

# Mapping Narratives within Southern Plantation Museums



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# Southern Plantation Museums and Narratives of Enslavement



Plantation museums traditionally say little about enslaved in marketing, exhibits and guided tours of “Big House”

Eichstedt and Small (2002) studied 122 plantations

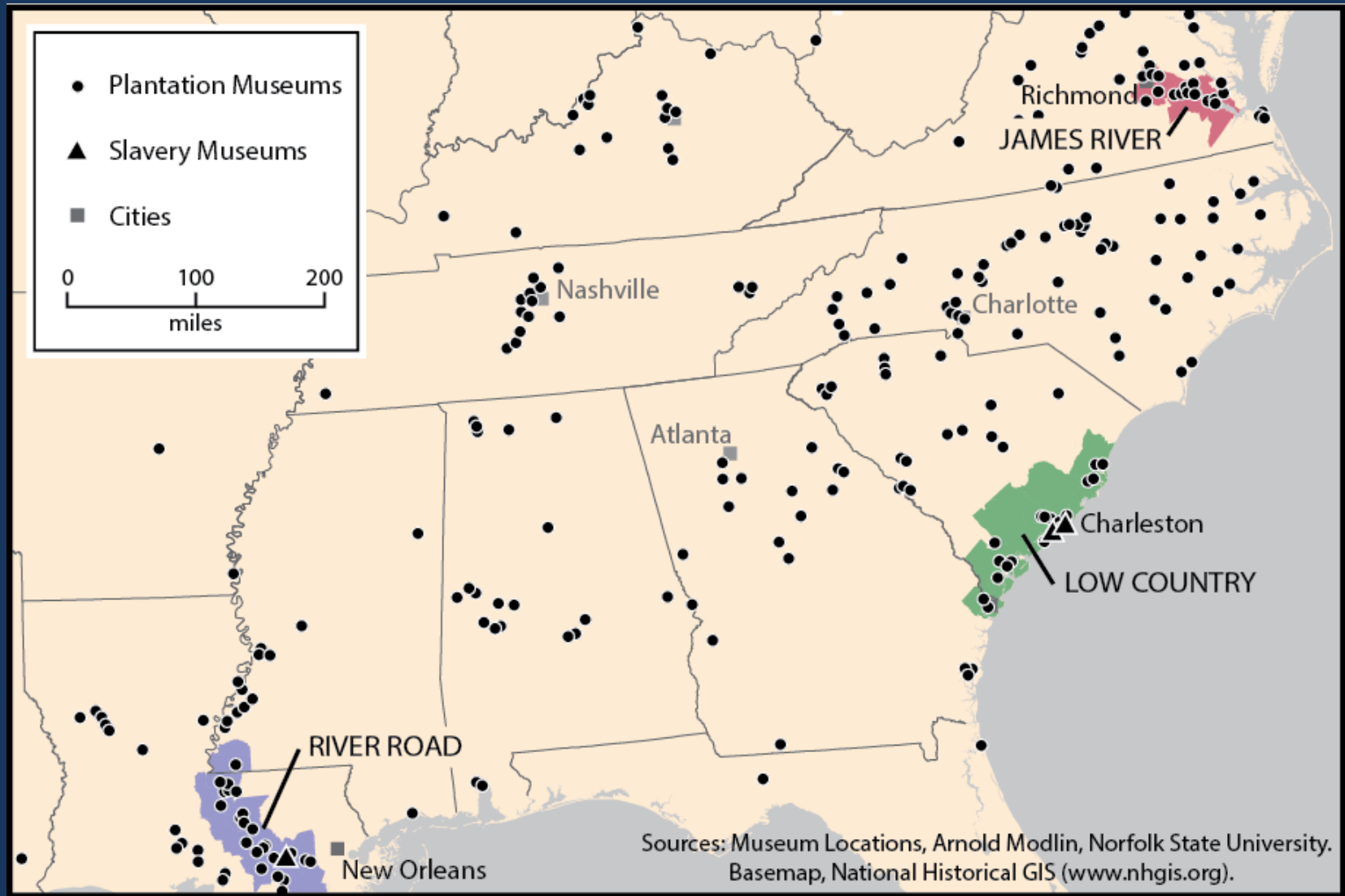
- Symbolic Annihilation (56%)
- Trivialization/Deflection (27%)
- Segregation (4%)
- Relative Incorporation (3%)
- “In-between” (10%)



# Tourism RESET: Race, Ethnicity, and Social Equity in Tourism

- Research Team: Derek Alderman (UT), David Butler (MTSU), Candace Bright (ETSU), Perry Carter (TTU), Stephen Hanna (UMW), Arnold Modlin (NSU) and Amy Potter (GSU).
- Research Assistants: Included 8 Mary Washington Geography undergraduate students: Meredith Stone (2015), Ian Spangler (2016), Xavier Griffin (2016), Phil Devine (2016), Christine MacKrell (2017), Sarah Rogers (2017), Maiah Bartlett (2017), Meredith Gregory (2018)
- Funding: National Science Foundation: Grant #1359780

# Study Regions



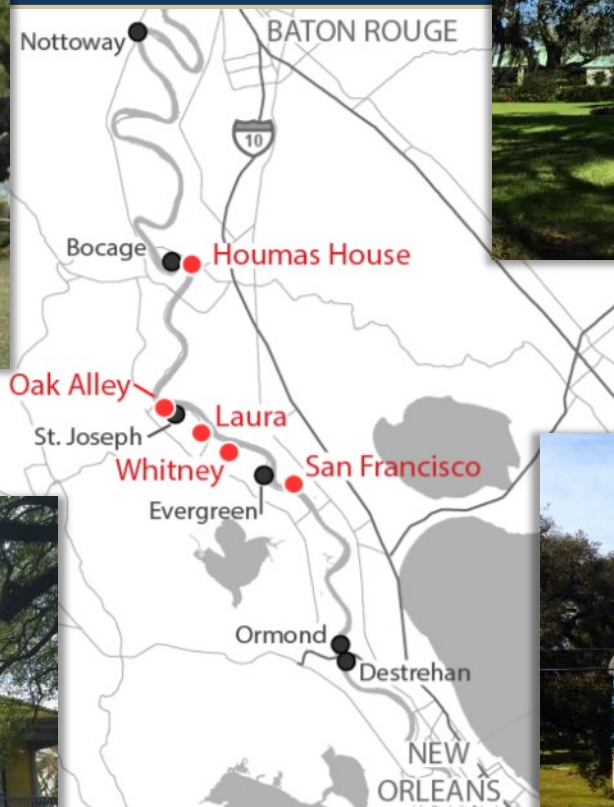


# River Road Sites

Oak Alley



Houmas House



Laura Plantation



San Francisco



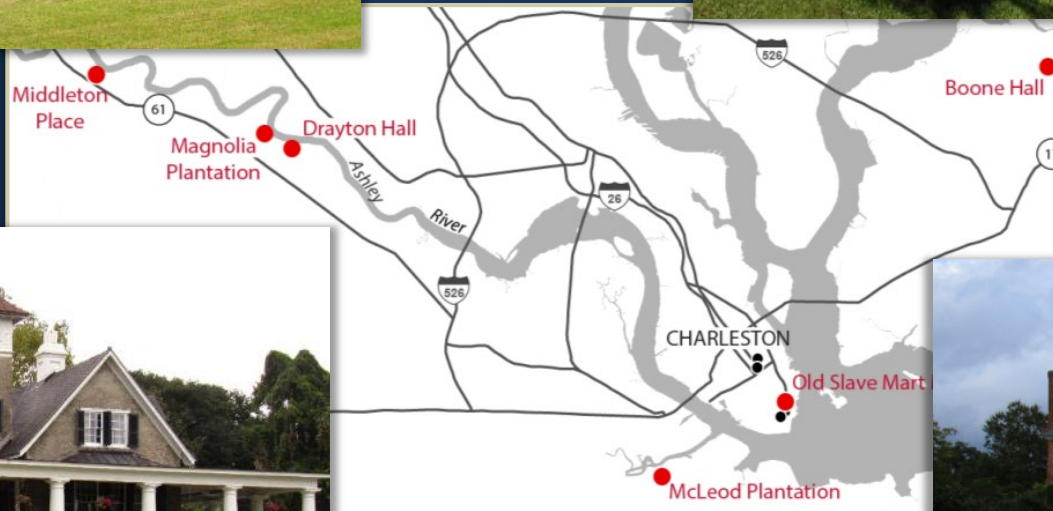
Fieldwork conducted in March 2015

# Charleston Sites

## Middleton Plantation



## Drayton Hall



## Boone Hall



## Magnolia Plantation



Fieldwork conducted in February and April 2016

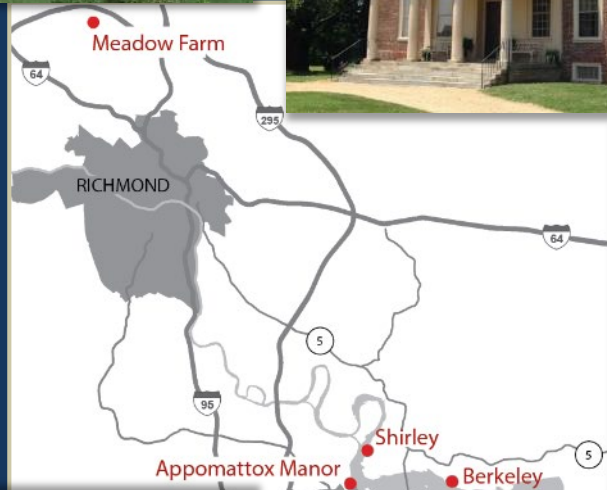


# James River Sites

Shirley Plantation



Meadow Farm

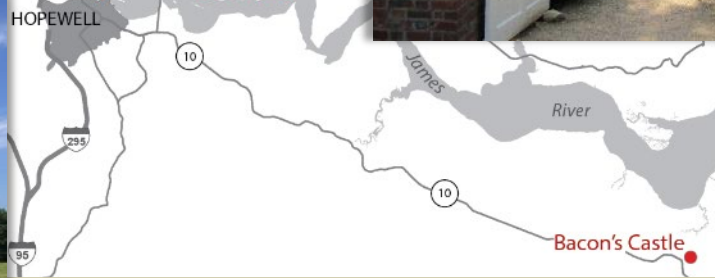


Appomattox Manor



Berkeley Plantation

Bacon's Castle



Fieldwork conducted in July and October 2016

# Counter-narrative Sites



Whitney Plantation, Louisiana



McLeod Plantation, South Carolina



Magnolia Plantation



Fieldwork conducted in 2015 and 2016



# The Plantation Museum Experience

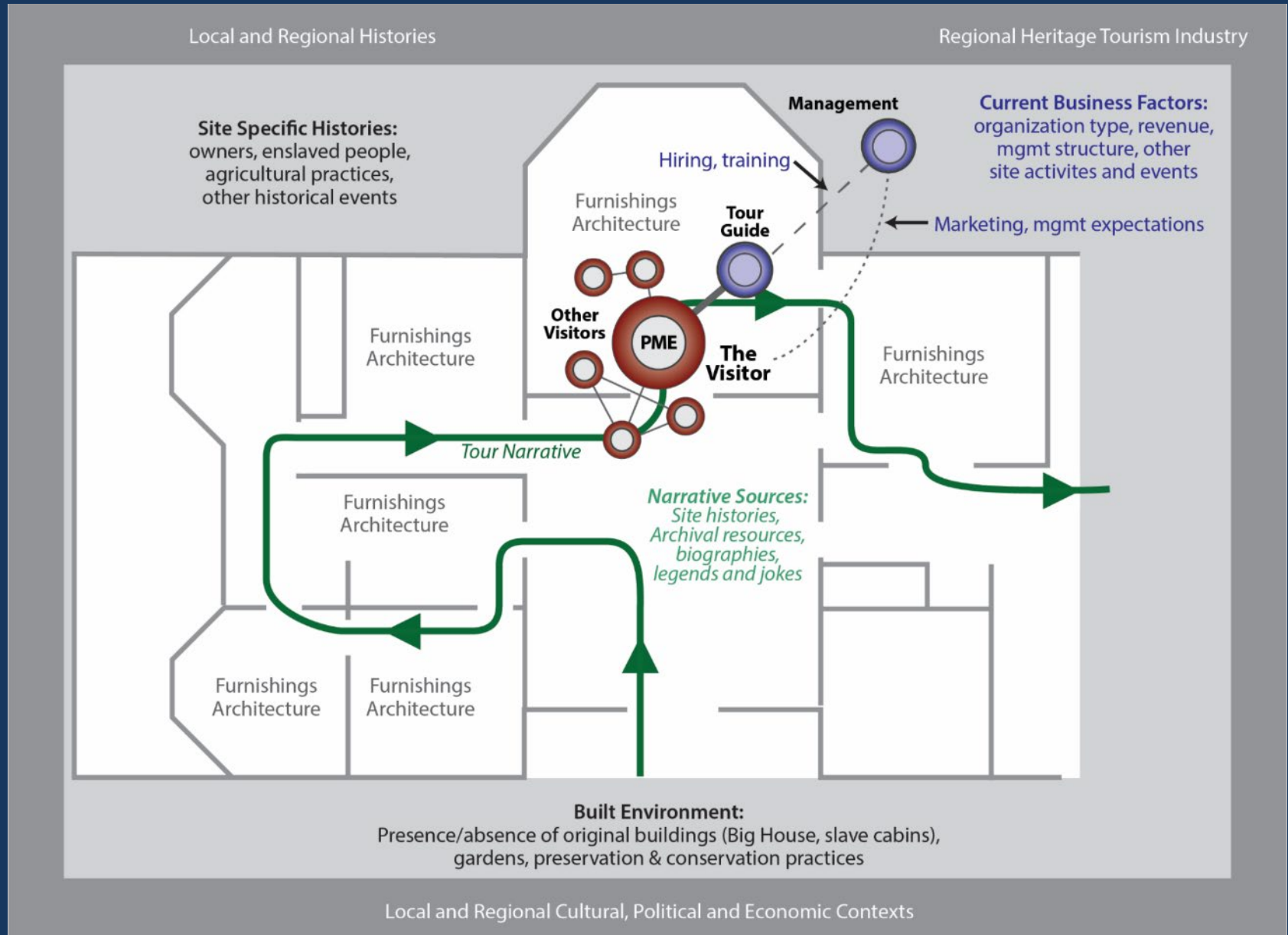


# The Plantation Museum Experience





# The Plantation Museum Experience



QUESTIONS?



# Capturing how Narratives of Enslavement are placed within the Plantation Museum Experience involved:

- Interviewed visitors
  - Pre-tour (243)
  - Post-tour (361)
- Surveyed visitors
  - Pre-tour (849)
  - Post-tour (936)
- Interviewed owners/management (36)
- Interviewing tour guides (109)
- Narrative mapping (documented 170 tours)



# Narrative Mapping House Tours



- “Big House” tours tend to be centerpiece of plantation museum experience
- Tour route and basic themes determined by management
- Each tour is unique however because:
  - Different guides
  - Guides are human
  - Visitors change tours
    - Ask questions or not
    - React emotionally
    - Presence of children
    - . . . .



## Note Taking Guide for Narrative Mapping

Plantation: Boone Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Note Taker: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Tour: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of visitors on Tour: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Tour: \_\_\_\_\_

### Tour Guide Information:

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of these topics were discussed on the tour? Include all topics for which the guide provided at least a few details (circle all that apply)

Role of Women	Original Owners	Slaves/ Enslaved/ Slave
Grounds/ Gardens/ Landscape	Family History/ Local History	Culture/ Politics/ Public Opinion
Furnishings	Civil War	Crops/ Agriculture/economy
Current Owners	Architecture	Other: _____
Colonial/Revolutionary	Southern History	
Other: _____		

2. Of the topics listed above, which received the most attention?

a. Most: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Second most: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Third most: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Tally the number of times that slavery was mentioned on the tour: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How was slavery discussed on the tour (please include where slavery was discussed, were slaves referred to as servants, describe whether details about slaves beyond basic facts were mentioned) ?

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5. What questions did tourists ask?

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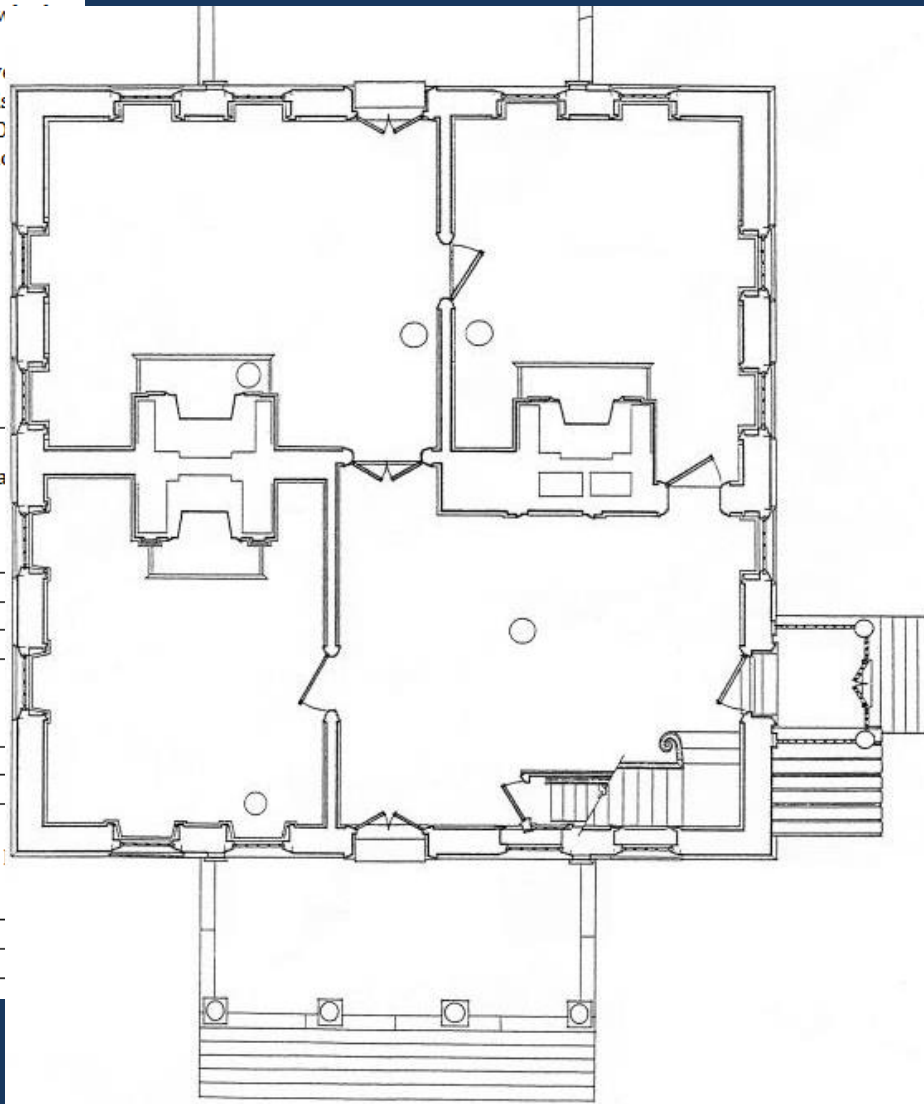
6. Did the tour guide go in character? How was s/he dressed? Did tourists follow along? How evocative was it? Elaborate.

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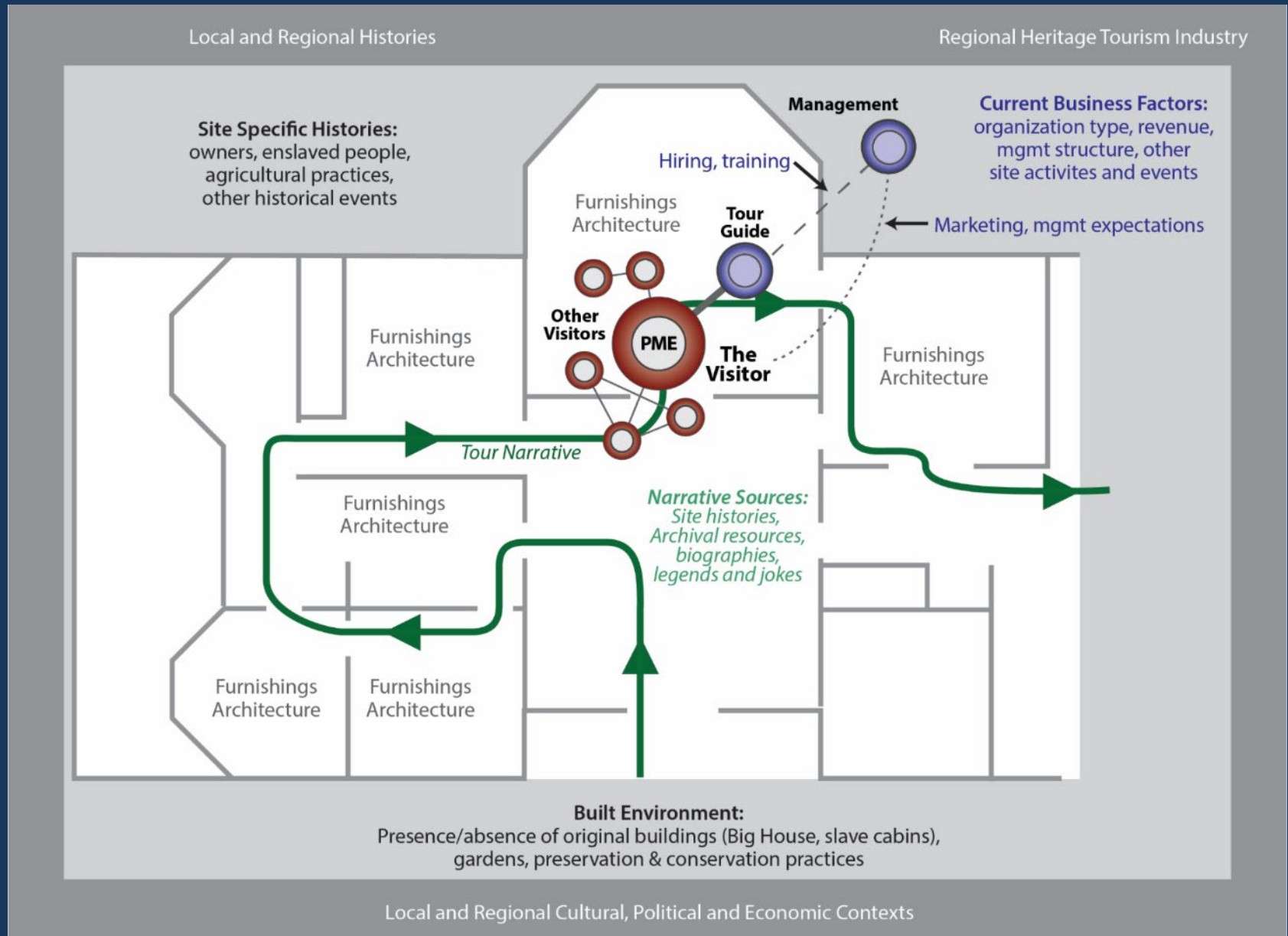
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# Narrative Mapping Instrument



# Narrative Mapping





# Narrative Mapping

Method designed to:

- reveal tendencies and variations in content related to enslavement for any one museum including
  - Prevalence and consistency of enslavement as a topic;
  - Where enslavement tends to be discussed on a tour;
  - How enslavement tends to be discussed on a tour;
- summarize narrative mapping results for all sites as well as by region
- classify plantation museums by the spatial strategies used to incorporate or marginalize the enslaved in their tours

# Mapping Shirley Plantation's Tour Narratives

Primary Tour Topics: Owner's family history, furniture

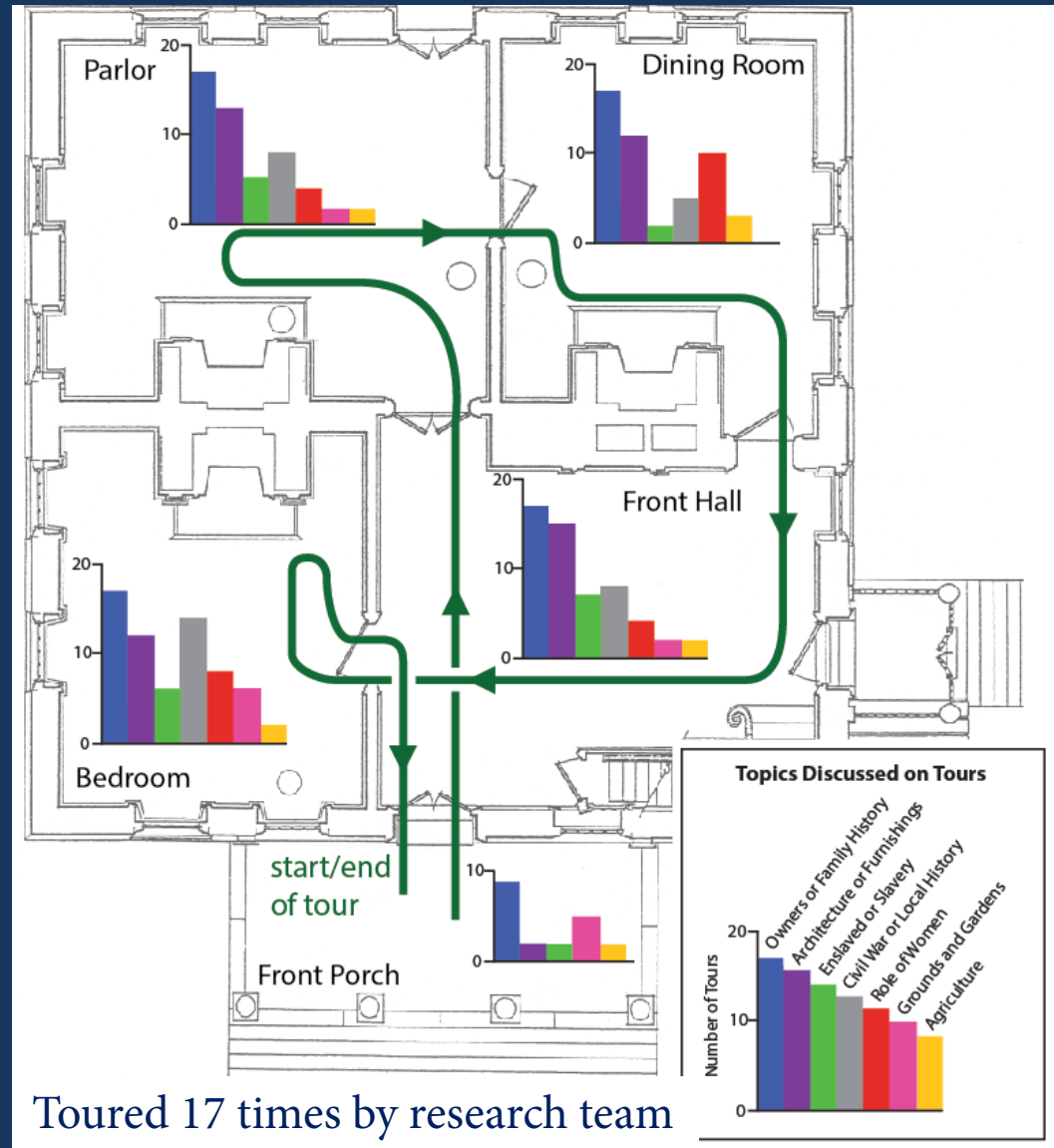
Where Primary Topics Discussed:  
every room on (almost) every tour

Presence of Slavery/Enslaved:  
mentioned <4 times per tour. Not discussed on 50% of tours

Where is Slavery Discussed:  
front hall & bedroom. Associated with owner's wealth and Civil War

How is Slavery Discussed:  
as labor, no names or biographies, sometimes referred to as servants

Variance Among Tours:  
very little



# Roles of Guides, Visitors, and Material Culture in Reproducing Shirley's Past

- Guides: not in character or costume but professionally dressed. Some display emotion when talking about 11 generations of the Carter family who have lived at Shirley. Use of humor to keep visitors entertained
- Visitors (93% white, avg. age 58, 59% female): ask questions about family history, whether furniture is original, where furniture was made, who is in portraits, what famous visitors. A handful asked questions about economics, slavery, architecture. On some tours, slavery only mentioned because of visitor questions
- Material Culture: use family portraits to introduce generations in Front Hall, various artifacts, architectural features, and original furnishings to tell family stories. These lend authenticity to tour narrative





QUESTIONS?

# Narrative Mapping Results: Overall and by Region

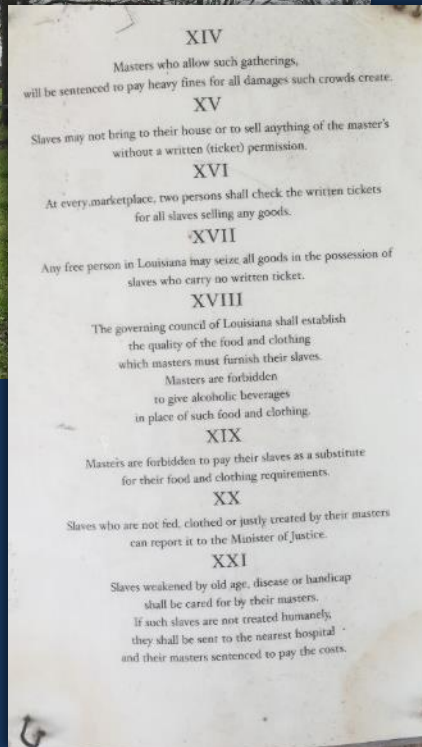
Percent of main tours on which topics were discussed								
Topics Discussed	River Road		Charleston		James River		All Sites and Regions	
	Discussed on:	top 3 topic on:	Discussed on:	top 3 topic on:	Discussed on:	top 3 topic on:	Discussed on:	top 3 topic on:
Owner's life and Family History	85%	49%	95%	78%	92%	65%	90%	64%
Furnishings	82%	41%	68%	51%	89%	53%	81%	52%
Enslaved people and Slavery	95%	53%	85%	15%	85%	6%	80%	21%

# River Road: Laura and Whitney had most tours featuring significant information about enslavement

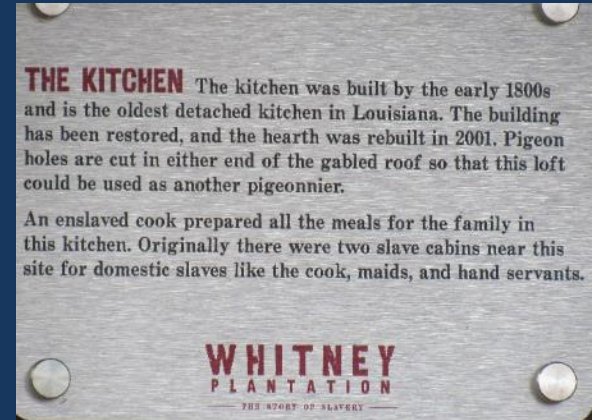
## Laura Creole Plantation



Louisiana's  
Code Noir



## Whitney Plantation



Visitors  
entering  
Kitchen  
building





# Charleston: Separate slavery-themed tours or programs

Middleton Place “Beyond the Fields”



Magnolia Plantation:  
“Slavery to Freedom”



Boone Hall

# James River: Resource Issues



Appomattox Manor  
Laundry Building



Meadow Farm Kitchen

Bacon's Castle slave dwelling

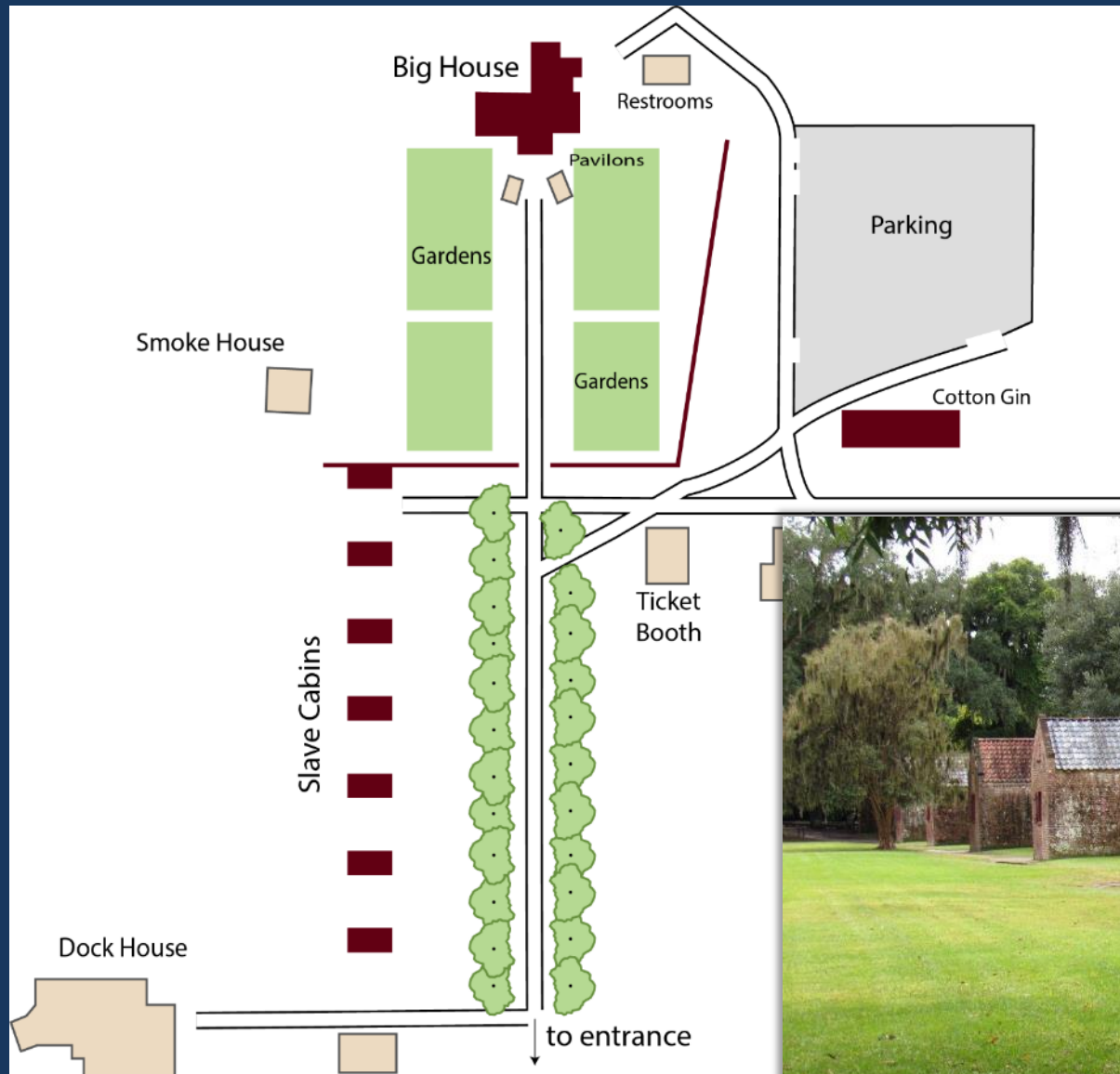


# Spatial Strategies for Incorporating the Enslaved (not mutually exclusive)

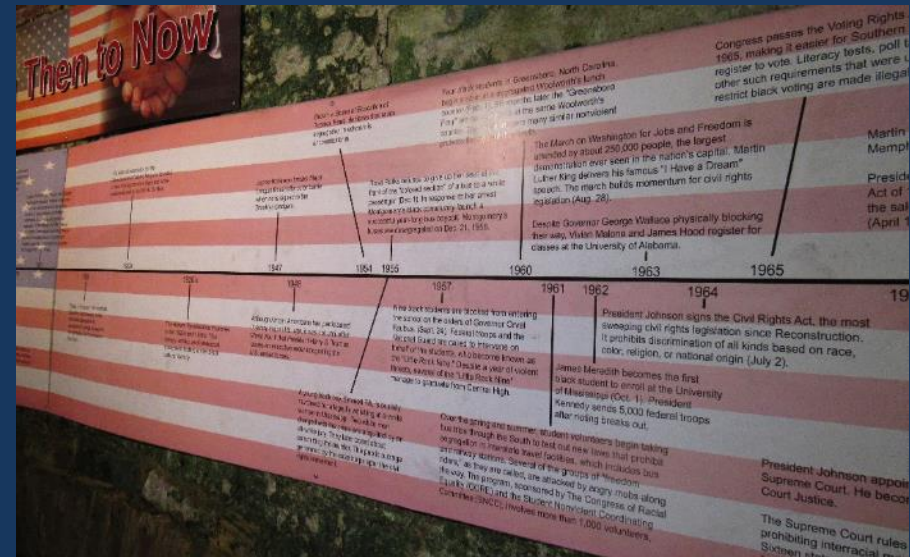
- Separate slavery exhibits:
  - James River: Berkeley and Shirley
  - Charleston: Boone Hall
  - River Road: San Francisco and Oak Alley
- Separate slavery-themed tour/presentation
  - Charleston: Magnolia, Middleton, and Drayton
- Segregation within main tour
  - River Road: Laura Plantation
- Inconsistent Incorporation
  - James River: Appomattox Manor, Bacon's Castle, Meadow Farm
  - River Road: Houmas House
- Making enslaved central
  - Charleston: McLeod Plantation
  - River Road: Whitney Plantation



# Separate Slavery Exhibits: Boone Hall

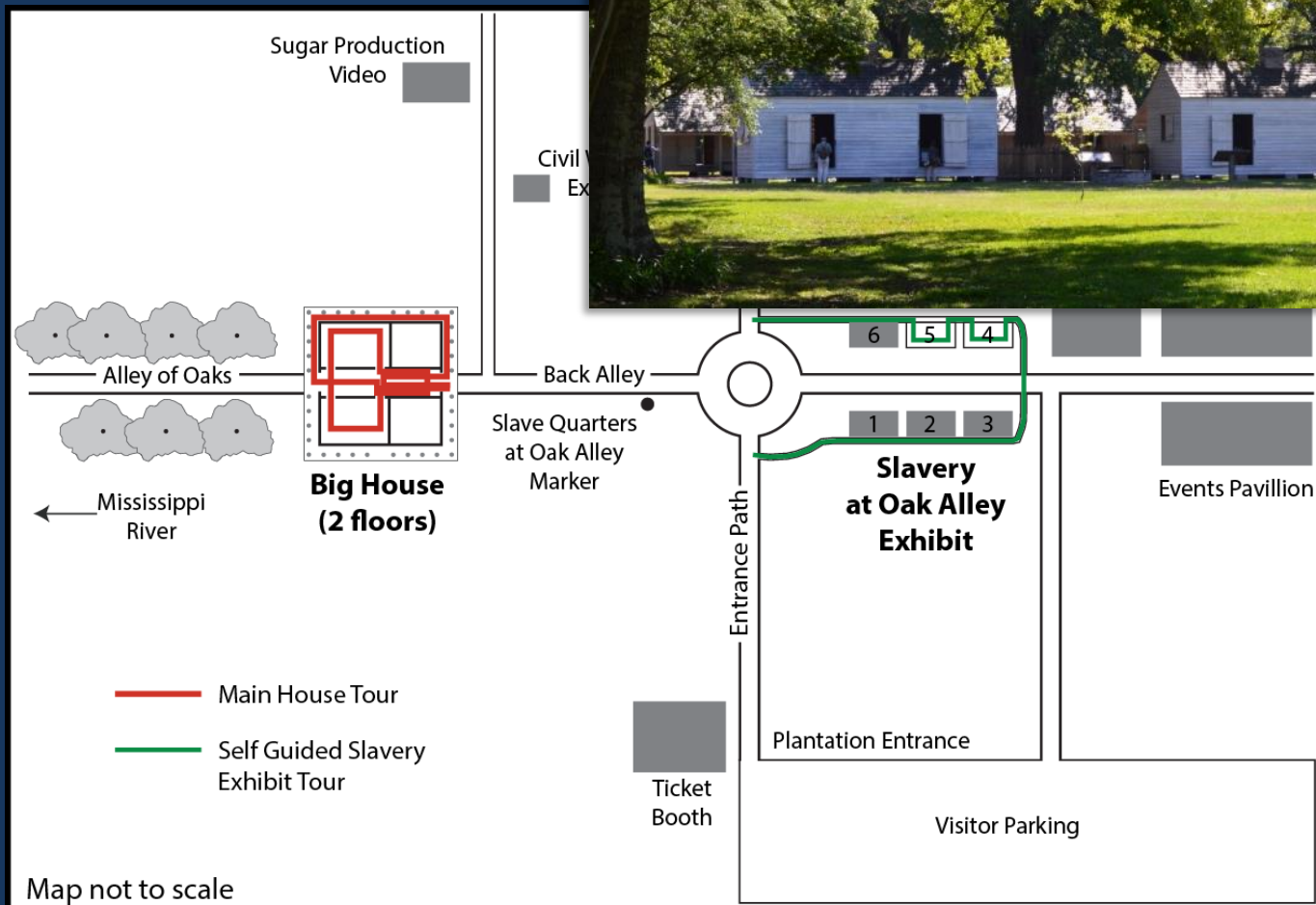


# Separate Slavery Exhibits: Boone Hall





# Separate Slavery Exhibits: Oak Alley





# Separate Slavery Exhibits: Oak Alley



Thomas	Billy Lorimer	Charlotte	Pallas
Onufre	Henriette	Justine	Do
Alfred	Thomas	Rosetta	Eugene
Maurice	Serville	Susan	Paris
Andre	Trosine	Benoit	Jenny
Rose	Soulougue	Prince	Mars
Moses	Mercury	Francoise	Nancy
Felonise	Adele	Albert	Paul
Michel	Benedict	Ida	Louis
Julia	Felicite	Codjo	Martin
Toni	Marie Angelina	Louise	Jules
Ursule	Grand Joseph	Tom	Adam
Elise	Roselia	Raymond Ox	Bazile
Flore	Euphrosine	Theotis	Gognon
Sarah	Desiree	Charley	Anne
Marie	Jean	Michel	Helene
Warner	Rosine	Honorine	Sally
Hiram	Thomassin	Fine	Daniel
	Mandrin	Roselia	Jack

# Separate Slavery Exhibits

## Berkeley Plantation



## Shirley Plantation





# Separate Slavery Tours



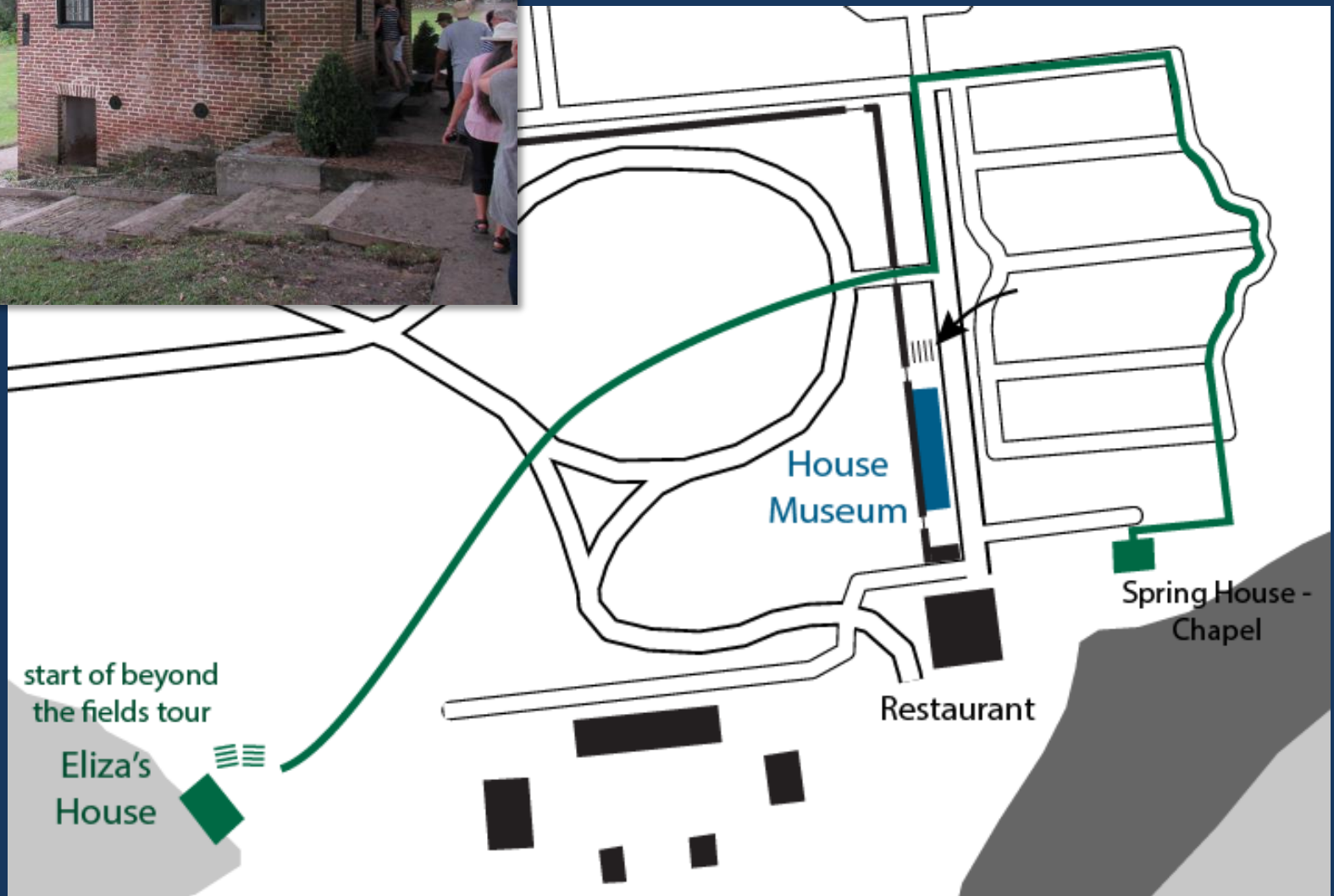
Magnolia Plantation:  
“From Slavery to Freedom”



Middleton Place: “Beyond the Fields”

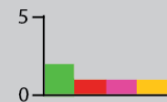


# Middleton Place: “Beyond the Fields” Tour

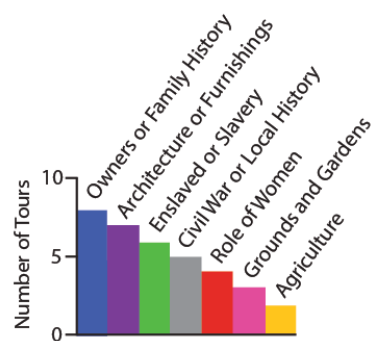


# Mapping Magnolia's Tour Narratives: Slavery to Freedom Tour

Tram from Cabins



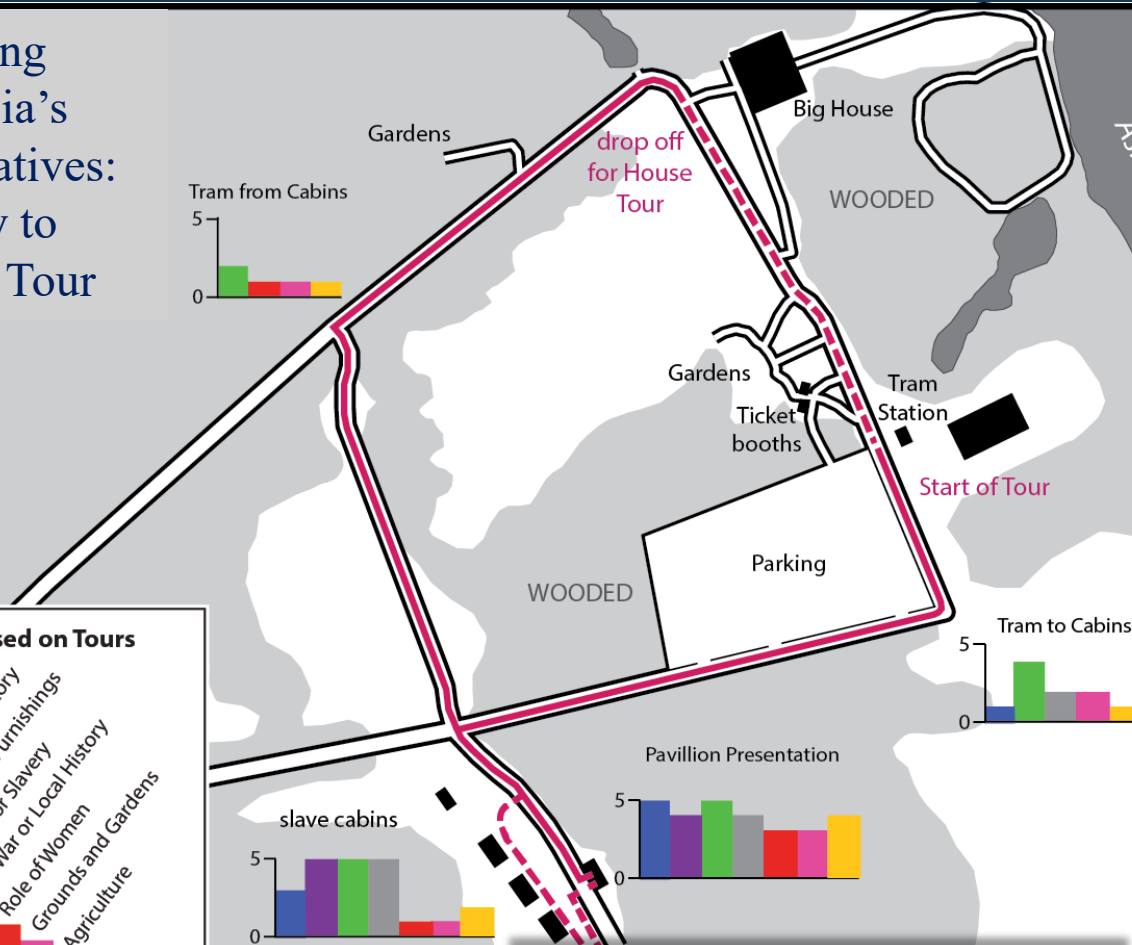
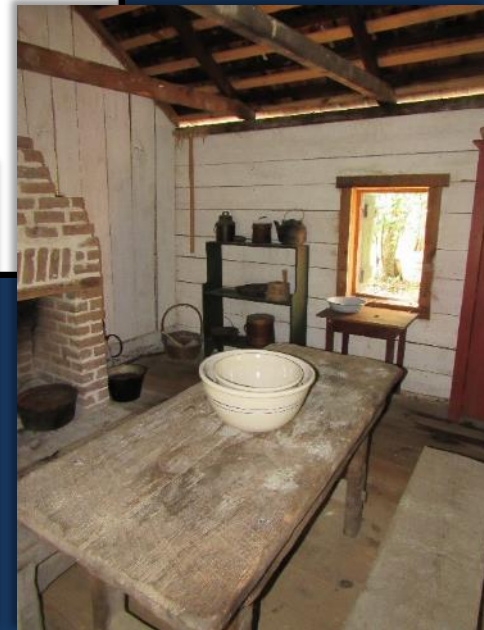
Topics Discussed on Tours



slave cabins



Pavillion Presentation



# Mapping Magnolia's "Slavery to Freedom" Tour Narratives

Primary Tour Topics: Slavery, agriculture, gardens

Where Primary Topics Discussed: Throughout tour but mainly in presentation pavilion and cabins

Presence of Slavery/Enslaved: Slavery mentioned 36 times per tour; marked as 1st most discussed topic on 5/7 tours

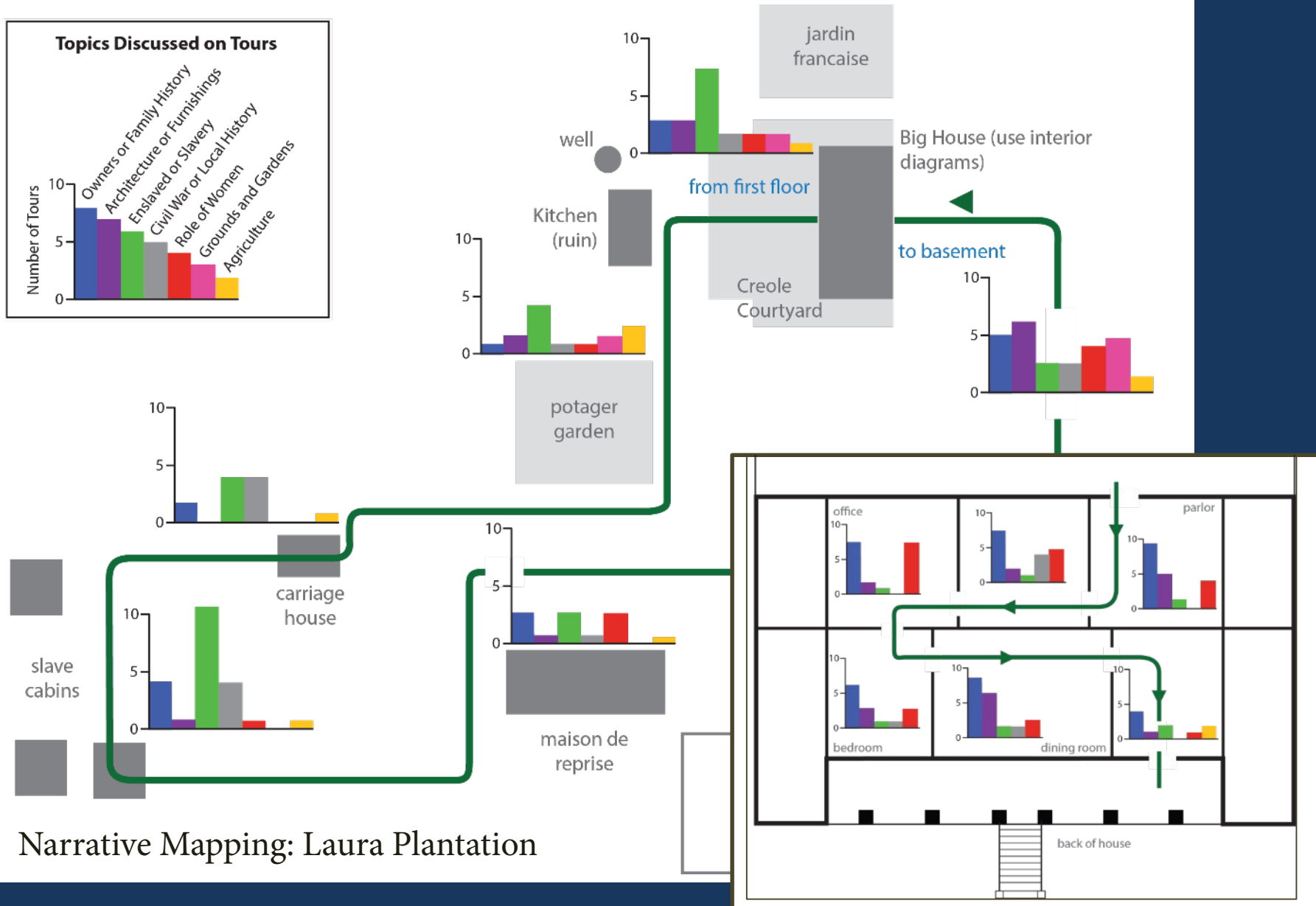
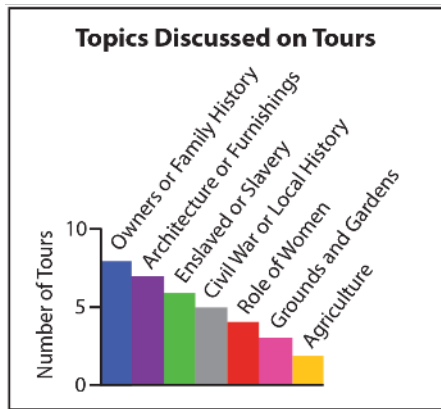
Where is Slavery Discussed: Throughout tour but mainly in presentation pavilion and cabins

How is Slavery Discussed: Agricultural labor, connection to Middle Passage, some attempts to get visitors to identify with enslaved. But also presence of loyal slave/kind master myth

Variance Among Tours: Not much but surprisingly slavery was not main topic on 2 of 7 tours.



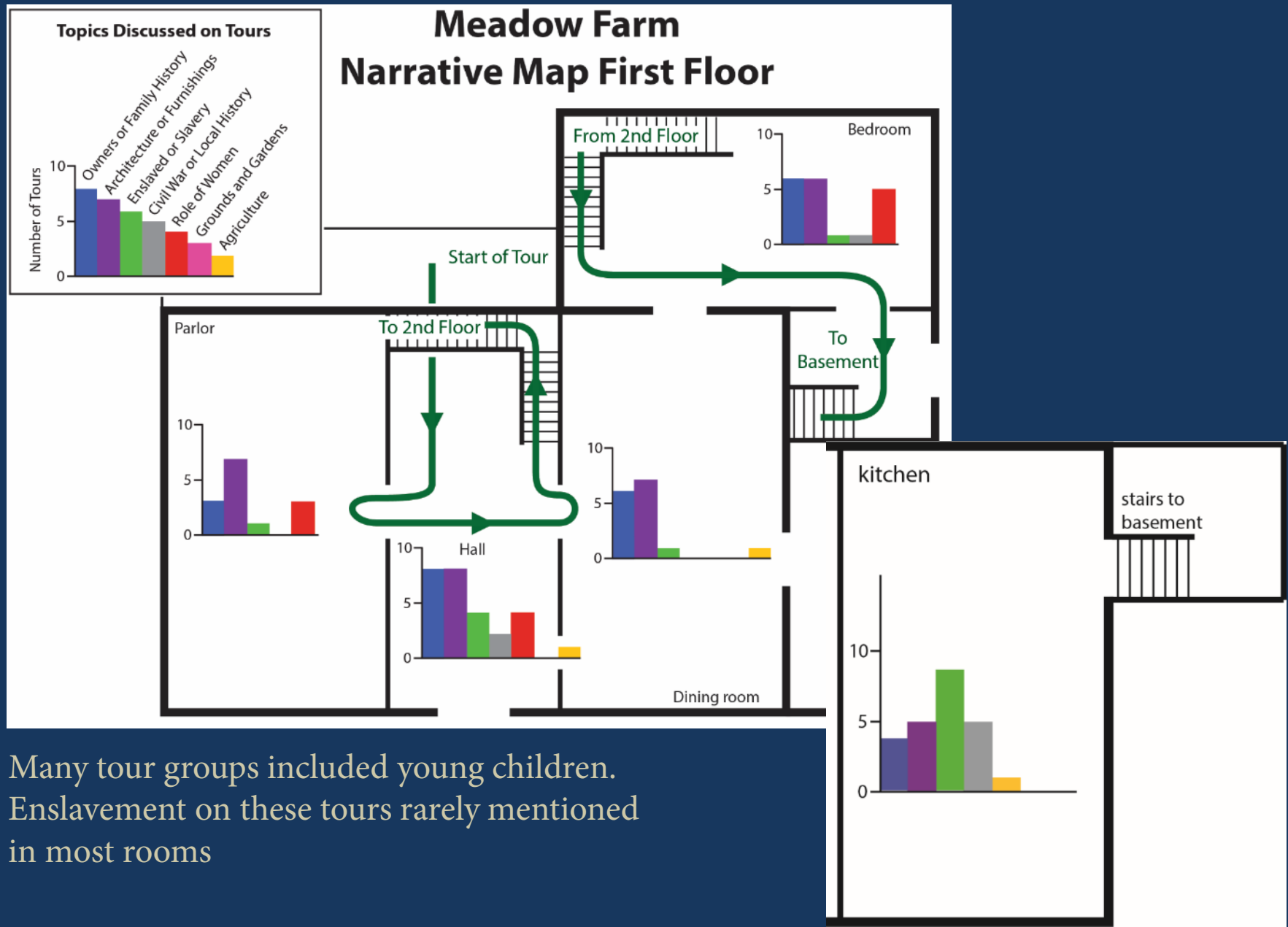
# Segregation with Tour: Laura Plantation



# Segregation with Tour: Laura Plantation



# Inconsistent Incorporation: Meadow Farm



Many tour groups included young children.  
Enslavement on these tours rarely mentioned  
in most rooms



# Making the Enslaved Central: McLeod Plantation

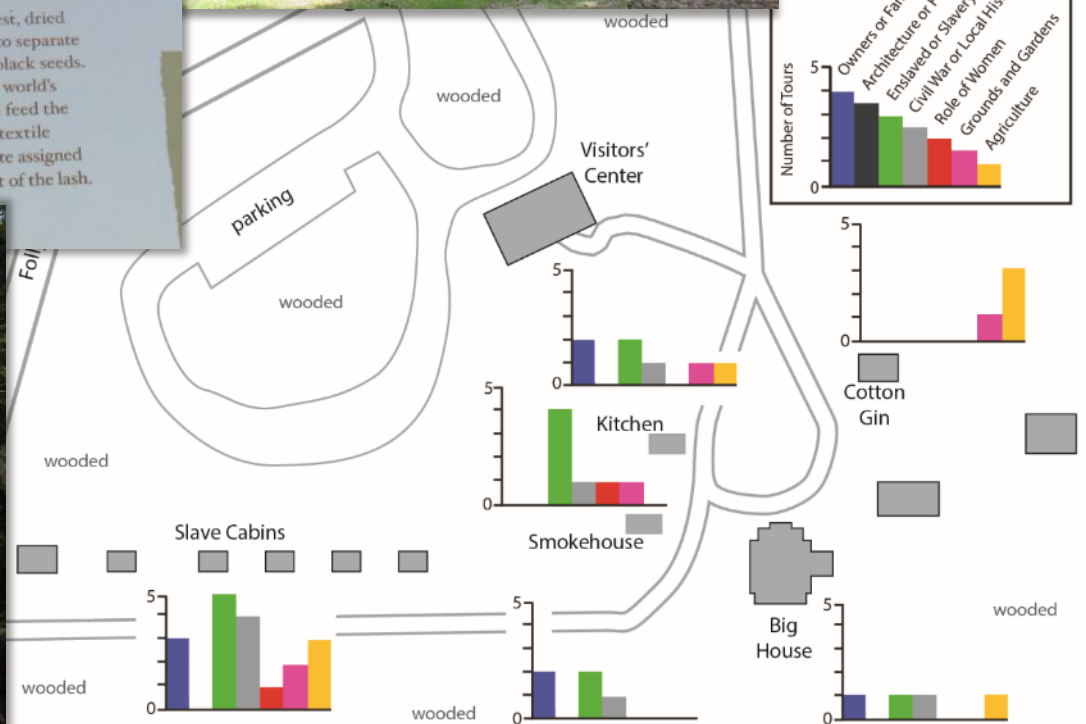


**10 A SEA ISLAND COTTON PLANTATION**

**THE TASK SYSTEM**  
Unique to the Lowcountry, this labor system assigned specific allocations of work, whether planting or ginning cotton. Once completed, time often remained to pursue personal interests. Following emancipation this system persisted in the form of "two-day" contracts requiring freed people to work two days for plantation owners, leaving five days for themselves.

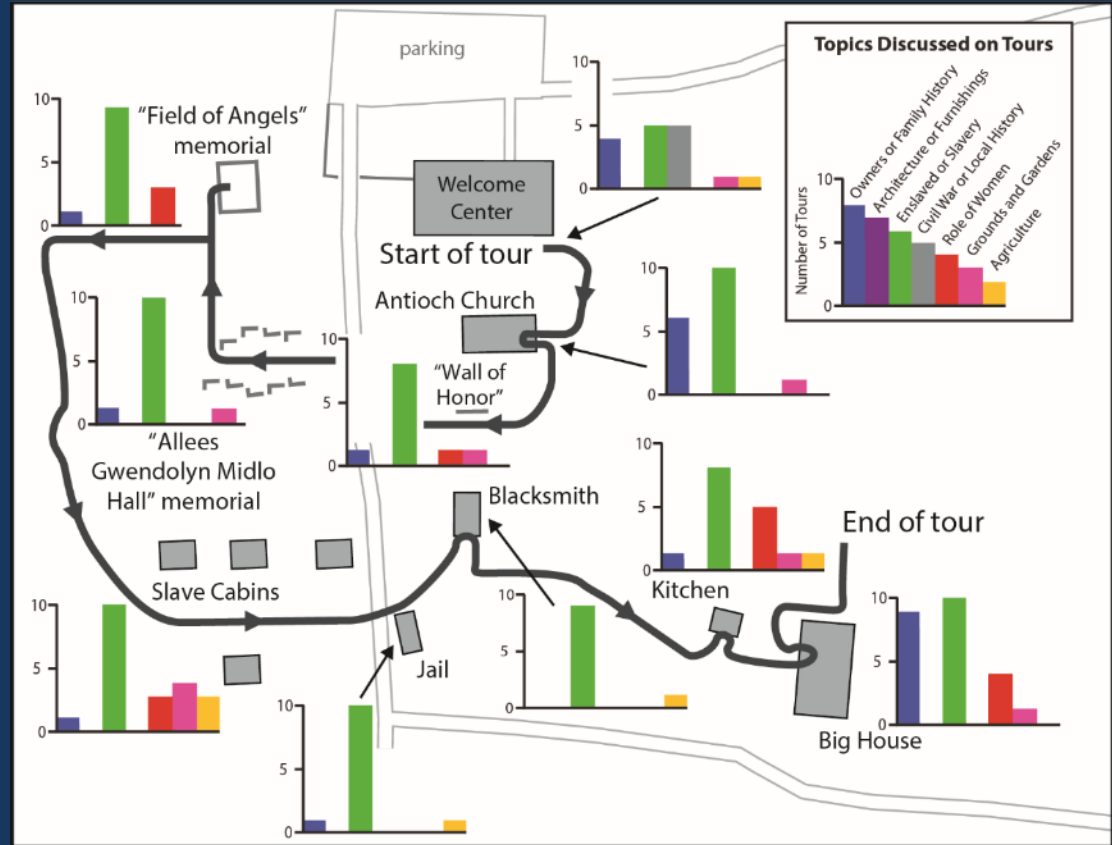
Imagine McLeod Plantation at its peak in 1860. It is a cold January morning and preparation for planting in March has begun. Low-burning fires stretch across the fields, fueled by last season's shriveled stalks.

In this gin house last fall's harvest, dried and cleaned, is fed into the gin to separate long delicate fibers from small black seeds. Towering bags stuffed with the world's finest cotton await shipment to feed the insatiable demand of Britain's textile industry. People slave to complete assigned backbreaking tasks under threat of the lash.



Note: There is no single tour routes as different guides followed different routes through the site

# Making the Enslaved Central: Whitney Plantation





# Acknowledgements

- Plantation Museum Owners, Managers, and Staff in River Road, Charleston, and James River
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- UT Office of Research
- Our Research Assistants:

