

# **Diversifying Eastern North Carolina Heritage Sites: Tour Guides' Perspectives**

by

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## **Abstract**

Tour guides from six Eastern North Carolina heritage sites were interviewed to assess minority participation. The sites in this study focus on museums, plantations, and towns. A further comparison was done between site ownership: private and state. The interviews were coded, which provided themes to reasons behind lack of participation, what exhibits minorities show interest in, and potential solutions to boost minority participation. Sites were also assessed on how the information located within each site was presented. In order to perform site assessment, content from a guided tour along with inventorying of site gift shops was completed. Finally, recommendations were assessed based off of the guides' interviews and the tours.



# **Diversifying Eastern North Carolina Heritage Sites: Tour Guides' Perspectives**

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by

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DIVERSIFYING EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA HERITAGE SITES: TOUR GUIDES'  
PERSPECTIVES

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction to Heritage Tourism**

Income from tourism related activities has the potential to ease economic difficulties in rural counties. However, the revenues involving heritage sites are predominately derived from tourists that are of European American descent. Marketing the sites to members of other ethnic groups living in the United States has the potential to bring in more money and should be explored further.

A problem that many heritage sites throughout America face is a lack of minority visitation. Since the late 1990s several studies attempted to determine why minority populations do not visit heritage sites (Floyd, 1999; Floyd, 2007; Lawton and Weaver, 2008; Mowatt, 2009; Philipp, 1999; Stanfield, Manning, Budruk, and Floyd, 2005; Weber and Sultana, 2013; Whiting, Larson, and Green, 2010). These studies examined minority visitation to both parks and heritage sites. Weber and Sultana (2013) point out, “Greater visitation leads to more resources to provide for visitor interpretations and safety as well as protect the wildlife, scenery, and other park resource” (pp. 439). No one study can establish for certain why the minority population has such a low visitation rate, but studies often point to some type of problem, such as lack of concern for the site or financial issues. If minority visitation can be improved, then I hypothesize that the racial and ethnic divide, and economic situation of these sites will be eased. This leads to the research question for the current study: “How can we advance the diversity of ethnicity among visitors to heritage sites?”

Heritage sites teach tourists about past people, places, and events. Just as Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003) suggest, a heritage site is anywhere a person feels an emotional connection to the area that they are visiting. McKercher, Ho, and Cros (2005) state that “Heritage tourism reintroduces people to their cultural roots” (pp. 539). Visitors to a site, also expect to encounter

effective tour guides and interactive exhibits (Cameron and Gatewood, 2000). Sites such as plantations, battlefields, refuges, wetlands, and museums offer people knowledge of how America has developed through the years. Sites of this nature will be referred to as heritage sites. These sites are able to show today's tourists what the landscapes and tools looked like hundreds of years ago. The sites help tourists connect to the past. Heritage sites are very important socially because they not only exemplify how life used to be, but also they allow individuals a route of escape from everyday life.

Heritage sites are extremely hard to tailor to the interest of individuals because people view places differently and experience different emotions (Cheung, 1999). Often heritage tourism is subject to who is telling the collectively accepted or the officially accepted version of history. Another problem heritage tourism faces is the responsibility of portraying everyone's history accurately. Interpretation is often questioned when it comes to how a site should portray certain topics, especially when the topics are sensitive to racial differences. Topics that center on slavery often impact people in different ways. Site managers or tour guides may choose to lessen the impact of slavery at a particular location during a tour by simply referring to slaves as servants. Alternatively they may choose to show focus mainly on the painful experiences of slaves at a particular location and talk less about the life of the plantation owners.

Historic sites across North Carolina were threatened with closure during the economic crisis and related lack of tax revenues for state run sites and private funds at private sites (McCrary, 2013, pp. 118). In addition, many American citizens are exposed to less information about historical events than any other industrialized nation (Cameron and Gatewood, 2000). Keeping these sites open to the public is not an easy task to accomplish due to the need for employee's salaries, maintenance, and other expenditures, including utilities, electric bills etc. . . .

have to be paid. State sites often charge admission and always take donations. An increase in visitors to these sites would make imminent closure less likely.

Several studies have looked at ways that affect African American participation at these sites (Floyd, 1999; Carter, 2008; and Alderman, 2013). Alderman (2013) does not suggest that all African Americans have the money to visit, but does insist that minorities are “an important and profitable sector of the travel market” (pp. 375). Thus there needs to be more research on how to increase visitation to historic sites, specifically by minorities. Roberts and Rodriguez (2008) reported that “issues surrounding race and ethnicity and constraints to recreation participation have not been given the attention they deserve” (pp. 37-38). The same is true with African American participation at heritage sites. Hence, my main goal is to determine how heritage sites can attract more tourists, specifically African American tourists. Floyd (2007) issued a three tiered challenge for researchers to increase minority participation by understanding “we have not assessed well where we have been, where it is we need to go, and how we might get there” (pp. 248). Increased visitations to these sites will bring in much needed funds which can potentially save sites, histories, and jobs. My research question is: How do heritage site tour guides, in Eastern North Carolina, evaluate and accommodate African American visitors?

Exploring how to attract more minority visitors to these sites needs several steps of investigation. The experts of the tourism field needed to be consulted. For the purpose of this study, tour guides at historic sites across Eastern North Carolina are considered experts. Tour guides interpret the sites to the public and influence how the history is being interpreted. Guides also know characteristic features of visitors because they interact daily with the people who are traversing the grounds. My assumption was that the tour guides can tell me what the visitors are most interested in hearing. Hence I expected the descriptions and reflections of tour guides to

allow me to develop ideas about potential strategies to make heritage sites more attractive to minority visitors. A related goal of this research was to better understand the training that tour guides receive and their personal evaluation of their knowledge base.

I expected to find similar answers from the tour guides at all locations. At each different site, I presumed to find what interests the typical tourist will also interest the African American tourist. Furthermore, I expected that all tour guides at the sites have a set script that each follows while giving a tour; that training of the guides occurs infrequently and some of the guides have only limited suggestions on how to draw in more tourists while many of the guides suggest more advertising.

The secondary goal of this research was the evaluation of the presence and range of artifacts at sites that represent the minority experience, in particular the African American experience. This is a similar replication of prior studies (Alderman & Modlin, 2008; Giovannetti, 2009; and Litvin & Brewer, 2008). The creation of lists of items displayed at tour sites, in gift shops, and exhibits has allowed me to determine if the history of African Americans is part of the sites narrative.

The combination of collection information about the perceptions of tour guides, the source of their knowledge, and the range of minority related artifacts was expected to assist me in making recommendations to heritage sites in Eastern North Carolina to take steps to attract in more minority visitors. Furthermore, data collected from this study might provide sites with suggestions of how to be more socially sustainable, which should in turn lead to economic sustainability. A location that equitably represents the history at each site is socially sustainable. McKercher et. al. (2005) points to economic viability when, “Museums, heritage theme parks and even religious cultural assets that rely on gate fees and/or donations may benefit from

increased visitation with no adverse impacts” (pp. 541). Economic sustainability will follow when the sites are able to draw in more of the minority which should bring in more money through admission, gift shop purchases, and donations.

Insights from this research can make a contribution towards social sustainability. Social sustainability has been defined in several different ways. Most of the literature focuses on how developing countries need to include the local population in tourism industries (Holden, 2008). Jensen et al. (2012) use three different ways to define social sustainability. The definition that my research project is based on is ‘maintenance sustainability’. Maintenance sustainability speaks of sustaining traditions and preserving natural areas. Social sustainability should be viewed as bridging the racial gap that is present in America today. Tour guides are vital to this research because they know what version of history is being presented along with what narratives people like to hear.

Potential answers to the research question may also lead to economic sustainability. Economic sustainability can be achieved by attracting more people which can correlate to more income to that institution (Weaver, 2006; Weber & Sultana, 2013). If a focus is placed on attracting more African Americans, then marketing strategies need to be developed that can deliver such a goal.

The next chapter provides background information on minority visitors attending heritage sites. Chapter two focuses on perceptions of interpretation, slavery research, plantation research, portrayal of history and survey research. The third chapter introduces the research methods that were used when the data was collected discussing site selection, sampling strategy of guides, data collection methods, and analysis methods are discussed. The fourth chapter assesses guide demographics, questions asked to the guides, and inventoried items. All of the information

gathered will be presented during this chapter. The fifth chapter further analyzes the data. The section compares state vs. private run sites, and combines all of the information to present solutions for increased African American visitation. The sixth chapter consists of the appendix. The appendix has the survey instruments, tour and gift shop checklist, and IRB approval document.

Research focusing on attracting more minority visitors is essential, not only as a way for sites to increase their revenue, but also to illustrate a deeper understanding and respect of America's past. This is not a new discovery. Similar rationales were developed by George C. Marshall and Clarence C. Randall. Marshall responded to the plight of Europe after World War II wrote legislation in the form of the Marshall Plan that lifted visa requirements for US Citizens during the 1950's (Edgell and Swanson, 2013). His plan made it easier for Americans to travel overseas and learn foreign cultures. Clarence C. Randall, an assistant to President Eisenhower, also saw the need for tourism exposure as he wrote, "I hold strong conviction that tourism has deep significance for the peoples of the modern world, and that the benefits of travel can contribute to the cause of peace through improvement not only in terms of economic advancement but also with respect to our political, cultural, and social relationships" (Edgell and Swanson, 2013, pp. 43). Although Marshall and Randall were referring to international travel the sentiments still hold true for heritage sites and their attendees. Visiting heritage areas will lead to stronger identity formation, a deeper understanding, and a more profound tolerance of the diversity of cultural practices in current times. Reaching out to community members to include voices of all races can give sites a unified voice that illustrates appreciation of diversity.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The information surrounding African American visitation to historic sites and parks is extensive. Floyd (2001) warns readers that sites need to get prepared for minority visitation because in the year 2050 America's minority population will be the majority of the population. Being the majority in less than 50 years means research needs to be done now, focusing how to attract minorities to parks. The Census Bureau suggests that by 2060 the minority will comprise 57 percent of the population (US Census Bureau). The more minority visitors that can be attracted now, the greater success parks will have in the future. It is my hypothesis that if these groups are not reached soon, then parks might suffer economically. Lack of participation by the future majority will cause parks to suffer economically, causing many of them to close.

The literature written on minority visitation to parks is extensive. Topics covered over the course of the last 30 years concerning minority visitation include southern plantations, National Parks, museums, and recreational spaces used for leisure (Butler, Carter, Dwyer, 2008; Clark, Williams, Legg, Darville, 2006; Alderman, Modlin, 2008; Hanna, 2008; Kirchberg, Trondle, 2012; Bressey, 2011; Falk, 1999; Whiting, Larson, Green, 2010; Weber and Sultana, 2013; Lawton, Weaver, 2008; Floyd, 1999). Research looks at ways minorities view heritage sites within a community along with visitor satisfaction. Certain trends in the research tend to dominate the discussion. Four types of data collection can be identified: studies that followed tour guides on their tours, exit surveys conducted with visitors after tours, surveys within the minority community, and statistical analysis of minority visitation demographics. The literature surrounding interpretation, slavery research, plantation research, portrayal of history, and survey research allows the quandary surrounding heritage sites visitation to come to the forefront.

### *Perceptions of Interpretation*

The strongest motivation for the current research project comes from my interest in understanding how people perceive interpretations or the ways in which narratives are told. Levine, Britt, and Delle (2005) relate that “creating identity relies on the interpretation of specific sites or material culture, interpretations that are manipulated for specific ends” (pp. 401). Interpretation is used to provoke thoughts about people and their relationship to places (Barre, 2012; and Stewart, Haywood, Devlin, and Kirby, 1998). Interpretation takes on the facade of a person, the community, and the region where it is being performed.

Interpretation is referred to by the tour guide community as presenting an insight to objects that are displayed at their site. According to Lim and Aylett (2007) interpretation is the same as storytelling. Christie and Mason view interpretation as an “indispensable tool” with a primary purpose to educate visitors (pp. 1). Interpretation as related to heritage sites is packaging the sites historical information into a story that the guide presents.

Levine et. al. (2005) look at how local residents are supporting tourism in Lancaster County, PA. The heritage that is contested in this town surrounds Thaddeus Stevens and the Underground Railroad. The local population prefers to highlight the accomplishments of President Buchanan because of the more reserved features, whereas the figure of Stevens is more radical. Stevens’ legacy centers on Radicle Republicanism. He also was found to have harbored slaves during the Civil War as his house was on the Underground Railroad. Local people are not open to change the image of the community. Getting the community to back a project could thus ensure that the project is going to be successful.

The perception of slavery among local populations has been investigated by Yankholmes, Akyeampong, and Dei (2009). They focus their research in Ghana on a Transatlantic Slave Trade

destination. Promoting tourism to showcase the slave trade can be difficult when the subject matter is contested. The research concluded that 74% of the local respondents agreed that the site should be promoted. Yankholmes et. al. (2009) also show that, “residents perceived the educational and cultural values of historical attractions as economically beneficial” (pp. 324). Here we see the local population supporting the promotion of the contested tourism topic for educational and monetary benefits to the community.

Coeterier (2002) looked at experts’ versus lay people’s evaluation of what sites in an area should be preserved. The author explains that there are three reasons to grant lay people the right to state their opinion: “they give or enhance place identity, personal identity and group identity” (Coeterier, 2002, pp. 121). The research compared residents and nonresidents opinions to what should be preserved in a community. The locals tended to have more of an emotional attachment to the items in their area.

### *Slavery Research*

The word “slave” is used in differing contexts and some sites in the southern states of the United States still use the labels servant, laborers, or enslaved people in their handouts and exhibit descriptions. An overview of brochures from southern heritage sites shows that the word “slave” or “slavery” is excluded in the marketing of sites (Alderman and Modlin, 2008; Butler, 2001; Eichstedt and Small, 2002). Sites do this because of the negative connotations that are associated with the word slave. Shipler (1998) suggests that obstacles will be faced in getting African Americans to visit historic sites because they associate these places with shame and violence. I believe the sites need to focus on the issues of slavery—as they are key to the plantations narratives. The history of slavery at plantations can be shown in several lights. Narratives at sites give examples of the cordial relationship between slave and master as well as

narratives that showcase the malevolent relationship between slave and master. Slave narratives are very diverse and point to the fact that history has multiple complex narratives about slaves.

Hanna (2008) examined a slavery museum that was planned for Fredericksburg, VA. Some residents of Fredericksburg were against the building such a museum. People thought the history portrayed at the museum might take away from story of The Battle of Fredericksburg. This particular battle was a major victory for the Confederacy. Hanna (2008) shows the lack of African American referencing by stating that, “Few of the programs held that weekend mentioned that slavery was the primary cause of the war or that it secured the emancipation of the African-American slaves” (pp. 317). The findings of this study also suggest that the residents there do not see slavery as part of their historic background. The local uproar alone brought the project completely to a halt. Hanna (2008) shows that often the white-centric view is the only one portrayed at sites. White-centric is a generic term used to describe narratives that focus in favor of the white race. Many authors referring to the term “white-centric” often focus on how the slaves were good servants and how the masters were fair and just. “White-centric” is collectively associated with “white washing” (Modlin, 2008; Eichstedt and Small, 2002; McDonald, 2009; Litvin and Brewer, 2008). Small’s (2013) research shows how sites with slave cabins often marginalize the use of the cabins, which does not display African American history. By marginalizing history, the site effectively “white washes” the location, leaving out black history. He also shows that slavery carries great negative connotations that many individuals do not want associated with their town.

Along with slavery on the rural plantation, we learn that urban home owners also had slaves. Litvin and Brewer (2008) look at the history of slavery being portrayed in Charleston, SC. Their study assesses the sites in question by using a participant-as-observer approach, taking

tours without letting the guide know they were investigating the tour.<sup>1</sup> The results of that research show that tour guides often confronted slavery upfront, discussing what slaves did for their owners living in the city. There were some sites in the city that chose to replace the word slave with servants. Replacing words such as these is viewed as “white washing.” Litvin and Brewer (2008) come to the conclusion that even though plantations might have shied away from addressing slavery, historic homes in urban places mention slavery.

### *Plantation Research*

Plantation research is very similar to that of slavery research because plantations in the South employed slaves. Scholars have studied people who visit plantations and the reasons these people are attracted to the sites. Buzinde and Santos (2009) show that the key role of plantations is to, “preserve history and to educate generations about the plantation past vis a vis noble tales describing the lives of the plantation owners and the architectural intricacies of their homes” (pp. 439). Hanna (2008) notes that “Plantations are remembered as the homes of great men and their families rather than as places built by the labor of slaves” (pp. 331). One huge part missed by plantation interpretation is the fact that slaves also inhabited the plantation. Giovannetti (2009) also expresses the same situation happening in South American Plantations. He suggests that slavery is often left out at most of the plantations that he visited. According to Giovannetti (2009), sites often focus on the “Great House” and casually mention the slave quarters—effectively leaving out the slave narratives. The author suggests that this was done because people want to see the grandiose side of the plantation not the side that portrays negativity and servitude. Histories that capture the past of all participants should be portrayed at a site in order

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<sup>1</sup> Litvin and Brewer (2008) used the participant-as-observer method so that they would not influence the guide’s behavior (pp. 74). The method had previously been used by Butler (2001) and was a suggested method by Ryan (1995).

to attract more minority visitors. If they are courted to become visitors, they need to be offered a link to the heritage features they are interested in.

Clark, Williams, Legg, and Darville (2006) studied visitors that traversed Kingsley Plantation. Kingsley Plantation is a National Parks Service historic site located in Florida. The plantation was owned and operated by Zephaniah Kingsley from 1814-1837 (National Park Service, 2014). The site currently has twenty-two tabby cabins, slave dwellings. The visitor survey done by Clark et. al. (2006) collected data on the demographics of visitors. Then Clark et. al. (2006) polled the tourists about their expectations for the site. The demographics showed that 73.9% of the visitors were white and the majority of them was 46 or older. The study also showed that 33.9% of the black visitors went to the site for educational reasons and 50% went to experience more about their heritage. The researchers also found that “African Americans were more interested in programs, exhibits, and the story of the people who lived at the plantation than white visitors , and were more likely to feel sadness while at the site” (pp. 30). Interpretation at heritage sites needs to be unbiased and presented based on accurate historical data. I conclude that if more sites offer us unbiased information then everyone attending the sites will have a reason to attend.

Exit surveys are often conducted at plantations to see how tourists view the tours and what they take away from them. Butler, Carter, and Dwyer (2008) focus on the experiences of visitors at plantations in Louisiana. Their study shows that the percentage of whites visiting these sites was 85% compared to 3.5% of African Americans. The majority of the visitors stated they were greatly interested in the enslaved community. The study also found that the foreign born were more interested in the slaves compared to any other group. Butler et. al. (2008) concluded, that “any shame, guilt, resentment, or other feelings that may be felt by black or white

Americans...is not attributed to the foreign born” (pp. 300). Studies like Butler et. al. (2008) are very visitor oriented and are great to look at when searching for visitor preferences.

Buzinde and Santos (2009) use an encoding and decoding model to look at how visitors see the plantation after the tour is completed. During encoding the researchers set forth certain themes that the plantation delivers about slavery. The participants in the study were then decoded based on position they exhibited in an exit survey. Much of the information given to Buzinde and Santos (2009) showed that many tourists bring preconceived notions to their visit and grasp hold of the dominant narrative portrayed at the sites. They suggested that this is looking at romanticizing recollections of an unromantic event. One tourist in an overarching statement suggested “Rice planters were much nicer than cotton planters” (Buzinde and Santos, 2009, pp. 449). The tourist in this case was very subjective to the way the docents lead the tour. The guide had emphasized certain dominant narratives over others, what happened in the big house took precedence. Decoding the tourists answers were dichotomous based on which community they were from. The statement made by the tourist suggests that people visiting the sites are very susceptible to what is presented. These elaborations show that tourists need to be given a more diverse view of the history portrayed at sites in order to take away more than one side of a story.

Another area of study is based on researchers sitting in on tours or assessing web based content. Researchers have done this with the assumption that they can see how the representation of a site might explain why minorities do not visit the site. Alderman and Modlin (2008) look at plantation websites across North Carolina in order to determine if the information on these websites represents the enslaved community. They looked at frequencies of words relating to slavery. The conclusion of the article was that slavery is often misinterpreted when presented as part of a good master narrative. The good master narrative suggests that slave owners were not

malevolent to their slaves but treated them very well: feeding them, clothing them, and giving them shelter. They found that only three of twenty plantation sites included sufficient information about the enslaved African American in their interpretation. Their conclusions pointed to sites not offering enough information on slavery. Alderman and Modlin pointed to the fact that architecture is mentioned more often than slavery. They show that marketing heritage often lacks focus on slavery. Litvin and Brewer (2008) also sat in on tours that are located in urban South Carolina to see how slavery was represented there. Research like this is quite subjective because tours are not identical. Litvin and Brewer (2008) come to the conclusion that although plantations still avoid the topic of slavery, the historic homes in urban areas inform their visitors about slavery. The differences between urban and rural portrayal of slavery is shown in the literature. Giovannetti (2009) who assessed heritage sites in South America also noticed that the topic of slavery was not mentioned on a tour or the self-guided five-page guide. The study assessed plantation narratives in Barbados, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Brazil. Research like this is needed to give suggestions to heritage sites, allowing them to make sure that they receive unbiased feedback on what is being delivered to tourists.

### *Portrayal of History*

The literature about heritage sites focuses on how sites are being interpreted, presented, or showcased to the public. Interpretation reveals if the history at any given site is presented in an authentic or false mode. Pond (1993) suggests that tour guides are supposed to showcase the local community to tourists. Here one can see that the reason slavery is often not portrayed at sites is because it might show the surrounding community in a negative light. Lim and Aylett (2007) show that multiple aspects affect how tours are presented. They found that “factors like role, interest, experience, type of tour, length of tour, guide’s belief, guide’s personality and

visitor groups are found to influence the presentation of information” (Lim and Aylett, 2007, pp. 51). The data was produced by a brief survey given to tour guides. Their insights suggests that visitors are going to become interested in virtual tours in the near future. It is possible that guides who are not representing sites in a way that is acceptable to the visitor/client could lose their jobs to virtual tour guides who portray history in a predictable or prefabricated manner. Virtual tour guides would be able to interpret the history at a location in response to visitors; answers to their guiding questions. Having virtual guides would also ensure that the portrayal of history at a site is always done the same with no bias.

Poria, Biran, and Reichel (2009) study the role of information packaging at heritage sites. Their study focuses not on an American heritage site but one that is located in Jerusalem, the Wailing Wall. Collecting data on visitor perceptions on the relationship between a site and personal heritage the authors conclude that more than one perspective on heritage sites interpretation needs to be offered. Hall (1994) argues that most heritage sites seem to only offer a monolithic version of what happened at those sites. Thus, the challenge becomes to present more than one side of the story at any heritage site.

Poria et. al (2009) conducted 227 interviews with visitors in their study and found that visitors prefer interpretation when attending sites. One of the most important findings centered on the fact that individuals “who perceived the site as part of their personal heritage indicated greater interest in receiving interpretation than those who do not perceive the site as part of their personal heritage” (Poria et. al, 2009, pp. 97). Information from this study revealed that people who are emotionally connected to the sites want tours. African Americans are connected personally to heritage sites. Narratives need to be developed in order to attract these tourists so

they can obtain insights about the history of people they can identify with and consider to be members of the same ethnicity

A related issue is the question of how a site should portray slavery. Butler (2001) suggests that there are two sides, “a rosy side of a semi-fictitious history” and a “dark side” (pp. 172). He also expresses that it is difficult to tell the dark narratives because he assumes that people who go to these sites are often on vacation and don’t wish to hear about death and servitude. Henderson (2005) suggests that authenticity is extremely subjective and that each person can interpret history based on their own view of events and personal experiences. Christie and Mason (2003) consider tour guides as “educational agent involved in this interpretation process in the field” (pp. 4).

### *Survey Research*

Other publications discuss methodological improvements to data collection procedure. Several authors focus on how to question visitors before and after they take tours at heritage sites. Kirchberg and Trondle (2012) are interested to learn what draws people to museums. Butler, Carter, and Dwyer (2008) conducted an exit survey that asked what members of specific ethnic groups preferred to hear during a tour. They found a bimodal distribution: European Americans wanted to hear most about the architecture of buildings at a site and African Americans wanted to hear more about slavery. Butler et. al. (2008), as previously noted, included foreign born visitors as a group that seemed to not associate any resentment, embarrassment or guilt to slavery. Clark, et. al. (2006) study compares the interest of the different ethnicities that visit the plantation. The study ends with the authors presenting a list of ideas that can achieve more visitors and a fairer representation.

Another field of investigation related to visitor satisfaction with heritage sites, collects information on the proximity of sites to the private residences of visitors. Lawton and Weaver (2008) focus on Congaree National Park, South Carolina. Their research shows that more than half of the black population around the park had never visited any of the sites. Lawton and Weaver's (2008) research concludes that to reach this ethnic group, the park administrators need to increase awareness of the park. Weber and Sultana (2013) look at the same constellation, i.e. visitor profiles in respect to the distance between private residence and visited site, for the entire United States. They conclude that geographic distance from the park explains lack of visitation of heritage sites among African Americans. European Americans are more likely to visit a faraway site compared to Hispanics and African Americans (Weber & Sultana, 2013, pp. 447). However, in many instances, African Americans don't take advantage of the vicinity of sites located closely to their local residences.

Academics have also studied why minority populations are not visiting National Parks (Austin, 2002; Barton & Leonard, 2010; Buzinde & Santos, 2009; Erickson, Johnson, & Kivel, 2009). The National Parks are interested to attract a more diverse set of visitors in line with their goal to support all the public. Since 1960 when the National Park Administration reported an underrepresentation of minority visitors for the first time, the trend has continued (Stanfield, Manning, Budruk, and Floyd, 2005). Erickson, Johnson, & Kivel (2009) show the disparity in visitation by showing that only 3.8% of visitors attending National Parks are black. That figure is extremely low and needs to be brought up. Floyd (1999) relates the problem of African American visitation to four hypotheses that assume that economic constraints, ethnic upbringing, interpretation of the parks dominant culture, and interpretation of institutional discrimination are hampering more African American visitation. Those four hypotheses are featured in several

articles and have been studied within heritage tourism (Floyd, 1999; Roberts & Rodriguez, 2008; and Weber & Sultana, 2013). Lawton and Weaver (2008) show how the majority of African Americans living around National Parks have never set foot in them. However, Weber and Sultana (2013) demonstrate that African Americans have a stronger connection with historical sites than National Parks.

Research has also taken place at recreational parks on the number of minority visitors attending. A recreational park is a place that allows individuals to participate in any form of recreation. Recreation spans from sports to outdoor activities. Son, Shinew, and Harvey (2011) research also takes a similar approach using qualitative data. They find that some people would like to use the recreation center in a Midwestern town but they cannot afford it. Other constraints to participation are “lack of motivation, and lack of knowledge” (Son et al. 2011, pp. 97). The comparisons between recreational parks and heritages sites are often similar in that money is hypothesized to inhibit participation.

My research project will significantly differ from the aforementioned studies because it will focus exclusively on tour guides and their insights on visitor motivation and satisfaction to explore how to improve minority participation at heritage sites. I have found no other studies on how tour guides explain their choice of words and topics when interacting with minority visitors. I plan on giving the tour guides a voice instead of assuming to know what motivates them or what they wish to highlight in their interpretations. In addition, this approach can show us the ideas of experts in the field on how to best reach local minorities and entice them to visit the sites. The way that my research will differ from what has been done in the past, is the fact that I will draw on what the sites are offering to the African American community and what the guides believe should be offered to draw in more tourists. Looking at the opinions of guides and the information that

they present will offer insights on how the State of North Carolina and individually run sites might reach the local black population. The guides' answers to how they are trained and if they view themselves as experts will also provide much valued information. Finally by looking at the exhibits located at each site I will be able to determine if the site is providing any information about African American history that showcases their heritage.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This research project was informed by three objectives and related hypotheses. The first objective was to find out reasons African Americans are not attending heritage sites. The second goal was to determine what could attract more African Americans to heritage sites. The third objective was to document mentions of African American heritage on tours and throughout the gift shops of the study sites.

These three objectives directed my efforts to identify strategies to improve the rates of participation of African Americans at heritage sites in North Carolina. To accomplish the objectives I selected six sites in Eastern North Carolina, specifically, three state run and three private sites. I conducted semi-structured interviews with thirteen tour guides and evaluated the artifacts in stores and exhibits. I analyzed the data with grounded theory analysis and univariate and bivariate statistical measures. The detailed methods are described below.

#### *Site Selection*

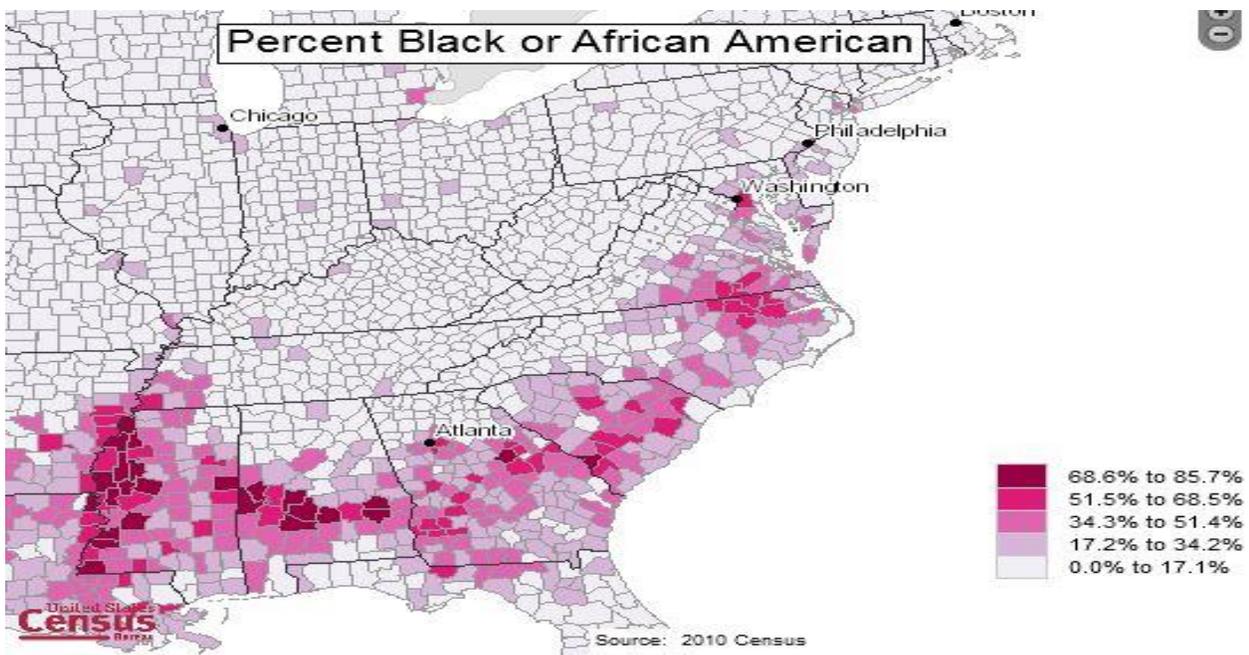
Because I decided to focus on African American participation at heritage sites in North Carolina, I specifically selected sites that have relevance to African American History. The minority demographic in the area needs to be robust so that the site has numerous potential minority visitors. The study is located in eastern North Carolina because that region has a comparatively large number of historic sites that are related to African American historic experiences. In addition, the local population in the eastern parts of the state have a higher proportion of black Americans compared to white Americans.

Looking at the demographics of North Carolina, it becomes evident that Eastern North Carolina counties have the highest proportion of African Americans in the state. Eastern North Carolina also has a farming tradition that dates back to the colonial era. During the early farming

history of the region, large landowners used slave labor. The slaves were freed at the end of the Civil War and continued to inhabit the countryside in the region.

While counties in the states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina all have larger minority populations, the location in this study is familiar to the author. The United States Census Bureau in 2010 reported the population percentages of whites and blacks per county. The results yielded the maps depicted in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

*Figure 1: Black Belt Map*

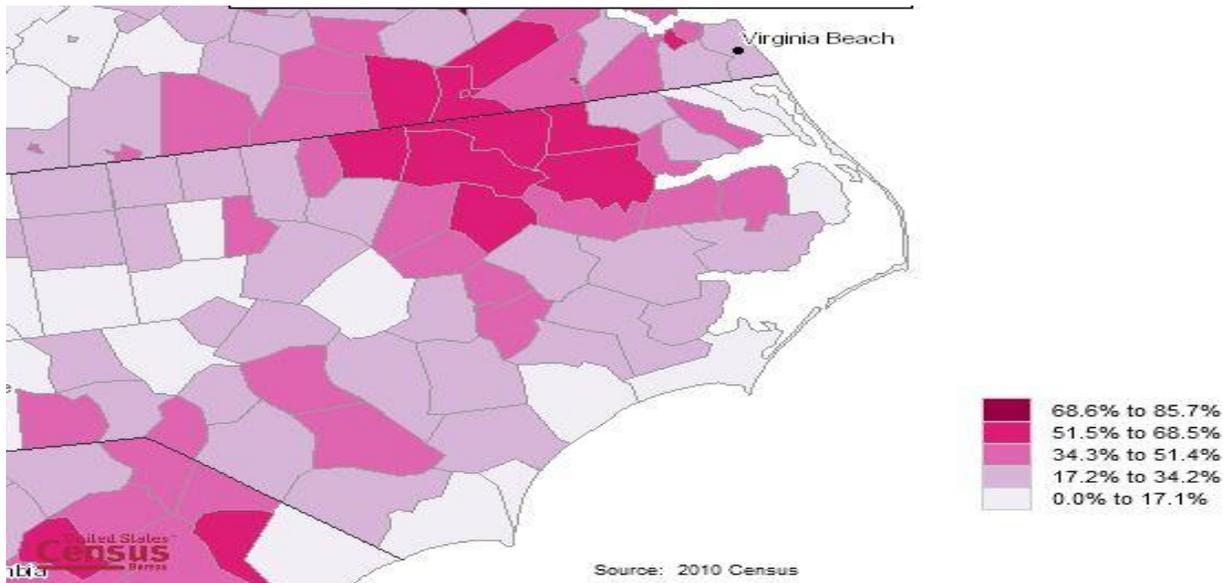


(US Census Bureau, 2013)

Figure 1 shows what is known as the ‘black belt’ of the south (Wimberley and Morris, 1997). Larger African American percentages among the population starts in Prince George County, VA and continues through the eastern regions of North and South Carolina. In South Carolina, the curve juts to the left through the center of Georgia and then continues through the center of Alabama. The belt finally comes to an end in Mississippi. The map shows the area in which we find locations that were once prominent plantations. The same area has become home

to African American diasporas in urban spaces that were established after the Civil War when blacks started locating in larger cities throughout the South.

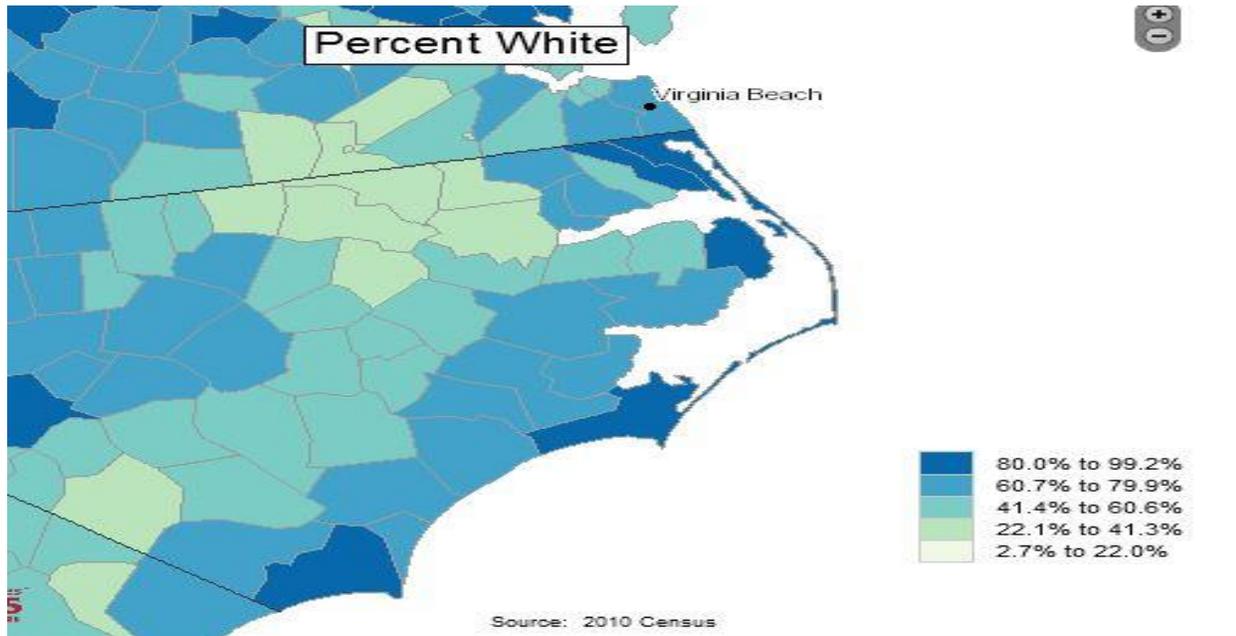
Figure 2: Black Percentages Eastern NC



(US Census Bureau, 2013)

North Carolina's location in the black belt justifies its usefulness for the study goals of this research project. The enlarged Census Bureau map shows specific North Carolina counties and percentages of African Americans living in them (US Census Bureau, 2013). The study looking into demographics would not be complete unless we also compared the white demographic located in this region. Viewing the white demographic explains the two dominant races in the region. Figure 3, a map of the distribution of white residents throughout the area further supports the suitability of rural Eastern North Carolina as a site for this research project. European Americans settle dominate in the coastal region of North Carolina (US Census Bureau).

Figure 3: White Population Eastern NC



(US Census Bureau, 2013)

Additionally, the eastern region of North Carolina is riddled with numerous historic sites including plantations, Civil War sites, multiple museums, European settlement sites, and early colonial government sites. All of these sites have potentially affected the local African American community. It follows that Eastern North Carolina is a suitable location to study African American visitation at heritage sites.

#### *Sampling Strategy for Recruitment of Informants*

To recruit tour guides for this study, I decided to focus on a purposefully selected set of heritage sites and interview two to three guides at each site. The selection of tour guides at each site was based on a convenience sampling strategy, i.e. the willingness of guides to participate in an interview. Interviewing tour guides who are key informants often has to be done purposively because of the few sites located in the specific area. Bernard (2008) suggests that when using expert informants' nonprobability sampling is the most suitable approach. Hence the first step of

my sampling strategy was to determine suitable heritage sites. I specified that to be included in this study, a site must have the following criteria: 1) historically significant 2) have an explicit connection to African American community. Heritage sites can be either state owned, federally owned or privately owned. Ideally, all three types of sites should be included in this study to test if management structure influences African American participation.

However, since Eastern North Carolina does not have a representative federally owned site that fulfill the two criteria, specified above, I focused only on state owned and privately owned sites and purposively selected an equal number of each for this project. Throughout Eastern North Carolina there are several state owned and privately owned heritage sites to choose from. Among them are: Plantations that used slaves to cultivate the land also fit the study. The region has two particular plantations that should offer enough information to compare between the sites. Other choices for sites include historic towns. My final selection of sites was informed by my interest to select three maximally different sites within each category: state owned and privately owned. I decided to limit the total number of sites to six heritage sites to allow recruitment of at least 2 if not 3 tour guides at each sites. Interviewing more than 18 informants would have gone beyond the time constraints of this research project. Romney and Weller (1988) as denoted by Bernard (2011) suggest that “10-13 knowledgeable informants are needed to understand the contents of a well-defined cultural domain” (pp. 155). In addition, I expected to reach saturation of information after talking to twelve informants.

The total number of museums and historic sites for visitation that show up in the eastern region of North Carolina is around 132. The information was gathered from a compilation of sites available on the internet. A search like this while adding up sites among different websites probably excludes some locations due to the fact they do not show up on the search engine or

have a website. Out of the 132 sites there are more than 15 that have houses that can be toured. Most of the houses are birthplaces or houses of the well to do North Carolinians. The houses consist of homes of politicians, planters and regular citizens. From these sites I plan to only visit the ones that are easily found on the internet. The sites chosen for plantation category were Somerset Place, and Hope Plantation.

These plantations are different from one another and should help diversify the data that is to be collected. They are located in the Eastern Region of North Carolina. As for historic towns Historic Beaufort was chosen for site selection. The site was chosen because of the diverse buildings that are located at the site. The buildings range in age from the 1700's to the 1800's. Sites that relate to the Civil War are also very important in this study. There are museums that showcase local North Carolina history during the Civil War. The sites that best fit this criteria in the area are the Port of Plymouth Museum, CSS Neuse and the Museum of the Albemarle. These three locations will be excellent choices because of the size differences between them.

Plymouth's museum is extremely small whereas the Museum of the Albemarle is very large and sees numerous visitors a year. The Museum of the Albemarle is a state operated site whereas the Port of Plymouth is a privately operated site. The CSS Neuse should also offer a good comparison between The Museum of the Albemarle because it is state operated. Both the CSS Neuse and Port of Plymouth specifically study Maritime Civil War History.

It follows that six sites are the most suitable strategy for covering all types of state owned and privately owned heritage sites in Eastern North Carolina. At each of the six sites I enrolled two or more guides to allow several perspectives to be presented. The guides were enrolled on a voluntary basis. There were no specific expectations for differences by age or gender among tour guides, so any tour guides at the selected sites are welcome to participate. Along with getting

guides to participate in the interviews the researcher will ask for the number of guides at each site and demographic information of the guides.

Table 1 lists the purposively selected sites for this study. In the following paragraphs I describe the sites in detail and explain how they fit the purposive sampling strategy. Hope Plantation and the King-Bazemore House are located in Bertie County. The site fits the study area. The privately owned site charges admission but gives tours every day of the week. The admission for adults is \$10, seniors \$8, and \$5 for students. The site is closed December 20<sup>th</sup> through March 14<sup>th</sup>. The tour consists of three museum rooms and two house tours. The tie to race and Hope Plantation belongs to the slaves that worked the plantation. Along with slave labor, Hope Plantation also has museum exhibits relating to African Americans. Hope Plantation easily fits within the criteria for site visitation for this project because of the size of the plantation site along with the political background of Governor David Stone. The site is also located within a high African American demographic.

Somerset Place is located in Washington County. The site fits in the study area as it is in the Eastern Region of North Carolina. Somerset Place like the previous plantation saw slave labor from African Americans. The site consists of a walking tour through the Collins house and adjoining buildings. Some of the buildings at the site are slave cabins. Somerset Place also reaches out to the African American community in the form of reunions. Somerset Place differs from Hope Plantation quite a bit as it is state owned. Somerset is opened Tuesday-Saturday 9-5 every day of the year with no admission charged, donations are accepted. Somerset Place being a plantation that saw slave labor on a large scale also fits in to the study.

The Museum of the Albemarle is located in Pasquotank County. The county being east of Raleigh fits into the study area of Eastern North Carolina. The museum depicts life in the region

of North Eastern North Carolina through the years starting with the Natives who were in the region. The site represents history through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The sites connect with the African American community would be consisting of the history from the beginning of slavery until it ended after the Civil War. Other history would also include the history of Reconstruction in the region. The museum is state owned and opened five days a week. This site offers many threads of history that have the potential to draw in African American visitors.

The Port of Plymouth Museum is located in Washington County fitting into the geographic study area. This museum is rich with the history of Plymouth and the Civil War in the Region. The museum is town owned and located on the Roanoke River. The museum consists of two rooms of artifacts and an outside replica of the Ram Albemarle, a Civil War iron clad. The site represents the struggle faced between the North and South during the Civil War. Being a Civil War site it has a direct connection to the African Americans who fought and died in the battles around Plymouth.

Historic Beaufort is located near the coast of North Carolina in Carteret County. The tour consists of three buildings. The buildings showcase how life used to be in Beaufort before the Civil War. Along with the tour of the houses one can also tour the Carteret County Jail, Court House and Apothecary. The site has many connections that can bring forth the history of slaves and freemen alike. The site portrays buildings that had house slaves working them. The site is opened Monday-Saturday 10-5pm.

CSS Neuse and Governor Caswell site is located in Lenoir County, fitting the area of study. The connection with the CSS Neuse comes with the ties of the site to the Civil War. Governor Caswell also ties perfectly to the site as he led troops in the American Revolution. An African American connection might appear here with slaves who volunteered to fight for their

freedom. Caswell is also a draw to anyone who loves North Carolina history as he was the first and fifth Governor of the State. Caswell demonstrated patriotism and a right for individual freedom. The ties to the African American community at this site include the Civil War and a North Carolina Governor who pushed for individual freedoms.

*Table 1: Purposive Sample of Heritage Sites in Eastern North Carolina*

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Topic of History</b>	<b>Period of History</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Dates Opened</b>
Hope Plantation	Private	Southern Plantation	Early 1800's	Bertie	April 1 <sup>st</sup> -Dec 20 <sup>th</sup> Monday-Sunday
Somerset Place	State	Southern Plantation	1785-1865	Washington	Tues-Sat 9-5
CSS Neuse	State	Civil War Museum	1860's	Lenoir	Tues-Sat 9-5
Port of Plymouth Museum	Private	Civil War Museum	1860-1865	Washington	Tues-Sat 9-4
Museum of the Albemarle	State	Regional Museum history	1500's-1960's	Pasquotank	Tues-Sat 10-4
Historic Beaufort	Private	Colonial Antebellum	1700's-1800's	Carteret	Mon-Sat 10-5

#### *Data Collection Methods*

Semi- structured interview instruments were used to collect information from the tour guides. This format was chosen to allow guides to express their personal opinions in response to open ended questions. Bernard states, “Nonprobability samples are always appropriate for labor-intensive, in-depth studies of a few cases” (pp. 143). However, all tour guides were asked the same set of questions. To obtain “reliable, comparable qualitative data,” Bernard suggests building a question guide to follow (pp. 158). This was also done because Johnson and Weller (2002) warn researchers that to make valid comparisons using open-ended questions, they must,

“ask all informants the same questions” (pp. 499). Using a recorder during the interviews ensured that all responses by tour guides were captured and documented.

All guides were interviewed individually. I decided against focus group interviews because I wanted to avoid guides feeding off each other in response to questions. Having run a pilot study in the spring semester of 2013, allowed me to determine this interviewing method. I also projected that saturation would occur very quickly, i.e. common themes emerging quickly among answer given by guides. After the data was collected, the recordings of all thirteen interviews were transcribed.<sup>2</sup>

Information from the semi-structured interviews has allowed me to fulfill the first and second objectives of this research project. Interview transcripts have revealed suggestions made by guides that focus on possible barriers of why African Americans are not attending the sites and how tour guides evaluate their training. In addition to semi-structured interviews, I collected data on the artifacts in gift shops and exhibits that represent African American history. I used a three pronged strategy, to assess on the presence of material that might attract African Americans. As a first step, I attended the offered tours and documented what parts of African American history were mentioned and how frequently such references were made. After cataloging the tour, I evaluated exhibits and the gift shops. In the gift shop I looked for items that are being marketed to the black community, items that might be of interest include books and children’s toys. The appendix showcases the checklist that I used to record the presence of such artifacts.

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<sup>2</sup> I transcribed three interviews and Casting words transcribed the remaining ten.

### *Data Analysis Methods*

Grounded theory analysis was used to code the complete text of all 13 interviews. After logging in the responses, causal relationships between the questions and the answers were gauged. Reading through all of the interviews I found that five reoccurring patterns emerged from the semi-structured interviews. The reoccurring patterns were set as codes. Bernard (2011) describes coding as using an encryption device, indexing device, and a measuring device. Coding for this study was used as an indexing device. These are ways in which data can be broken down in order to more easily assess the information. Grounded Theory Analysis, produced like themes throughout the collected data. After all the answers provided by four guides were read, frequencies were computed, i.e. reoccurrence rate of similar codes and the co-occurrence of specific codes within the space of three sentences.

Ensuring that the codes were credible, three coders met on three separate occurrences. Subsequently, content analysis was performed by myself and two colleagues who mediated reliability of the findings. During the first meeting the coders were presented with transcripts of three interviews to code through for the first outing. The second meeting determined that the five themes the coders were looking for needed tweaking. There was a slight adjustment as coding was similar for answers to the question *“How to draw in more minorities and what do they do to draw in more minorities.”* The coders all agreed that they were two separate themes. The later theme focuses on initiatives the organization is currently doing to draw in minority tourists. Whereas, *“How to draw in more minorities”* focuses on things that these sites could or should be doing to draw in minorities. The three coders then took the last ten interviews home to code for the next meeting. The coders used a list of five predetermined themes to code for.<sup>3</sup> During the

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<sup>3</sup> Coders decided to develop labels for the answers to the following five questions: How do guides prepare for the job, How do they cater to the tourist, What inhibits African American attendance at the sites, What draws African

last meeting the coders agreed on 90% of codes and themes. It was during this session that it was determined that coding for “*How do they cater to the tourist*” needed reassessing. The coders all came to a consensus that guides who said they did not cater to tourist were presenting material in a certain manner and effectively catering in the tour. Not catering was thus coded as a form of catering a tour. After the third meeting all of the coding was completed having to use only two instances where the coders needed consensus on content analysis. The interceding reliability was extremely high for all of the themes assigned to the coders.

The team of coders also determined if the tour guides can be considered expert based on the guides’ view of themselves and the description of their training. The guides were assessed based on how much training they have had to prepare them for giving tours and their willingness to change the script in reference to the ethnic composition of their audience. A guide who had prior training, tries to mold stories for tourist experience, and views him or herself as an expert was classified as an expert. Guides who reported they strictly follow the script and had not received any training other than the tour script, were not considered experts.

Descriptive statistic analysis was used to evaluate the checklists that recorded the number and type of artifacts related to the African American historic experience. I collected information on objects displayed in exhibits and gift shops and determined the presence of references to African American history during my participation of tours. Frequency was computed for each type of item at each location. In similar fashion, I determined the frequency of words alluding to African American history for each tour. Comparing the frequency scores, I established three levels of inclusion of African American history. Sites with no items in gift shops and exhibits that refer to African American history and had few mentioning’s of African Americans in the

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Americans to the sites, and What can be done to draw in African American visitors. The questions were treated as themes.

tour guide script, were rated “low involvement.” Heritage sites with no items in the gift shop and five references throughout the exhibits and scripts were labeled “moderately involved.” Finally, at sites that mentioned African American history several times during the tour, in exhibits and featured items, such as books on African American history, in the gift shop, were rated “highly involved.”

### *Reflection of Data Collection Methods*

When administering the survey I noticed a couple of wording choices that should be corrected should I or anyone else wish to use the same interview instrument. The word choice of “catering” has many implications. Does the word mean give tourists what they want? Does it mean change tours based on who is taking it? The word should be changed to elaboration of script or “adjustment of script to needs of visitors or accommodating visitor’s requests, interests, and needs” Another section should also be added that looks to see if guides “alter” their tours based on race.

In addition, my operationalization of the term ‘expert’ needs review ‘Expert’ is a strong word that implies a guide knows a lot about one particular aspect of an area. During the research I was trying to make a scale that showed if the guide was qualified to lead tours. The data collected on formal training, informal training, and how guides accommodated visitor needs would hit at the core to the expertise of the guides. The semi-structured interview proved to be inadequate for this particular task. Many guides would not mention certain items unless they were prompted. However, after completion of all interviews, I feel better equipped to design a semi-structured instrument that would list all possible training elements and allow guides to report their encounter with each type.

The research design of prompting tour guides for information went well as all of the questions received various amounts of feedback. The structure of the survey allowed guides a chance to breakdown inhibitors, and attractions easily. A complete version of the survey can be found in the Appendix.

Inventorying the African American material found in the gift shop was a useful strategy when assessing the marketing and offerings of the sites. The only implication that might have arisen from this is the missing a book title or souvenir. In order to avoid this after inventorying on my own I asked the gift shop attendant if there were any other items that I might have missed. A blank checklist for inventorying the gift shop can be found in the Appendix.

A checklist for documenting the number of times African Americans heritage was referred to on tour and exhibit was also created. The speed of the tour often made it difficult to follow the guide and write out exactly what the guide was referring to. Thankfully, during all of the tours I was the only participant and was able to ask the guides to repeat if it was necessary. Exhibits allowed a full study of the artifacts on display were I could count the number of times African Americans were referred to. A checklist for the exhibits is provided in the Appendix.

## Chapter 4: The Current State of African American History Presentation at Heritage Sites in Eastern North Carolina

Exploring the perceptions of tour guides about the current rate of African American participation at heritage sites in Eastern North Carolina, asking them for suggestions for improvement and evaluating the displays and gift shops at the heritage site has provided a range of insights. In this chapter I will first review the number of guides and the ethnic distribution of visitors at the selected heritage sites that were included in this research project. This is followed by an evaluation of the training that tour guides received. In the next section I present the explanations for low minority participation that tour guides suggested during the interview. The chapter concludes with a report of the items referring to African American history displayed at gift shops and in exhibits.

### *Number of Guides and Visitors at Selected Eastern North Carolina Heritage Sites*

The total number of guides available at the study sites to give tours is thirty-two. Table 3 presents the total number of people available by gender and ethnicity. Only two tour guides at the selected sites are of African American descent. The total number of guides at all 6 sites included twenty female guides and twelve male guides.

*Table 2: Available Tour Guides at Sites*

	White	Black	Total
Male	12	0	12
Female	18	2	20
Total	30	2	32

The sample of tour guides interviewed for this study includes four men, equally distributed between state sites and private sites. The total number of women interviewed was nine, four at state sites and five at private sites. Only one of the informants for this study, a female guide working at a heritage site managed by the state, was of African American descent.

*Table 3: Guides Interviewed at State Sites*

State Sites	White	Black	Total
Male	2	0	2
Female	3	1	4
Total	5	1	6

Floyd (1999) found similar low representations of minority workers in National Parks Worsley and Stone (2011) explain the lack of black leaders with barriers to upward mobility in the US education system and related economic structures.

*Table 4: Guides Interviewed at Private Sites*

Private Sites	White	Black	Total
Male	2	0	2
Female	5	0	5
Total	7	0	7

The experience of guides varied greatly, according to duration of years worked at current sites and other sites. The total number of years worked at the current location, for both private sites and state sites, was one hundred and twenty three years and six months. One of the biggest

differences was working at other sites. The state workers had worked a combined thirty-two years at other sites, compared to only seven and a half years for private site workers. The private site workers had worked on average a little over two years more at their current location than the state site workers. Overall, the state workers averaged about two more years of total work. These statistics show the current and previous heritage employment that the guides have accumulated over the years.

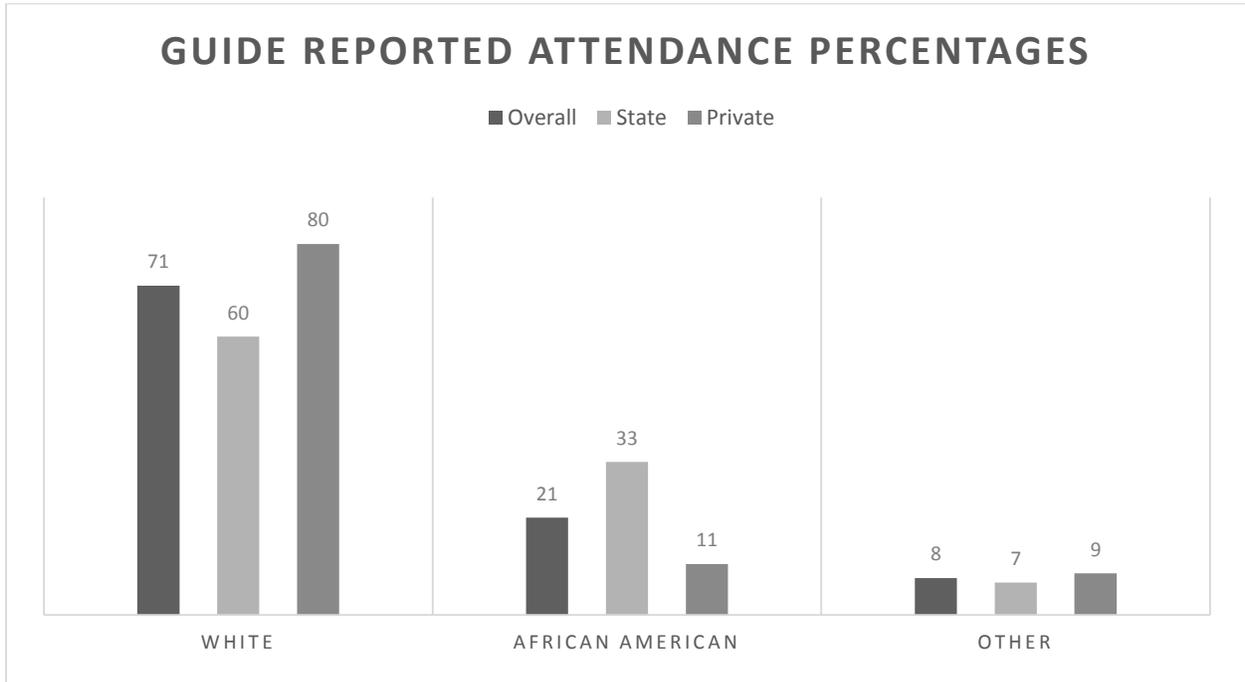
Guides from all sites were asked to determine the proportions of black and white visitors. The percentages given by the guides were their personal estimates in reference to interactions with visitors. Guides were asked to exclude school groups in their estimations. Many schools with a large proportion of African American children make visiting these sites mandatory.<sup>4</sup> The guides were asked to exclude these children because they attend these sites as part of an obligation. The goal of this research was to focus on visitors who arrived due to choice rather than requirement. The following chart indicates the annual percentage of visits by ethnic group at different sites. According to the tour guides, the average distribution of visitors was 71% white, 21% black, and 8% other. The other category was a compiled from a combination between Hispanic, Asian, and unknown. I found that most guides grouped several ethnicities together because there was such a small percentage of visitation recorded for them. When comparing the numbers of visitors at all six sites I learned that Somerset Place, a state site, had the largest majority of African-American visitors. The two guides from Somerset Place listed the number of African-Americans as 65% and 45% respectively. The reason for the high percentage was the large homecoming events held at Somerset Place that attract many African Americans to the area. Every other site, both state and private listed a majority of white visitors Guides at private

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<sup>4</sup> During the interviews many guides suggested that African American children attend the site from the local schools.

sites listed about 80% of the total participation as white people. State sites averaged 60% white participation. Black participation averaged 33% at state sites whereas private sites only averaged 11%, according to the tour guides.

*Figure 4: Guide Reported Attendance Percentages*



### *Evaluating Tour Guide Expertise*

The guides were asked several questions to assess the sources they relied on for their training about the history of the site. Guides receive a combination of informal training, and formal training. In addition, I determined to what extent guides take the ethnic composition of their audience into account when presenting a tour.

### *Informal Training*

Informal training at a site takes into consideration what guides do on their own time. The guides illustrated that informal training could come from reading/researching, visiting other museums, being raised in the area, learning from tourists, asking local historians, uncovering

artifacts, and participating in publications. The main themes that came forth during the interviews was reading. All of the guides expressed that they read literature about the history that their site portrayed. Researching and studying a particular area was the next major theme that was revealed during the informal training investigation. The guides primarily researched on their own time, though some did mention it as part of their job. One guide expressed that, "I go find answers when asked unfamiliar questions on a tour."

The category of informal training had numerous examples of what information guides knew that prepared them for their jobs. Seeking information that museums could use was also illustrated in the informal training. Three of the guides found that they themselves would take tours of museums to related places. One guide stated that visiting other museums "lets you see how your museum compares." Another stated that she liked visiting other museums because they offer information on a certain time period that they could themselves use while giving tours. Visiting other museums showcases that guides expand their knowledge in particular areas.

Other informal training included statements about learning from visitors, and being raised in the area. Three of the thirteen guides expressed that they learned facts from visitors while showing them the site. A few visitors contribute knowledge they acquired prior to coming to the site. Other visitors ask challenging questions that inspire the guide to conduct research to improve future tours. Another aspect that three of the guides thought helped them conduct tours was being "born and raised here." These guides claim they know the history and culture of the area more than a non-resident. I would not say that this advantage qualifies them for the position but it does give them an emotional connection with the site that might make them more enthusiastic or influence the style of their tours in a particular way. Learning from visitors and claiming expertise on the basis of having grown up in a region are not necessarily indicating

expertise in the factual sense. These statements mainly indicate the level of personal involvement of the guides and their willingness to engage with visitors.

Uncommon findings that only were mentioned once: learning from local historians, personally recovering artifacts, and assisting with the publication of books. Asking a local historian a question is not a part of the job description for the workers at these museums and is information recovered on that participant’s own time. Recovering artifacts is informal training because to display the piece accurately the artifact has to be researched. Participating in the writing of five books illustrates that the person participating in the work must be credible with facts.

Informal training thus showed that all of the guides used their own time to prepare for their job. Although all guides mentioned one of the activities introduced above, it should be noted that there were several degrees of depth. Several of the guides had a combination of researching on their own and another one of the above mentioned activities. Table 5 illustrates the different individual responses of guide. From averaging the total number of responses it was determined that guides who had a total of four different informal training statements were average in level of informal preparedness. A total of seven guides scored at or above four with informal train preparedness.

*Table 5: Guide Tallies of Informal and Formal Training*

	Informal	Formal	Accommodating Visitors
Beaufort 1	4	3	6
Beaufort 2	3	1	5

Hope Plantation 1	3	3	6
Hope Plantation 2	4	8	10
Hope Plantation 3	3	6	9
Plymouth 1	7	3	8
Plymouth 2	4	7	6
Somerset 1	1	4	8
Somerset 2	1	5	3
CSS Neuse 1	4	5	7
CSS Neuse 2	3	3	7
Albemarle 1	4	7	10
Albemarle 2	6	9	11

*Formal Training*

Formal training consists of schooling, prior historical jobs, reading materials distributed by the site, and participating in tours. Prior to the conversations with tour guides I assumed that all guides would follow a script, have a background related to history, and had participated in training tours in preparation for their own engagement with tour groups.

The data collected shows that seven of the thirteen guides went to college for a history related degree. Of those that attended college for their degree, two of them hold a graduate degree directly related to Public History. There are other educators in the group but they have no

educational background in history. Formal training also includes participation in workshops offered by the State of North Carolina. As one guide noted, state sites send them off to “Interpreter Training”. Guides from two of the three state sites mentioned the training programs. One guide noted that due to lack of money, the guides at her site had not been to the training school in several years. None of the private run sites mentioned training programs on this scale. Hope Plantation’s guides mentioned that when the mansion was reinterpreted they “had a training session on the new layout”.

Another commonality among nine guides are previous job related experiences. Seven of the nine completed internships or were paid by the sites at which they had worked. Both Historic Beaufort and the Port of Plymouth had guides that had “volunteered” at other sites. Somerset Place was the only site that had guides with no previous related work experience. Employment at other sites shows that the expertise of guides has been evaluated by more than one institution. Their previous knowledge and experience of presenting historical information during tours carries over to new sites.

Guides also mentioned the scripts that had been given to them as part of their training. Three sites, Hope Plantation, Somerset Place, Historic Beaufort, used scripts but not all guides mentioned the script as reading material or formal training. Five of the seven guides who worked at these sites mentioned the scripts. This leaves two who did not mention the script but had access to it. I hypothesize that the few guides who had access to a script but didn’t mention it during the interview simply forgot to recall it. Some of the guides also mentioned that there are note cards hidden in places throughout their tours. If asked a question they did not know, that they can look it up and find the answer. The coders agreed that this was a form of formal training

because it suggested that if guides did not know an answer they could locate the answer on a “cheat sheet.” Scripts and note cards were mentioned by over half of the guides interviewed.

Learning from another guide is another way in which sites formally train their employees. Eleven of the guides said that they attended a fellow guide’s tours. This approach teaches facts to other guides and streamlines the interpretation of the sites. Most sites require guides to shadow an established guide during several tours to familiarize themselves with the layout of the tour. Shadowing and participating a fellow guide’s tour allows the novice guide to add a different perspective to his or her own understanding of the site. It also coordinates the interpretation of the site among all guides.

The last trend that indicated guides received formal training tasks given them by the management staff of the site. These tasks include setting up exhibits, responsibilities for programming, transcribing manuscripts, and writing press releases. These tasks were mentioned by two of the thirteen guides. Developing exhibits calls for in-depth research to be undertaken, making this a formal training technique used with hands on studying. Transcribing manuscripts allowed one guide to learn “an incredible amount about the site.”

In sum, formal training at heritage sites in Eastern North Carolina consists of education received in a college setting or at a training program designed to inform guides on facts. Scripts are also important training tools for guides. Sites often require their guides to shadow other guides’ presentations. Establishing programs/events along with transcribing material is not a frequently mentioned tasks, but should be counted as part of possible formal training available to tour guides in Eastern North Carolina. Table 5 illustrates different individual responses guides mentioned with informal training. The average score for formal preparedness was five, the score was computed by adding the total number of informal training variables mentioned by the guides

and then dividing it by the number of guides. A total of seven guides scored at or above average when it came to formal preparedness.

### *How the Tour Experience is Offered*

There were several questions asked throughout the interview that determined how guides led tours. Guides were asked to tell me about the different version of tours they offered and how they tailor the tour to the specific interests of tourists. I wanted to evaluate to what extent each tour guide accommodates the needs of their audience. The following statement of a guide captures what I consider an ideal attitude to promote an engaged experience for tourists: "The visitor will help you shepherd how they want their tour experience to be. It's not a memorized script. It's memorized facts because if you don't take your cues from the visitor, they don't care."

After analyzing the statements of all guides interviewed for this study, I concluded that the most salient way guides figure out what tourists are interested in is through asking them questions. Eleven of the thirteen guides expressed that tours were formed around asking questions. Some actively ask tourists questions and others learn what tourists are interested in by listening to tourists' questions. When guides ask a question to a tourist a direct answer is given on what the tourists is interested in. Likewise, if a tourist ask questions, that means they want to know more about that particular aspect of the tour. Either being asked, or asking a direct question will provide information to the tourists' interests. Knowing tourists interests allowed these guides to elaborate more on that particular part of the tour.

One of the strongest themes emerging during analysis was intuition. Nine of the guides expressed that they could "judge" a person's interests. The guides "judged" by looking at body expressions. Expressions as subtle as eye movement was a big factor in judging intuition with several guides. Guides expressed that tourist's show lack of interest when they start walking off,

looking at their watches, looking away, and have a blank look on their face. All these gestures are identified as cues that a visitor is not interested in a topic. The guides who stated that they encountered these expressions, moved on to the next part of the tour. A trait that illustrates the fascination of a visitor, was “their eyes light up.” The guides articulated that if they saw this then they would elaborate on that aspect of the tour.

Guides also adjusted their tours based on size and age of tour groups. One guide suggested that when encountering a large group it was hard to accommodate them. The guide expressed that when this occurs the best way to handle the situation is to let them ask questions and give them an overview. Another guide expressed that when school children come to the site, more hands on activities are needed. Two of the thirteen guides suggested they alter a tour based on number of participants. If the group had children in it, one guide suggested that they would ask the child questions throughout the tour. Asking the child questions adjusts the tour to accommodate the child’s interests. Keeping the children participating helps lengthen the child’s attention span. The guide articulated that younger children’s attention spans would not last the whole hour and forty-five minute tour. “If they have young children that is automatically going to shorten the tour.”

Somerset Place was unique in respect to tour script adjustment because both guides interviewed at this site stated they don’t make any modification for the benefits of the visitors. There is a script laid out for all of the buildings located at the site. Everyone coming to the site is going to hear the same story. Guides also wanted to get their point across by saying that “Here you tour everything. We divide our time between the slave quarters and the Collins House.”

The combination of activates associated with informal training, activities associated with formal training and the habit of tour script adjustment was used to determine quality in site

interpretation. All guides listed some type of training as part of their job experience. The following table reflects the range of items associated with guide preparation. In no way can this table infer the expertise of the guides in question. In order to do that, guides would have to answer a survey and have the responses calculated in order to judge qualifications. The findings from this data could potentially be used to design a survey to measure qualifications of guides. Table 6 shows how the sites compared based on the aggregate responses of guides at their respective sites. One can see how guides compared to their peers refer the averages from Table 6 to the individual answers in Table 5. The averages were tallied given the number of individual responses per guide. Informal training scale was established as 0-3.4 responses as below average, 3.5-4.0 as average, and over 4.0 guide as above average. Formal training responses were found that below 4.5 was below average, 4.5-5.0 was average and over 5.0 was above average. Accommodating visitor needs was determined that below 7.0 responses was below average, 7.0-7.5 was average and 7.5 or greater was above average. After accruing all of the information a total score was adjusted by the aggregating all of the categories. The overall scores were also based on the guide's answers having below 15 as below average, a score from 15-16.5 was average, and above 16.5 was above average. Table 6 illustrates how the sites fell into each of the categories. Evaluating the combination of informal training, formal training, and adjusting the tour script, three of the six sites scored above average; The Museum of the Albemarle, The Port of Plymouth and Hope Plantation. In contrast, the activities and responses of guides at Somerset Place, CSS Neuse, and Historic Beaufort received a score below average.

*Table 6: Chart Measuring Guide Qualification*

Site name	Number of guides interviewed	Site type	Informal training	Score for formal training	Accommodating visitor needs	Total score
Somerset place	2	State		Average	Below Average	Below Average

			Below Average			
CSS Neuse	2	State	Average	Below Average	Average	Below Average
Museum of the Albemarle	2	State	Above Average	Above Average	Above Average	Above Average
Historic Beaufort	2	Private	Average	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average
The Port of Plymouth Museum	2	Private	Above Average	Average	Average	Above Average
Hope Plantation	3	Private	Below Average	Above Average)	Above Average	Above Average

*What Inhibits African Americans from Attending*

My main hypothesis about the lack of participation from the African American community was that lack of fair representation at these sites explains their absence. I also thought lack of interest by the African American community, and the sensitivity of the subject would emerge from the interview texts. Only one tour guide did not present reasons for the limited number of African American visitors at Eastern North Carolina heritage sites.

Lack of representation was mentioned by a total of six guides equally distributed by state and private sites. It constitutes the most frequently mentioned reason explaining the low numbers of African Americans at sites. Lack of representation was measured based on two variables, number of artifacts and the one-dimensional content of tour scripts. Artifacts relating to the African American community are not prominent in heritage museums that date back before the Civil War. Both guides interviewed at the Museum of the Albemarle suggested that one reason African American participation is low is because of lack of historical objects to display in the museum. One of the guides suggested, “We do not have a lot of artifacts from the African Americans, they either do not save them or they won’t donate them.” Another guide stated that their museum had not done as much research on the African American portion of the site. One

guide expressed that lack of artifacts, “hindered the whole Civil Rights exhibit we were planning.” Lack of representation at the sites can be from absence of evidence and historical memorabilia or due to an overall skewed view of the history of the site. One guide at The Port of Plymouth Museum suggested that, “They assume we're portraying a certain story that is inaccurate for them and vice versa.” Site histories are expected to only tell the facts. That way the true history can be interpreted at a site. A guide from The Port of Plymouth Museum expressed their concern when they referred to only devoting three minutes to an overview of the African Americans at the Battle of Plymouth as part of a thirty minute tour. Both of Somerset’s guides commented that they believe that lopsided views deter African Americans from visiting other locations. One of them stated, "I guess African Americans may have a certain aversion to going to plantations since most plantation sites only interpret on a particular aspect of the plantation which would be the main house, the life of the owner.”

One of the most significant findings refers to statements about African Americans’ perception of a site. Five guides, including all guides at Hope Plantation, mentioned that their site was viewed as an elitist organization in the area. Guides from two state sites, CSS Neuse and Museum of the Albemarle, also stated the site’s perception was a reason that local African Americans were deterred from visiting, since their history was not addressed at all. I had suspected that only private sites would be evaluated as elitist organizations by the local African American community. Private heritage sites are primarily run by white Americans who also founded these organizations. Black Americans are usually not included. Interestingly, in addition to Hope Plantation, a private site, guides working at state sites also explained that their site was considered an elitist organization.

A theme similar to perception is sensitivity about the topic of slavery. Only two guides, both working at private sites, suggested that the issue of slavery was too hard to deal with. The site guides that mentioned the sensitivity of the subject were Hope Plantation and The Port of Plymouth Museum. I hypothesized that this would be one of the most frequently stated themes from the guides, it was not. One guide suggested that it is a “touchy” and “contested issue.” Another guide along the same lines stated that we need “them to realize that there is no shame in having a slave ancestor.”

Three of the thirteen guides thought that the reason African American visitation was so low was because of lack of awareness and knowledge of the site among members of the black community. This was mentioned by guides at private sites, namely The Port of Plymouth Museum and Historic Beaufort. One guide pointed out that children are not taught in school about both sides of the debate, skewing the history. Yet another reason was lack of knowledge about family relations to a specific site. Somerset Place actively reaches out to descendants of former occupants and Hope Plantation has a genealogy fair. Other sites might want to engage in similar activities. All of these reasons explain why African Americans are not attending sites.

Several of the guides, all of them working at private sites, also mentioned that travel habits might explain the limited numbers of African American visitors. One guide in particular mentioned that the bulk of their tourists during the summer months were visiting the Outer Banks and suggested that “Maybe they (African Americans) do not go to the beach.” Not going to the beach could also fit within the cultural interests of the African Americans. Another guide expressed that the proportion of black residents was small in the city where the site was located. The US Census Bureau (2014) revealed that only 6.3% of residents of Carteret County are of African American descent. However, in the neighboring county, Jones County, African

American population accounts for 31.9% of the total population (US Census Bureau, 2014). I conclude that the guides who claim low proportions of African Americans in their immediate neighborhoods overlook the fact that surrounding counties often have sizable numbers of African Americans among their residents and could potentially be approached to encourage visiting their heritage site.

Another theme that emerged from the text analysis was cultural preferences of African Americans. Guides from one state site and one private site mentioned this theme. They reasoned that personal preferences within the African American community and upbringing might explain disinterest in heritage site visitation. A guide at the Museum of the Albemarle stated that some people are not brought up with parents taking them to museums, inferring that they would continue to avoid museums in the future because it was not a part of their normal routine. Another guide from Historic Beaufort Museum suggested that African Americans are interested in other activities but not museum visits

Two guides mentioned financial reasons and suggested that entrance fees keep African Americans out of the museum. I expected this to be listed by guides working at private sites who have to charge fees to maintain a site. However, the topic was mentioned by one state run site and one private site guide. The guide at the Museum of the Albemarle said she often observed entire families waiting outside while one family member enters. But “as soon as they find out there's no charge, they wave their families to come in.” This is indirectly referring to the Marginality Theory which states that economics play a role with minority attendance (Floyd, 1999). Overall, fees were not as frequently mentioned as I expected.

Geographic isolation or remoteness was also a theme that came forth during text analysis. Two guides mentioned this problem, one at a state site and one at a private site. One guide from

Somerset Place referred to the site as a destination site. Indeed, Somerset Place is located several miles off Highway 64. Being located far off of the beaten path has implications that can deter people from visiting. The guide from the Port of Plymouth referred to their isolation as being a small southern town. Signage along main highways might be able to overcome the challenges posed by remoteness. The Marginality Theory also applies here since African American residents may not have means to transportation that would allow them to visit distant heritage sites.

Lastly, another theme that I had anticipated was lack of advertising to African Americans. A guide at Hope Plantation stated, “We don’t do outreach.” The guide also said that if people do not know about an event they are not going to come. Although lack of advertising was only mentioned by one guide it might serve as an explanation why African Americans may not be attending museums. I had predicted that multiple guides would mention more advertisement.

In sum, findings from this study show that lack of representation, site perceptions by the African American community, sensitivity to the topic of slavery, lack of knowledge about the presence of a site, proportions of African Americans among a regional population, the African American culture, fees, geographic isolation, and lack of advertisement are reasons guides cite to explain the lack of African American visitation at Eastern North Carolina’s heritage sites. In the next section I explore what might entice African Americans to attend heritage sites and then what measures could be used to attract more visitors.

### What Attracts African Americans?

To assess the strategies heritage sites are currently using to attract African American tourists I asked the guides: *What do African American visitors like most at the site? What does*

*the site do to draw in African Americans?* I hypothesized that African Americans would be directly affected by African American exhibits, and sites would advertise to increase visitation. Guides also directed me to the questions that African Americans ask while on tour. Knowing what they ask is important in gauging their interests at the site and will be included at the end of the section. Guides would also inform me that direct programming, and black history month were big draws for African American tourists.

The major theme for what draws African Americans to their museum centered on African American exhibits. Exhibits that were directly related to the African Americans were mentioned by eight guides at four sites. Both guides at the Port of Plymouth cited pictures of African Americans as being a favorite exhibit among African Americans. At Hope Plantation one guide pointed to an exhibit of a prominent African American family in that region. The other guide at Hope Plantation pointed to the John Kanoe exhibit. John Kanoe is a form of dancing. The Museum of the Albemarle has an exhibit of a local black policeman that both guides mentioned as well received among African Americans. Another exhibit featured wooden shoes from a local plantation and a stained glass window from the church where Martin Luther King Jr. gave a speech. Overall, the guides at the Museum of the Albemarle suggested that any exhibit that has to do with emancipation or freedom usually receives a warm welcome among African American visitors. At Somerset Place guides pointed to the fact that African Americans like the main house and the Sucky exhibit. The latter exhibit takes place inside of a slave cabin, telling the story of a female slave who lived on the plantation. The slave had numerous children and was well documented by the Collin's.

Specific programs launched on special commemorative dates is also a large attraction at several sites and attracts large groups of African Americans. Special programming was

mentioned by tour guides at four sites, two state sites and two private sites. Somerset Place features second Saturday events that usually draw in people of all ethnic backgrounds. The Museum of the Albemarle mentioned several times that programming directly related to the African Americans “can pack the auditorium.” The other guide expressed enthusiastically that, “On days of African American programming it's 90% African American and 10% Caucasian.” Successful programming topics listed by the guides from The Museum of the Albemarle include: ‘segregated schools in the south’ and musical performances on Saturdays and Sundays. They also credited their programming success with implementation of an African American support group. Historic Beaufort Museum guides mentioned programming that had to do with music, in particular Stephen Foster’s spirituals. In addition, inviting visiting speakers from the region to the Beaufort Museum were considered very popular. Hope Plantation had two guides mention a genealogy fair that was successful in attracting African Americans participants. Somerset Place also mentioned that African Americans who visited were very interested in tracing their genealogy. One guide from Hope Plantation stated that lectures during “black history month” were popular. No direct programming for African Americans was mentioned by the guides from The Port of Plymouth Museum or the CSS Neuse Museum.

Another large influx of African Americans takes place during Black History Month in February and was mentioned by two guides both of which worked at state sites. The sites that report an increase in African American visitation in February were the Museum of the Albemarle and Somerset Place. A Hope Plantation guide shared “Come on people...Do we really have to restrict our program to celebrate African American contributions to February? I want to do that all year around.” If all guides adopted this mentality then African American visitation might be on the rise all year long instead of just during the month of February.

While interviewing the guides I wanted to know if they had any questions that stood out that were asked by African Americans while taking a tour. The responses varied greatly as each site offers a different aspect of history, from the antebellum period through Reconstruction. The guides at the Port of Plymouth had been asked about local recruitment of blacks during the Civil War as well as what part the African Americans had in the battle of Plymouth. At Hope Plantation, as one might suspect, guides were asked about the enslaved community and life on the plantation. The same is the case for Somerset Place. Along those same lines, a guide at Somerset Place was asked, “Was Josiah good to his enslaved community?” The guides there refused to answer the question, and pointed to the facts that are available. The historical evidence there allows the conclusion that he was both a fair and a malevolent owner. Taking a tour one can see how he allowed his slaves to supplement their diet with things they caught as well as planting a garden. The owner also kept a runaway slave, Becky Drew, in the stocks overnight (North Carolina Historic Site, 2012). The night temperatures caused frostbite in the young woman’s feet and they had to be amputated. The guides explain that evaluations of Josiah Collins as a good owner are a matter of interpretation. The guides tell the visitors it depends on how you look at the situation. The same theme came forth at Historic Beaufort as guides stated that African Americans want to know more about how people and the slaves lived here. At the CSS Neuse one guide mentioned that African Americans typically ask about the building of the ship and whether or not it included slave laborers. One guide at the Museum of the Albemarle mentioned that some African Americans would ask about Bayside Plantation and Somerset Place. As one can see there is a variety of questions that are asked of guides when giving a tour. The themes show that typical questions asked by African Americans focus on their culture and how people lived in those times.

As hypothesized, African Americans are drawn to exhibits that directly display their heritage. Among the most common themes to draw in African Americans were programs that feature music and dance. Other programs worth mentioning include speakers talking about a directly related subject, primarily authors. Another noteworthy trend is the participation during the month of February.

#### *What can the Sites Offer to Increase African American Involvement?*

During a particular section of the semi-structured interview I asked questions that would elicit what could be done to draw in more minority visitors. There were several trends among the responses. One guide from the Port of Plymouth, stood out with several suggestions. All others contributed about the same among of ideas. The guides suggested that sites should advertise more, get school groups involved, improve infrastructure, hire staff with a primary focus, and avoid fees.

Adding new exhibits was the theme that occurred most frequently. Guides from all sites related to the fact that new additions in programs and exhibits that focused on what African Americans are interested in would go a long way to increase the visitation number. All guides mentioned either having more programs at the site during the year or creating an exhibit that focused on African American heritage. The following paragraphs will elucidate the exact type of exhibits the guides recommended.

The state sites recommended several specific exhibits that could be added to increase the number of African American visitors. Both guides from the CSS Neuse thought that adding exhibits on the United States Colored Troops would increase the interest and number of African American participants. The guides at the Museum of the Albemarle both agreed that they would like to see more African American artifacts displayed. One guide recommended that a collection

of artifacts from the local plantation, Somerset Place and Bayside, be put together and travel throughout the region. A traveling exhibit would give publicity to both the site it was located at and the site it was representing. One guide from Somerset Place also recommended a display of more artifacts in exhibits. The other guide suggested the continuation of homecomings/reunions. By doing this, vendors and programs would be set up for the participants.

The private sites also had noteworthy recommendations of exhibits. A guide from the Port of Plymouth noted that the middle section of that museum needs revamping. The guide suggested that possibilities to add a comparison of livelihoods for slaves versus free black people in the local area. Similar to the guides from the CSS Neuse Museum, both guides thought that more needed to be done with the interpretation of the black soldiers in the Battle of Plymouth, getting the United States Colored Troops re-enactment groups was among one of their themes. Lastly, exhibits which featured local farmers, including women and children, might draw in more African Americans. At Hope Plantation, guides thought the genealogy fair that directly focused on African Americans should be continued. Also mentioned was the potential for an exhibit on enslaved craftsmanship that could display local furniture made by slaves. Hope Plantation also would like to see hands on programs that would illustrate trades, cooking and crafts, to children and adults. The guides at Historic Beaufort brought up dance shows and concerts featuring African American choreographers and composers. In addition, inviting local black authors to read from their work might be attractive to the local community. Historic Beaufort Museum guides also thought of adding exhibits of drawings of local African American houses, and more in-depth research on the African Americans who fished on the local boats. All sites private and state run had similar ideas in implementing exhibits. The CSS Neuse and The Port of Plymouth both mentioned adding exhibits on the United States Colored Troops. Getting children involved

was also seen as a positive among privately run sites. Differences also occurred in the suggestions as private sites tended to mention more on site programming. Overall, the suggestions recommended would benefit all sites, state and private.

Advertising was one of the biggest ways in which guides mentioned they could draw in more African American tourists. Nine guides from five sites mentioned that more advertising to African Americans would help boost numbers. Suggestions include TV stations, newspapers, and the internet. One guide even proposed to go to churches and send out brochures by mail. Guides also mentioned doing outreach programs at local schools in the area. One guide from Hope Plantation also stated the importance of inviting big name African American publications to help spread the word about the plantation. Both guides at the CSS Neuse proposed letting locals know how the exhibits focus on African Americans and that, “they are not being excluded.” Guides from The CSS Neuse suggested articles in the local paper and advertisement in general. One guide from The Museum of the Albemarle stated that flyers should be used as much as possible. The guide also inferred that getting the word out to African Americans is important so they can spread the news in their local community. Guides from Somerset Place stressed that they should get their name out as often and as positive as they can. Social media is considered a great way to do this because it goes to numerous people and it is free.

Several of the guides mentioned the key to long term success would come from getting school groups involved. More school participation was mentioned by three sites, two private sites and one state site, with a total of six guides. This is captured by the following statement, “If you get kids interested when they're little, maybe it would stick with them.” All three guides working at Hope Plantation also saw the need to inform children. They mentioned getting children out to Hope Plantation and going to schools and telling the children about the plantation.

Historic Beaufort, Somerset Place and the CSS Neuse did not mention anything about getting school children to participate. One guide at the Museum of the Albemarle did however mention the importance of getting all African Americans to “buy in” to the museum. The guide explained, “Concentrating on school groups to bring them in and so that the children can know that this museum belongs to them and as they grow up will continue to have them bring their families”. Educating the public about their right to attend could be the answer to improved minority visitation in the future.

The theme of improved infrastructure was not a particularly strong theme but was mentioned by at least two guides, both guides of which came from Somerset Place. Improved infrastructure consists of building new structures or improving the existing ones on the grounds at these sites. One of the Somerset Place guides suggested a reconstruction of the Lake Shore Chapel, and Four Story Barn that once sat on the property. Both guides expressed a need for a new visitor center. The structure in which the visitor center sits is also the house in which the Collins boys were educated, making it a historic structure. A guide from Hope Plantation noted that several people both black and white were disappointed when visiting because there was no slave cabin. Adding structures of importance could provide additional opportunities for increasing African American participation.

One of the other themes that came forth several times was adding African American boards or museum groups to help with exhibits and promotion. One of the guides in Plymouth recommended that there needed to be at least one black board member. Having a black board member would be the first step towards a community wide support of a heritage site Museum of the Albemarle and Hope Plantation both had groups of African Americans on their advisory boards. A guide from the Museum of the Albemarle did mention that it would be nice if they had

staff that could devote their time exclusively to research African American heritage. Only two guides mentioned adding either more staff or members to a board as strategies to increase African American visitation rates.

Several recommendations for improvement were only mentioned once. Among them was the phrase “Put down, No Charge.” It relates to the burden of private sites and their struggle to stay open despite little funding. Private sites have to charge entrance fees because, unlike state sites, they receive no public funding. The guide mentioned placing a fee suggested that this “would catch everybody’s eye” black and white. A guide from Hope Plantation also saw the need to “sensitize the docents.” These suggestions infer that all guides should be on the same page when giving a tour, making sure that nobody presented wrong information or tainted the interpretation with individual convictions. A guide from Plymouth suggested doing an oral history round table to get ideas for exhibits. The guide in this case wanted to get local African Americans involved so that their ideas could be assessed as to the likes and interests of their community.

In sum, tour guides shared a variety of ideas about specific exhibits, programs, advertising, formation of groups, visiting schools and building new structures. Interestingly, all guides had at least one statement to make about what could be done to increase African American participation. The possibilities covered in this section will be revisited in the discussion.

### *Gift Shop*

Another part of this research project focused on determining what products are offered for sale at heritage sites that might be of interest to African American tourists. Inventorying books and souvenirs in gift shops that relate to the African American history allowed me to

compare how the sites are both similar and different in their products offered to African Americans. It should be noted that books were not documented based on quantity of available books but rather based on differentiation of titles. Figure 5 shows the different number of book titles and souvenirs offered for sale at each site.

*Figure 5: African American Gift Shop Inventory*



In terms of souvenirs offered at the gift shops I found sites had a coffee mug of a slave cabin, both Union and Confederate African American soldiers, black dolls, and a sack race that was offered for children of every race. Only five different souvenir items were found for sale at all six sites. Historic Beaufort offered four of the souvenirs and Somerset Place offered the other item. Hence the private site featured more items than any state site. The souvenirs were primarily marketed to the children who visit the sites.

The total number of books found at all sites was sixty-eight with a total of fifty-five different titles, there were thirteen titles that were the same at all sites. The private sites had a total of seventeen books compared to fifty-one books for sale at state sites. Figure 5 shows that

Somerset Place features almost 60% of all of the books, or a total of thirty-eight different titles. The rest of the sites had less than nine books for purchase showing no difference between state sites and private run sites. Although there is a high disparity between Somerset and all the other sites, most state sites and private sites have a small section in their museums with items that might be of interest to African American visitors.

In terms of marketing products to the African American community Somerset Place has by far the most items to offer. They have a diverse range of products, including souvenirs and books. The gift shop there accommodates the African American minority and might be able to explain why there is such a large percentage that visits the site on a yearly basis. The literature at Somerset Place covers topics from antebellum history up to the Civil Rights Movement. All of the other sites only offer literature that focuses on slavery.

#### *Documenting African American Heritage at Sites*

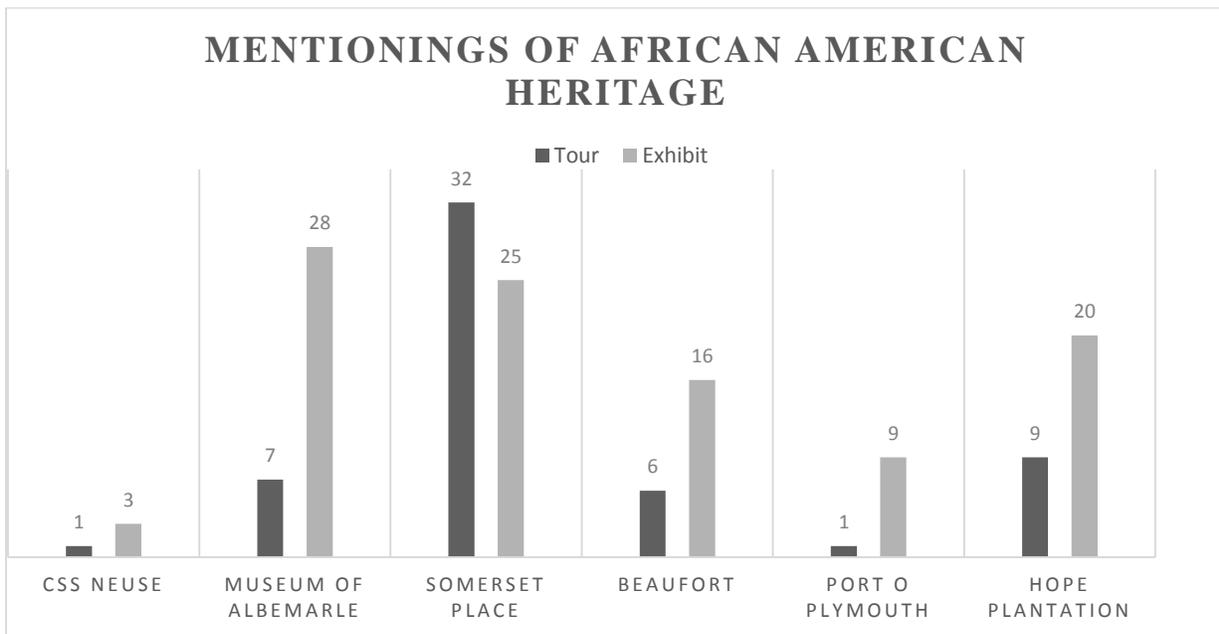
Documenting exhibits as well as what was said on the tours allows for unbiased assessment of the sites' interpretation. The major themes I documented on these tours include but are not limited to enslaved people, slavery, slave, servants, free blacks, blacks, and house keepers. It should be noted that no tour is exactly the same as none of the tourists visiting a site are identical. The exhibits on the other hand are a fixture for all tourists. The information presented in exhibits does not change for the time period that it is displayed for viewing.

While taking a tour of each site I penned down notes on what was said that related to the enslaved community. I then uploaded each of the tours notes into Microsoft Excel. It should be noted that several sites did not have guided tours with question and answer sections because they are museums with exhibits. The CSS Neuse and The Port of Plymouth Museum had tours with very limited lengths of presentation time. While Somerset Place, Hope Plantation and Historic

Beaufort all had lengthy tours. The permanent exhibits in Somerset Place and Historic Beaufort were limited because of space. The other four sites all had ample space to display African American exhibits.

Somerset Place is clearly at the top of the list mentioning slavery on their tours. The site referred to the African American heritage 32 times on the tour. Hope Plantation was next with 9 references to African American heritage. The Museum of the Albemarle referred to African American heritage 7 times on their tour. While Historic Beaufort mentioned the topic on 6 different occurrences. It should be noted that while the CSS Neuse and Port O Plymouth only mentioned African American heritage once on their tours the tours at these two sites are not as lengthy as the other tours.

Figure 6: Frequency of Words that Refer to African American History at Sites



Exhibits were evaluated based on the references illustrating African American heritage. At the sites I documented exhibits and pictures that showcased African American culture. If a sentence in a panel said something referring to an enslaved servant or a picture displayed the enslaved community it was noted. The results are shown in Figure 6. The Museum of the

Albemarle and Somerset Place exhibits showcase African American history more than the other sites, both are state run sites. Other notable sites that had low to moderate representation of the African American story was Hope Plantation and Historic Beaufort. Low representation of African American history was found at the CSS Neuse Museum and the Port of Plymouth. Overall, the breakdown of state versus private sites was inconsistent. Most exhibits displaying African American history was found at state sites. Africans Americans had a mean of sixteen mentioning's at all sites. This indicates that both state and private sites had two sites equal to or above the average and one site below. The percentage breakdown was 55% state and 45% private. Having looked at each sites offerings, it appears that a solid representative number of African American mentioning's should be at least twenty-two times. If there are less mentioning's then there is need for improvement.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

Data analysis revealed several similarities and differences among the heritage sites in Eastern North Carolina selected for this study. In this discussion I present how the sites compare to each other, and point out general problems with African American participation. Then I suggest overall goals of implementation, both short-term and long-term and review potential exhibits that each participating site could develop. All goals and exhibit suggestions are designed to suggest strategies to attract more African Americans to heritage sites.

### *Comparing Heritage Sites*

#### *Inhibitors*

Guides listed several inhibitors to explain the reasons behind low African American participation. The top five themes were: lack of representation, elitist perceptions, lack of knowledge/interest, few African American travelers, and admission fees. Lack of representation at a site was the most mentioned theme among guides. The number of guides mentioning representation was greater with regard to ownership, however there were two state sites and two private sites. The next largest inhibitor was the elitist perceptions given off by sites. There were two state sites and one private site that mentioned this perception. All of the guides at Hope Plantation mentioned that the elitist perception was an inhibitor to black participation. State sites, while having more in number had less guides mention this, the results were thus mixed. Lack of knowledge was only mentioned by three overall guides from only private sites. While no state sites mentioned this it was still a theme. Having few African American travelers was mentioned at all private sites. No state sites suggested that low African American visitation was because of the lack of black travelers. Another theme that is noteworthy is admission fees explaining

representation. One guide from each state and private site mentioned that fees were reasons why some people did not attend museums. The themes will be further explained in the following sections.

*Table 7: Inhibitors to African American Visitation at Selected Heritage Sites in Eastern North Carolina According to Guides*

	Ownership	Lack of Representation	Elitist Perceptions	Lack of knowledge / interest	Few African American Traveler	Admission Fees
Somerset Place	State	2	0	0	0	0
CSS Neuse	State	0	1	0	0	0
Museum of the Albemarle	State	2	1	0	0	1
Historic Beaufort	Private	0	0	2	1	1
The Port of Plymouth Museum	Private	1	0	1	1	0
Hope Plantation	Private	1	3	0	1	0
Sum of themes		6	5	3	3	2

*Current strategies to attract African American visitors*

In regards to what currently brings African Americans into museums and sites, guides referred to three themes. Sites were equal in comparison with explaining what draws African Americans with their themes of interests in black exhibits, programming, and February. Both state and private sites were equal in site number and guides. They agreed that African Americans are interested in exhibits featuring African American history. The only site not to mention any form of increased African American participation was the CSS Neuse.

*Table 8: Comparison of Current Attractions for African American Visitors*

	Ownership	Interested in Black Exhibits	Programming	February “Black History Month”
Somerset Place	State	2	2	1
CSS Neuse	State	0	0	0
Museum of the Albemarle	State	2	2	1
Historic Beaufort	Private	0	2	0
The Port of Plymouth Museum	Private	2	0	0
Hope Plantation	Private	2	2	0
Sum of themes		8	8	2

*Suggestions for Future Attractions*

All guides from every site explained that adding exhibits and programming focusing on African American heritage would be beneficial in increasing the number of those participants. Every state site suggested that advertising needed to occur to attract more African Americans. However, only two private sites mentioned the need for advertising. The greatest difference when looking at suggestions for improvement surround the involvement of children. Only one guide at a state site eluded to getting children involved. However, five guides at two private sites mentioned getting children involved as increasing participation. The last theme that was common among several sites was adding black staff members to their museum. This theme was mentioned by guides from both state and private sites. Themes comparing future attractions were very similar among both state and private run sites.

*Table 9: Suggestions for Attracting African American Visitors*

	Ownership	Adding African American Exhibits/ Programming	Advertising the Site	School Children Involvement	Adding Black Board / Staff
Somerset Place	State	2	1	0	0
CSS Neuse	State	2	2	0	0
Museum of the Albemarle	State	2	1	1	1
Historic Beaufort	Private	2	0	0	0
The Port of Plymouth Museum	Private	2	2	2	1
Hope Plantation	Private	3	3	3	0
Sum of themes		13	9	6	2

*Comparing Characteristics of Sites*

When comparing state sites and private sites together an interesting outlier in terms of participation numbers and gift shop offerings emerges: Somerset Place. Here the African American participation was far greater than at any of the other sites. Somerset guides averaged African American attendance at 55%, 34% more than the total overall averages at all sites. The primary reasons Somerset Place has more African American attendance is because of the initiatives that taken to attract visitors to the site The Homecoming Program there is one of the biggest reasons the African American attendance is so high. The program invites descendants of enslaved families to come to the plantation each year. Another reason Somerset Place stands out is the way the interpretation of the site was conducted. The site is laid out in two equal parts: one

that illustrates how the owner class lived and the other how the enslaved community lived. No other site in the study devotes similar length of time to the African American experience, either in their museum or on their tour. At Somerset Place everyone's story is told making it a prime example of what should be done when giving a tour. Interpretation and programming are very important to the African American community.

Another example of representation of African American history can be found in the gift shop. Somerset has thirty-eight different titles in their bookstore which was over half of the number of different titles offered at all the sites. The large inventory, while not a primary reason African Americans visit Somerset, does show how the site is trying to show everyone's side of the story. The books here are also laid out in sections making it easier to find books on certain subjects.

One site, the CSS Neuse, was in a transitional phase having moved from their previous location. Since the museum was in transition from one place to another they had only a couple of exhibits. None of the exhibits on display in the museum focused on anything to do with African Americans. The guides both suggested that like other sites they wanted to focus exhibits on the local community and an exhibit on the United States Colored Troops. The CSS Neuse now has the opportunity to set up the museum in a way that would draw in more African American visitors.

Hopefully this compilation of suggestions when returned to tour guides and site managers will help the site succeed in drawing in people from different ethnic backgrounds. I do understand that these suggestions are costly and might be shelved because of lack of funding. The most common themes of incorporating more African American history within the site and improving outreach to African Americans should boost their attendance numbers. If sites, both

state and private, try to do just those two things then a step towards fairer African American representation will be achieved.

Some of the findings in this study confirm insights presented in the existing literature (Stanfield, Manning, Budruk, and Floyd, 2005; Floyd, 2007; and Derek Alderman 2008). Litvin and Brewer (2008) looked at participation at Laura Plantation in Louisiana. They found that 85% of the people attending were white. The research in Eastern North Carolina is consistent with other private sites as they averaged 80% white. The participation numbers of my research are somewhat different from Floyd's (1999) list. In all of Floyd's examples whites made up 85% or more for attendance at parks (pp. 13). The guides at Eastern North Carolina heritage sites mentioned overall averages of 71% white at all sites.

The Museum of the Albemarle and Historic Beaufort guides thought entrance fees were inhibitors. Stanfield et.al (2005), Floyd (1999), and Weber and Sultana (2013) discuss that in reference to the Marginality Hypothesis. These are socioeconomic constraints that inhibit blacks from coming to sites. Stanfield et. al. (2005) suggests that "per capita income can contribute to under-representation of blacks in national parks because they may have less discretionary income than whites" (pp. 248). Private sites here are going to take on the burden because they have to charge fees in order to keep their museum open, whereas many state sites are fully supported by the state and only ask for donations. All sites can get people to their museums by offering open houses and free programs. These two types of events will draw both those that have money and those that do not. Sites should try to sell things at these events that are going to bring the site money. Free programs will also get the word out of how great the site is representing both sides of the story.

The Marginality Hypothesis also correlates to findings at Somerset Place and The Port of Plymouth Museum. Both sites inferred that the reason attendance was so low is because of the location of the site. Coincidentally, both locations are located off of Highway 264. Somerset Place is located eight miles off of the main road and Plymouth less than four. The marginality hypothesis comes into focus because of the transportation issues. The guides were saying that people who go to these sites go to them as part of their destination experience. Remoteness infers that the sites are a long way out, thus meaning that to get there it costs time and money.

The admission fees charged at heritage sites need to be looked at to determine if costs are keeping African American from attending. Somerset Place, and The CSS Neuse had no fees associated with attending the site. The Port of Plymouth Museum (\$3.50), Historic Beaufort (\$10), and Hope Plantation (\$10) all had fees with attending. The Museum of the Albemarle also had a fee for their special exhibit, the main room exhibits are free. Somerset was the only outlier as they had more African American visitors. The other sites both charging and not seemed to have the same amount of African American visitors.

Gall-Ely et al. (2008) focused their research on free admission to museums and monuments in France. Sites offering free admission in to attract more tourist might find that in the short term it is successful but the long term effects are futile (O'Hare, 1975; O'Hagan, 1995; Bailey and Falconer, 1998). Free admission in their study correlated to a "negative effect on the commitment of the attendant" (Gall-Ely et. al., 2008, pp. 65). The respondents in the study expressed a belief that the value of visitors' experience is not going to change if the experience is offered for free.

The fee structures suggest that private sites are more closely linked to white visitors is because of the charge and the way the site promotes what they have. Floyd mentions that

economic constraints often inhibit African Americans from attending these sites. The private sites in the study all had a \$3.50+ entrance fee that could be keeping some of the African Americans out.

One trend in Alderman's (2008) research focused on what was being marketed most at sites across Eastern North Carolina. Sites like Hope Plantation primarily market their furniture to visitors. A guide from Hope Plantation expressed her opinion by saying that "blacks are primarily interested in the life on the plantation and whites like the furniture." Site need to figure out what they are going to market when reaching out to the African American community. This study suggest that when targeting African Americans something pertinent to their heritage needs to be addressed.

Cultural differences also came into focus in the interview texts. Carter (2008) studied where African Americans are willing to travel on vacation. Guides in this study did mention that African American tourists were not going to their sites because they did not travel to nearby beach resorts. Not attending a heritage site on vacation maybe a cultural preference. A guide from Historic Beaufort mentioned the small proportion of African Americans among the town population. The same guide also expressed that African Americans must not be interested in the topic. Weber and Sultana (2013) have focused on the culture topic by mentioning the Ethnicity Hypothesis which states, "different groups have different values and interests" (pp. 444). A guide from the Museum of the Albemarle mentioned that African Americans were not brought up attending museums. The guide went straight to culture with their assumption of why African Americans do not attend their site. Sites should know that just because they add new exhibits, it does not necessarily follow that every African American is interested to attend.

The last theory that applies to the suggestions made by tour guides is the Discrimination Hypothesis. Weber and Sultana (2013) write that low visitation occurs because of legacy. Guides in this study at both state sites and private sites mentioned that one inhibitor to African American visitation was the image of the site. All guides at Hope Plantation stated that the old image was associated with the elite class. Guides from the CSS Neuse and The Museum of the Albemarle also directly stated that the same elitist organizations used to be felt there. All the sites stated that the image has currently changed and are no longer meant to leave anyone out. The next step is for the sites to get the word out that they have changed their site layout and their interpretation.

Finally, I evaluated the interpretations offered at each site. Every tour with the exception of Somerset Place's could have included more on the African American experience. Johnson (1999) and Inwood (2010) both point out that tourism perpetuates a holistic heritage which neglects complex local histories and illustrates certain racial identities into the landscape while ignoring others. Guides already have pointed out that local histories should be added to their exhibits to include the African American experience. It is imperative that sites heed the warning, as history is diverse and that all sides of the story need to be told.

#### *Problems with Participation*

The themes mentioned by the guides are all important when trying to understand the low participation numbers. Sites need to publicize that their image has changed over the years. In getting the word out I would suggest sites advertise on their Facebook pages and through some newspaper articles. Tell the locals and the public in general that the site layouts have changed and portray a more accurate depiction of the way life used to be. A lot of the elitist's looks should disappear when the guides start doing more things with the students.

The question of sensitivity is also a big factor in dealing with African American participation. Slavery is a very difficult subject to interpret or portray. A guide from The Port of Plymouth Museum related that it is a very touchy subject. Years of bondage have long scarred the ways in which African Americans view these sites. A guide from Hope Plantation stated that “We need to get them to realize that there is no shame in having a slave ancestor.” Sensitizing the guides and changing scripts so that African American history is portrayed more throughout the site will help ease the tensions felt. Only time will ease the tension between the strong feeling of animosity that is felt among some in the African American community.

### *Barriers to Implementation*

Guides made many valuable recommendations about what should and could be done to draw in more African Americans, but their ideas are not currently implemented at the sites. One primary reason for lack of development of African American initiatives is lack of money. With insufficient funds sites cannot buy display cases or artifacts to put in them. Another hindrance is the lack of staff members. The Museum of the Albemarle mentioned that if a position was created to primarily study African American history at the site, then they could add more exhibits. Funding problems also extend to advertising. Some types of advertisement are free, such as Facebook presence or twitter accounts. However, there is a charge to run ads in newspapers and on the internet.

One of the other reasons recommendations made by some guides might not be implemented is the lack of motivation by the guides themselves. Guides may or may not find the topic of African American history particularly interesting. Those that do not might not want to take on the task of conducting additional research to make new exhibits. Studying a topic that is not interesting can cause a lack of motivation thus affecting that employee’s job.

## *Goals*

In doing this research my primary goal was to be able to create a list of steps that sites could enact in order to achieve greater numbers of African American visitors. Text analysis of interview transcripts revealed concrete examples of what needs to be done. The lack of information about African Americans in a museum can be solved by adding several exhibits. Below is an analysis of initiatives that sites can be put forth so that African American visitation will increase. The initiatives are laid out in short term and long term goals.

*Table 10: Short-term and Long-term Goals*

Term	Initiative	Creation Time	Resources	Impact
Short	Consistent Scripts	Weeks	Low	Moderate
Short	Creating Exhibits	Month	Moderate	High
Short	Reaching out to Children	Weeks-Months	Moderate	High
Long	Teaming up with ECU	Months-Years	Low	High
Long	Traveling Exhibit	Months	High	High
Long	Black Staffing	Months-Years	Low-High	Moderate

### *Short Term Goals to Increase Participation*

After looking at all of the data collected and having experienced several different tours, I noticed that guides at each site need to cooperate more closely with one another. Guides at Hope Plantation would express how they might really go into the furniture, whereas another guide stated they would really showcase life on the farm. Having a consistent script among the guides

at the site is going to ensure that when people come and visit a location that they all get the same product. Accommodating to the need of the visitor is excellent when the guides are able to elaborate more on certain aspects of the tour, the enslaved community, furniture etc. Adjusting to the needs and interests of visitors can potentially become a problem when the site does not get across what it should be portraying because of a lopsided tour. Somerset Place showcased how a site should give a tour. The guides also emphasized that all visitors receive the same information. Quality control relating to material presented should become the norm at all heritage sites. The consistency goal is short term and should only take a couple of weeks to have in place. The costs for enacting this particular goal would be very low as the guides could be trained by the site instructor while they are at work. The impact that this could have is moderate.

Another strategy is to offer African American visitors what they want to see and hear. Tour guides and site managers interested to attract more African American visitors should not focus primarily on one side of an event and not the other. While visiting the sites, one could tell that the primary focus does not relate to the African American experience as often as it should. Improvements here can be made by simply adding more references on a tour to the enslaved community, black soldiers, or tradesmen of the area. Sites should try to create exhibits that show the African American experience. These exhibits do not have to be grandiose. As many guides have suggested, sites should portray local African Americans. Research on this level can be done while on the job with books and documents. The costs of adding several lines into a tour while giving a tour is very low. However, if sites really want to add in African American exhibits the costs could be expensive. The outcome for this should be particularly high as it will attract many African Americans.

Looking to the children should be both a short term and long term goal. A short term goal should be to do more outreach to schools in the area of the site's location. Programs should also be put in place so that the information is being brought to schools. If sites are capable, they should have school days. Since some sites need income from entrance fees to operate, they could ask parents of children to pay \$1 per child for the tour. School children are also very willing to spend parent's money on souvenirs that these sites offer. Traveling exhibits listed in the long term goals section are capable of being located at schools. One of the primary reasons for developing programs around school children should be for "buy in."<sup>5</sup> Because the current 40-50 year old African Americans did not frequent museums as often as others they are not taking their children. This is probably due to the elitists' appeals that some of these sites had back in the 1950's-80's. Reaching out to children will take more time and effort. Programs carried to the schools should be developed as well as getting the children to the site location. Costs for children's initiatives are going to be moderate. Advertising, along with programs are not cheap to develop. The impact that this initiative can have on a site is extremely high. When children hear their history and are interested, it allows a child to become connected to his or her heritage, which I would like to call a "buy-in to their heritage." This could potentially lead to a cultural shift in the future. Children who grow up with the memory of researching their own history or the history of their region, might become lifelong museum visitors.

Another market to reach out to is the locals who live in the area. Visiting friends and family (VFR) is a strong market. Backer (2011) illustrates how VFR encompasses large portion of travelers and has for a long period of time. VFR is also cited as being a main trip purpose and is an important motivation as to the choices travelers make (Asiedu, 2008). Research undertaken

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<sup>5</sup> Suggestion from Museum of the Albemarle guide.

by Kim, O’Leary, Lee, and Nadkarni (2014) found that VFR travelers in 2011 were younger, highly educated, have higher income, and stay at hotels more than those from 2006. The VFR market should be considered to facilitate increased attendance. If the VFR of American Americans are reached then locals need to be made aware of events that are taking place at sites. Marketing a site in local and regional media outlets should be mandatory for the administration of any heritage site. African Americans can be reached through local newspapers and church functions these venues need to be used in order to reach the locals. Once the locals are made aware then hopefully they will tell their VFR.

#### *Long Term Goals to Increase Participation*

One long term goal that should be pursued is a traveling exhibit. A guide from the Museum of the Albemarle suggested that as a way to illustrate the local area. My suggestion is that every site put together a compilation of the history of their location or some unique artifacts. The sites should include all aspects of history and give an overview of what that site has to offer. An example that I recommend could be pursued by the Port of Plymouth and CSS Neuse. Both sites had African Americans who fought for the Union during the Civil War. A traveling exhibit that illustrated the United States Colored Troops experience before, during, and after the Battle of Plymouth and skirmishes around Kinston would be a perfect exhibit to put on display. The exhibit could include the photos of the African American veterans who served in the Union ranks. The exhibit might also have a black mannequin dressed in Union attire. The guide at the Museum of the Albemarle said that it would be nice to have an exhibit on Somerset Plantation. A traveling exhibit such as this could place pictures of the site and slave stories on foam core board and place them at different sites. The reason this would be a long term goal is because of the costs and maintenance. The overhead could be as expensive as the sites wanted them to be and

the research that would have to be done in order to give accurate histories about the subject. Possibilities to these types of traveling exhibits are endless, these are just some examples that could be put in place. The impact that exhibits could have within a site are extremely high. Imagine a museum that has a whole experience on African Americans before, during, and after the Civil War. If the exhibits are done professionally, based on the recommendations stated by the guides, there will be a high impact in the area.

Another long-term goal should be teaming up with learning institutions. Universities often look for projects that their students can complete. Professors at these universities should be contacted in hopes of developing a class project that can help develop narratives for the site in question. Developing site narratives will offer students hands on learning and real world experience. Tapping into any learning institution offers sites a way that their narratives can further be developed. This particular goal will require a lot of time in getting professors to develop a class project. The expense in working with the university should be moderate, as a staff member's time will have to be devoted to getting the project started and traveling costs might be placed on the site.

The sites should actively seek recommendations from members of the African American community. The African American community living in the surrounding area of each site should be included with all of the programs offered by the sites. Director boards at each site should include African American members from the community they serve. Sites trying to get African American members included should market board membership at local churches. Another outlet for recruiting African American board participation might also exist by reaching out to African American colleges. Professors at these colleges could potentially have interest in developing

certain programs.<sup>6</sup> African Americans on the board will also present further suggestions of the site can offer a better product.

### *Potential Exhibits for Sites in Study*

My primary goal as mentioned before was to make heritage sites successful ensuring their longevity for future generations. In this section I recommend exhibits that each of the sites could display that would better incorporate African American heritage. Some of these sites have been used in prior examples but will be discussed again in reference to the information I gathered from their sites and other local sites in the area. The potential exhibit suggestions below are recommendations put forth by myself. The information is based on the content of the exhibits were found and the information provided by the guides. Thorough research should be conducted before implementing any of these suggestions.

The Port of Plymouth has several opportunities of which they could establish an African American exhibit. An opportunity for them would be to do a full exhibit focusing around the African American experience during the Civil War. Here the museum could include an exhibit on the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Researching the USCT could offer visitors a more holistic view of how the Civil War had African Americans fighting for their own freedom. An exhibit could be technologically made to give aspects of how life was different for USCTs compared to their white counter parts. Along with this exhibit the museum could also include how local blacks responded to the Union occupation in Plymouth. These are just a couple of examples that could be done at the Port of Plymouth that would better represent African American heritage, further research should be conducted to see if it is feasible to place this exhibit in the Port of Plymouth Museum.

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<sup>6</sup> The Museum of the Albemarle guides stated how they worked closely with Elizabeth City State University professors.

A similar site, the CSS Neuse, mentioned that they were going to set up a USCT exhibit. In diversifying their information, the CSS Neuse could offer an exhibit on how the local blacks helped build the ship. The vast expanse of the visitor center could display an exhibit of slave craftsmen in the Kinston, North Carolina area. The exhibit could feature tools used by blacksmiths and carpenters who worked in the town and on local plantations. An exhibit of this sort could offer hands on experience to young children by setting up a basket weaving or pottery exhibit. Another exhibit could let children touch tools used by local slaves. Offering a hands on experience like this is unique. Other potentials here are setting up a local history display of both blacks and whites in the community. These examples should be further looked at by the site to see if they are possible. The CSS Neuse along with other sites have the potential to develop numerous topics that can be displayed.

Hope Plantation also has potential to set up exhibits devoted to African Americans. I believe Hope Plantation could better add to how life was on a plantation in Eastern North Carolina. The site could potentially do an overall view of slavery in all the southern states first. Afterwards the site could focus on Hope Plantation with narratives from the surrounding area. An exhibit that could potentially be a huge success would be to show the local ads of runaway slaves in the area. An exhibit like this could show the differences to how some slaves were worth more to their owners than others and how some had different skills sets. The site could also construct a slave cabin on the premises. Further research is needed before implementing this costly structure. I suggest the site look at other plantations who have constructed such buildings and asked them about their success and interpretation after construction. The guides at Hope Plantation could also show the daily lives of slaves with a slave cabin. Being located right on a farm, the site could also offer first-hand experience to the ins and outs of that way of life. The

site could get local farmers to donate cotton and tobacco plants for cultivation to create an interactive farm. Guides would have to accomplish the upkeep of the farm. I also suggest that farm implements be kept at the garden to let tourists who are interested participate in weeding the crops. This would teach tourists about crops in the area and that slave labor was demanding. Before implementing this sort of interactive exhibit much research needs to be accrued. Are there insurance issues? What will the farmers and how much will the farmers donate?

Somerset Place has a potential marketing ploy that could single it out from the rest of the sites. The enslaved community is already very well displayed at that location. Somerset Place needs to focus all of their efforts on making a traveling exhibit that is displayed at other sites throughout the region. It was mentioned by guides at the site that they have several artifacts in the vault in Raleigh because they had no place to put them at the site. I would suggest the site make the most out of those artifacts by building a traveling exhibit. The display case could read at the end, "If you would like to know more about the enslaved community and planter class of early 19<sup>th</sup> century North Carolina then visit us in Creswell." The traveling display case has the opportunity to market, both the site displaying the artifacts and Somerset Place. Further research by Somerset Place administration should look at other sites that have traveling exhibits to see how well they work. The cost of maintaining these exhibits can also be high considering the movement of artifacts and the set up in other museums.

The Museum of the Albemarle guides both mentioned how African Americans were primarily interested in the enslaved community and anything to do with freedom. The exhibit that I would recommend for them would consist of a regional plantation map marking all of the plantations in the region. The exhibit should include drawings of slave cabins, talk about slave life on the farm, the number of slaves at each site, and point out what happened after the Civil

War ended. The initiative will take a lot of research but provides a potential exhibit opportunity that displays African Americans' heritage and local history.

The guides at Historic Beaufort and other interviewed sites mentioned that they had a huge turnout for musical performances. Historic Beaufort needs to further develop the sea shanty men songs. My vision for Historic Beaufort would be to record local African American stories and place them in an exhibit in the main hall. The stories of local blacks who worked the ships would be of interest to African Americans as well as locals. If the site would add a recording and a five minute video illustrating songs and the lives of the sea shanty men they would have one more exhibit that helps illustrate life of the local blacks in Beaufort. Further research needs to be compiled on musical performances and African American attendance.

Again, these are only recommendations that I consider feasible for the sites studied in this research project. These exhibits if implemented cannot guarantee an increase in African American visitation. The exhibits are only meant to further African American content at the sites they are located at. When funds become available, the site should hire/request an exhibit advisor to help create new exhibits. The exhibits recommended by an advisor will also need to be further assessed before implementation to see if they have faltered in attracting more visitors at other museums.

### *Conclusion*

The two main goals of this research were to understand the viewpoints and suggestions of tour guides regarding African American participation at Eastern North Carolina heritage sites and to aggregate the information in a way that could identify suggestions for increased visitations from African Americans. I accumulated information from six different sites by interviewing guides, taking a tour of the sites, documenting exhibits, and documenting gift shop items. The

information pointed to low African American participation at all but one site, Somerset Place. The guides offered valuable insights as to what African American visitors are attracted to at sites, both programs and exhibits. Along the same lines the guides expressed their opinions as to why African Americans did not attend the sites. Further research needs to be conducted to find topics that can involve the African American public. Until then sites should offer more representation of African American history, along with advertisements, to see if participation increases. Sites should ensure that interpretation reflects several different viewpoints and includes the African American historic experience. If sites do this they can take pride in their product and know they are socially responsible.

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## **Appendix**

### *Semi-structured Interview Instrument*

#### **Questions for Tour Guides:**

This study reviews experiences with any minority visitor to your site. However, it doesn't include visitors who arrive as part of a school obligation.

#### **General Guide Questions:**

How long have you worked at this site?

Where have you worked before that? Please describe your level of expertise about the history of this site?

Do you consider yourself an expert of the history at the site?

How does your expertise compare to the expertise of your fellow guides?

Please describe any formal or informal training that you have received in preparation for this task.

How long does the tour last? Do you offer different versions of the tour?

Please give me an overview of the proportion of time spent at each location of your tour?

How do you try to cater the tour experience to what the tourists are interested in?

#### **Specific to visitors:**

Describe the typical visitor?

What days see the most visitors?

On an average day, what are the proportions of male and female visitors?

On an average day, what are the proportions of visitors over 50 and under 50?

On an average day what are the proportions of African American, Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian visitors.

On a busy day what are the proportions of African American, Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian visitors.

What are tourists most interested in?

What stories you tell get the most disbelief?

What stories you tell get the most applause?

Please estimate the breakdown of race for yearly visitation.

- a. Asians
- b. Hispanics
- c. Caucasian
- d. African American
- e. Other

Do visitors of various races want to hear about different things on the tour? Do their interests tend to focus in some areas more than others?

What are African Americans most interested in? What do they ask about?

What are Caucasians most interested in? What do they ask about?

What are Asians most interested in? What do they ask about?

What are Hispanics most interested in? What do they ask about?

In your opinion, what explains the low numbers of African Americans visitors at your site?

What kind of feedback have you received from African American visitors?

How is that different from your typical Caucasian visitor?

What type of visitors do you think your site is meant for?

**Recommendation for more visitors:**

What can be done to attract more African American visitors to the site? Do you think that site management should try to attract more AA visitors?

If money was not a limitation, how would you suggest the site reaches African Americans to increase the number of participants?

What exhibits have you noticed as very much favored by African American visitors?

What exhibits have you noticed are not looked at much by African American visitors?

What kind of exhibits would you suggest to add to attract more African American visitors?

What kind of advantages do you see in an increase of more African American visitors?

Do you see any disadvantages with increasing the number of African American visitors?

*Checklist for Artifacts in Stores and Exhibits at Sites*

Time	Location	Period	Word	Context

*Checklist Gift Shop*

Book	Gift Shop	Period	Word	Context


*IRB Informed Consent*

*East Carolina University*



**Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: A Tour Guides Perceptions: How to improve African American visitation to Eastern North Carolina Heritage Sites

Principal Investigator: Wilson Hoggard

Institution/Department or Division: The Center for Sustainable Tourism, East Carolina University

Address: Address: 205 Rivers, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858

Telephone #: (252) 328 9469

Study Sponsor/Funding Source: Personal Funding

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Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study problems in society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. My goal is to try to find ways to improve the lives of you and others. To do this, I need the help of tour guides who are willing to take part in research.

The person who is in charge of this research is called the Principal Investigator

You may have questions that this form does not answer. If you do have questions, feel free to ask the person explaining the study, as you go along. You may have questions later. Feel free to ask those questions, as you think of them. There is no time limit for asking about this research.

You are not under any obligation to take part in this research. Take your time and think about the information that is provided. If you want, have a friend or family member go over this form with you before you decide. It is up to you. If you choose to be in the study, then you should sign the form when you are comfortable that you understand the information provided below. If you do not want to take part in the study, you should not sign this form. That decision is yours and it is okay to decide not to volunteer.

This form explains why this research is being done, what will happen during the research, and what you will need to do if you decide to volunteer to take part in this research.

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### **Why is this research being done?**

The purpose of this research is to ensure that heritage site make enough money to sustainably support them. It is also important because I want to ensure that no history is being left out of narratives at sites. I need to ensure that all histories at sites are being told without bias and that sites are making an effort to reach all demographics.

### **Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are an expert in who is attending heritage sites. I am looking to enroll men and women of all age ranges between 18 and up (no upper limit): who have worked at a heritage site. If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 36 tour guides to do so.

### **Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**

I invite you to participate. There are no adversarial effects of talking about your observations during your job. I would like to hear your voice and represent your voice to your fellow scholars as part of a written thesis that shows how sites in Eastern North Carolina plan to attract minority visitors. I also plan to hold public forums that will display posters and presentations about the findings from all the information.

### **What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**

You choose not to participate in this study.

### **Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research procedures will be conducted at your workplace. You will need to come only once to a location you and I have agreed upon. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is about 45 minutes for a one time meeting.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You are being asked to do the following: Have a conversation with me about your observations people who come to your workplace. You will be asked a series of open ended questions about your job. You will also be asked to sort a set of open ended questions about minority visitation. The questions will all be basic knowledge you have accumulated by working at the site.

### **What possible harms or discomforts might I experience if I take part in the research?**

It has been determined that the risks associated with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life.

**Are there any reasons I might want to withdraw from the research or you might take me out of the research?**

The only reason I will take you out of the research is if you have not given a tour at your site. I can for see no reason why you would want to withdraw from the research.

What are the possible benefits I may experience from taking part in this research?

I do not know if you will get any benefits by taking part in this study. This research might help others learn more about why African Americans do not attend heritage sites and potential suggestions that might bring them in. There may be no personal benefit from your participation but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

I will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

**What will it cost me to take part in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research. I will accommodate your work schedule to avoid you having to miss time at work.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

Other than the principal investigator, Wilson Hoggard, nobody else will know that you took part in this research. I will not record your name but link your answers to an encrypted numeric identification code that represents your gender, age, occupation in addition to a specific number assigned to you. I will destroy any contact information we have for you after this interview is concluded.

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure and how long will you keep it?**

When you decide to participate I will assign you an encrypted numeric code that allows us to match your answers to the site you work. I will keep the file with your answers to the specific questions I ask in a word document that I will save for 5 years. I will erase all records after 5 years. In presentations, reports, and journals that will capture the findings of this research I will report the frequency of reoccurring answers among the 36 guides I plan to interview. I will report on suggestions you all will have that should bolster African American visitation. However, it will be impossible to detect who said what or provided what kind of information. If you give me permission, I would like to create an audio recording of your answers. This recording serves as a backup of the opinions you provide me and that I write down. The recording will be labeled with the encrypted numeric code that identifies the interview session we conducted together.

What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?

Participating in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to be in this research after it has already started, you may stop at any time. You will not be penalized or criticized for stopping. You will not lose any benefits that you should normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The person conducting this study will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator, Wilson Hoggard, at (252) 209-4092 every day between 8 am and 8 pm or leave a message at [hoggardw12@students.ecu.edu](mailto:hoggardw12@students.ecu.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office for Human Research Integrity (OHRI) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the OHRI, at 252-744-1971

### **I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I understand that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

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<b>Participant's Name (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Person Obtaining Informed Consent:** I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

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<b>Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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