indicate the centroid positions of archaeological features identified in the course of fieldwork (Figure 12). Niven collected these data with a GPS. An unfortunate gap in the GIS which was unable to be integrated as of yet, is the positional information of complex wall features running throughout Birchtown and a seemingly important part of the Black Loyalist landscape assemblage (see Figures 13 – 17). These features do play an important part in understanding the construction and use of space at Birchtown, as will be shown in the Data Analysis chapter, though they cannot yet be analyzed within the GIS. That said, point layers for Black Loyalist, nineteenth century, indeterminate and mound features were created separately, so that the features could be examined as distinct contexts.

Phase 3: Observations, Assessment of Results and Conclusions

Once the digital data were integrated into the GIS, I carefully explored and assessed them based on the spatial discourse and the heritage information. I created multiple combinations of data using the overlay and stacking arrangement functionality of the GIS and then visually assessed the new spatial and image information available within the GIS. Proximity analysis of features in the image data with those recorded in the archaeological site point dataset was performed visually and with the use of a distance measurement tool available in the software. Comparison of archaeological site positional

data with the aerial photos and the Goulden Map was also performed visually. Land cover change was assessed using the multitemporal aerial photo dataset.

The purpose of using the GIS as a tool for the exploration of the spatial data derives from the efficiency with which this tool handles this type of data. The various spatial data were quickly overlaid and rearranged to allow different combinations and perspectives to be experienced. Questions derived from the ethnohistorical. archaeological and primary historical documentation drove the exploration of the spatial data. but the GIS allowed questions to evolve and transform more quickly based on the speed with which answers to the simpler questions were obtained.

I calculated the size of the Black Loyalist landgrants based on the geometrically corrected Goulden Map. I recorded my observations and interpreted from an anthropological perspective using the spatial analytic discourse to guide my interpretation. Once I drew conclusions from the spatial analysis. I assessed these and my conclusions drawn regarding the application of the digital image and vector data.

I did not use all of the functionality of the GIS software; however. I felt the slow and careful exploration of the data should supercede the importance of utilizing as many of the GIS tools as possible. There is a great deal more information that can be derived from the GIS that has been built for Birchtown. however the data gleaned thus far has exceeded initial expectations and must be thoroughly treated before moving on to further information products.

Phase 4: Field Testing and Validation

I have suggested field objectives to the project archaeologist based on the observations and conclusions I have drawn from this research. These objectives have

provided him with specific geographic locations for identified spatial anomalies and will.

hopefully, be tested archaeologically.   In this way, the potential for the digital data to be

used to increase the efficiency of field projects as well as stand-alone feature assessment

can be tested. Ideally, the results will be positive and drive the project direction

throughout the entire field season. This is what one should expect. The original plan was

to test the GIS-derived conclusions during this past field season (2001), however.

obstacles within the agency administering the archaeological fieldwork have put plans for

further fieldwork at Birchtown on hold for the time being.

The most labour intensive phase of this project was the integration of the data into

the GIS. This task will be ongoing as long as archaeological research continues at

Birchtown.

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[1] Elements of African culture which adapt and survive in the Americas, particularly those in African American culture.

[2] A global positioning system (gps) uses a constellation of navigational satellites orbiting the earth to calculate the geographic position of a land-based unit, often a handheld device.

[3] Vector base data refer to digital points, lines and polygons used to represent spatial features.

[4] Five metre accuracy in the base data is very good. The most important objective is to have everything line up with each other - which in this case it does, within a metre or so of the base data. Everything may be off of the real world (because of the initial accuracy of the base data), but at least it is consistent. What the compounded accuracy means, however, is that the co-registered data sources could be six metres off of the real world (5+1 metre). This is a basic principle for geographic image processing.

[5] Raster data format refers to the storage of numbers in grid cells or pixels. An image is divided into a grid of pixels and a number value based on brightness is recorded as the pixel value. The computer uses the pixel values to interpret how brightly to display each cell, which when viewed at a suitable scale (i.e. zoomed out) creates an image.

[6] True color refers to the closest simulation to human vision. This is in opposition to black and white or colour infrared, for example. Humans do not see in black and white, nor do our eyes detect energy in the infrared portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. A true colour aerial photo represents the same colours one would see looking out of the window of an airplane or helicopter.

[7] In this case, the resolution referred to is spatial resolution. Spatial resolution is the smallest area on the earth or target surface that can be discerned in the image.

[8] Laird Niven has directed archaeological investigations at Birchtown since 1993. In the course of his investigations he has manually entered data from the Book of Negroes into a digital database format for the purpose of integrating it into the Birchtown GIS. Niven delivered this data to me in the winter of 2000.

[9] "Friday, [September]19 [1783]. Wrote Mr. John Neil, who is got upon water lot No. 14, Letter A., South division, that it is the property of John McNeil of Lynch's Company. His lot is Letter A., 97 North division. About 4 o'clock p.m., Capt. Turnbull came to me with a message from Capt. Barclay and others desiring me to meet them at Capt. Barclay's house. I refused to do it, but told him I would wait for them at my own marquee till ten o'clock. He went off very much disconcerted, in appearance at least. The business is about

the 50 acre lots. The people have sent out a Mr. Sperling with a pocket compass and cod line. He ran over the western side of the harbour as far as Cape Negro, laying out 50 acre lots. He has taken into his survey Birchtown, which will utterly ruin it, if it was in any degree near the truth -- for that will shift the niggers at least two lots -- should all the rest be right. For it seems he has laid out that many on the Black men's grounds. For this business he has two dollars p. Head, and some have paid the money and determine, at all adventures, to take possession under this not even a shadow of a license. Under the circumstances I cannot get a party to go out to finish the survey on that side of the harbour. I requested it last Saturday, and have repeatedly mentioned it since to no effect....

Saturday, 20. Located 10 persons upon town lots. Marked out some streets round the Cove in order to lay out water lots. Had a conference with Captains Barclay, Shakespear and Turnbull on the subject of the disposition of 50 acre lots. They have promised to overhaul that business. Mr. Tully returned from Birchtown this morning." (Marston in Raymond: 1908)

Ethnohistory

West African Slave Trade

West Africa was opened to European consumers by Portugal in 1441. When the Portuguese returned from their first explorations along its coast, they brought twelve black people whom they had obtained at a market run by black Muslims south of Cape Bianco (Whitehead 1999: pers. comm.). However, an established pool of people available for trade with Europeans was not yet in existence, certainly not in the proportions that would later be in demand.

The West African slave trade, the decisive propellant of European colonialism, began in 1510 with a shipment of African people to Haiti (Herskovits 1937). The British established forts on Africa's western coast for the purpose of participating in the slaving industry in the sixteenth century. Britain, however, did not come to dominate the West African slave trade until the eighteenth century (Curtin 1969; Rawley 1981; Donnan 1935:IV).

The forts established along the African coast were known as "slave factories", serving the purpose of storing European goods for trade with the African captors and purchased people awaiting shipment into slavery in Europe, North America and the West Indies. This slave trade forced at least ten million African people into migration. Approximately two million of those lives were lost en route. Walter Rodney (1967) puts the number of forced migrants as high as 15 and 25 million and the number of deaths en route correspondingly higher. There has, however, been a great deal of controversy surrounding the number of Africans forced into migration and enslaved.

Africans. The benefits that the slaving industry afforded the participating European countries are fairly well known; the economic success of the British Empire and the North American colonies depended on it. However, the benefits to the African traders are less popularly known. Quite apart from the economic influx created by the participation of the Europeans, the West African slave trade created a socio-political mechanism utilized at both intra- and inter-tribal levels.

Europeans were unlikely to raid African communities for people to enslave, although any raiding they did took place along the coast. The reasons for this are several and help to support the evidence for African complicity in the slaving industry. First, the tropical environments of West Africa harboured diseases against which the white Europeans had virtually no immunity, namely malaria and yellow fever (Curtin 1969: 283). In the 1780's, an Englishman, Thomas Clarkson, assembled and submitted to the Privy Council the results of an investigation he had conducted into crew mortality rates in the English sector of the West African slave trade. Clarkson found that roughly 24% of any given English ship's crew died or were lost at sea. This number far exceeded the mortality rate of English ships' crews engaged in trade elsewhere, East or West India, St. Petersburg, Newfoundland or Greenland, for example (Clarkson 1788; Part II cited in Curtin 1969: 285.

In addition, tribal warfare or territoriality would make the interspersion of European raiders virtually impossible and definitely not cost effective in the long term. An account of an early attempted coastal raid indicates the disadvantages with which the Europeans met. One may assume that inland raids, with less convenient access to their

ships for retreat, lacking knowledge of terrain. cultural territories and community

locations, not to mention increased risk of disease, would have made such raids too high a

risk and ineffective for their purposes.

> " ...the captain with a dozen men went through the town, returned
> finding 200 negroes at the water's side, shooting at them in the
> boats, and cutting them in pieces which were drowned in the
> water...Thus we returned back somewhat discomforted...having
> gotten by our own going ten negroes, and lost seven of our best
> men, and we had 27 of our men hurt. We departed with all our
> ships from Sierra Leone. towards the West Indies..." (Hakluyt
> 1972: 105-106).

The above factors would have required willing African participation in the slave

trade for it to become a profitable and longstanding industry. Slavery did exist among

African tribes prior to the establishment of the West African slave trade. though the

nature of it as an element of society was very different than slavery in European and

colonial societies. The slavery of Africa was of a more domestic nature. not like that on

colonial plantations and was not based on race, but rather tribe.

African merchants provided human resources for trade with the Europeans. in

exchange for European goods, such as guns. and gunpowder, which they desired.

Herskovits opened the way to viewing the African role in the slave trade by focusing on

the tribal origins of enslaved people. He explored the relationships between the groups

from which these people came and African slave dealers. Dahomeans, from the Kingdom

of Dahomey, are cited as among the most aggressive. and most economically successful

slave dealers along the Gold Coast. capturing and selling off members of neighbouring

tribes. An annual "war" helped supply the Dahomean slave dealers (Herskovits 1941:35),

though such wars were not the norm throughout Africa. This established tradition

between different tribes does indicate extant methods for communication between

neighbouring tribes. Perhaps linguistic commonality or some kind of ritualistic event

allowed members of different tribes to communicate. Such methods of communication

would have taken on a different role under slavery in the Americas, serving to unify

enslaved people and promote survival or adaptation of cultural elements to a new creole[1]

culture.

As the slave trade grew, it provided a regular method of disposal for prisoners of

war and others unwanted by the African merchants. It seems logical that one would trade

a member of a community different than their own for personal gain. Holy wars (jihad),

access to natural resources and political wars provided cause for tribes to fight and take

prisoners who could be sold into slavery. Another factor, less readily acknowledged

historically, was the opportunity to dispose of political opponents through the slaving

industry.

In a case where two individuals vied for political power, the slaving industry

could provide a means of ridding one of opposition for good (Herskovits 1941:106). As

well, spiritual or religious leaders or members of secret societies[2] feared as too powerful

could also be disposed by this means. The above factors conditioned the socio-cultural

matrix of enslaved people. This debunks the myth that only the unintelligent and less

esteemed members of African societies were the ancestors of today's New World

African-descended people (Herskovits 1941:1).

A great deal of research has been conducted into the cultural origins of Africans

exported through the slaving industry (Curtin 1969; Rawley 1981; Herskovits 1941;

Donnan 1928 & 1930-35; Stetson 1967; Koelle 1854). Different European merchants

preferred people to enslave from specific areas, at different times. For example, at the

beginning of the eighteenth century, the English focus of the slave trade was on Liberia

and the Gold and Ivory Coasts (see Figure 18). Later, the Bights of Benin and Biafra and

Angola provided the largest supplies of human trade. Herskovits says that the English

slave trade of the last half of the eighteenth century drew heaviest from the Guinea coast

(1941:51). Curtin cites a convenient amalgamation of regions as "Guinea," including

Sierra Leone, the Gold and the Windward Coasts and some of the Bight of Benin (1969:

159).

Even more specifically, the South Carolina slave market of the eighteenth century

preferred people to enslave from the Senegambia, that is, largely Bambara and Malinké

people. The South Carolinians would take, as a second choice, inhabitants of the Gold

Coast but did not care for those from the Bight of Biafra or short people (Herskovits

1941:50). Virginians, on the other hand, did not seem as interested in ethnic origins as

the South Carolinians (Curtin 1969: 156). The preferences of the South Carolinians,

then, resulted in what appeared to be a preference among Virginians for people from the

Bight of Biafra and from the Ivory Coast.

Within the regions identified above, numerous cultural groups existed. Along the

Gold Coast were found Ashanti-Fanti and Akan. The Bights of Benin and Biafra were

home to Ibo, Efik, Ibibio, Calabahs, Bantu, Hausa, Fon, Gun, Popos, Yoruba, Nupe and

Benin peoples. Senegambia and Sierra Leone belonged to the people of the Wolof,

Malinke, Temne, Fulbe, Bambara, Susu, Mende, Koso and Sherbro tribes. These lists are

all incomplete. Here they serve as a sampling of the ethnic diversity of some of the people involved in and exported through the slaving industry. To understand the New World "slave cultures" one must understand not only the cultures from which these people came, but also the conditions into which they were sent overseas and the cultural mechanisms with which they had been imbued as Africans.

Ports in the New World, equipped to receive the human 'cargoes' of the slave ships included Charleston, South Carolina; the point of entry for over 40% of North America's enslaved Africans. Many of the people brought to Birchtown by the Loyalist forces were from South Carolina (Whitehead 1999: pers.comm.). Given the cultural preferences of South Carolinian slave-owners, mentioned before, one may assume that Senegambian cultures, filtered through the experience of slavery, would be the most likely to be found in Birchtown.

Experience of slavery

The African people who arrived in the New World would have, by that time, experienced capture, imprisonment in one of the slave factories and the conditions of the middle passage below the decks of the slave ships. In the course of these experiences, they likely witnessed death, experienced separation from family and friends, and suffered physical or sexual abuse, not to mention the mental, emotional and spiritual abuse inherent in such conditions. How did these people, having survived the journey from overseas, meet their New World and the conditions of slavery? Some escaped immediately and fled to the uninhabited countryside, becoming known as Maroons (Herskovits 1941:91). In Jamaica, this vast group of people created a formidable society

capable of launching raids of their own on the colonists' plantations (Davis 1987).

Others adapted, likely with the assistance of fellow enslaved people, becoming

acculturated to the "slave culture" of the New World. There were those, however, for

which this latest indignity was finally unbearable. They took their own lives to escape

further abuses and the horrors of this New World.

> " 'When the negroes become accustomed to the labor and life of
> the plantation, it seems to agree with them; but during the first
> years, when they are brought here free and wild from Africa, it is
> very hard to them, and many seek to free themselves from slavery
> by suicide. This is frequently the case among the Luccomees,[^{3}]
> who appear to be among the noblest tribes of Africa, and it is not
> long since eleven Luccomees were found hanging from the
> branches of a guasima tree.... They had each one bound his
> breakfast in a girdle around him; for the African believes that such
> as die here immediately rise again to new life in their native land.
> Many female slaves, therefore, will lay upon the corpse of the self-
> murdered the kerchief, or the head-gear, which she most admires.
> in the belief that it will thus be conveyed to those who are dear to
> her in the mother-country, and will bear them a salutation from her.
> The corpse of a suicide-slave has been seen covered with hundreds
> of such tokens.'" (Bremer 1868 cited in Herskovits 1941:95).

The above passage, written by a European observer in Cuba during the nineteenth

century, offers an etic perspective on African acclimation to the condition of slavery. It

tells us about some of the funerary customs, understandings of death, notions of value,

gender-related behaviour and dress and that Cuba received large quantities of enslaved

people from the Yoruban culture. It also notes the behaviour of those who did not

commit suicide, but who did live within slavery and carried elements of African culture.

While some African people did seek to escape slavery, those who endured,

adapted to and survived it created a new culture by default. The new, "slave culture" was

created with African forms of understanding, resistance and adaptation to colonial

European circumstances. It is the etic perspective, harboured and recorded by the

European colonialists which is responsible for what Melville Herskovits calls the myth of

the Negro past[4]. Through arrogance and lack of understanding of elements of African

culture and forms of resistance, five inaccurate assumptions developed which support

racism and ignorance. For example, white slave-owners interpreted attitudes of

indifference or distaste for daily tasks as laziness. Seeing this behaviour widespread

among the enslaved people, they assumed laziness was inherent to black people.

However, industrious performance was observed regularly when the enslaved were

offered opportunities that they desired, such as leave to visit spouses (Gutman 1976:

284). The culture of these enslaved people was a mixture of Africanisms, colonialisms

and elements of the European cultures that orchestrated the enslavement of African

people. This culture eventually evolved into African-American culture.

Herbert G. Gutman, social historian, writes:

> "Slavery is viewed as an oppressive circumstance that tested the
> adaptive capacities of several generations of men and women. To
> focus on the 'family' also means to focus on 'culture.'... The
> assumption that slaves could not develop and sustain meaningful
> domestic and kin arrangements denies them that capacity...."
> (1976: xxi)

The lifestyle of enslaved people in the southeastern United States will be the current

focus, as it was likely the typical experience of many later inhabitants of Birchtown.

The memoirs of formerly enslaved blacks and white planters afford emic and etic

views of life under slavery, respectively. There existed two broad classes of slave labour,

field hands and household servants. Naturally, those enslaved for household duties had

the greatest contact with the culture of their white owners, and so, were more likely to

adapt elements of it into their own habits. Because of this apparent adoption of behaviour, whites felt that those enslaved as household servants were of a 'higher class,' along with the drivers,[5] than the field hands. This view, however, was not shared by the black people enslaved as field hands and was, in fact, the inverse. The society of enslaved people was emically organized with the conjurers, root doctors and preachers at the top, harsh (black) overseers and permanent house servants at the bottom and temporary household servants, craftspeople and exceptional field hands in between (Otto 1984:37). From a modern anthropological perspective, this reflects the varying degrees of potential for African cultural survival and, perhaps, loyalty to it. As well, placing those responsible for spiritual matters at the top indicates the superior importance of spirituality over all other needs. This hierarchy also reflects the importance of "being African" and different than the whites in their midst. Finally, the middle positions held by craftspeople, exceptional field hands and temporary household servants seem to indicate a value placed on hard work and specialization.

Eighteenth century planters of the American South usually provided housing structures for their enslaved labourers. Most of these planters did not allow these people to build their own huts, viewing it as a display of 'Africaness,' which was discouraged (Otto 1984: 43). The one room cabins, a frame covered with clapboard and, generally, dirt floors, were arranged in rows along a 'street' for easier inspection and control (Whitehead 1999: pers.comm.; Otto 1984:86). Windows were simple holes in the wall, almost never containing glass. Doors, if they existed, often didn't lock and furniture was minimal, at best. In his memoirs, Booker T. Washington tells of the 'bed' he shared in his

mother's cabin with his siblings, "a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct... a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor" (Washington 1900).

In West Africa, woodcarving was a traditional skill, (Herskovits 1941:138) though carving as an art did not survive widely in the New World. Woodworking and carpentry, however, allowed the enslaved people the skill to fashion a table, bench and sometimes a bed for their homes (Otto 1984: 44). Owners and overseers rarely, if ever, entered the homes of the enslaved (Otto 1984: 44). This meant that household speech was not monitored, thus allowing for the oral transmission of language and culture.

> "...at secret meetings in the woods, slaves continued to hold harvest dances - accompanied by African-style stringed instruments (Georgia Writers' Project 1940: 186-187). Finally some slaves even secretly fashioned ritual objects..." (Otto 1984:87).

Women were the usual caretakers of the home and garden, men providing resources with which the women had to attend the home and family, while attending her duties to her owner. White owners did provide some food to the enslaved, however the provisions often did not meet minimum nutritional requirements (Otto 1984:56). The people had to provide the balance of what they required through hunting, fishing, foraging, animal husbandry and cultivation after they had completed their daily tasks for their overlords. Planters usually provided small garden plots for cultivation beside the slave cabins. Here the people grew corn, sweet potatoes, turnips, cowpeas, greens and other hearty crops. A portion of the harvest may have been used to feed hogs or chickens, sometimes penned behind the cabin. Hogs were the ideal domestic stock, able to forage in forests and survive on fodder, converting one fifth of what they ate into meat (Otto

1984: 58).

Women were often charged with making clothing for family and others from materials supplied by the owners (Otto 1984: 71; King 1796; Whitehead & Robertson 2000: in press). The textiles provided were often coarse and uncomfortable. but cheap. Booker T. Washington, related a story of how his elder brother wore his new ˙flax˙ shirt for a few days, until it was broken in.

Enslaved people, socially stifled by their white owners, were not allowed to address each other as ˙mister˙ or ˙missus˙, implying respect for social position. As a way to resist this imposition, but in such a way that would allow them to continue to address others, specifically elders. with respect. kin terms were adopted for fictive kin relationships. The terms ˙aunt˙ and ˙uncle˙ were prefixed to names by the younger addresser in place of ˙mister˙ or ˙missus˙ (Gutman 1976: 217). Social organization and hierarchy did exist within the communities of the enslaved. Elders were accorded respect for their wisdom, experience and social position as the mothers and fathers of aunts and uncles and parents. Lateral positions were signified by the term ˙cousin.˙ In some cases, sibling terms were forbidden by white owners (Gutman 1976: 218) requiring the extended kin designation instead.

> ˙˙˙It is from the grandparents of both sexes,' Meyer Fortes writes of the West African Ashanti, ˙that children learn of family history, folklore, proverbs, and other traditional lore. The grandparents are felt to be living links with the past.˙ Elderly slaves - fictive aunts and uncles among them - played that role among Afro-American slaves. a role given status within the slave community by investing such persons with symbolic, or fictive, kin titles. A white met an elderly man on a Mississippi plantation and learned from his owner that ˙Uncle Jacob was a regulator on the plantation; ... a *word* or a *look* from him, addressed to younger slaves, had more efficiency

than a *blow* from the overseer'" (Gutman 1976: 218-219).

The society of the enslaved people was internally regulated, and disciplined for crimes against fellow members of their community. The supernatural and mediators of it were responsible for sanctioning or deterring behaviour. The subduction of conflict and antisocial behaviour, the maintenance of morality as defined by the enslaved people, and mechanisms for internal community support were all needs met through an understanding of the supernatural and the actions of its mediators. Punishment ranged from social isolation to beatings, repayment of stolen property in fourfold, sickness and death. Death, however, was not directly carried out by human hands, but rather by the spirits of the dead and other supernatural beings, a kind of reckoning (Stroyer 1879 cited in Gutman 1976:279-281; Herskovits 1941:60-61). The social isolation referred to here demonstrates the use of social space to create barriers to communication; walls excluding people and limiting access to information; Uncle Jacobs tools, from Gutman's passage above. This would likely have been especially important given the lack of ability to physically expel a person from the community or construct material walls. Recognition of the above mechanisms of social organization in the societies of enslaved Africans should serve to direct focus to the importance of social and cognitive realms of space and their uses in social organization.

Extended kin networks among the enslaved people helped support their efforts to better their conditions. These networks of kin and fictive kin relationships also created a mechanism for dealing with the sale and separation of children from parents. Children were more likely to be sold with a mother than a father. In the event that a sale separated

a child from its mother, however, an "aunt" would effectively, adopt the child.

Christian evangelists of the time were busy with missionary work among indigenous peoples of the New and Old Worlds. Planters did not always allow missionaries to meet with and preach to their enslaved charges. Conversion of the enslaved presented a moral dilemma for many Christian planters, as they would then be owners of fellow Christians and the church may teach them to read the Bible. Literacy was not promoted in the community of the enslaved by white slave-owners. To educate was to inform and an uninformed person is always easier to control than an informed one. When planters did begin to allow Christian missionaries to preach to their enslaved labourers, many of them became Christians. Enslaved people also welcomed the opportunity to learn to read and write the languages of those who held them in slavery. As a result, the Bible was read widely throughout the black population of the southeastern United States. Missionaries from the Baptist and Methodist denominations were most successful among blacks in the American South (Herskovits 1941:208).

With time and understanding of the culture of their white owners, African-Americans were able to express, often secretly, certain elements of the cultures from which their ancestors had come (Otto 1984:87). The ongoing influx of human trade from West Africa helped to maintain ties to and knowledge of these traditions.

In his intellectually catalytic work, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), Melville J. Herskovits explored assumptions regarding the heritage of African-Americans that have been used to justify and reinforce racist and ignorant behaviour. These assumptions infer that the cultural matrix of lives under slavery was "disorganized" or "pathological" and

that the enslaved people lacked traditions or adaptive capacities with which to bear their circumstances (Frazier 1939 cited in Gutman 1976). Each of the precepts of the myth defined by Herskovits assumes that the African people who came to the New World were of a single character, culture and predisposition. An understanding of the West African slave trade immediately dismisses this foundation of ignorance.

Herskovits posited that the enslaved people who came to the New World in predominant numbers first, infused the "slave cultures" of the plantations with their own cultural mores. Those arriving much later, of different cultures, had the beliefs and languages of the previous arrivals imposed on them. Evidence of African cultural survivals have been discerned and demonstrated by numerous scholars (Turner 1949; Bascom 1941; Ferguson 1980; Gutman 1976; Herskovits 1941; Parsons 1923; Puckett 1968; Vlach 1978).

South American and West Indian contexts harbour more unadulterated African cultural survivals than do the North American contexts. The reasons for this derived, mostly, from the differences in the physical environments of the West Indian and South American plantations as compared to those in the southeastern United States. Plantations in tropical environments increased the incidence of enslaved people labouring away from their white owners by virtue of the fact that whites lacked the biological tolerances required to successfully tend and exploit the tropical plantation crops. African people, coming from tropical environments, had increased immunity to malaria and yellow fever, relative to the whites from temperate environments. The harsh physical conditions of tropical plantations, however, took its toll on the enslaved populations, requiring more

frequent influxes of people from Africa. These influxes kept the memories of Africa at the forefronts of their minds and so an increased consensus to return, or at least escape from enslavement. As well, the tropical environments, more demanding on whites than that of North America, also resulted in a smaller ratio of white to black inhabitants. This fact, again, favoured African cultural survival and finally translated into greater incidence of uprisings among the enslaved. Haiti is the only New World site wherein an uprising of enslaved people successfully ousted the white inhabitants, leaving blacks to express their own cultural mores with impunity (Davis 1987). Enslaved people throughout the New World, however, resisted white hegemony, though in some cases the resistance was subtle, and so less easily chastened. Witness the use of extended kin terms for respectful terms of address.

Strict etiquette in terms of address and respect for elders and ancestors was an important component of many African societies (Herskovits 1941:150; Gutman 1976: 211). The use of kin terms for respectful address in the black plantation cultures of the southeastern United States, then, not only served to resist the imposition of disadvantage and lower social stature, but also allowed an African custom to persist in an adapted form. Such development demonstrates not only the capacity to adapt cultural traditions to the conditions of life in the New World, but also the will to do so. Through the use of a system for terms of address, an African defined social hierarchy was able to survive, even though modified under the conditions of slavery.

Material culture, of apparent African origin, has been found in the Caribbean. Whether the artifacts were transported from Africa or manufactured in the New World

using African techniques is unclear. The presence of such, however, does indicate a

sense of "Africaness" which existed and survived in the New World. Gutman and

Herskovits have pointed out that not only did African people have the capacity to adapt

their cultural norms to the conditions imposed by enslavement, but that they also had the

will to do so. These points are championed by the existence of the material culture

recovered from the Caribbean and its site of recovery, a grave.

Material culture, transported from Africa, has not been found in the southeastern

United States contexts, however decorative and crafting techniques have been noted. In

basketry, the direction of coiling has been consistently noted as counter-clockwise.

Although woodcarving did not proliferate in the New World, the decorative motifs used

in African woodcarving have been noted on spoons and walking sticks (Otto 1984:87).

Among the most well documented traditions are the methods of food preparation. The

use of wooden mortars and pestles is viewed as a carry-over from African cultures. These

tools were used to prepare flat cakes, known as sarakas, by beating grains or seeds,

sometimes with salt or sugar (Georgia Writers' Project 1940 cited in Otto 1984). As

well, the use of larger versions of these tools rhythmically, in teams, is considered another

carry over of traditional behaviour from Africa. The preparation of "one-pot" meals,

known as hominy, pottages or pileaus, is also considered an Africanism. Colono-ware, an

unglazed, low-fired coarse earthenware, is considered to be a utilitarian ceramic

fashioned by black potters enslaved in North America to meet demands for vessels for

food preparation and consumption (Ferguson 1980). The production of colono-ware

appears to have ceased when European ceramics became widely available in North

America. Colono-ware was used by colonial whites and blacks. In the Chesapeake, a region of the American south with a long history of enslaved African people, locally crafted tobacco pipes were decorated with motifs considered to be African in origin (Deetz 1993:91). All of the above noted cases support the claim that African cultures adapted and survived, in varying degrees, in the New World African-American culture and that "slave culture" was not so much a result of being enslaved, but of being an enslaved African.

In large part, Africanisms which were manifest in the African-American culture of North America were of an intangible nature. For example, motor behaviour such as dancing, singing, methods of worship and religious celebration, folklore and oral traditions have been identified as survivals of African cultural heritage, but tangible Africanisms are less likely except as the product of "African" behaviour. Behaviours were adapted to the conditions of the New World with its different natural resources and forcibly different political structure. This enabled retention of traditions under slavery, though inevitably they evolved. It is interesting, however, to consider that it would be possible to perform a behaviourally African ritual or craft in the Americas. Consider the man mentioned in an ad for a runaway listed below, who, although a mulatto, bears a "large scar on one of his ears and cheek."

> Run away from the subscriber on Saturday night, July 26, 1777.
> THREE NEGROES; one a mulatto fellow named Jamie, well
> known in Charlestown, and is remarkable for having a large scar
> on one of his ears and cheek; another fellow of the Guinea country,
> named Peter, of a middle stature, who is very active and artful, but
> speaks very bad English; the third is a tall likely fellow of the Ebo
> [Ibo] country, named York. They may change their dress, but
> when they went away two of them had striped jackets. They are all

bred to the cabinet making business. It is suspected that they will
attempt to go for St. Augustine [Florida] by land or water. All
masters of vessels and keepers of ferries are requested to be
particularly on their guard. A reward of FIFTY POUNDS for each.
and all reasonable charges. will be paid on delivering them to me.
or the Warden of the Work-house in Charlestown. JOHN
FISHER" (South-Carolina and American General Gazette.
Charleston. S.C. 31. July 1777).

The first man listed in the advertisement above, Jamie, is mulatto. and therefore is of

mixed African and European heritage. This does not necessarily mean he was born in the

Americas however, and that he is enslaved suggests that the parent who was white might

not have wanted or known about him. Perhaps ritual scarification was an attempt to

rebuff the white parent; a way to invest cultural claim and denote Africaness. Perhaps the

scar was the result of punishment at the hand of a slave-owner or overseer. or maybe it

was left by an accident. The location of part of the scar, on the cheek. however. may be

an attribute not unlike the ritual scarification worn by African people. Another feature of

ritual scarification practiced in African cultures was tooth filing and has been recorded in

African American culture in South America and the West Indies.

Spiritual or religious behaviour among black people was. and often still is.

considered distinctive. Even as Christians. black congregation members. often as

Baptists, express their devotion and role in the church through extroverted behaviour. as

compared to white Christians. These extroverted behaviours, such as singing. vocal

assents of a speaker's or preacher's words. dancing. hand-clapping, and 'jerky' public

possession. began in the Christian church with the conversion of Africans and African

descendents (Herskovits 1941: 231). Congregations that participate and affirm the words

spoken by the preacher are viewed as Christian manifestations of Shango-cult

ceremonialism and the more general African etiquette of address (Herskovits 1941: 152).

The hand-clapping, foot-tapping, and sometimes wider motor behaviour. such as arm

waving and dancing are seen as New World Christian counterparts of African drums,

rattles and possession dances. Another aspect of African heritage is notable in the

popularity of the Baptist church in the black communities of the New World. This may

be partially explained by the aggressive evangelism of this church, but the role of baptism

by total immersion is also important. This is a carry over. according to Herskovits. of the

river cults in West Africa.

> "...the river spirits are among the most powerful of those inhabiting
> the supernatural world, and that priests of this cult are among the
> most powerful members of tribal priestly groups. ...in the process
> of conquest which accompanied the spread of the Dahomean
> kingdom, at least (there being no data on this particular point from
> any other folk of West Africa), the intransigence of the priests of
> the river cult was so marked that, more than any other group of
> holy men, they were sold into slavery to rid the conquerors of
> troublesome leaders"(1941:232).
> "...aggressive proselytizing activities of Protestantism made the
> retention of the inner forms of African religion as difficult as its
> outer manifestations, [so] the most logical adaptation for the slaves
> to make to the new situation, and the simplest, was to give their
> adherence to that Christian sect which in its ritualism most
> resembled the types of worship known to them....the Baptist
> churches had an autonomous organization that was in line with the
> tradition of local self-direction congenial to African practice. In
> these churches the slaves were also permitted less restrained
> behaviour than in the more sedate denominations. And such
> factors only tended to reinforce an initial predisposition of these
> Africans toward a cult which, in emphasizing Baptism by total
> immersion, made possible the worship of the new supernatural
> powers in ways that at least contained elements not entirely
> unfamiliar" (1941:233).

Rhythm, drumming and music are important in cultures all over the world. Music

has often been seen as a forum for African style. Aside from instruments and

vocalizations, rhythms have been identified with African celebrations and ceremony and have played integral parts in social transformations, such as death, birth, re-birth and spirit possession to name few. One formerly enslaved man told of the displeasure of his master when a fellow enslaved man tried to beat the drums at a funeral, saying the master "dohn wahn drums beatin round duh dead." Another slave labourer of that plantation, at Cannon's Point in the Georgia Sea Islands, named Okra, tried to build an African style dwelling, which the master, James Hamilton Couper, had him destroy, stating that he did not want any African huts on his plantation (Otto 1984: 86). After this, Okra, presumably more stealthfully, fashioned a drum from maplewood and calf skin (Georgia Writers' Project 1940: 178-182). Although the plantation owner was able to squelch attempts to construct African homes, music was much less easily controlled. The enslaved people persisted in making African music and dance, even if they had to hold "secret meetings in the woods" (Georgia Writers' Project 1940: Plates I-IV cited in Otto 1984: 87). The generation of rhythms with hand-clapping and foot-tapping is an active resistance to the slave-owners disallowance of drums and other African percussive instruments.

Bremer, the nineteenth century traveler in Cuba who witnessed the funerary customs of the enslaved following a suicide, noted the value accorded head kerchiefs by African women in the New World. Colours, methods of tying and kerchief designs were used to denote various social positions. "In Charleston Ferguson noted that the married women were distinguished by a peculiarly tied kerchief they wore upon their heads" (Doyle 1856 cited in Herskovits 1941: 149). In Haiti, a place boldly steeped in Africanisms, mambos or female officiants of the vodun cult wear white kerchiefs. In

Africa, among the Ashanti people, more than fifty names for styles of tying head

kerchiefs have been recorded, paying credence to the notion of its value and viability as

an Africanism in New World cultures.

A "sick house" was a building commonly found on plantations' "slave streets."

The enslaved attended the health of their own people, and so medicinal knowledge

brought from Africa was part of the toolkit of their nurses and healers. This knowledge

was supplemented with traditional medicinal and herbal knowledge from the indigenous

people in the Americas. White Europeans held Native American people in slavery, in

addition to the people of Africa. Although it is likely that knowledge flowed in both

directions between these two groups of people, the aboriginal people had an intimate

knowledge of local flora and fauna that could mean the difference between life and death

for the African and African-Americans. The mother of Boston King, an African-

American born into slavery in 1760, was enslaved on a South Carolina plantation outside

of Charleston who was "employed chiefly in attending upon those that were sick," having

been taught, "the virtue of herbs, which she learned from the Indians" (King 1798). John

Marrant and David George, later inhabitants of Birchtown, both spent time living with

aboriginal people. Perhaps such types of knowledge were passed on to them, as well.

Architectural Africanisms are limited, due in large part to the restrictions imposed

by many slave-owners against the construction of African-style huts. In a few cases,

however, slave-owners did allow their charges to fashion their own housing, employing

the techniques they knew. When this occurred, a hut with a dirt floor, with dimensions

roughly 10 by 10 or 12 by 12 feet, was built (Jones 1985: 206; Otto 1984: 42). Wattle

and daub or "tabby," a material made from lime, sand and seashells used to make bricks

and a kind of concrete, were materials made and most often employed by Africans and

African Americans in building construction. Soil was used as an architectural material by

the inhabitants of Malagasco in Africa, noted in the memoirs of Venture Smith, a man

who was captured at the age of six in West Africa and enslaved at Rhode Island. He

describes these 'caves' as:

> "...eight feet horizontally into the earth, six feet in height and as
> many wide. They were arched overhead and lined with earth,
> which was of the clay kind, and made the surface of their walls
> firm and smooth" (Smith 1798 in Carretta 1996: 374).

Semi-subterranean houses were noted at Martin's Hundred and Flowerdew

Hundred (Hume 1985:58-59, cited in Niven 1998), seventeenth century sites in Virginia

where Africans and their descendents lived. According to Niven (1998), these seem to be

of the same type as the feature excavated at AkDi-12 in Birchtown. That soil was viewed

as a material suitable for architectural purposes begs the question, were the temporary

shelters constructed for the first winter in Birchtown influenced by African architectural

techniques? Granted the circumstances were dire and these shelters were only temporary,

but did African tradition offer this coping mechanism?

Loyalists

At the close of the American Revolution, tens of thousands of Loyalists sailed

from New York, the last British stronghold, to the remaining British colonies in the north,

the West Indies, England, Germany and Belgium. Many came to Nova Scotia, which at

that time included modern day New Brunswick. Among the Loyalists were thousands of

Africans and African descendents. Some had escaped slavery to find shelter behind

Loyalist lines as soldiers and servants, others had purchased their freedom, were

manumitted[6] or were born free[7]. Some were still enslaved, by soldiers who had

purchased them or by their white Loyalist owners. These black people became known as

the Black Loyalists (Whitehead & Robertson: 2000).

The Philipsburg Proclamation of 1779 was intended to undermine the economy of

the Revolutionaries in the hopes that it would force them to cede to the British forces and

not because of any empathy for the circumstances of the enslaved black people. But the

British lost the war and signed a Provisional Peace Agreement on November 30th, 1782

(Walker 1992:10). As a result they were left with a smaller empire with which to fulfil

their promises and settle all Loyalists, black and white alike.

The Provisional Peace Agreement stated that:

> "...without Causing any destruction or carrying away any Negroes
> or other Property of the American Inhabitants withdraw all his
> [Majesty's] Armies, Garrisons, and Fleets, from the said United
> States."(PAC, Chatham Ms., 1780-92, Bundle 344)

The above passage clearly demonstrates that enslaved people were viewed as

chattel, and that Africans and people of African descent in North America still struggled

under the impression that they were available to be owned, and not equal as human

beings. As a result of these kinds of attitudes and their reinforcement in the Provisional

Peace Agreement, American interests, through General George Washington, spoke out

against the removal of black people from New York. Finally, however, only those who

had been confiscated during the final withdrawl of forces or who had come to the British

after the Agreement had been signed were eligible to be returned into the hands of the

claimants. Slave-owners, then, could come and claim their "property" if the black person

met the criterion of post-Agreement alliance. This struck fear into the hearts of black

people awaiting passage. In his memoirs, Boston King wrote:

> "About which time [1783], the horrors and devastation of
> war happily terminated and peace was restored between
> America and Great Britain, which diffused universal joy
> among all parties, except us, who had escaped from slavery
> and taken refuge in the English army; for rumour prevailed
> at New York, that all the slaves, in number 2000, were to
> be delivered up to their masters, altho' some of them had
> been three or four years among the English. This dreadful
> rumour filled us all with inexpressible anguish and terror,
> especially when we saw our old masters coming from
> Virginia, North Carolina, and other parts, seizing upon their
> slaves in the streets of New York, or even dragging them
> out of their beds." (King:1798 in Whitehead &
> Robertson:2000)

As a means of accounting for their charges, Carleton had records made of each

black person being removed from New York. The name and age of each passenger was

recorded, along with a brief physical description and information relevant to their New

World origin, status and/or previous ownership. In a case where an American made a

valid claim, under the Peace Agreement, to one of the black passengers as property, but

the passenger had already sailed from New York, compensation could be paid.

The record of the these people, known as the *Book of Negroes*,[8] lists more than

2500 men, women and children awaiting safe passage into British colonies. Of the 30 -35,

000 Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, more than 3000

of them were free black people (Carretta 1996:348). This number does not include those

who were still enslaved by white Loyalists.

In a few cases, the Book of Negroes shows family members, immediate and

extended, as people's owners.

> "Charlotte Plum, 13, fine girl, mulatto. Daughter & property of
> Thomas Plumb, 42, stout fellow, mulatto, carpenter; indentured to
> Andrew Ross, born free, Little York, Virginia."
> "Lucinda, 25, stout mulatto wench. Manuel Housterman of St.
> John's claimant. She is wife to Manuel Housterman."
> "Nancy Mumford, 21, stout wench, (indentured to James
> Robinson). Free as per Bill of Sale of her mother from Mrs.
> Mumford, Rhode Island, to her father Bristol."

The reason for this would have been to provide protection of loved ones from

enslavement. The memoirs of Venture Smith document this practice (Carretta 1996:369-

387). Smith bought, from white slave-owners, his pregnant wife, two sons, one daughter

and three unrelated men after he had purchased his own freedom. While Venture Smith

was not one of the Black Loyalists, his memoirs do help explain the incidents of familial

ownership seen in the Book of Negroes.

The Book of Negroes notes facial markings on some individuals, possibly the

result of ritual scarification as mentioned earlier. These people may have been firsthand

carriers of one of West Africa's cultures or of a cultural survival.

> "Fanny, 33, stout wench, 3 scars in each cheek. Indentured to
> James Fraser. Formerly slave to Mr. Cunningham, who died in
> England, where she got her freedom 6 years ago. General Birch
> Certificate."
> "John Pell, 28, stout man, pock marked, (William Hill). Free as
> appears by a Certificate of General Birch to whom he was given by
> Sir Henry Clinton; says he left Charlestown about 5 years ago."

John Pell's pock marks beg the question of whether these marks were of ritual

origin or the result of a skin condition or small pox. One of the latter two is the more

likely, but the former is a possibility. The scars in Fanny's cheeks are characteristic and

such marks are often noted in runaway advertisements in the newspapers (Whitehead

1999: pers.comm.). Though a single paragraph cannot suitably describe a person, the

Book of Negroes does, within its brevity, provide a great deal of information.

Nova Scotia received groups of Black Loyalists before and after the close of the American Revolution. However, the 1783 migration was the "largest single immigration of blacks into Canada at any one time" (Whitehead 1999: pers. comm.). The first group of free Black Loyalists to come to Nova Scotia arrived in 1776. The Company of Negroes, along with other Loyalist soldiers, was evacuated from Boston and sent to Halifax. When they arrived, Walker writes:

> "...the suggestion was made that they be used as ransom in exchange for Loyalist prisoners held by the Americans. Such was apparently to be their reward for sharing the hazards and hardships of the New England campaign. Though the Council declined to discuss the scheme, still it was evident that some white authorities were not prepared to consider the Black Loyalists as equal claimants to justice and consideration." (1976: 7)

In May of 1783, the first group of Black Loyalists from New York arrived in Nova Scotia. They were to be granted land by the British Crown, as promised for their loyalty and support in the American Revolution and as free subjects of the British Empire. Nova Scotia was unprepared to deal with the numbers of Loyalists it had received. The Black Loyalists included runaways, indentured servants,[9] freed people,[10] and people born free. What they were greeted with was not their promised land, but rather a disorganized and understaffed system of land granting. Grants to blacks were typically among the last to be surveyed and allotted. Those lands that were set aside for Black Loyalists were of poorer quality than those for whites and usually not suitable for cultivating (Walker 1992:23). In almost all instances, when farming lots were later granted, they were too far from the town lots, on which houses had been built, to make farming practicable. This was likely

the case for the 6,382 acres carved out for 184 claimants at Birchtown (Walker 1992:32).

Inherent in the system of delayed land granting, sometimes more than five years after

arrival, patterns of settlement were claimed as obstructive to the accommodation of

surveyed lots. This was the case with the Thomas Brownspriggs landgrant in Little

Tracadie (Whitehead 1999: pers.comm.). Finally, as evidenced in the land grants in

Preston to both white and black inhabitants, blacks got less land per grant. "...the portion

allotted to the blacks was less than a quarter of the average assigned to their white

neighbours" (Walker 1992:29).

Once in Nova Scotia, the Black Loyalists were compelled, in some cases, to

indenture themselves or their children in order to provide necessary food and shelter

(Walker 1976:50). It was hard on everyone, regardless of ethnicity. Ethnic groups from

the British Isles such as Irish and Scots, considered by the English majority to be inferior,

also found themselves in dire straits, numbering themselves among the white poor.

Walker's passages, quoted above, help illustrate the socio-political environment

into which the masses of Black Loyalists were delivered in 1783. Seven years did not see

a great deal of change in white people's attitudes toward black people. While technically

free, Africans and African descendents in the New World were still often treated as lesser

beings by the governing authorities than their white fellow British subjects.

As more Black Loyalists arrived, the competition for resources, employment and

land increased, creating ever more difficult circumstances for blacks and the white poor.

Black communities around the province, Brindleytown, outside of Digby, Little Tracadie,

in Guysborough County, Preston, outside of Dartmouth and Birchtown, outside of

Shelburne, struggled with the same political, economic and administrative issues. Lands

were not being granted, people could not settle and they had to turn to wage labour and

indenturement rather than being able to support themselves. Blacks were typically paid

less than whites for the same job. As more Black Loyalists arrived, white labourers,

competing for the same jobs, became resentful. The middle and upper class whites

employed the cheaper labour pool of the Black Loyalists, welcoming the opportunity to

save money.

Birchtown

Birchtown was named for Brigadier-General Samuel Birch who issued

Certificates of Freedom to the Black Loyalists, thus ensuring their freedom, legally, from

enslavement or re-enslavement. These Certificates were issued at Charleston, South

Carolina, prior to the removal of Black Loyalists to New York. There is only one extant

Birch Certificate (which are noted as GBC in the *Book of Negroes*) known today,

belonging to Cato Ramsey (Whitehead 1999: pers. comm.; Niven 1998).

Birchtown, a black community, was located roughly five miles along the coast

from Shelburne, a predominantly white community. The two were founded in the same

year (1783), however, the white community was afforded more government attention and

so became settled first. The original intention was to make Shelburne the main seaport

for trade between Britain and New England (microfilm H-984, NAC).

> "...a special board was established in Shelburne to process
> applications for land. When the board was dissolved two years
> later, in November 1786, all the Loyalists were settled and the
> lands laid out 'except those for the Negroes at Birch Town'.
> Despite Marston's [the surveyor] best efforts, only small town lots
> had been given to some of the Birchtowners. Their promised farms

still lay unsurveyed beneath the district's 'deep Swamps' and impenetrable Woods' " (Walker 1992:23).

As there were no legally surveyed lots awaiting the Black Loyalist settlers at Birchtown, the grantees were free to impose their own spatial organization on the lands and resources. Black Loyalists had begun arriving at Shelburne in May, but it was not until September, under the leadership of Colonel Stephen Blucke, that Governor Parr ordered that they be settled 'up the Northwest Harbour' outside of Shelburne (Niven 1998). The first year saw the black settlers scrambling to erect "make-shift houses with a peaked roof... over a hole in the ground" (Dennis 1934 cited in Niven 1998). By the autumn of 1784, the population of Birchtown had reached 1,521. This made it the largest settlement of free black people in all of North America, a fact noted at that time by a New York newspaper (Niven 1998).

As many had in slavery, Birchtowners supplemented their provisions through fishing, hunting small game, animal husbandry, foraging for local flora and cultivation of small garden plots on their town lots. The government distributed the provisions, as documented by muster rolls for Nova Scotian communities, including Birchtown (microfilm H-984, NAC), but they were simply not enough.

Boston King notes, in his memoirs, that his wife Violet, managed to cultivate potatoes. That winter (1790-91) was the best seen by Boston and Violet in Birchtown. King writes, "...my winter's store consisted of one barrel of flour, three bushels of corn, nine gallons of treacle [molasses], 20 bushels of potatoes which my wife had set in my absence, and the two barrels of fish..." (Whitehead &Robertson: 2000).

Perishables would have been kept in the root cellar, a feature typical of African-

American houses of that time (Niven 1998:29). As time passed, more permanent structures than the temporary, semi-subterranean structure mentioned above were built. These homes would likely have been furnished in much the same manner as the slave cabins, drawing on the woodworking and carpentry skills of the men. This assumption is drawn on the basis that what little money people did have, likely went toward food and clothing. The forests surrounding the nascent community would provide all the materials needed to build furniture.

A muster roll for Birchtown, housed at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) records names, ages, gender, remarks and, where possible, occupations. Among the inhabitants of Birchtown were carpenters, sailors, (marine) pilots, farmers, sawyers, tailors, military leaders and servants. The people were grouped on the muster roll according to companies under the care of a ranked black leader of the Loyalist army. Based on these muster rolls and journals and memoirs of some of the Birchtown inhabitants,[11] it appears as though the white Loyalist government defined these companies. The social reality, however, seemed to be that this community, like other black communities in Nova Scotia, was organized under groups led by black Christian preachers. The journals and memoirs mentioned belong to Christian preachers, which might bias the understanding of community life in Birchtown. Historical documentation of the later exodus to Sierra Leone, however, indicates that it was the leadership and guidance of black Christian preachers that organized those emigrating to Africa. The factions led by these preachers derived, from different Christian denominations, primarily Baptist, Methodist and Huntingdonian Methodist.

The place of the Christian church in society, white or black, is very different today than it was in the eighteenth century. Black communities, however, could lay claim to a very distinctive kind of Christian worship and, in fact, still do. Instances are often described of people being 'touched by the Holy Spirit,' fainting and moaning and lying on the ground, dancing and jumping and being 'afflicted' and sometimes bedridden for periods ranging from moments to weeks. This behaviour marked a transition, a kind of communing with the Holy Spirit, which was noted as Christianity began to reach and be adapted into the lives of enslaved African people and their descendents. Such expressions of emotion and 'possession by the Holy Spirit' were also seen in white Christian churches, however the behaviour, among Christians, seems to have originated with blacks (Herskovits 1941:231).

Prayer meetings and sermons were delivered at meeting houses. Before a 'chapel' had been built[12], such meetings were in the homes of preachers and followers. David George writes about meetings held outside on the wooden platform built to support the future chapel in Shelburne. The chapel was used by all denominations, taking care in the scheduling of worship times. Relations between the religious groups were not always cordial though, as both John Marrant and David George note.

Petitions were made to the government for provisions and land as a group, usually under the representation of a primary claimant. John Marrant petitioned the governor of Nova Scotia, John Parr, for resources with which the Birchtowners could cultivate their garden plots. The governor provided: hoes, spades, pickaxes, hammers saws, files and blankets at the request of the Birchtowners (Marrant 1790:35). This petition was made in

April of 1787, four years after the Black Loyalists had arrived from New York.

People

Boston King, at the age of sixteen, was apprenticed by his owner to a carpenter in Charleston. Boston's parents both lived on the plantation of his birth. His father had been 'stolen from Africa as a child' (Whitehead & Robertson: 2000). Boston ran away while under apprenticeship to the carpenter for fear of a flogging. He had borrowed a horse to go visit his parents when another enslaved man had stolen the horse from him. Knowing he could not return in time, he fled to the British forces that then had Charleston under siege. Boston was freed under the Phillipsburg Proclamation and received a Certificate of Freedom from General Birch. He arrived in Birchtown in 1783.

John Marrant was born free in New York June 15th, 1755 (Marrant 1785:1). His mother moved his family to St. Augustine, Florida four years later, after his father had died, and then to Savannah, Georgia. John attended school in both Florida and Georgia, but at the age of eleven his mother sent him to Charleston, South Carolina to apprentice to a trade. Instead, John studied the violin and french horn, both of which he mastered. After a 'dramatic conversion to Christianity,' John was press-ganged[13] by the British to play the french horn. He was discharged in England where he preached for several years before going to Nova Scotia in 1787 (Whitehead & Robertson: 2000).

David George was born into slavery on a plantation on the Nottaway River, Virginia around the year 1743 (Whitehead & Robertson 2000: in press; Carretta 1996: 347). His parents were both African (George 1793:1). He had four brothers and four sisters, all of whom were African-American. David's mother was a cook, and was

enslaved for household duties in the big house[14]. He ran away, when he was approximately 19 years old, to South Carolina. After having spent several years as a servant to Creek and Natchez aboriginal people, David worked mending deerskins and tending horses for a white man who traded with Indians on the Savannah River. Some years after his conversion by a white Baptist evangelist, David, his wife and three children went to the Loyalist forces at Charleston and were evacuated to Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1783. In Shelburne, David George led the Baptist church, attended by blacks from Shelburne and Birchtown and some of the Shelburne whites, as well. Upon the platform built to support the future chapel, David George established the first Black Baptist church of present-day Canada (Carretta 1996: 348).

Colonel Stephen Blucke was an officer of the Loyalist army and possessed a Certificate of Freedom from General Birch. A creole, he was born free in Barbados in 1752 (*Book of Negroes*). He came to Birchtown on September 3, 1783 with his wife, mother and an indentured servant. Stephen, as a military officer and administrative leader, fared better than his neighbours in Birchtown. This has been determined through what are believed to be the archaeological remains of his home and mentions made of him in John Marrant's journal.

The number of generations removed from Africa varied among the settlers at Birchtown. Some of these people had made the journey from Africa aboard the slave ships to the coasts of America and then ran away or were purchased from their owners to find shelter behind the Loyalist lines. They then sailed to Nova Scotia to live as free British subjects. Others had been born in the Americas to enslaved, free or indentured

women.

The Black Loyalists wanted to build stable lives, homes and communities. What cultural tools, traditions and mechanisms did these people bring with which to build? Anyone seeking to rediscover these elements of Black Loyalist history must realize that the experience of slavery and the psycho-social ramifications of such an institution constitute a unique filter through which the traditional cultures were passed. Those traditional cultures came from Africa.

Africanisms in Birchtown

In order to recognize Africanisms in Birchtown, one must appreciate the matrix of people, histories and conditions that affected the expression of Africanisms. Although many of the inhabitants of Birchtown had previously lived in the southeastern United States, one must not expect the expression of Africanisms there to be mirrored in Nova Scotia. One of the primary differences was that nobody in Birchtown was living on a plantation. Within the harsher climate of Nova Scotia, the people of Birchtown had to deal with the responsibilities, as well as the rights, of freedom.

In West Africa and in slavery, people lived in close proximity to one another. Nova Scotia's social climate was not entirely hospitable to the Black Loyalists. Was the clustering of homes, which caused the obstacle to settlement of the Thomas Brownspriggs' landgrant in Little Tracadie, Nova Scotia, a response to the hostile social environment or an Africanism? Jones relates an incident from the late eighteenth century in Parting Ways, Massachusetts, near Plymouth:

> " For at least four families who lived on a total of 94 acres, the
> separate rights the government gave each of them to portions of the

parcel did not cause them to locate their houses apart with each
scattered on its own plot as was the contemporary placement
pattern of their Anglo-American neighbors. Instead, these Black
families group their structures together in the center of the entire
plot, even though the town clerk's map explicitly shows separate
portions of the plot cleared by each household head. Archaeologist
James Deetz has suggested that beyond mutual reassurance, such a
settlement pattern likely reflects a more "corporate spirit" than their
Anglo-American contemporaries (Deetz 1977: 152); as such the
similarity to an African pattern is greatly heightened" (Jones 1985
in Singleton 1985: 198).

Commenting on late nineteenth century black settled and owned communities of

the United States in general, Jones notes how they contrast "sharply with the nearby white

communities which developed linearly". This observation is interesting in that the

Goulden Map (Figure 2), displays a linear pattern of land grants. These lots, however,

were surveyed after the Black Loyalists came to Birchtown and built homes. Although

archaeological evidence for this community is not yet quantified, it may be interesting to

explore the possibility of clustered structures not supportive of the land grant boundaries

surveyed and recorded by the white government.

Wall complexes constructed with fieldstones and sometimes covered by dirt

possibly for consolidation, have been recorded throughout the Birchtown community

(Figures 13-17). Niven suggests that some of the areas contained by these short walls

(less than a metre high) are, in the vicinity of cellar depression features, too small to be

considered anything other than "runs" or pens for small livestock such a sheep, pigs, or

perhaps chickens (1998). This suggests strong ties with the husbandry of the people

enslaved on plantations of the South and the traditions of husbandry in Africa, as

mentioned by Venture Smith (1798).

The journals and memoirs of past inhabitants of Birchtown, mentioned in the sections above, cast light on the social life of the community. Although each of the three individuals whose memoirs were examined were Christian preachers, the importance of the church to the community is undeniable. Prayer meetings took place in the woods, outside of Shelburne (George 1793) in peoples' homes (George 1793; Marrant 1790), and on an open-air platform before chapels were built. Access to water, for baptismal immersion, was important for the placement of the chapel (George 1793). Each of the memorialists notes conversions and 'interventions' of the Holy Spirit. Their remarks on behaviours associated with these experiences are identified as derivatives of African notions of spirituality and methods of worship and indicate that African heritage was still firmly rooted in the religious expressions of Birchtown's inhabitants.

The muster roll, mentioned above, notes households headed by women. Many of these women are young mothers. The acceptance of pre- or extra-marital children within African-American culture may be viewed as an Africanism, managed socially by the categorization of such children as 'outside children' (Gutman 1976: 74). Undoubtedly, though, some of these young mothers were widows.

The occupations listed in the muster roll reflect the apprenticeships that many of the settlers had studied under slavery and as free people in the economies of North America such as sawyers, carpenters, boat builders, and sailors. Others, listed as farmers and labourers, may represent former plantation field hands as well as those who desired self-sufficiency. As mentioned in the section on the experience of slavery, plantation field hands were more likely to incorporate Africanisms into their daily lives, without the

constant impressions of Euro-American culture to which people enslaved for household duties were exposed.

There remains a great deal of investigation to be carried out archaeologically and ethnologically on the original community of Birchtown. Perhaps through an understanding of African uses of space and the transformations of those principles under slavery into African American spatiality, archaeologists can be directed to the locations attractive to the settlers in the eighteenth century. Through a wider acknowledgement of life, as experienced by enslaved Africans and their descendents in the American South and the methods of coping employed in the challenges of life in Nova Scotia, the degree of 'Africaness' of Birchtown may be better understood.

The settlers of Birchtown, like other Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, facing political disorganization, racial stigma and bureaucracy, found that no land grants were officially awarded for as much as five years after their arrival. Even then, the grants were lacking access to water, of poor soil quality, distant from town lots where their homes were, and largely uncultivable. This lead to Nova Scotia's label. 'Nova Scarcity.' By 1787 the people of Birchtown were in the throes of desperate poverty, as were many other black communities across Nova Scotia. In 1789, the entire population of Nova Scotia was struck by famine. Those with the least, which included the black Nova Scotians, were the hardest hit. John Marrant's journal records the plight of two of Birchtown's victims.

> "I remained at Shelbourn till the 31st, about Ten o'Clock, we set
> out for Birch Town, and when we had got about half way, we came
> up with two women in the road, one was lying down and just
> expiring, and the other stood over her weeping; they had both been

over to Shelbourn, to beg something to eat, and were then returning
back to Birch Town, and had got a little Indian meal, but had not
strength to reach home with it. When I came up to her, I found that
she was irrecoverable; and had I not arrived as I did, the other
would have been soon dead also....when we arrived in town, we got
all the necessaries we could for her recovery; and dispatched two
men off to bring the dead body of the other woman" (1790:49).

By 1791 the offer of a better life in Sierra Leone became the opportunity to escape

the hardships of poverty and the racism the black people of that time suffered in North

America, free or enslaved. On the 15th of January, 1792, the first Nova Scotian Black

Loyalists, 1,196 in all, sailed for Sierra Leone, hoping to finally settle their newly

promised land. There the Black Loyalists were met with many of the same problems

faced in Nova Scotia and more. Torrential rains, hostile African neighbours, nearby slave

traders and the usual problems with delayed land grants, limited provisions and racial

suppression all contributed to yet another arduous effort at settlement. Eventually, the

Black Loyalists, becoming known in Sierra Leone as Nova Scotians, built their

community physically and sociologically in Africa, starting at Freetown. They brought to

the African people evangelical Christianity and European economic opportunities,

precisely as their sponsors, the Sierra Leone Company and the British government, had

hoped.

Meanwhile, back at Birchtown, Black Loyalists continued their struggle to farm

the land, though many had gone. Land formerly owned by Black Loyalists had been

bought by white Loyalists prior to the exodus to Sierra Leone. Community life there

went through another metamorphosis. Little is known of this time in Birchtown – even

less than of the time before. Stephen Blucke, the community leader, remained until at

least 1796. The previous year, on April 21, 1795, Stephen's infant daughter, Francis, was

baptized by the Christ Church of Shelburne. It seems after his wife, Margaret, left to

return to New England, Stephen took up with their indentured servant Isabella Gibbons,

now his wife (Microfilm reel # H-984, NAC). According to these records, the black

population at Birchtown was still significant, though not what it once had been. Still

though, the people hoped, worked and built.

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[1] Creoles are the offspring of immigrants born in a new land. Children born in the New World of African-born parents were dubbed Creoles. Also known as Creoles were the offspring born in Sierra Leone, Africa of American-born parents. Thus, the term Creole is somewhat generic but a Creole culture would reflect adaptation to and evolution of an old culture in a new place. (Carretta 1996:1)

[2] Secret societies, in West African cultures, often wielded political, religious or dynastic power and served to enforce conformity to rules by 'extra-legal' means. These societies, then, were organizational institutions that reinforced governance, and in some cases, may have controlled it. Such organizations are widespread among such West African tribes as the Ibo, Ibibio, Poro, Sande and many others (Herskovits 1941: 82)

[3] In his footnotes, Herskovits says the following, " The Luccomees, as far as can be discovered, are the counterpart of the people termed Yoruba or Nago by the French and British writers." (1941:310)

[4] Herskovits' five basic precepts forming the myth of the Negro past are:
"1. Negroes are naturally of a childlike character, and adjust easily to the most unsatisfactory social situations, which they accept readily and even happily, in contrast to the American Indians, who preferred extinction to slavery;
2. Only the poorer stock of Africa was enslaved, the more intelligent members of the African communities raided having been clever enough to elude the slavers' nets;
3. Since the Negroes were brought from all parts of the African continent, spoke diverse languages, represented greatly differing bodies of custom, and, as a matter of policy, were distributed in the New World so as to lose tribal identity, no least common denominator of understanding or behaviour could have possibly been worked out by them;
4. Even granting enough Negroes of a given tribe had the opportunity to live together, and that they had the will and ability to continue their customary modes of behaviour, the cultures of Africa were so savage and relatively so low in the scale of human civilization that the apparent superiority of European customs as observed in the behaviour of their masters, would have caused and actually did cause them to give up such aboriginal traditions as they might otherwise have desired to preserve;
5. The Negro is thus a man [or woman] without a past." (1941:1-2)

[5] Essentially, a black overseer.
[6] Manumission refers to the act of legally freeing an enslaved person by the hand of the slave-owner . Also, "Slaves were sometimes freed upon the owner's death, in recognition of 'good and faithful service', or because they had borne children to their owner." (Whitehead 1999: pers.comm.).

[7] "Any child born of a free woman was deemed to be free." (Whitehead 1999: pers. comm.) This included children of indentured women. Although indenturement was often similar, if not the same, as slavery it was still a technically free status. This offered the children of indentured women an opportunity for self

sufficiency, even if it was a tenuous one. Also note the case of Fanny Lacy, wife of George Lacy, both listed in the Book of Negroes. It says: "Fanny his wife, 33, stout mulatto wench, (John Finch). Born free, her mother being a white woman... ."

[8] The original manuscript is housed at the Public Records Office at Kew in England. A copy of this exists at the National Archives in Washington, DC. The Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management collection contains a third manuscript, thought to be an early nineteenth century copy (Whitehead & Robertson: 2000).

[9] Indentured servants were technically free, but were legally bound in servitude for a specific period of time, by means of a contract. Unfortunately, many black people were tricked into longer periods of servitude than they would agree to by prefixing or suffixing a digit to that agreed upon by the black person (Walker 1992:50).

[10] According to Niven (1998), a freed slave was one who had been freed by their previous owner (manumission) or had purchased freedom; effectively buying one's self.

[11] *JOURNAL of The Rev. John Marrant, From August the 18th 1785, TO The 16th of March 1790. To which are added, TWO SERMONS ONE PREACHED On RAGGED ISLAND on Sabbath Day, the 27th Day of October, 1787; THE OTHER At BOSTON, in NEW ENGLAND, On THURSDAY, the 24th of June, 1789; Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher. Written by Himself, During his Residence at Kingswood School; An Account of the Life of DAVID GEORGE, from Sierra Leone in Africa; given by himself in a conversation with Brother RIPPON of London, and Brother PEARCE of Birmingham; and A NARRATIVE OF THE LORD'S wonderful DEALINGS WITH JOHN MARRANT, A BLACK.*

[12] John Marrant mentions funding construction of a chapel at Birchtown.

[13] The term press-ganged refers to the kidnapping and forcible enlistment of one by military forces (Whitehead 1999: pers.comm.)

[14] Big house refers to the slave-owner's plantation residence.

Data Analysis

Meaningful spatial relationships occur at different scales. Birchtown's spatial relationships and dynamics will be discussed at decreasing scales, beginning with the provincial scale, moving to the regional scale, then to the local and then individual site contexts. This presents itself as a logical organization that will, hopefully, encourage a better understanding of the less measurable dynamics of these spaces and, perhaps, allow the reader to understand the cognized transitions between these spaces.

Birchtown at the Provincial Scale

Throughout the province of Nova Scotia, Black Loyalists were settled in separate communities of their own, though proximal to white Loyalist communities. Brindleytown was close to Digby, Birchtown was close to Shelburne, Little Tracadie was close to Tracadie, Preston was close to Halifax, and so on; all within feasible commuting distances for the time. This fact, viewed from both the black and white Loyalists' perspectives, was important in the social relationships experienced and developed between these two groups of people. This practice is reminiscent of the location of slave cabins on a plantation, near the big house (Prunty 1955; Orser & Nekola 1985). This served to keep the enslaved labourers near at hand, though not to include them as part of the planter's social position as anything more than a symbol of wealth. The increased distance between the free communities in Nova Scotia, as compared with the distances between the big house and the slave cabins, results from the wider scale of social interaction between separate groups of British subjects and the free status of the inhabitants of the Black Loyalist communities. Here, again, visibility and privacy are significant in that the increased distances served to exclude Black Loyalists from the white community, but at the same time increased the privacy that blacks could enjoy

without the interference of whites. The white government was responsible for the imposition of this practice on the Loyalist settlers, and so was likely meant to benefit the white communities. It seems that the white Loyalists did not want to "fraternize" with the Black Loyalists, as a general rule (Walker 1992:48-49). This settlement pattern kept the Black Loyalist pool of potential labourers close enough to work regularly for whites, but not so close that everyone had to live together, day-to-day, as though the last couple of centuries had not happened. This type of attitude, founded on racism, is expected in administration of socio-political affairs in the North American colonies for at the time, racism was systematically ingrained. Recognition and separation of people based on the colour of their skin had, at that time, been at work here for more than a hundred years. As well, white Loyalists in Nova Scotia still held Africans and African descendents in slavery. That said, the settlement practice also benefited the Black Loyalist communities by increasing privacy from the hegemonic whites and allowing more uninterrupted cultural function and development within the communities, with the exception of the riot of 1784.

Birchtown at the Regional Scale

Birchtown was a source of labour and skills that Shelburne inhabitants commonly drew upon. During the initial phase of construction in Shelburne, carpentry skills and heavy labour from the Black Loyalist men were most in demand, thus providing the opportunity for gainful employment. With imbalanced distribution of resources, little or no lumber or nails available to the settlers of Birchtown, what was a pioneer to do? The most prudent investment of their time and skills may have been to work for the white

Loyalists in nearby Shelburne. Not only would this provide an income, but it may have increased the black settlers' odds of obtaining building supplies.

The distance between Birchtown and Shelburne was a mere five miles, making seventeenth century "commuting" a viable possibility for the black workforce from Birchtown. Boston King, in his memoir, relates his market of carpentry and boat building skills to white buyers in Shelburne, moving back and forth each day.

Women were accepted and respected as heads of households, as single mothers and as property owners within African-American and Black Loyalist communities (Walker 1992:207 & 361). If the most experienced builders and carpenters, who also happened to be men, were busy working at building Shelburne, Birchtown's women would bear a certain amount of the responsibility for the construction of shelters, including the semi-subterranean, peaked-roof shelters which will be discussed later. A hole in the ground can be dug by almost anyone, without the requirement of any special construction skills, tools or technical knowledge of joinery. Additionally, the women of pioneering communities, such as Birchtown, likely engaged in the physical labour necessary, especially when motivated by the condition of independence so hard won. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Violet King raised a crop of potatoes to support she and her husband, Boston, while he had gone for an extended period of time working for a white fisherman. Such instances of women "holding down the fort" and working to better the physical conditions of the home were likely common.

The interactions between Shelburne and Birchtown continued and extended beyond the economic to the spiritual. Ministrations of the Christian church, in the form of baptisms, marriages and the like were performed in Birchtown by Anglican ministers

from Shelburne and vice versa of black preachers from Birchtown. These interactions are attested to by the records of the Christ Church of Shelburne (Microfilm reel # H-984, NAC) where people are noted, variously, as "Blks" or "Blacks at Birch Town" or simply "Birch Town" with names recognized as common in the black community, such as "Suky", "Dorcas" or "Primus" or last names such as "Farmer", "Gerrow", "Izzard" or no last name at all. Finally, David George and John Marrant both preached in Shelburne as well as Birchtown, sometimes to white as well as black people.

Local Scale

Given the scarcity of lumber and nails for building Birchtown, the use of available materials such as rocks and soil is exhibited throughout the identified archaeological community. Currently, the identified physical remains of the original settlement structures are buried archaeological resources such as cellars, with the exceptions of many dry-laid stone walls (Figures 13 – 17) and two puzzling rock mound complexes (see Figures 19, 20 & 23). An example of a semi-subterranean shelter constructed for temporary purposes corresponds to oral history as the type of shelter built by some Black Loyalists upon their arrival in Nova Scotia (Dennis 1934:359).

A striking sequence of architectural heritage is represented in the archaeological features excavated. Of the nineteen sites rediscovered at Birchtown thus far, five have been identified as Black Loyalist (see Figure 23). Niven bases their identification on artifact dates corresponding to the period of occupation by the Black Loyalists (1997), using Stanley South's mean ceramic date formula (1972, 1977), as well as quantified patterns from these sites that mirror the Carolina Slave Artifact Pattern which indicates their ethnicity (Niven 1997). This artifact pattern, developed by Wheaton and Garrow

(1985) and based on South's Carolina Artifact Pattern (1977), exhibits a higher percentage of kitchen-related artifacts than architectural artifacts. The reasoning behind this was that less surplus wealth was available to the enslaved, African and African American populations as compared to the white colonialists and loyalists for home renovations and that more time was spent on subsistence activities.

Further sites at Birchtown have been identified; five as nineteenth century occupations and seven others are indeterminate sites, meaning Niven is unsure as to whether they are early Black Loyalist or nineteenth century sites (see Figure 23). Both of these groups of sites may well have been structures built by Black Loyalists, perhaps some of them by those that stayed behind as the others left for Sierra Leone. All nineteen of these sites are considered here as Black Loyalist in origin, since no compelling evidence to the contrary has been raised.

Integration of the Goulden Map with the archaeological site location data, modern base vectors and historical research data in the GIS, as seen in Figure 9, has presented the opportunity to make connections between archaeological features and individual Black Loyalist settlers. As well, these digital geographic data enable comparisons and understandings to be developed for the differences between the "planned" town, as laid out by the surveyor, and the actual town represented in the archaeology, as created by cultural values.

For now, please indulge a few observations, best followed with the aid of Figures 9 and 12. The coloured points (see Figure 12) represent archaeological sites, all except the yellow dots, are "cellar" features, of one type or another. The yellow dots represent large rock mound feature complexes whose function has thus far been rather enigmatic.

Green dots are Black Loyalist sites, blue are nineteenth century and pink are indeterminate.

Six of seven indeterminate sites fall outside of the Black Loyalist landgrants area. Niven feels that the evidence points to their association with Black Loyalists, but needs more proof. These sites could represent settlement of Black Loyalist people prior to the allotment of land. The one indeterminate site that falls within the Black Loyalist landgrant falls, according to the Goulden Map, on a lot designated for Joseph Blair. This may mean that names were assigned to lots on which squatters were located and therefore, designates by default.

On August 17th 1788, Reverend Dr. Walters of Shelburne's Christ Church, an Anglican church, baptized a boy and recorded the baptism as: "Peter, son of Joseph, & Hanah Blair. Blks" (Microfilm reel # H-984, NAC). The Book of Negroes, integrated into the GIS as a database, records a formerly enslaved Black Loyalist woman, "Hannah Blair", whose new status (free, slave or indentured) was unknown. Perhaps her response to the question of her status was "I'm married" (to Peter?) and the recorders did not know how to interpret the response into a "freedom status". She was twenty-five in 1783, from the eastern shore of Virginia, ran-off in 1776, served no military service and had no Certificate of Freedom. Her former owner was Jacob Hancock, though she had no current claimant or possessor and was to be taken to Port Roseway (later known as Shelburne) on the ship L'Abondance by Lt. Phillips. She is the only person with the last name of Blair listed in the Book of Negroes. The indeterminate cellar feature may have been Joseph and Hanah Blair's first home in Birchtown. Perhaps this indeterminate site was the reason for Joseph's name appearing on the Goulden Map.

While three of five Black Loyalist sites fall within the area of the Black Loyalist landgrants, four of the five nineteenth century sites fall within the same area. This may indicate a trend toward settlement within the surveyed land grant area that occurred over time and that the majority of Black Loyalists became settled on their "assigned lots" as opposed to the places they or their families had chosen while awaiting their land grants. However, perhaps the construction of modern roads and highways has destroyed significant amounts of Black Loyalist archaeological material, skewing the pattern visible in the spatial data. If this trend first indicated were the case though, it would indicate a shift in the social functioning of Birchtown, as the government would have finally recognized the claims of the Black Loyalists for landgrants and acceptance by the Black Loyalists of a British pattern of settlement.

African American settlement patterns sometimes exhibit physical closeness (Jones in Singleton 1985:198), relative to what the anthropological and cultural geography communities have come to expect of eighteenth century settlements in British territories. This patterning is likely a cultural survival from West Africa (Whitehead 1999). This appears to have been the case in Little Tracadie, a Black Loyalist community, smaller than Birchtown, settled in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia. When the surveyed lots were to be granted, it was determined that the settlement adopted by the Black Loyalists as they waited for their land grants was too "clustered" and the lots would have to be re-surveyed to accommodate the structures.

In Birchtown, however, an opposite pattern is visible in the overall site location data. The "town site" was defined by white Loyalist surveyors, not by the Black Loyalists. By displaying the site location points with contour lines and the Goulden Map

(Figure 21), it seems that the general distribution of sites is spread out, away from the "town site" around Colonel Blucke's property and above a small rise in elevation. This could be the result of waiting for lots to be surveyed and not wanting to build on land which may be assigned to someone else, however, this is not likely the case. Remembering the strained relations between the white and black communities that erupted in a race riot, perhaps the construction of homes away from the more easily accessed "town site" and in the privacy of the forests served as a protective barrier around the black settlers. Also, the reminiscence of plantation spatial patterns at the provincial scale gains support if this dispersed, un-clustered pattern of settlement parallels, as it seems to, the change in settlement patterns on postbellum plantations in the American Southeast.

Orser, Jr. and Nekola (1985) modeled changes, based on the earlier work of Prunty (1955), in settlement patterns on American plantations from antebellum to postbellum (post-1864) times (see Figure 22). Africans and African Americans moved out of slavery and into lives as sharecroppers and tenant farmers on the plantations. Housing moved from the linearly arranged slave cabins on the slave streets to squad clusters of sharecroppers further from the big house, to dispersed settlements of tenant farmers, even further away from the big house. In fact, tenant farmers often lived at the property border as far away from the big house as possible. The last stage of this model, dispersed settlement, reflects the independence from former overlords, sought, gained and expressed through the built environment. The tenant farmers living in this dispersed fashion, away from the big house and the established infrastructure of the plantation are free, making a living and working to maintain and protect their independence and right to

privacy. The motives and issues faced by these people seem much the same as the

Birchtown settlers, which included some tenant farmers (Niven 1999:9), as do their

material responses to social and cognitive spaces (compare Figures 22 & 12), even if they

occurred at different times. Again, it seems, the people of Birchtown achieved another

first.

The reason for the different patterns exhibited at Little Tracadie and Birchtown,

other than lost or unidentified archaeological resources, may derive from the influence of

direct West African culture at work in the process of settling each of these communities.

Little Tracadie was smaller than Birchtown, so it would have been easier for fewer

people born in Africa to influence the pattern of settlement. At Birchtown, the greater

population may have had a higher percentage of African Americans whose cognition of

settlement patterning began with the slave streets. As well, Shelburne was a significant

population of white elite, perhaps equivocal to the planters residing in the big house and,

so, Birchtown settlement patterning would likely be comparable to the dispersed

settlement of the tenant farmers of the southern plantations.

One possible contradiction to the theory of settlement patterning at Birchtown

being put forth, however, is a cluster of five indeterminate sites in the northwestern

corner of the Black Loyalists' settlement. It is possible these sites represent people born

in Africa or those with a more direct connection to West African culture through an

immediate relative. There were 43 people born in Africa at Birchtown (Niven 2001:

pers. comm.), which may explain the variability within Birchtown, and an affinity

between this cluster and clustered American settlements such as Bigwoods, Melitota,

Uptown, Washington Park and Parting Ways (Jones 1985:198), and perhaps Little

Tracadie, if the above hypothesis is correct.

The parallel to plantation patterns of the American south that appears to arise in

Birchtown may also explain the lack of archaeological sites identified in the "town site"

area, as indicated on the Goulden Map (see Figures 9 & 12). The only site found in this

area, thus far, is the house site of Stephen Blucke, the military leader assigned by the

Loyalist forces to lead the people of Birchtown. Blucke's establishment of leadership

status in the hierarchy defined by whites is not unlike that of black plantation overseers

(Otto 1984:37). The title of Berry Cahill's biography of Blucke. "Stephen Blucke: The

Perils of Being a 'White Negro' in Loyalist, Nova Scotia" (1991) supports this possible

parallel. Dispersal of home sites away from the "town site" and Blucke's house may

indicate the quest for privacy and physical reinforcement of social distance by people at

Birchtown at a time when they enjoyed the freedom and independence to express their

own social hierarchy, not that imposed by whites (again compare Figures 22 & 12).

One last possible explanation for the settlement away from the "town site" may be

the threat felt by Black Loyalists of being captured by slavers and sold back into slavery.

This was a very real concern, as many blacks were seized illegally around Shelburne and

carried back to the United States or the West Indies (Walker 1992:51). Such a climate of

insecurity may have motivated people to settle away from the waters edge. where slavers

could land and capture them. The need to secure Birchtown from "outsiders" may have

support in the existence of other barrier and border-like structures.

One of the most exciting, and testable hypotheses to arise out of the geometric

correction and georeferencing of the Goulden Map is the positioning of the two enigmatic

rock mound complexes (Figures 12. 19 & 20). These features are large. purposeful

structures whose visual and, perhaps, symbolic anchors are large glacial erratic boulders.

These mounds build on the enormity and permanence of these boulders and are not, as

many have asked, including the author prior to seeing them, the result of field clearance;

their structure is too deliberate. Each structure in the complex is constructed of a shell of

larger rocks (small boulders) and infilled with rubble and smaller rocks. They are also all

flat on top, which cannot be coincidental; the flatness is too well defined and consistent.

Had these structures been mere field clearance or the collection of building materials for

other structures, they would be piled in mounds. The use of the smaller rocks to fill in

the shell-like structures, as well as their flat tops, contrast with the nature of collecting

activities. This shell-infill construction technique is the same employed for many of the

linear rock wall complexes throughout Birchtown.

The rock mound complexes fall on the external borders of the "town site" area

within the Black Loyalist land grant tract (Figures 9 & 12). This open area was meant to

be the communal area, the "town site" and these mound features seem to delineate the

borders of this area. Although the "town site" area was originally defined by the white

Loyalist surveyors, perhaps the trend mentioned above, of Black Loyalists adapting to the

linear settlement patterns of the white Loyalist settlement pattern, is responsible for these

complexes and their relationship to this area. In the event that a third exists at yet another

corner of the "town site", then this explanation would be even more plausible. However.

with only the two mound complexes identified, and their positions at mapped boundaries

between black and white Loyalist settlers, they may possibly, at the least. signify and

reinforce a boundary. These may have been built as a way of creating social privacy for

the Black Loyalist settlers from the white Loyalists that surrounded them. inhabitants of

the same communities that bore racist sentiments toward them and attacked them based

on the colour of their skin? If so, perhaps the privacy was also enforced on the spiritual

plane for which these complexes may have been built to honour. Perhaps they were

meant as simple indications for the traveler that people lived here.

Both complexes are also located near freshwater courses that would have been

running past these spots at the end of the eighteenth century. Perhaps they marked

gathering spots for the Black Loyalist community where social ritual. perhaps baptisms

or sermons, or "love feasts"[1] were carried out. This is a plausible explanation for these

features and now that the Goulden Map is very near geometric correctness, manageable

test areas for the other extremities of this area can be delineated and field-tested.

Recall Rapoport's comments on architecture of religious or social significance. In

societies of scarcity emotional, religious and, material surplus are expended on

constructing these types of architecture. They are, "…generally show[n] by their greater

scale. more elaborate decoration, and method of building, but they may also be

distinguished by being smaller; in any case, they are *different*" (1969:10).

There is no doubt that these features, and the complexes that they comprise are

different than anything else seen at Birchtown. The configuration of features at these two

complexes is puzzling, but seemingly elaborate. Each would have required investment of

significant time and effort, as well as organization under a directing force, all of which

indicate some cultural value. In addition to the investment required to construct these

features, it has been learned, through comparison of the multitemporal aerial photo

dataset and the archaeological site dataset in the GIS, that the area around the

southernmost complex (AkDi-31) used to be cleared. In the aerial photography from the

1920's (Figures 24 & 25) this area was free from forest canopy, thought it now has

become overgrown with trees (Figure 23). The clearance was most likely cultural

activity as the native land cover in this area is mixed and scrubby forest. The fact that

this area became overgrown in the last century indicates that its significance was to a

time and people no longer at Birchtown and that the area has not been used during the

period of forest regrowth. The type of vegetation which naturally succeeds ceased

cultural activity is deciduous. Both of the sites of these complexes, AkDi-21 to the north

and AkDi-31 to the south, are covered by deciduous tree canopy. In the case of AkDi-21,

the point in the GIS representing this site was misplaced, roughly 65 metres to the south

of the actual site. A comparison of the area of the actual site in the 1920's and 1989

aerial photography reveals that this site, too, was cleared in the earlier imagery.

However, there does seem to be some slight regrowth here by the 1920's, where at AkDi-

31 there does not appear to be any. This may indicate an earlier data of disuse for this

northernmost complex. Perhaps AkDi-31 was a newer location for whatever activity

these features represent, and AkDi-21 was abandoned for the new location.

If the previous theses of African cultural survival and plantation parallels at

Birchtown are correct, then perhaps these complexes signify protection devices for this

settlement from outsiders, whites from Shelburne or slavers come to capture people. In

the hierarchy of African and African descendents on plantations, the spiritual leaders held

the top ranking positions, not military leaders such as Blucke. It would make sense that

protection of the community would be sought under the leadership and guidance of a

spiritual leader, who would have had the power within the community to organize and

direct the construction of these complexes. The church was, undoubtedly, the core of the social functioning of the black community and Birchtown was no exception.

John Marrant claims to have funded the construction of a chapel at Birchtown, though whether it was built in his presence or after his departure is unclear (1790:iv). David George built a church at Shelburne. In his memoirs, he talks about holding a service in Shelburne on a platform, as no church had yet been built to shelter his flock. This platform was later developed into a chapel, however neither the structure, nor any archaeological remains of such have been identified, but David George's lots in Shelburne have been identified. According to Marrant and George, there was time, energy, resources and will to construct buildings of religious significance, even though the Black Loyalists endured many hardships. Perhaps the two rock feature complexes were fruits of such labours. No site, however, has been identified and confirmed as that of a religious structure, though it is expected that such would constitute a social focal point in the community. The importance of Christianity in the Black Loyalist community must have influenced the spatial organization of the community relative to the position of the church structure(s). Knowledge of the position of the church(es) may allow for more expedient detection of other archaeological features.

Semi-subterranean structures, identified as early temporary shelters in the oral history, may have been built atop hillocks for drainage purposes, thus exhibiting a topographically influenced pattern of settlement. The one confirmed site of such a feature, Borden site number AkDi-12[2], sits atop a significant hill, as do many other Black Loyalist sites. Topography may also have been a mechanism for increasing privacy from and visibility of visitors to homes. This would indicate exertion of control over one's

surroundings and creation of privacy, something an enslaved person was restricted from doing. The roofs of these shelters began as birch bark covered frames of saplings or small tree limbs with moss and grass used for insulation. As time passed and material resources were procured. the roofs became more substantial lumber frames with shingles and eventually the holes in the ground were abandoned for above ground architecture, often having root cellars for storage of foodstuffs.

It appears, based on the identification of cellar features. that preference for elevated sites remained, although dwelling structures progressed and were improved to more permanent architecture with dry-laid stone cellars. Perhaps this preference contributed to the spread out distribution of the individual sites identified as homes were built where there were hills, though the parallel with post bellum tenant farmer settlement patterns on southern plantations remains the favoured explanation.

Socio-economic hierarchy within Birchtown is indicated in the range of domestic architecture due, in part. to differing power to organize human resources. Differential access to material resources was pronounced due to the stigma attached to resource allocation to blacks as evidenced by their interactions with the government for land. tools and provisions. Military leaders, such as Colonel Stephen Blucke, were the most likely recipients of resources such as lumber or nails from the white government. Such leaders were considered above the other members of the Black Loyalist community based on the white perception of social hierarchy within the black community. Colonel Blucke's property and associated architectural remains have been identified and investigated through archaeological research. Niven cites Blucke and his home site as, "...in a much

more economically advantageous position compared to the average citizen of Birchtown"

(1999:7).

Finally, the evidence of great dreams and strong wills is everywhere in historic

Birchtown. Walls, about a metre high, are everywhere throughout the area (Figures 13-

17). Whole complexes appear to denote property boundaries or yard compounds around

houses and along roads. Areas within these compounds or properties have also been

demarcated, perhaps for small livestock. These walls, constructed with small boulders

and infilled with rubble, as were the rock mound features, represent huge investments of

time and labour, as well as a useful employment of copiously available material. This

fact and the symbolism of using rock as a construction material seem to indicate a sense

of permanence, that the homes (houses and outdoor spaces) built here would witness the

success and independence of generations of Black Loyalists and their children. They also

convey a sense of ownership and right. In the definition of a boundary, even one a metre

high, through such unambiguous means as rocks and boulders, an "inside" and an

"outside" was created. The ability to create and reinforce "one's place" was, quite

possibly, a unique experience for many of the Birchtown settlers. Perhaps enjoyment of

this freedom helps explain the additive quality visible in some of the complexes, a quality

characteristic of vernacular architecture, according to Rapoport. It would not have been

an effective protection device against racists seeking to harm the Black Loyalists or

marauding slavers attempting to capture people, so the significance of these walls, while

likely utilitarian to a degree, is also symbolic. Had the walls been constructed for the sole

purpose of corralling livestock, these spaces would be expected not to include the

domestic house structure. Also, the presence of these walls along roads, but not

enclosing a single space boasts support for the argument of their symbolic value outweighing their significance as utilitarian devices.

Exterior space is expected to be as, if not more, important, in terms of quantifiable functions and community-based culture, as interior space. The "yard" may have been a place of work, socialization and semi-public transition for guests visiting the inhabitants. Also, the small size of the domestic structures, approximately 10ft x10ft or 12ft x 12ft in many cases (Niven 1993; 1998; 1999), minimize the possibility that the interiors of these structures were used for entertaining guests. Such use of exterior space is reminiscent of plantation patterns, again.

The distribution of the most intact examples of these complex wall structures surrounding homesteads seems to be limited to areas away from the "town site." This may result from any combination of factors which include not having identified extant archaeological sites in the "town site" area or their having been destroyed by subsequent land use and development. The last, and most likely, is that the construction of these complex features coincides with the dispersed settlement pattern, related to the internal social hierarchy of the Black Loyalists. Those that chose to live away from the "town site" may have been of the upper and middle classes in this hierarchy, conjurers, root doctors and preachers in the upper class, craftspeople and exceptional field hands in the middle class (Otto 1984:37). This is supported both in the parallel with later postbellum settlement patterning and in the recognition of Stephen Blucke as a leader in the white hierarchy. If this is the case, then those experienced in field labouring would be living in this area of dispersed settlement and rock wall features, accustomed to working hard at manual labour and experienced in such activity. Also, these people may have been more

motivated to establish their own farms because of their exposure to agricultural activities as a symbol of wealth and independence and as a demonstration of control. In the case of the Black Loyalist farmers, however, control was not sought for the purpose of controlling others, but for control over one's own self.

If these were the people responsible for the construction of the seemingly agricultural wall complexes, it may explain the variability with linear, road-lining rock walls as the fruits of labour of people who had worked at jobs other than field labouring. Or, the road-lining rock walls were a cultural survival from the Black Loyalist settlers built by their descendents.

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[1] From the Journal of John Marrant, 1790. "...in the evening, we had a great love feast, and we continued all night praying to and praising of God..." (p.20).
[2] A Borden number is given to every archaeological site in Canada, based on the Borden site designation system.

Conclusion

The spread out distribution of the sites at Birchtown was an obstacle to the community being designated a National Historic Site (NHS)(Niven 2000:pers.comm.). Officers from the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board gave a negative assessment to Birchtown as a NHS candidate due to this apparent lack of spatial concentration of features. I suggest that the dispersed settlement pattern exhibited by the sites at Birchtown should be recognized by the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board (NHSMB) as the structure of the community. This structure is culturally relevant in the history of Black Loyalists and serves as a reminder that, besides being British subjects in Nova Scotia, they were also Africans and African descendents, many of whom had suffered enslavement. Instead, the NHSMB is seeking a settlement pattern based on white Eurocentric notions of settlement, which are not applicable in Birchtown. This seems, also, to neglect the nature of the site as a rural landscape. Were the location of a religious structure discovered, or the mound complexes confirmed as religious in nature, perhaps a focal point for the society could be established. In the meantime, perhaps the homes of William Eustace and Robert Nicholas (or Nickinson?), the other two individuals named in the Black Loyalist landgrants on the Goulden Map, could be located and individual stories of Birchtown settlers, not in the white-authored histories, become known.

In the course of gathering information for this thesis, there was a general consensus that Africanisms would not be found at Birchtown (Whitehead 1999:pers. comm.; Niven 2000:pers. comm.). Reasons were cited such as: African material culture was not made or transported there, people were too busy surviving and they had been too acculturated by British colonial culture to bear much resemblance to African, African

American or plantation culture. Such conclusions are not surprising, as the artifacts thus far collected from the sites are indicative of European colonialism. Some have suggested that any "Africaness" found at Birchtown would have been in the uses of these artifacts and perishable goods such as foodstuffs, which would be difficult to detect archaeologically. However, this study of the spatial contexts of Birchtown, while not exhaustive, is a good starting point and shows that the cognition of socially motivated behaviours can be detected in material space. I believe that the relationship between Birchtown's spatial configuration and later developments in similar social circumstances to America's southeastern plantation country indicate that there is likely a greater degree of "Africaness" or African Americaness" at work in the culture and community of Birchtown than has been previously acknowledged. The American contexts of such sites have long been regarded as culturally distinct from white colonists and American settlers. The cultural distinctions are rooted in the traditional cultures of the African American population, and their African ancestors. I suggest that if the same culturally conditioned responses occurred at Birchtown as the sites in America's southern contexts, then the same cultural distinctions were likely present. While the Birchtown context predates the American context this does not negate the connection. Therefore, progress from this point may be made by studying the plantation parallel, particularly the postbellum period. There will, no doubt, be certain differences based on time, place and technology, but I feel I have successfully demonstrated the significance of the comparison.

It is important to recognize that while certain primary historical information regarding Birchtown is available, it sheds light on only a very small portion of life there. These sources are also quite biased toward white Eurocentric-defined Christianity, which,

although preached by black Preachers, came originally from the teachings of preachers often looking to eradicate African culture. Spatial analysis and archaeology offer much more democratic means of learning about people.

Shelburne suffered a drop in population once its hopes for becoming the commercial centre between Britain and New England were dashed. That said, it remains a viable, predominantly white Loyalist descendent community. There are many examples of the settlers' architecture still standing and protected by the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia. If the Black Loyalists were workers and carpenters labouring on the structures and in the community for the white Loyalists, then their techniques and traditions may be preserved in the heritage architecture of Shelburne, where standing architectural history for Birchtown is not available. The cultural landscape of Birchtown included Shelburne, and vice versa. As a result, a current interest by the town of Shelburne to obtain heritage district designation should consider its historic relationship with Birchtown and its former inhabitants as builders of their architectural heritage resources and the social history of their town.

Utilizing image-processing tools and techniques was immensely successful. The ability to geometrically alter and correct the Goulden Map and overlay it with other data sources has proven invaluable for my research. Without having done this, I would not have been able to integrate this eighteenth century map into the GIS as a spatial data source with anywhere near the degree of success demonstrated. The iterative nature of the georeferencing and geometric correction process encouraged careful examination of the spatial and attribute detail in the map, which allowed me to make observations about older mapping technology and the vestiges of the historic landgrants boundaries which

may never have been proven in the modern property boundaries. We may never have known that the Black Loyalists got smaller land grants than the size reported (seven acres as opposed to ten). An understanding of the purpose of the rock mound complexes may now be closer. Contrasts between settlement patterns in this black community with notions of appropriate settlement patterning from white Eurocentric communities was observed by overlaying the Goulden Map with the archaeological sites and contour lines. Integrating the Goulden Map with the archaeological site data has also allowed a specific site to be linked with the names of a common family in this historic black community, a truly unique accomplishment.

The georeferenced, multitemporal aerial photo dataset, overlaid with the archaeological site data showed the relationship between the rock mound complexes and old land clearance activity. The vegetation changes between the old and new aerial photos indicate that these sites were built and used long ago and that one may predate the other. Observation of vegetation changes may be noted for other archaeological sites, with further examination. The benefit of storing and managing archaeological site data digitally in a GIS is clear.

Plantation and postbellum archaeological research has received a great deal more attention and funding in the United States than the black cultural history of Canada. Nova Scotia's Black Loyalist history has been sadly neglected when compared to its cousin sites from the Underground Railroad in Ontario. Perhaps this is because the history of treatment of Black Loyalists is less complementary toward Canada than the vision of people seeking shelter from American slave-owners in the bosom of Canada's political centre.

To conclude, hopes and plans for the future of Birchtown's GIS and the information it may yield are outlined below. One initiative that I have suggested is the mapping of land cover classes in the older aerial photo dataset as a vector-based format and overlaying it on the modern air photo dataset. For example, one might map all the clearings or single-species forest stands in the historic aerial photos, and overlay these maps on the modern air photos to see how these areas have changed and are represented today. This might also enable discovery of vegetative reclamation or patterning that can be associated with sites, and areas of similar patterning to be tested.

Finally, mapping the extensive and complex rock wall features, with a gps for efficiency-sake if possible, would be an important addition to the GIS. These features may represent property boundaries, small livestock pens and garden fences that were constructed by the Black Loyalists, quite possibly before any land grants were formally issued, and in configurations that had nothing to do with the prescribed spatial patterns of the British surveyors. This kind of information can allow one to more closely examine rules of spatial organization employed outside of the will of the British surveyors.

Integrating the wall locations into the GIS would allow a synoptic view of their configuration and distribution, which may enable a community-wide spatial pattern to be discerned. As well, if the walls were integrated as a vector data source and overlaid on the aerial photos, vegetative patterning may become more visible. With this type of information, further incidence of this vegetation pattern could be derived using image-processing technology, called image classification. Again, this might assist in discerning vegetative reclamation or patterning that can be associated with the wall complexes, and areas of similar patterning to be tested.

Archaeology and spatial analysis are more democratic means of learning about average folks in the past. GIS and remote sensing image-processing technologies should be embraced as useful tools for archaeological and anthropological data exploration. Birchtown is an important place in the cultural history of the African American and Black Loyalist descendent populations of North America. It must be protected and its distinction as an African descendent community must be recognized and celebrated.
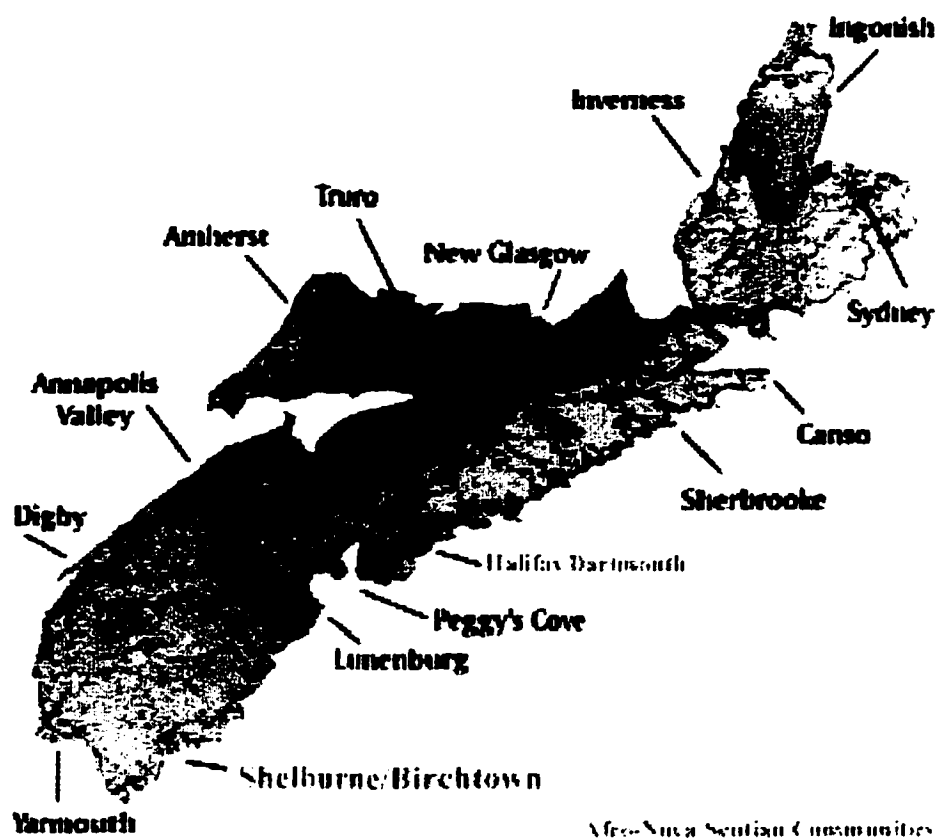
Map courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society website:
http://museum.gov.ns.ca/arch/sites/birch/

Figure 1: Map of Nova Scotia showing location of Birchtown
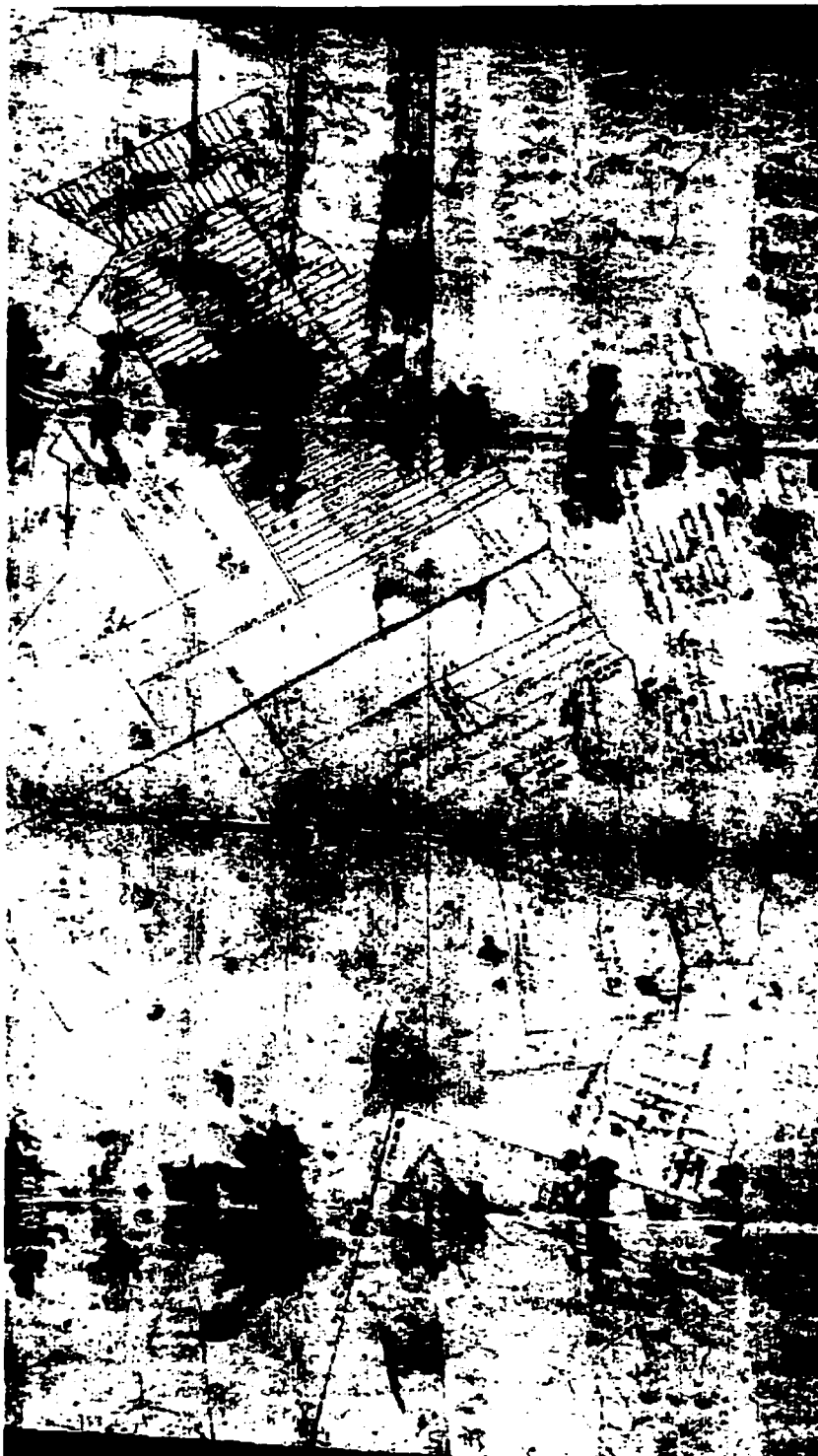
Figure 2: The Goulden Map
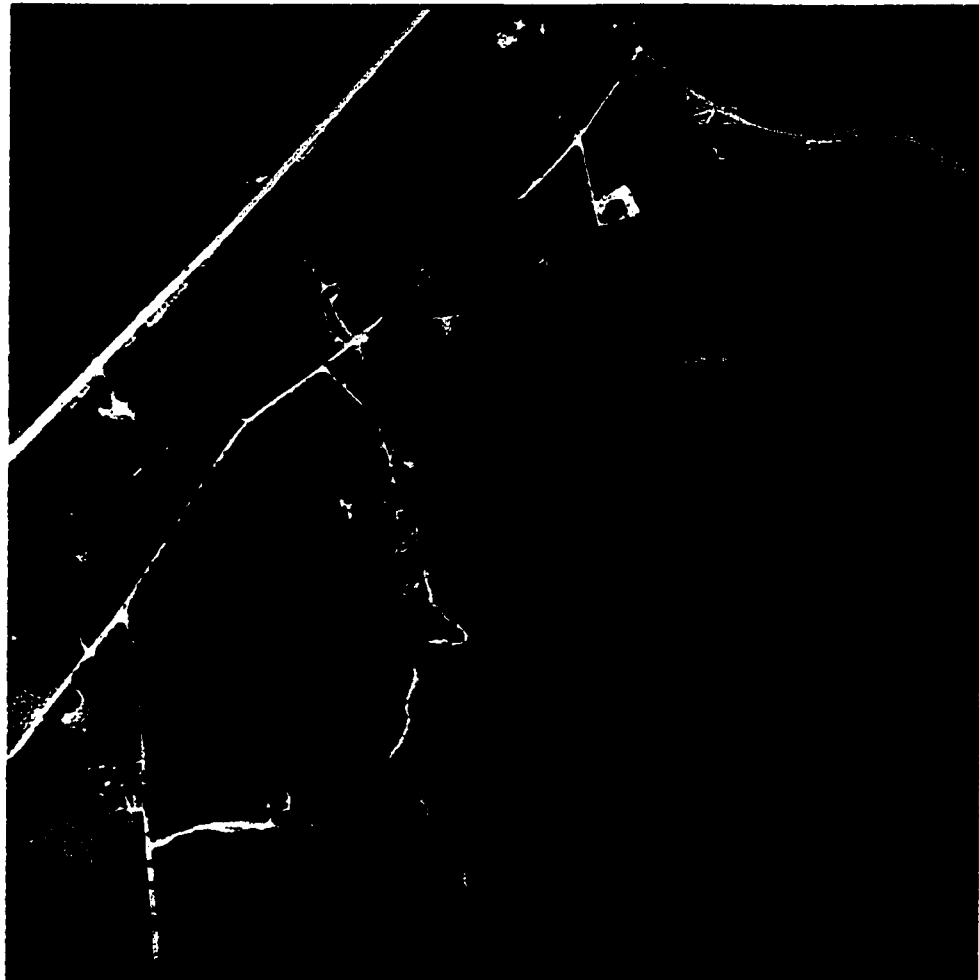
**Figure 3: 1989 Aerial photo (subset) over Birchtown, Nova Scotia
Registry of Deeds, 89313-65**

Figure 4: 1927 Aerial photo over Birchtown, National Air
Photo Library, ka59_62
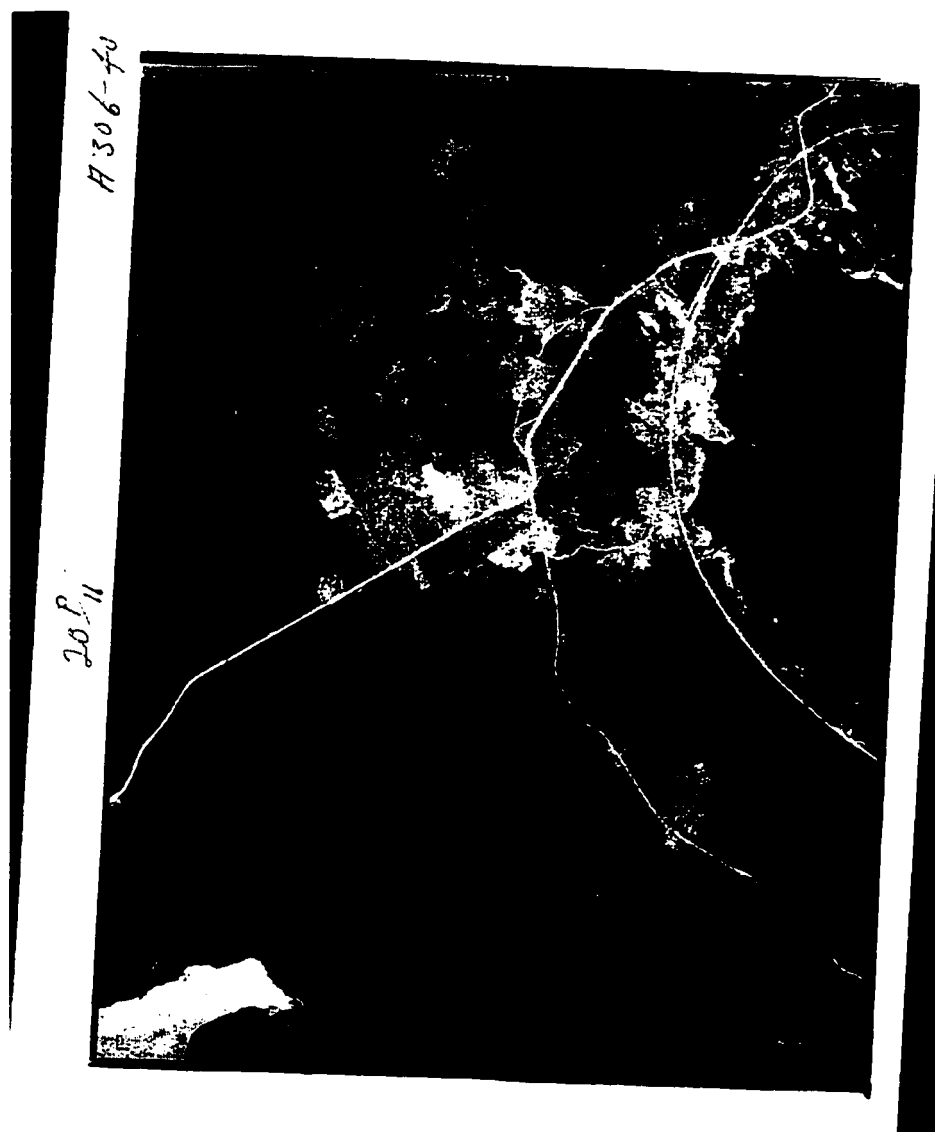
Figure 5: 1928 Aerial Photo over Birchtown, National Air
Photo Library, a306_40
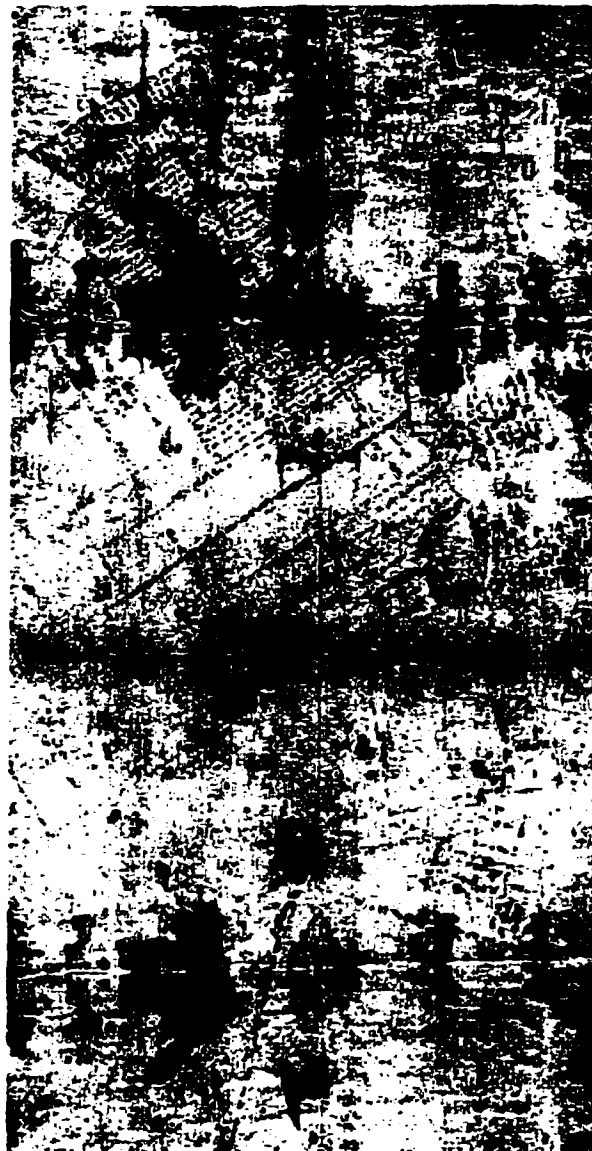
Figure 6: Distribution of GCPs from first attempt at georeferencing and geometric correction

Figure 7: Goulden Map, first correction attempt. Poor fit.

Figure 8: Goulden Map, second correction attempt, first order polynomial transformation. Poor fit.

Figure 9: Goulden Map, second correction attempt, second order polynomial transformation. Best fit.
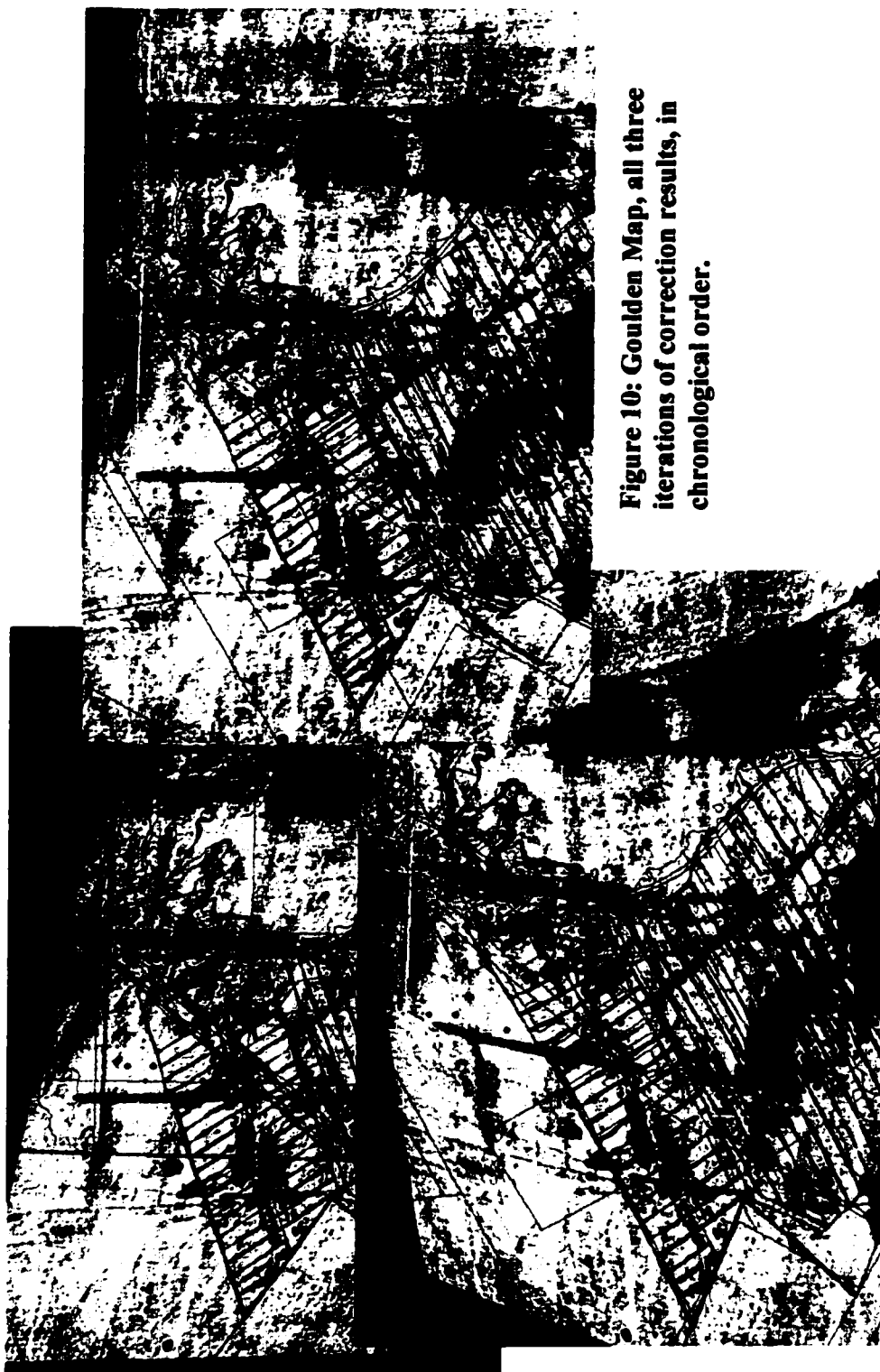
Figure 10: Goulden Map, all three iterations of correction results, in chronological order.
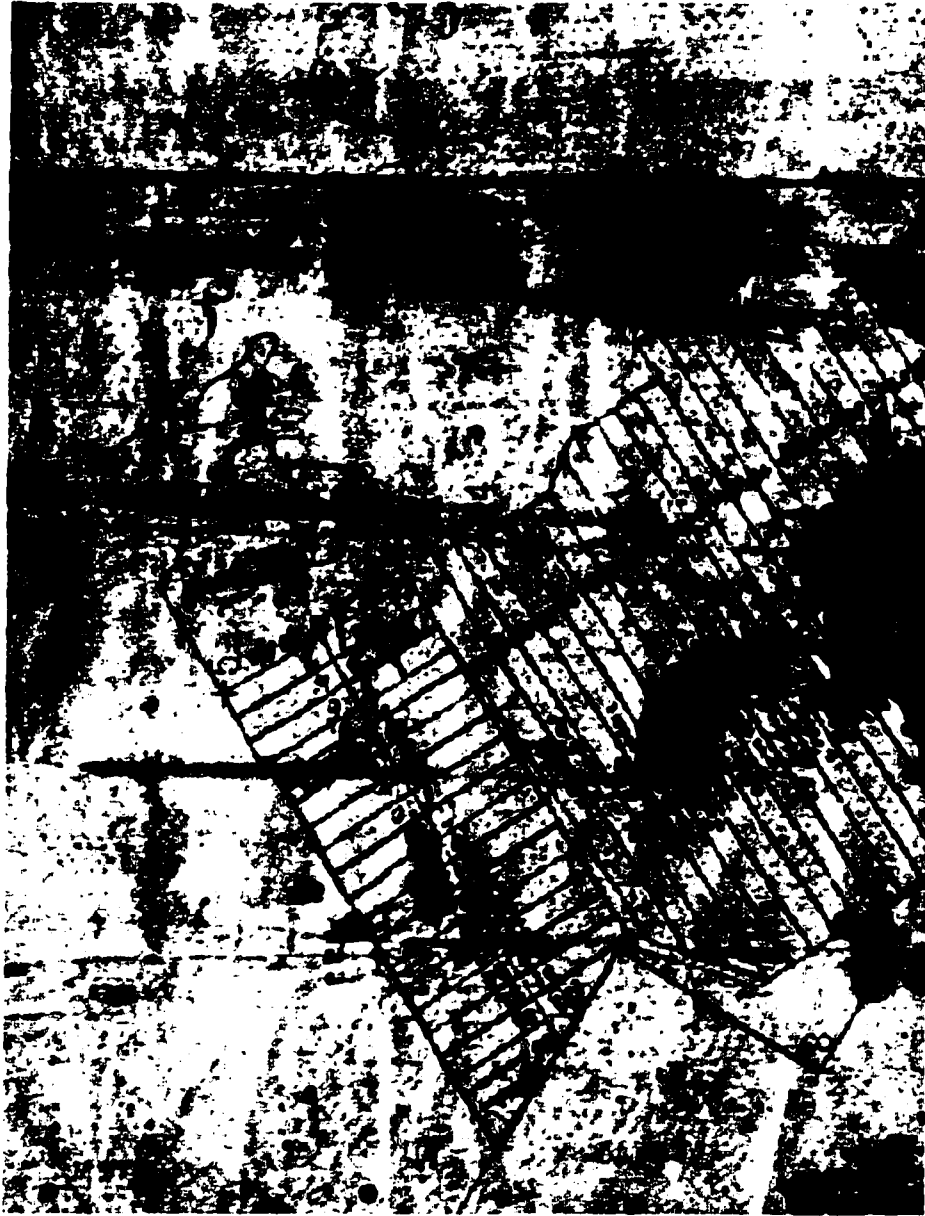
Figure 11: Distribution of second correction attempt gcps across clipped Goulden Map subset

Figure 12: Archaeological sites locations overlaid on the Goulden Map: Green = Black Loyalist site, Pink = Indeterminate, Blue = Nineteenth century and Yellow = Rock Mound Complex
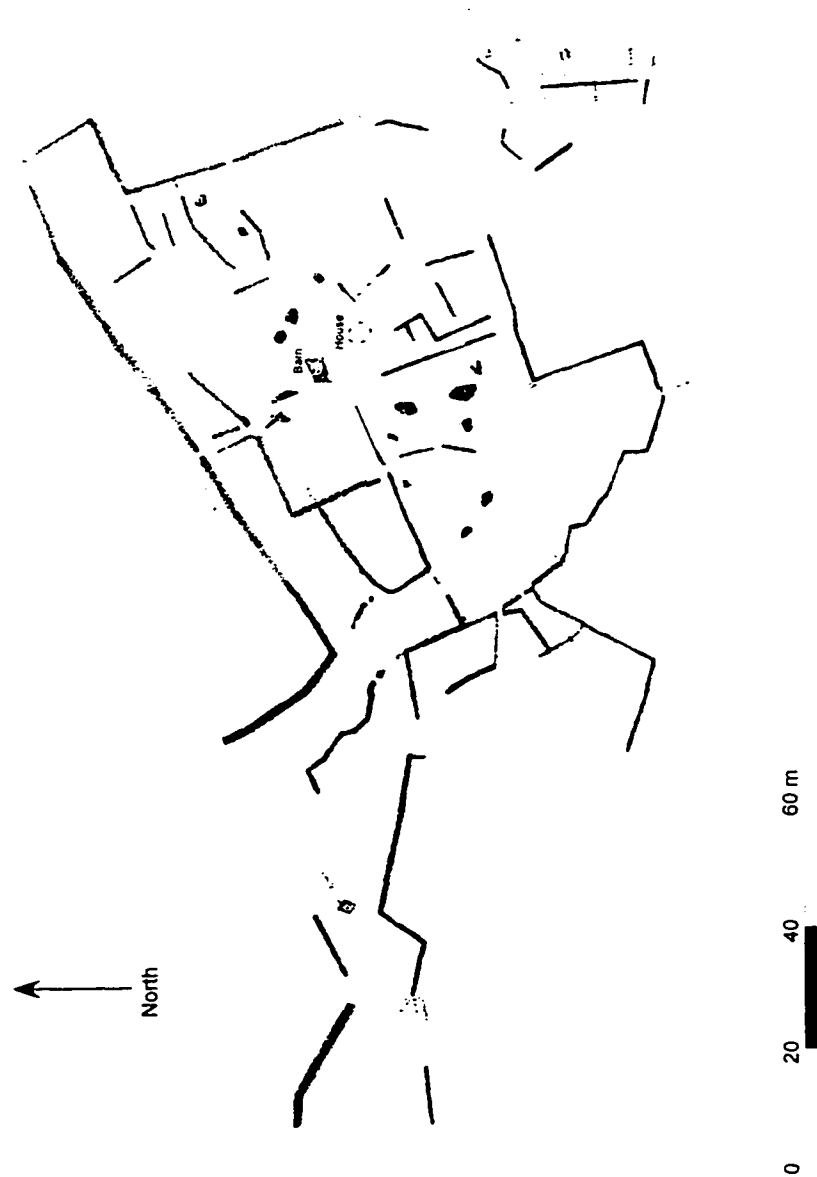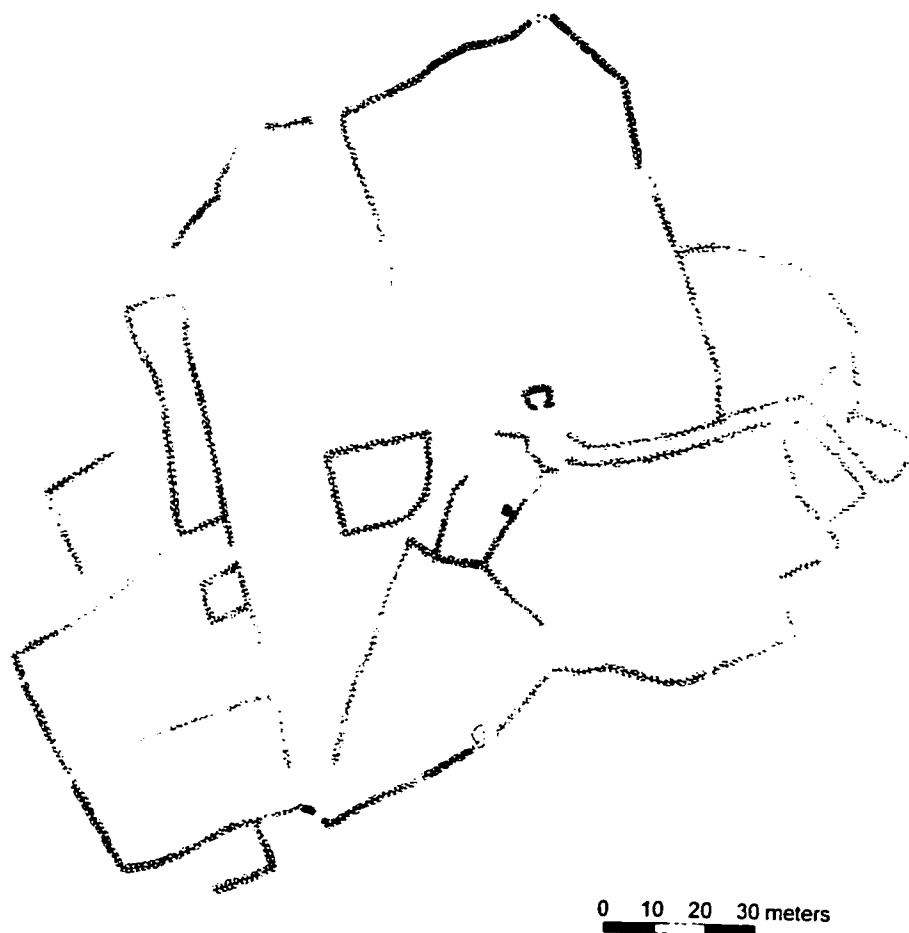
Figure 13: Wall complex at AkDi-11.
From Niven 1999:45
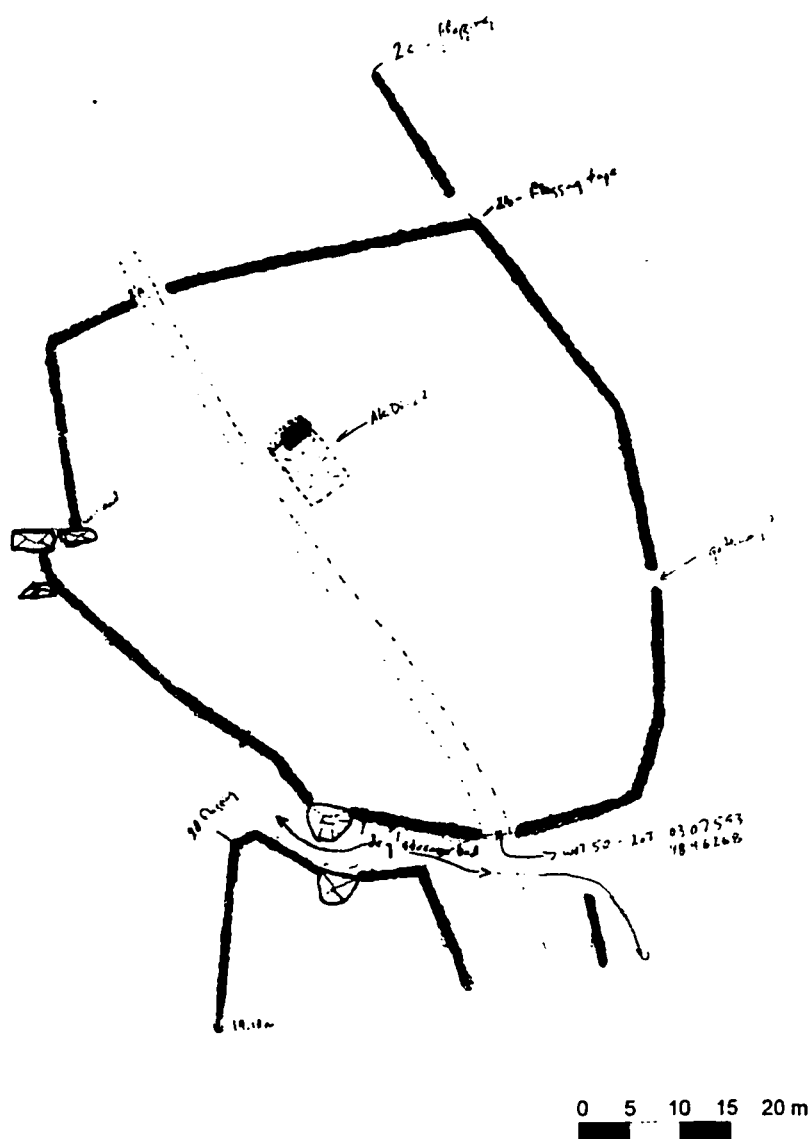
Figure 14: Wall complex at AkDi-22.
From Niven 1999:44

0 10 20 30 meters

Figure 15: Wall complex at AkDi-30.
From Niven 1999:43

North

AkDi-5A

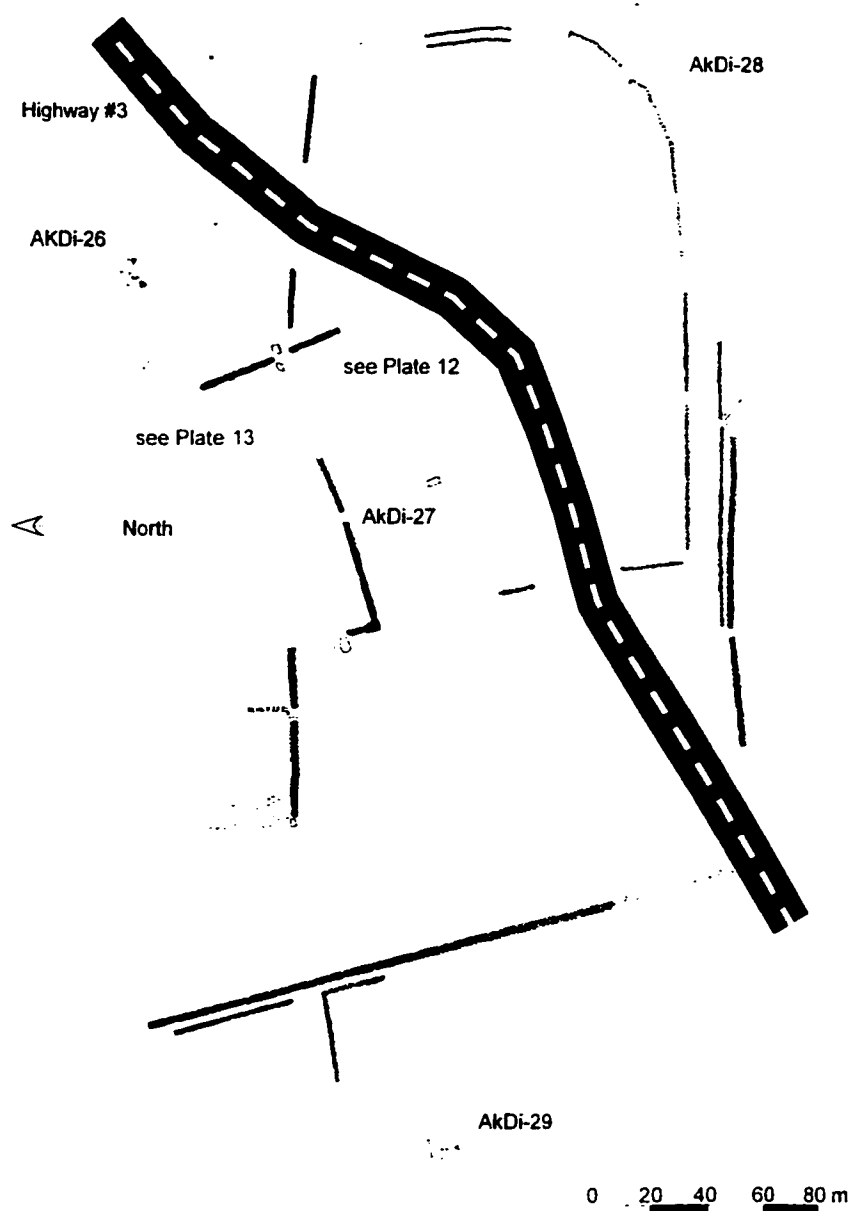AkDi-5B
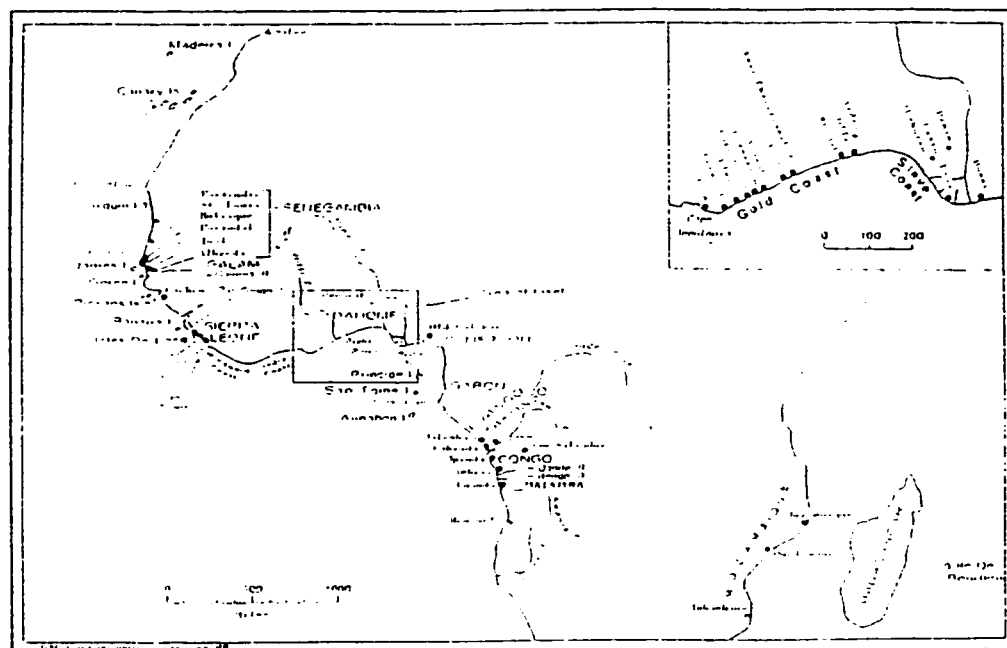
Well

AkDi-25

0 ... 10 ___ 20 m
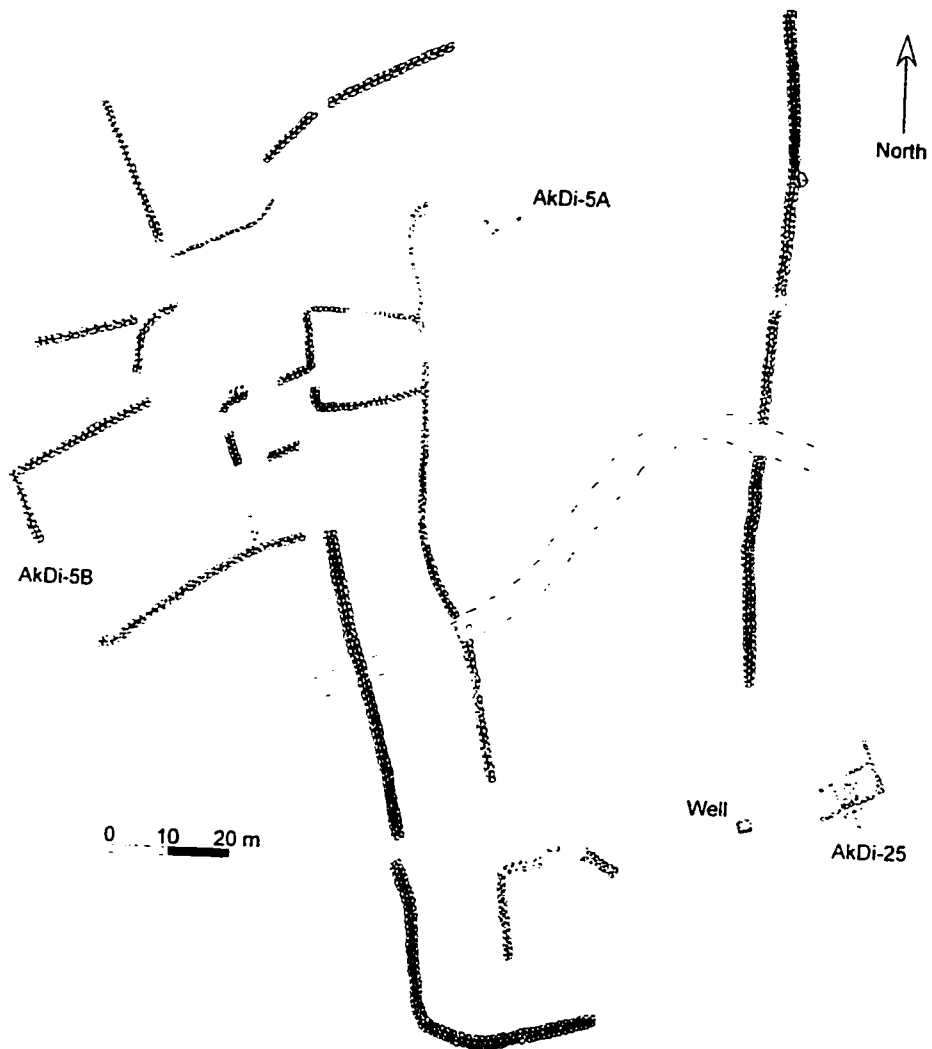
**Figure 16: Wall complexes at AkDi-5 and
25. From Niven 1999:35**

Figure 17: Wall complexes at AkDi-26, 27, 28 and 29 – along roads.
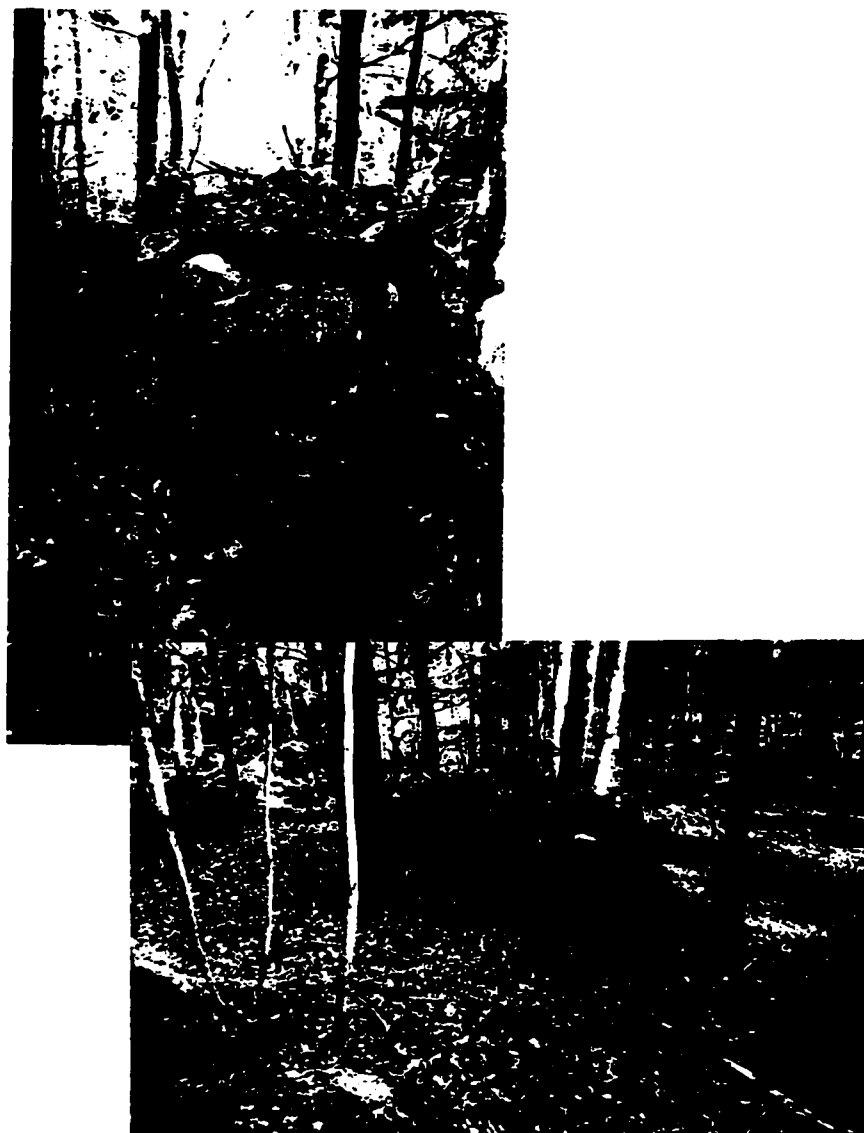**From Niven 1999:38**

Africa (with an inset of the Gold and Slave Coasts)

Figure 18: Map of West African coastal areas involved in the slave trade. From Rawley 1981

Figure 19: Rock mound complex configuration (southernmost at AkDi-31). From Niven 1999:41

**Figure 20: Photos of Rock mound feature at AkDi-31.
From Niven 1999:56**

Figure 21: Archaeological sites locations overlaid on the Goulden Map: Green = Black
Loyalist site, Pink = Indeterminate, Blue = Nineteenth century and Yellow = Rock
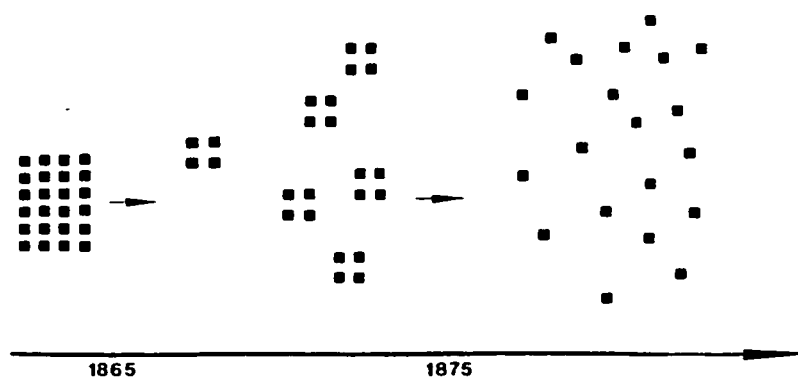Mound Complex. Note small ridge on the waterside of wide site dispersal.

Figure 4.1 Idealized model of plantation settlement dynamics from clustered slave quarters to dispersed tenant farmer and sharecropper homes with a "squad" arrangement intermediary.

Figure 22: Orser and Nekola's model of settlement pattern change from slave cabins to dispersed tenant farmers and sharecropper homes. In Singleton 1985:71

Figure 23: Archaeological sites locations and modern property boundaries overlaid on the aerial photo (1989): Green = Black Loyalist site, Pink = Indeterminate, Blue = Nineteenth century and Yellow = Rock Mound Complex.

Figure 24: Archaeological sites locations and modern property boundaries overlaid on the aerial photo (1927): Green = Black Loyalist site, Pink = Indeterminate, Blue = Nineteenth century and Yellow = Rock Mound Complex.

Figure 25: Archaeological sites locations and modern property boundaries overlaid on the aerial photo (1928): Green = Black Loyalist site, Pink = Indeterminate, Blue = Nineteenth century and Yellow = Rock Mound Complex.
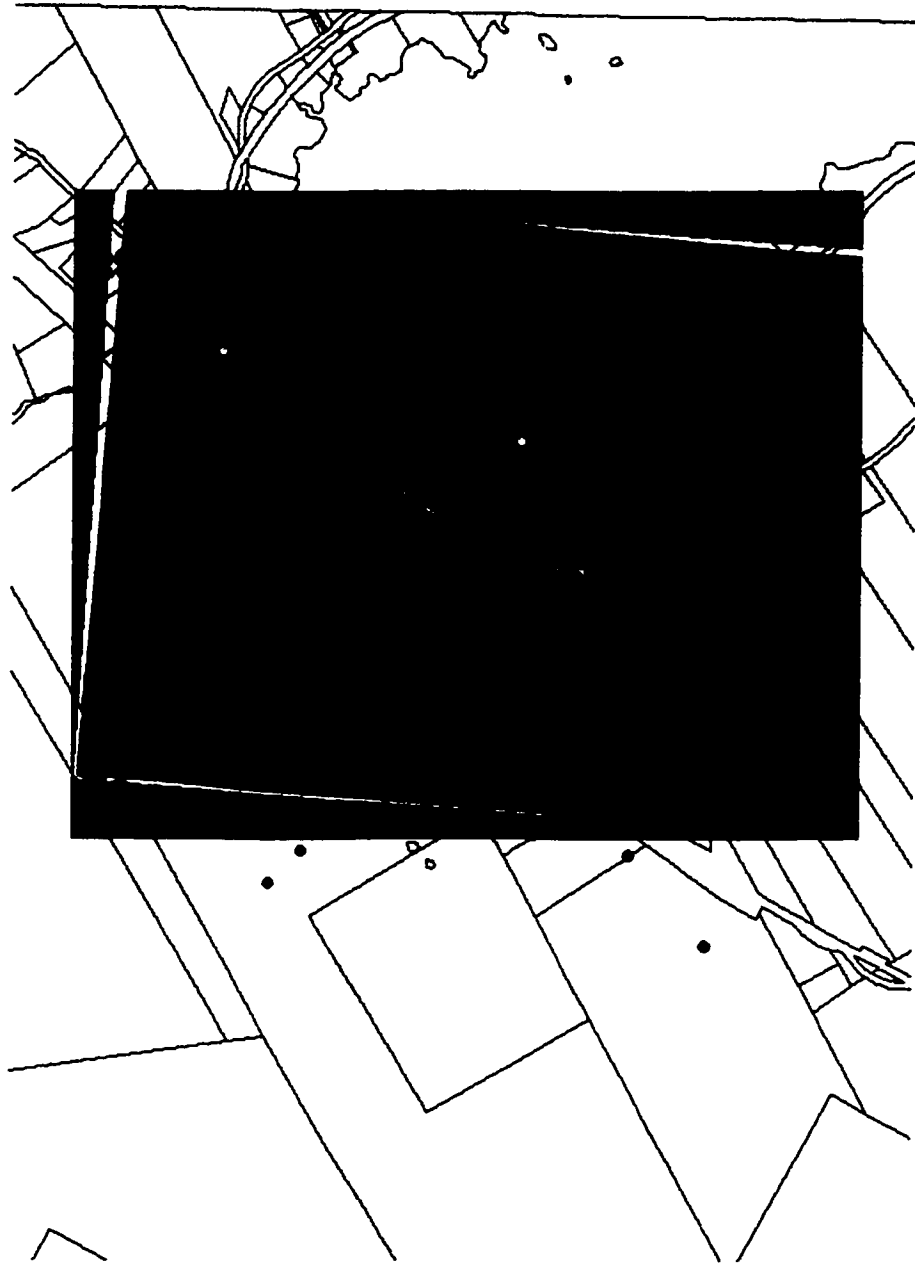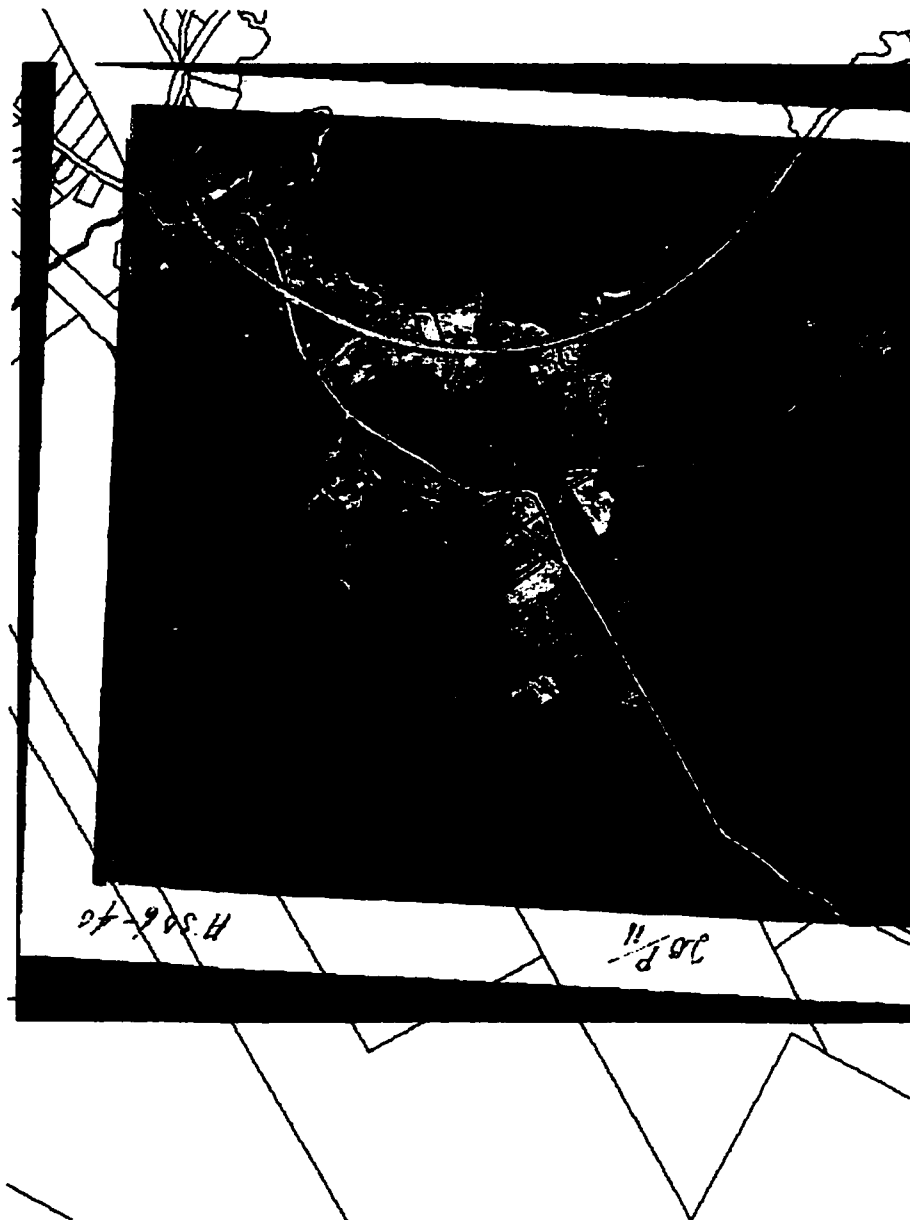
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Addendum

p.77 Joseph Blair does appear in the Book of Negroes. The digital database entry of the Black Loyalists bound for Shelburne made a most unfortunate omission by leaving out the record for Joseph Blair. However, Blair's appearance in the book of Negroes only serves to reinforce the importance of being able to assign a specific lot of land with an archaeological site on it to a Black Loyalist settler.

"Joseph Glair [sic; Blair], 50, worn out. Formerly the property of John Blair, Eastern shore, Virginia; left him 5 years ago."

"Hannah Blair, 25, stout wench with 2 fine sons, 4 & 2 years old. Formerly the property of Jacob Hancock, Eastern Shore, Virginia; left him 7 years ago."

(Ruth Holmes Whitehead & Carmelita Robertson 1998:42 *Black Loyalists Emigrating to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783 From New York City*. Nova Scotia Museum)