

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283682619>

Memory, slavery, and plantation museums: the River Road Project

Article in *Journal of Heritage Tourism* · November 2016

DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100629

CITATIONS

2

READS

119

3 authors, including:



[Derek H. Alderman](#)

University of Tennessee

113 PUBLICATIONS 1,214 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Stephen P. Hanna](#)

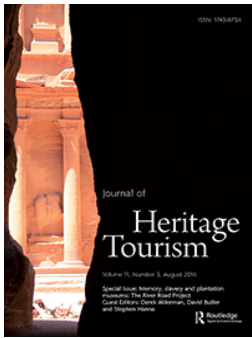
University of Mary Washington

22 PUBLICATIONS 249 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

All content following this page was uploaded by [Derek H. Alderman](#) on 26 May 2016.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file. All in-text references [underlined in blue](#) are added to the original document and are linked to publications on ResearchGate, letting you access and read them immediately.



Memory, slavery, and plantation museums: the River Road Project

Derek H. Alderman, David L. Butler & Stephen P. Hanna

To cite this article: Derek H. Alderman, David L. Butler & Stephen P. Hanna (2016) Memory, slavery, and plantation museums: the River Road Project, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 11:3, 209-218, DOI: [10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100629](https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100629)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2015.1100629>



Published online: 02 Nov 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 168



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

Memory, slavery, and plantation museums: the River Road Project

Derek H. Alderman^a, David L. Butler^b and Stephen P. Hanna^c

^aDepartment of Geography, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, USA; ^bDepartment of Political Science, International Development and International Affairs, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, USA;

^cDepartment of Geography, University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA, USA

ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism plays an increasingly important yet controversial role in interpreting the emotionally and politically charged memories and legacies of African enslavement. Antebellum plantation museums in the southeastern USA remain relatively underanalyzed by researchers, despite their tradition of ignoring and minimizing the contributions and struggles of the slave community. Yet, this neglect is being challenged somewhat by a growing number of plantations and counter-narrative sites that incorporate slavery into docent-led tours, promotional materials, exhibits, and preserved structures. Responding to a need for scholarship that can ferret out the nuances, complexities, and conflicts of producing and consuming heritage at these tourist sites, this special issue presents the results of a study of four plantations (Laura, Oak Alley, Houmas House, San Francisco) along Louisiana's River Road. The issue's editors and contributing authors address a central question: what factors, social actors, and interactions (social and spatial in nature) shape, facilitate, or even constrain the remembering of slavery at southern plantation museums, including those sites making seemingly significant progress in recovering the enslaved? River Road is a microcosm of the larger politics of reshaping southern and American heritage tourism and demonstrates the value of industry-engaged, multi-method examinations of different plantation landscapes within the same region.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 September 2015

Accepted 23 September 2015

KEYWORDS

African-American; plantation heritage; race; slavery; River Road; Louisiana

Heritage tourism scholarship is increasingly seen as an important avenue for exploring the racialization process, understood here in terms of the role of tourism in reproducing but also resisting dominant racial identities, histories, and inequalities (Inwood, 2010; Lee & Scott, 2015; Thomas, 2014; Zakos, 2015). Important to the subject of this special issue and the broader examination of the racial politics of heritage tourism is a discussion of the history of slavery. Growing numbers of researchers are addressing the place that the travel industry can and should have in interpreting the emotionally and politically charged memories and legacies of African enslavement (Buzinde & Santos, 2009; Carter, Butler, & Alderman, 2014; Poirot & Watson, 2015; Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015b). While initial seminal academic treatments focused on slavery heritage as a form of thanatourism or dark tourism (Dann & Seaton, 2001), there is a growing realization that the study of slavery and tourism cannot be conducted in isolation of wider understandings of how societies selectively remember (and forget) racialized violence and dispossession and the uneven power relationships and trauma that undergird slavery heritage (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015a). Engaging slavery heritage is not simply about adding another history to the mix of narratives presented and performed at tourist destinations. Rather, recovery and representation of these painful histories are often fraught with debate and thus involve the politics of bringing long repressed and suppressed histories

and marginalized identities into dialogue with a tourism industry that until recently had been content with ignoring if not denying these very stories (Alderman, 2010; Dwyer, Butler, & Carter, 2013).

Scholars are exploring the opportunities and challenges of addressing slavery through heritage tourism development and promotion across a range of transatlantic regions and destinations – e.g. “roots” tourism at slave castles in West Africa (Mensah, 2015; Teye & Timothy, 2004), heritage sites at slave trade ports in the UK (Beech, 2001; Casebeard, 2010), and interpretations of slavery heritage at former plantations in the Caribbean (Best & Phulgence, 2013; Catalani & Ackroyd, 2013). The role of slavery in heritage tourism in the USA is also receiving greater scholarly analysis than in the past (Buzinde, 2013; Hanna, Potter, Modlin, Carter, & Butler, 2015; Litvin & Brewer, 2008; Small, 2013). These studies are correcting a traditional scarcity of attention paid to the relationship between African-Americans and tourism in general (Alderman, 2013). Examining the racial politics and place of slavery in the production and consumption of US heritage tourism is important economically, given the significance of the minority travel market and the increased demand among white travelers for unsanitized historical narratives. It is also important socially and morally as we work toward what Pritchard, Morgan, and Ateljevic (2011) call a “hopeful” paradigm of tourism research that directly addresses social change and justice. Moreover, recent articulations of sustainability focus on the larger goal of racial reconciliation and justice in an effort to widen the social benefits of tourism and address long-standing racial disparities in resources and sense of civic belonging (Alderman, Benjamin, & Schneider, 2012; Barton & Leonard, 2010; Davis, 2013; Miller & Cochran, 2013).

The impact of the transatlantic African slave trade and its accompanying system of enslaved labor was felt throughout the USA historically and, indeed, recent scholarship argues that slavery was foundational to, rather than an aberration from, the American system of capitalism (Baptist, 2014). The stakes are high for engaging the history of slavery and racism nationally, but they are especially crucial in the context of the American South (or southeastern USA). The South has a unique racial past, which has been actively inscribed into its heritage tourism landscapes. This cultural difference can be attributed, in part, to the South’s racialized class system, which created a legacy still evident in how the region is viewed and how it views itself (Berlin, 1998; Cobb, 2005; Goldfield, 2002). Long dominated by “white-centric” conceptions of identity, the South has traditionally ignored, misrepresented, and trivialized African-American contributions and struggles within its iconography, cultural narratives, and touristic representations and performances (Eichstedt & Small, 2002). These exclusions have had important implications for perpetuating social inequalities within the region and shaping an African-American sense of dispossession. At the same time, some African-Americans and others from the white community have begun challenging racist landscapes of memory and heritage tourism while emplacing new anti-racist narratives that bring African-American struggles front and center within commemorative and touristic retellings of the South’s history (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). This has provided an opportunity for recovering, rather than destroying an African-American sense of place (McKittrick, 2011).

Plantations are among the most widely recognizable symbols of the South and play an important role in shaping the public’s interpretation of southern history and understanding of the nature of slavery and race relations during the antebellum period (Adams, 1999). No less than 375 plantations are open for tours within the USA, with the largest concentrations of tourist plantations (often also called plantation house museums) found in the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Georgia. Although the southern plantation was, for many African-Americans, the beginning of their ancestral connection with the region and the nation, managers of plantation museums have traditionally created and marketed a form of tourism that valorized the wealth and perspectives of the white planter class while ignoring, minimizing, or romanticizing the historical contributions and suffering of the enslaved who made that privileged way of life possible. In the frequently cited words of Eichstedt and Small (2002), plantation museums have tended to present visitors with docent-led tours, promotional materials, and preserved structures and artifacts that “symbolically annihilate” the histories and identities of the slave community and disinherit

African-Americans from their own heritage. As Giovannetti (2006, p. 5) argues, the plantation is a space of racial formation – “a defining space for racial meaning and for the racial experiences of those who lived in it and those who live its legacy in the present”.

Southern plantations are especially powerful tourist sites where the exclusion of slavery heritage is not only reproduced but also potentially contested. In fact, a growing number of plantations are incorporating slavery into their depictions of the antebellum past, although it would be unwise to characterize this as wholesale change. And even if plantation tourism operators speak more about the enslaved than in the past, this does not guarantee that the destination does not perpetuate prevailing historical myths about benevolent masters and faithful slaves (Modlin, 2008). At the same time, plantation museum management is under increasing pressure to deal more directly and authentically with the history of enslavement. This pressure comes from many sources – from the specific comments, requests, and criticisms of visitors and locals displeased with a whitewashed story to a general cultural trend toward a more sophisticated and empathetic understanding of slave life, helped along as much by mass media (e.g. *Twelve years a slave*) as by academic scholarship. There is also now greater social activism in pulling back the cover of “moonlight and magnolias” representations of plantation life to reveal the role of racism, white supremacy, and slavery in driving the Old South and the Civil War. While many of these calls have come to a head in the wake of the Emanuel Nine shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, they were actually around for many years.

Focus of special issue

While the ongoing inclusion of the enslaved within plantation heritage tourism is more promising now than just a decade ago, this process is not universally embraced and can be open to multiple, dissonant constructions and public interpretations – thus demonstrating how slavery and race are, in the words of historians Oliver and Lois Horton (2006), the “tough stuff” of American memory. Despite the complex and contested place of slavery within public memory, plantation museum experiences remain relatively underanalyzed by heritage tourism scholars and social scientists in general, notwithstanding recently published work in *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (Best & Phulgence, 2013; Buzinde, 2010). This special journal issue responds to the need for scholarship that can ferret out the nuances, complexities, and conflicts of memory production and consumption at these museums. The issue’s editors and contributing authors address a central question: what factors, social actors, and interactions (social and spatial in nature) shape, facilitate, or even constrain the remembering of slavery at southern plantation museum sites, including at those plantations making seemingly significant progress in incorporating the enslaved?

Under the auspices of an interdisciplinary and multi-university initiative called RESET (Race, Ethnicity, and Social Equity in Tourism), a group of faculty and students from six universities have worked together over the past three years to study the dimensions, processes, and politics of remembering the history of slavery at four plantation museums along Louisiana’s River Road District – Oak Alley, Laura, San Francisco, and Houmas House (Figure 1). The River Road Project, which is the subject of this special issue, was carried in three installments. In October 2012 and March 2013, the River Road team conducted 716 surveys and 250 interviews with visitors to all four plantations immediately after they toured the “big house” or slave master’s residence. Both tools focused on what tourists liked and disliked about the tour, and in particular, whether they felt that slavery was emphasized enough by the docent. In June 2013, the team returned to Louisiana to conduct semi-structured interviews with docents working at each plantation, talking with them on site in between tours about their impressions of a typical guided tour, visitor types, and how they addressed the topic of slavery. At each site, at least 50% of working docents were interviewed, resulting in 28 useable interviews. Although not addressed in this special issue, during the March 2013 research, owner(s)/operator(s) at each River Road plantation were engaged in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews about personal background, daily operations at the plantation, and philosophy on representing slavery at their heritage tourism sites.

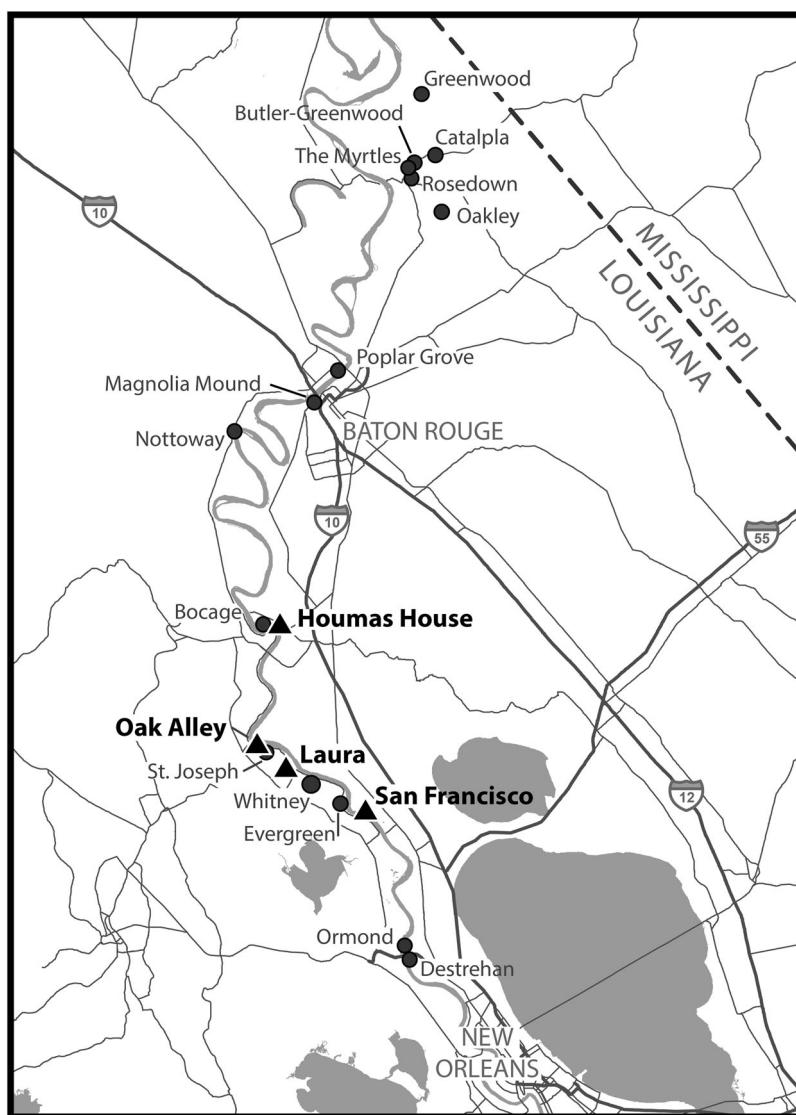


Figure 1. Tourist plantations along Louisiana's River Road. Map by Stephen P. Hanna.

Throughout all three periods of research, the River Road team conducted participant observation and content analysis of guided tours to determine the extent and nature to which each of the four plantations is engaged in the narration of the history of slavery and the manner in which their tours employ aspects of the plantation landscape itself in either remembering or forgetting the enslaved. The latter emphasis on place was especially important to us, as geographers, and the team carried out a critical analysis of the spatial narratives and landscape configurations of each plantation.

A detailed description of each River Road plantation examined can be found in Bright and Carter's article in this issue. To varying degrees, these Louisiana River Road plantations have made an effort to incorporate the memory of enslavement into guided tours, brochures, websites, and the material landscape of artifacts, exhibit spaces, and preserved/reconstructed historical structures and buildings. While these four plantation museums were our primary focus, we did investigate heritage sites on and near River Road, including non-plantations, that offered a decidedly anti-racist,

counter-narrative to the tradition of making the enslaved invisible and unheard. Cook's article in this issue takes the reader to some of these counter-narrative sites.

River Road is just one of several plantation regions in the USA under study and discussion, and the RESET team is presently conducting National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded research in two other plantation heritage-rich areas in the USA – Charleston, South Carolina and James River, Virginia. Yet, the River Road arguably attracts the largest number of plantation tourists in the USA, with two of the four plantations, Oak Alley and Laura, each exceeding 200,000 visitors per year. Moreover, there is value in examining the heritage tourism activities of one region in great depth and using the River Road as a “microcosm” for exploring themes of universal relevance to plantation museums and other heritage sites across the American South, many of which are working through the politics of doing justice to the enslaved experience. The River Road Project resulted from several years of partnership building between David Butler, one of the issue's co-editors, and the owners/managers of the River Road plantations, demonstrating the great analytical gains that can be realized through publicly engaged scholarship. David reviews, in the first person, his seminal experiences along the River Road in the next section, reminding us how one's social conscience can drive the discovery and development of a research focus.

The River Road Project: David's story

The Louisiana “River Road” runs from New Orleans in the southeast and winds its way westward to Baton Rouge and then takes turn northward to Natchez, Mississippi. This stretch of the River Road landscape was known historically for large swaths of sugar cane production with each parcel having a small footprint along the river for transporting goods and persons up and down the Mississippi. Today, the River Road landscape is dotted with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and tourism uses, each adding to the uniqueness of the region. Among the tourist attractions include a number of restored antebellum plantation homes that tell stories and serve mostly the New Orleans tourist market. Most of the plantation mansions along the riverfront, as well as most slave quarters, were lost or destroyed over time due to exposure to the elements, misuse, abandonment, river encroachment or industrial expansion. The attractions that remain, though they all fall into the same general category of antebellum tourism plantations, are diverse in terms of owners, narratives offered on tours, physical landscapes, representation of enslavement, architecture, and much more.

In 1994, I took a trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, and visited Oak Alley Plantation as hundreds of thousands of other visitors do each year. During the tour of the “big house”, I was so outraged by the narrative and both the exclusion of the enslaved and the trivialization of the idea of slavery that I started to ask pointed questions of the docent. It got to the point that I was disrupting the tour. After returning to the rental car, I was visibly angry, shaking my hands and arms and banging on the steering wheel. I was outraged that such callousness existed in the world and that people were selling and buying this unjust form of heritage tourism.

Instead of protesting the site, which was my first instinct, I channeled my outrage into a research project. A few months later while in Charleston, South Carolina, for a conference, I visited another plantation to be sure that Oak Alley was not an outlier. Sure enough, the same insipid narratives were repeated at this other plantation. While the owners' names and other details changed, the same meta-narrative existed. While in Lexington, Kentucky, I visited another plantation which also had the same slave-annihilating tropes. Three plantations in three different states worked to reproduce a version of southern history that excluded the enslaved while celebrating the white-centric *Gone with the wind* version of the antebellum period. To determine if these stories were omnipresent at other plantation tourism sites, I called 153 plantation museums and asked them to send me a copy of their brochures, resulting in the receipt of 102 pieces of marketing. My content analysis, which involved doing keyword search for references to enslavement and other themes, confirmed that antebellum history was indeed “whitewashed” in these heritage tourism destinations (Butler, 2001).

In 2002, during another visit to New Orleans, I visited the newly opened Laura Plantation. At this time, the plantation's owner/manager led tours. Compared to Oak Alley, the Laura tour had a stronger personal narrative and included some mention of slavery. At the end of the tour, I talked with both the owner and the plantation's director of marketing (who also led tours) and asked if I could come back and interview visitors to better understand what they expected and experienced at a plantation tour, including how they felt slavery should be addressed at plantation museums. Since they were looking for good marketing and visitor profile data, an agreement was struck. I involved both undergraduate and graduate students in this first round of fieldwork and, after two weeks, we had surveyed over 1000 visitors about their experiences at Laura. The results were summarized in a report given to Laura's management, who took our findings seriously and, among other changes, added more about slavery into the main tour narrative and added a second tour focused on the plantation's enslaved population.

Laura Plantation was, and remains today, a member of the Plantation Parade – an affiliation shared with Oak Alley, Houmas House, and San Francisco – which works to increase visitation to these heritage sites. At one of the Plantation Parade meetings, Laura's owner showed our research report to the other tourism plantation owners, who realized the commercial value of the data we had collected. When I approached Laura's owner for permission to do a follow-up study, all four owners were anxious to have their plantations studied and even helped to fund the research. At the same time, I began building relationships with other scholars, including the contributing authors in this volume, to research enslavement, commemoration, and tourism. These scholars and their students collaborated with me and my students in collecting the 2012–2013 data that serve as the basis for several of the papers in this issue.

The insights and data gleaned from River Road Project also served as the foundation for our successful application for funding from the NSF. The grant allowed us to return to River Road and the Plantation Parade in spring of 2015 to conduct another round of fieldwork and to explore more deeply some of the themes and results found a few years earlier. We have found River Road to be a highly instructive region and our desire through this collection of articles is to share some lessons we have learned. These lessons speak to the complicated but changing relationship that exists between southern plantation tourism and the memory of slavery. But River Road has also advanced our understanding how places of heritage tourism – more generally but especially those involving a controversial racialized past – operate and the many factors that shape what histories and identities are ultimately presented (or not) at these sites.

Lessons learned and description of articles

Our work along the River Road has taught us that the reproduction of social memory at tourist plantations involves complex interactions among visitors, tour guides, and museum management – all of whom engage with narratives, performances, and material practices within a broad landscape including, but extending well beyond, the plantation big house. Therefore, even when a museum decides to commemorate enslaved women and men by instructing guides to mention slavery more often, constructing an exhibit, or adding interpretative signage, the result cannot be assessed without a theoretical understanding of the roles, and relationships between, heritage tourism social actors and landscapes. Furthermore, we have come to realize that the traditional plantation museum is not the only site where the South's pasts are (re)worked through such interactions. In River Road and other plantation regions, activist memory workers offer counter-narrative sites which foreground the experiences of the slave community.

Such theory must be built through exhaustive methods of data collection and analysis. Earlier works brought much needed attention to the absence or partial incorporation of the enslaved, basing their analyses on participant observation of guided tours (Eichtedt & Small, 2002), the textual analysis of promotional materials (Butler, 2001), or interviews and surveys with only one set of actors (Carter, Butler, & Alderman, 2014). When used in isolation, however, none of these approaches

can address the complex social and spatial processes that emerge as museum management, visitors, and docents interact with each other and with the always present landscape of historic preservation and interpretation. It is only by identifying the processes and politics that shape these interactions can we begin to identify places for making an intervention in the uneven and incomplete narration of the history of slavery. The papers of this special issue share a common desire not only in analyzing plantation museums but also in understanding and challenging social injustice at these sites.

Therefore, the River Road plantation research team built a methodology prioritizing data collection from all actors involved in reproducing and altering the meaning of these heritage landscapes. The papers featured in this issue represent our first efforts to understand how different actors at plantation museums and counter-narrative sites work to reproduce or redefine the social memory of African enslavement.

Because the contributions of visitors to the creation of meanings within these commemorative landscapes have received the least attention in the literature, the research team has prioritized surveying and interviewing visitors at these sites. Two articles in this issue present analyses of survey and interview data collected in 2013. In “Memory, slavery, and the demographics of plantation tourism museum visitors”, Candace Bright and Perry Carter use over 400 tourist responses to exit surveys taken at Oak Alley, Laura, Houmas House, and San Francisco plantations to investigate relationships between visitor demographics and their levels of interest in various topics, including slavery, covered on the tours of the plantation. Acknowledging that the reproduction of memory at these heritage tourism sites is, in part, a negotiation involving tourists, Bright and Carter address not only who visit tourist plantations, but also how their interests drive their decisions to visit one of the four plantations included in their study. The results of their cluster analysis suggest that most visitors have some interest in the enslaved and that visitor demographic profiles and interests help explain destination choice.

Alderman and Modlin’s focus on the importance of the tourist voice in plantation tourism and thus offer a valuable qualitative complement to the more quantitative work of Bright and Carter. In “On the political utterances of plantation tourists: Vocalizing the memory of slavery on River Road”, they focus on visitors’ verbal contributions to how social memories are animated at Laura, Oak Alley, Houmas House, and San Francisco. More specifically, Alderman and Modlin use exit interviews with tourists and conversations with docents about visitor questions and comments to explore how visitors’ political utterances can help us understand both the different ways the public remembers and articulates the history of slavery and the capacity of visitors to influence the narrative arc of guided tours to create more complete and just social memory practices.

In “Where are the enslaved?: *TripAdvisor* and the narrative landscapes of southern plantation museums”, Perry Carter also focuses on the roles of plantation visitors. By analyzing comments tourists posted on *TripAdvisor* after visiting Oak Alley and Laura Plantations, however, Carter draws our attention to how visitors both consume and contribute to the narratives practiced and brought to life in these landscapes. Visitors, according to Carter, bring narrativized understandings of plantations with them and negotiate with the narratives presented to them while at the museum. Their comments on *TripAdvisor* provide a window into the nature and extent the enslaved are, or are not, featured in these narratives. In addition, the presence of visitors on a social media site both affects visitor engagement and can drive plantation management to change their narratives. Therefore, visitors have an important impact on the reproduction of social memories, at these sites.

TripAdvisor comments and visitor responses to our own surveys and interviews strongly suggest that plantation museum docents or guides play a major role in their affective and intellectual engagements with the narratives offered on plantation tours. As Amy Potter notes in “‘She goes into character as the lady of the house’: Tour guides, performance and the southern plantation”, the unpredictable and ephemeral performances of tour guides as they lead visitors through the spaces of a plantation add a great deal of complexity to any understanding of how these commemorative sites work or of how the enslaved are woven into museum narratives and landscapes. Working through the theoretical lens of performativity, Potter details how guides shape each tour as they

adjust to visitor demographics and demeanors and argues that researchers should work with guides along with management to more fully incorporate the enslaved into the experiences created within plantation museums.

Docent and visitor interactions occur within a plantation landscape in which narratives and emotions are attached to furnishings, architectural features, gardens, slave cabins, and other features. As Stephen Hanna notes, this makes plantation museum narratives inherently spatial. In “Placing the enslaved at Oak Alley Plantation: Narrative, spatial context, and the limits to surrogation”, he argues that the locations where (or where not) enslaved women and men are made present in these commemorative landscape matter. Famous for its alley of live oaks, hoop-skirted docents, and romanticized nostalgia for the antebellum South of the Lost Cause, since 2012, this museum has made significant investments in incorporating the enslaved into its landscape and narratives. Yet, the site’s “Slavery at Oak Alley” exhibit effectively isolates the plantation’s enslaved community from the celebration of the enslavers’ lives in the “big house” as well as from regional, national, and global histories of slavery, thus limiting the exhibits’ effectiveness as a commemorative surrogate.

The enslaved are not only marginalized spatially at plantation museums. As Matthew Cook notes in “Counter narratives in the Deep South: Glimpses of empathy in the memory of slavery”, a small body of literature focuses on how artifacts and stories are used to encourage visitors to empathize with white owners while making it difficult for visitors to identify with or connect emotionally to the enslaved (Cook & Alderman, 2015; Modlin, Alderman, & Gentry, 2011). Cook examines the role of empathy in his study of three sites in Mississippi and Louisiana that offer counter-narratives to traditional plantation museums by foregrounding the experiences and lives of enslaved women and men. He, however, takes the position that such sites, and the activist-scholars who both study and work with them, should move beyond empathy. Cook notes that tourist empathy with the enslaved, even if possible, does not replace the need for these counter-narrative sites to have explicitly stated goals such as encouraging visitors to understand the importance of solidarity with the oppressed in the present.

The growing literature on slavery and heritage tourism, and in particular slavery and tourist plantation museums, has, for the most part, been limited to researchers studying a single tourist site, a single heritage tourism actor, or utilizing a single research method. As we argue, however, understanding the ways heritage tourism sites, actors, and practices reproduce – but also have the potential to resist – dominant racial identities, histories, and inequalities requires critical investigation of the roles and interactions of visitors, docents, management, and landscape at multiple sites. During our years along the River Road, we have gradually built an approach involving multiple methods and conceptual frameworks that we hope will allow us to successfully interpret and intervene in racialization processes at tourist plantations. We also realize that no single journal article, including the ones comprising this issue, can address all these aspects of plantation tourism. Therefore, we encourage readers to engage with the work of all of this issue’s authors to glimpse the complex interactions and practices of different heritage tourism actors as they interpret, narrate, and negotiate meaning within the plantation landscape.

Notes on contributors

Derek H. Alderman is professor and Head of the Department of Geography at the University of Tennessee. His specialties include social justice, public memory, heritage tourism, and the African-American experience, from slavery to the post-Civil Rights era. He is the founder and co-coordinator of the RESET (Race, Ethnicity, and Social Equity in Tourism) Initiative.

David L. Butler is a professor in the Department of Political Science, International Development and International Affairs at The University of Southern Mississippi. He is an economic and cultural geographer whose interests include heritage, methods of social memory research, and responsible tourism development.

Stephen P. Hanna is a professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Mary Washington. His teaching and research interests include critical cartography and GIS and the interactions of race and memory in the production of tourism destinations, with particular emphasis on the mapping and interpretation of spatial narratives at historical sites.

References

- Adams, J. (1999). Local color: The southern plantation in popular culture. *Cultural Critiques*, 42, 163–187.
- Alderman, D. H. (2010). Surrogation and the politics of remembering slavery in Savannah, Georgia (USA). *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36(1), 90–101.
- Alderman, D. H. (2013). Introduction to the special issue: African Americans and tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(3), 375–379.
- Alderman, D. H., Benjamin, S. K., & Schneider, P. P. (2012). Transforming Mount Airy into Mayberry: Film-induced tourism as place-making. *Southeastern Geographer*, 52(2), 212–239.
- Baptist, E. (2014). *The half has never been told: Slavery and the making of American capitalism*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Barton, A. W., & Leonard, S. J. (2010). Incorporating social justice in tourism planning: Racial reconciliation and sustainable community development in the Deep South. *Community Development*, 41(3), 298–322.
- Beech, J. G. (2001). The marketing of slavery heritage in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 2(3/4), 85–106.
- Berlin, I. (1998). *Many thousands gone: The first two centuries of slavery in North America*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press.
- Best, M. N., & Phulgence, W. F. (2013). Interpretation of contested heritage at an attraction in St. Lucia. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(1), 21–35.
- Butler, D. L. (2001). Whitewashing plantations: The commodification and social creation of a slave-free Antebellum South. *International Journal of Hospitality*, 2(3/4), 159–171.
- Buzinde, C. (2013). Speaking for the enslaved: Heritage interpretation at antebellum plantation sites. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 11(3), 225–229.
- Buzinde, C. N. (2010). Discursive constructions of the plantation past within a travel guidebook. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 5(3), 219–235.
- Buzinde, C. N., & Santos, C. A. (2009). Interpreting slavery tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3), 439–458.
- Carter, P., Butler, D. L., & Alderman, D. H. (2014). The house that story built: The place of slavery in plantation museum narratives. *The Professional Geographer*, 66(4), 547–557.
- Casbeard, R. (2010). Slavery heritage in Bristol: History, memory and forgetting. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 13(1–2), 143–166.
- Catalani, A., & Ackroyd, T. (2013). Inheriting slavery: Making sense of a difficult heritage. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(4), 337–346.
- Cobb, J. C. (2005). *Away down South: A history of southern identity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, M., & Alderman, D. H. (2015). Public memory and empathy in Gunter Demnig's Stolpersteine Project. In N. Rupprecht & W. Koenig (Eds.), *Global perspectives on the holocaust: History, identity and legacy* (pp. 321–348). Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Dann, G. M., & Seaton, A. V. (2001). Slavery, contested heritage and thanatourism. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 2(3/4), 1–29.
- Davis, P. (2013). Memoryscapes in transition: Black history museums, New South narratives, and urban regeneration. *Southern Communication Journal*, 78(2), 107–127.
- Dwyer, O., Butler, D., & Carter, P. (2013). Commemorative surrogation and the American South's changing heritage landscape. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(3), 424–443.
- Dwyer, O. J., & Alderman, D. H. (2008). *Civil rights memorials and the geography of memory*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Eichstedt, J., & Small, S. (2002). *Representations of slavery: Race and ideology in southern plantation museums*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Giovannetti, J. L. (2006). Grounds of race: Slavery, racism and the plantation in the Caribbean. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 1(1), 5–36.
- Goldfield, D. (2002). *Still fighting the Civil War: The American South and southern history*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Hanna, S. P., Potter, A. E., Modlin, E. A., Carter, P., & Butler, D. L. (Eds.). (2015). *Social memory and heritage tourism methodologies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Horton, J. O., & Horton, L. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Slavery and public history: The tough stuff of American memory*. New York, NY: New Press.

- Inwood, J. F. (2010). Sweet Auburn: Constructing Atlanta's Auburn Avenue as a heritage tourist destination. *Urban Geography*, 31(5), 573–594.
- Lee, K. J., & Scott, D. (2015). *Racial discrimination and African Americans' travel behavior: The utility of habitus and vignette technique*. Tourism Travel and Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally. Paper 11. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/ttra2015/Qualitative_Research_Methods/11
- Litvin, S. W., & Brewer, J. D. (2008). Charleston, South Carolina tourism and the presentation of urban slavery in an historic southern city. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 9(1), 71–84.
- McKittrick, K. (2011). On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(8), 947–963.
- Mensah, I. (2015). The roots tourism experience of diaspora Africans: A focus on the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 10(3), 213–232.
- Miller, M. M., & Cochran, D. M., Jr. (2013). Telling the story of African-Americans in Hattiesburg, Mississippi: A case study of socially sustainable tourism? *Southeastern Geographer*, 53(4), 428–454.
- Modlin, E. A., Jr. (2008). Tales told on the tour: Mythic representations of slavery by docents at North Carolina plantation museums. *Southeastern Geographer*, 48(3), 265–287.
- Modlin, E. A., Alderman, D. H., & Gentry, G. W. (2011). Tour guides as creators of empathy: The role of affective inequality in marginalizing the enslaved at plantation house museums. *Tourist Studies*, 11(1), 3–19.
- Poirot, K., & Watson, S. E. (2015). Memories of freedom and white resilience: Place, tourism, and urban slavery. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 45(2), 91–116.
- Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Ateljevic, I. (2011). Hopeful tourism: A new transformative perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), 941–963.
- Small, S. (2013). Still back of the big house: Slave cabins and slavery in southern heritage tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(3), 405–423.
- Teye, V. B., & Timothy, D. J. (2004). The varied colors of slave heritage in West Africa: White American stakeholders. *Space and Culture*, 7(2), 145–155.
- Thomas, L. L. (2014). *Desire and disaster in New Orleans: Tourism, race, and historical memory*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Yankholmes, A., & McKercher, B. (2015a). Rethinking slavery heritage tourism. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 10(3), 233–247.
- Yankholmes, A., & McKercher, B. (2015b). Understanding visitors to slavery heritage sites in Ghana. *Tourism Management*, 51, 22–32.
- Zakos, K. P. (2015). Truth is marching on: The Lasershow Spectacular at the Stone Mountain Park Confederate Memorial and the changing narratives of history. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 10(3), 280–295.