

THE GULF COAST HERITAGE PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE

Overview. This planning and pilot study will assess the feasibility of a community-based, interdisciplinary model for protecting endangered places and heritage in surviving historic Black settlements founded 1865-1930 known as freedom colonies. The team will develop the materials, approach, and lead model testing among freedom colony descendants in the Brazos Valley region. The project team will complete four objectives over two years to advance a 4-part, replicable model:

1. *Culturally Competent Preparedness Guidance.* Create guidebooks, self-assessment checklists, and “kits” that teach community members to protect archival materials that tell family and community histories from disasters.
2. *Project-based Learning & Cross-Training.* Create and test culturally responsive train the trainer workshops in the Brazos Valley, which teach community members, students, and scholars about the relationship between disaster and heritage preparedness through physical and digital archival preservation instruction.
3. *Targeted Documentation of Historic African American Settlements.* Expand the reach, depth, and impact of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project Atlas and Study by inviting new audiences to learn about creating community-based archives and adding to its database of place histories, making it a robust public humanities tool and resource
4. *Equity-Based Modeling.* Build a spatial hot spot analysis protocol that will guide model testing, replication, and site selection to facilitate proactive preservation of material culture associated with the most endangered, disappearing Black settlements in the Gulf Coast region of the U.S.

The team’s goal is to create a community heritage preparedness assessment protocol and process which includes public guidance, hotspot analysis, and workshop curriculum delivered through an engaged, participatory, public humanities approach. The deployment of this pilot study will determine if making existing guidance and assessments more participatory and including archival education within current engagement with freedom colonies will increase these communities’ capacity to prevent loss of culture and valuables before disaster strikes. Once tested and implementation is funded, the model will be propagated through the **Gulf Coast Heritage Preparedness Initiative (GCHPI)** which will leverage cross-disciplinary training and technology to enable field documentation, collection, and education throughout the State and region. A primary objective is to create sustainable, holistic approaches to community-based preparedness as the frequency and intensity of disasters increase and disproportionately impact communities of color.

The Center of Digital Humanities Research (CoDHR) has supported the formation of the project PI’s core grant writing team--the African American Digital Humanities Working Group (AADH)--through seed funding. The AADH team has convened over the past three years to compose proposals which have helped fund an existing component of the 4-part model--The Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas and Study, a digital platform and research study. Internally, team members have been awarded a T3 (2019-2020); Glasscock Buttrill Ethics Grant (2021); Presidential Transformational Teaching Grant (2021-2023). The PI has previously proposed two related X-Grants, one of which advanced to the final round (2018). External funding awards have included: National Trust for Historic Preservation (2019-present); Dumbarton Oaks (2021-); Whiting Foundation (2020-). Funding proposals to the National Endowment for the Humanities--American Rescue Grant--and the National Science Foundation--in collaboration with the Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center--are currently under review. If this X-Grant is funded, the team can apply for significant external funding from diverse government and private foundation sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Houston Endowment, Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Getty, Kresge, Ford, and Mellon Foundations. Further, the X-Grant will fund student education and faculty focus on developing the interdisciplinary research infrastructure (relationships, pedagogy, and research instruments) that will ensure successful implementation. Additionally, this project informs the launch of the Institute for Culture, Memory, and Place and work with associated engaged research centers on campus.

Background. Severe weather events are growing in frequency and diversity of risks, as the recent ice storm and accompanying structural water damage associated with Winter Storm Uri vividly attest. These events disproportionately impact low-income, rural, Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) residents in the Gulf Coast Region. BIPOC residents’ property and personal effects are especially vulnerable due to challenges to their recovery. Residents often lose their homes, leaving behind essential documents, photos, and artifacts associated with their family histories. Perpetuating a devastating cycle, such events hit rural communities with low populations and little government infrastructure hard because they are often left out of public history, disaster adaptation, and mitigation planning, and recovery funding allocations. Heritage conservation of structures and material culture, when made legible to planners and preservationists, can help community stakeholders articulate community and site-specific historical significance, risk, and needs to state agencies. African-American freedom colonies in Texas were initially “individually unified only by church and school and residents’ collective belief that a community existed” (Sitton &

Conrad, 2005). Many freedom colonies disappeared from public record and memory. These settlements' populations, historic buildings, and visibility declined after World War II; a lack of estate planning in the context of heirs' property made their landowners vulnerable to land loss. Sprawl, climate change, and gentrification have also destroyed these once isolated, secure communities. Further, most former slaves settled in the only areas available to them-- bottomland in low-lying areas, often in the path of hurricanes (Sitton & Conrad, 2005). After Hurricane Harvey, 229 of these settlements were in 53 counties FEMA-designated disaster areas. These counties contain 8.9 million Texans. More recently, Winter Storm Uri total estimated losses exceed those of Hurricane Harvey (2017, \$125 billion). In 2021, some economic analysts have estimated that Winter Storm Uri could end up costing \$200-300 billion, which includes lost income and business' economic output as production ceased during the storm.

Freedom colonies' aging population, declining physical properties, and lack of access to archival development services and digitization increase the likelihood that Black place heritage will be lost forever. Located in under-resourced areas in the Eastern half of the state, often in rural, unincorporated areas with little planning infrastructure, freedom colonies' descendant communities are especially vulnerable because they are often uninsured. When disasters strike, they lose their homes and artifacts associated with their family and settlement histories. Freedom colonies are absent from public history as well as disaster planning. Preservation of community heritage fosters the visibility integral to accessing planning processes and public services after disasters and fosters social cohesion and resilience required to successfully prepare and recover. Few in these communities have access to heritage preparedness planning support that would enable them to secure fragile materials valued by individuals and families and which, in some cases, prove their communities ever existed.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

African Americans' poor access and invisibility is perpetuated by existing divides between the sectors and disciplines that could solve address their vulnerabilities to disaster. In emergency management, disaster and climate change planning, preparedness is an encompassing term that describes an individual and community's ability to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies. While popular accounts of disasters often conceptualize them as singular events (e.g., Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Harvey), in the Gulf Coast disaster preparedness means coping with, and learning from, an interrelated series of past present and future crises and extreme events. As an emergent research area, heritage preparedness--activities and guidance that equips groups with knowledge on how to prevent material destruction in natural or human-made disasters and displacement--is largely under the auspices of architecture and large-scale identification and mapping of physical historical properties. Similarly, the fields of library preservation and archives are typically framed around their own heritage values, as institutional programs that house what architects and planners call intangible heritage, with community archives representing a distinctive shift in this paradigm. African American historic places remain undocumented or forgotten due to the disconnect between institutional preservationists', archivists, and individuals from these communities. Consequently, architects and planners access institutional archives missing the memories, stories, and visual culture that could support arguments for preservation of buildings and sites are neglected due to their declining physical condition. As a result, less two percent of all sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places represent African American heritage. Freedom colonies exemplify this phenomenon due to their environmental, socioeconomic, and historical positionality in public history and planning processes--invisible, vulnerable, and lacking access to information and spaces where they can affect change.

Successful disaster recovery and place preservation require an active and dynamic research infrastructure. Texas A&M has made significant investments in building out expertise in archives and preservation, heritage preservation, community engagement, disaster preparedness, digital humanities, and African American studies. This investment extends to robust centers and institutes represented among the GCHPI team; in addition to the Texas Freedom Colonies Project and emergent Institute for Culture, Memory, and Place, these include:

- Texas Target Communities (TTC), a service-learning program and university-wide community engagement initiative dedicated to creating sustainable communities, based out of the College of Architecture and the Office of Public Partnerships & Outreach.
- The newly revived Race and Ethnic Studies Institute (RESI) in the College of Liberal Arts, dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary partnerships and supporting research and scholarship on race and ethnicity.
- The Hazard Reduction & Recovery Center (HRRRC), in the College of Architecture, which aligns with the disaster preparedness paradigm of GCHPI through its emphasis on advancing understanding of the nature and impact of hazards through training, development, and education; and
- The Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC) in the College of Architecture, which supports research into cultural heritage, heritage conservation, and historic preservation.

GCHPI bridges across colleges and leverages the expertise of team members necessary to address a complex challenge in the region. If these bridges aren't built and institutionalized, the communities most vulnerable to disaster lose heritage after the next disaster, and receive only episodic access to badly needed resources. Part of this bridging work involves the research team creating a participatory, cross-disciplinary preservation education model that meets the unique needs of African American communities. By designing a model informed by community-engaged, interdisciplinary methodologies of inquiry and documentation, the project team's work within freedom colonies can serve as a basis for a complete change in the ways librarians, architects, and planners collaborate with one another and with African American communities regionally and nationally.

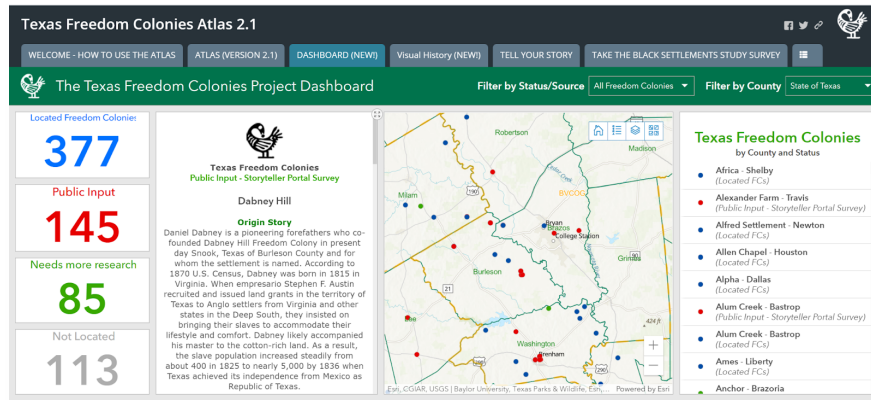


Figure 1. Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas 2.1 screen shot of Dashboard shows preview of Brazos Valley region freedom colonies added by research team and descendants. Dabney Hill origin story added to Burleson County by Gloria Smith. <http://bit.ly/txfcpatlastwo>

Though we foresee national impact, the pilot study scope encompasses activities taking place with TAMU faculty, students, and residents of freedom colonies in the Brazos Valley. This planning and pilot study is foundational to scaling up interventions and approaches. During this pilot study, substantial attention will be paid to educating Brazos Valley communities while researchers and students will learn about residents' heritage values and priorities. The overall goal is to promote heritage preparedness--a state of being equipped to simultaneously prevent material destruction in natural or human-made disasters and displacement through activities that foster social cohesion, empowerment, and sustainable preservation of cultural assets. Foundational to this planning process is ensuring strong self-assessment tools, guidance, a protocol for detecting hotspots informed by local knowledge, and a replicable train the trainer package for other individuals and groups to catalyze heritage preparedness in their own communities. The engaged approach and constant feedback will offer a productive challenge to prevailing professional and academic assumptions about what constitutes heritage, and the sociological purpose heritage serves in communities in distress.

The overall GCHPI team's work supports that of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project (TXFCP). Created and built by Dr. Andrea Roberts (PI) on an ArcGIS portal, the TXFCP Atlas (<http://bit.ly/txfcpatlastwo>) is currently the state repository of historical Black settlement data. The TXFCP Project researchers (the PI and students) used Texas Historical Commission historical marker content, National Register of Historic Places Listings, USGS maps, and Census data to create the core database. The Atlas integrates ethnographic, spatial, and archival data crowdsourced from the public to fill remaining gaps and make visible African American places, schools, churches, cemeteries, and histories in the public record. The publicly accessible map and data clearinghouse for descendants has documented 377 of 557 known freedom colonies (Figure 1). The Department of Transportation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Council of Texas Archeologists use the Atlas to conduct background studies, desktop surveys, and constraints analysis or identify Black historic resources. The Atlas is also the first statewide effort to attempt integrating freedom colonies and their descendants into contemporary planning processes by making previously unrecorded place knowledge available to practitioners and served as a model for similar projects around the United States. The University of Virginia, Florida State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Getty Institute, and the Freedmen's Town Conservancy in Houston have referenced the methodologies and approaches informing the TXFCP Atlas when developing similar digital humanities models. The Atlas has shaped professional training as evidenced by requests for Atlas presentations before the American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, National Park Service, and Urban Land Institute. Media outlets that have featured the TXFCP include the *Houston Chronicle*, KUT - Austin's NPR affiliate, *The New York Times*, *The Texas Observer*, and NextCity.org. The TXFCP has partnered with cultural institutions including the Bullock State Museum of Texas, the African American Library at the Gregory School, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City to elevate the visibility of freedom colonies.

X-Grant funding is vital to expanding The TXFC Project's impact. Resources will support an extended research team that can link the Atlas platform and content more directly to community-based solutions and faculty that address threats to freedom colony existence. To date, participatory heritage data collection among African American Texans has not been leveraged to systematically address residents' capacity to assess threats to their own existence or catalyze community recovery from disaster though there is some indication of a correlation between heritage data and capacity to recover. As Horney et al. argue, "Restoration of important cultural and heritage sites is critical to repairing social networks and community identity. Developing a database of these sites and resources, including their condition, before a disaster will contribute to repairs being made in a timely manner, post-disaster" (2018). If funded, the TXFC Project and AADH teams will leverage interdisciplinary relationships with research centers (TTC, HRRC, RESI, and CHC), faculty in Libraries, Architecture, and Liberal Arts, and community volunteers to shift from mere collection to a focus on capacity building, documenting heritage conditions, and preventing destruction of endangered heritage. Further, exploration of improved mobile field collection tools, Sketchfab, virtual reality photography applications, and other digital humanities tools can expand the reach and efficacy of place documentation and consequently public access to a more inclusive public history of Texas and the U.S.

The TXFC Project plans to return post-COVID-19 to its core mission: locating unmapped communities through story collection and safeguarding data scattered across private collections and elderly residents' memories. In Spring 2019, The TXFC Project created a new grassroots research network of descendants from around the state (Figures 2 and 3). However, the social distancing required by the pandemic slowed access to communities and archives. Consequently, uploading archival material that substantiates place existence has slowed among those not adept at connecting to our virtual programming. The Atlas currently facilitates virtual heritage conservation and raises awareness of their vulnerabilities through its Adopt a County (AAC) program. The TXFC Project's AAC program teaches volunteers to locate the missing settlement data and archival material in county-based teams. X-Grant funding will support face-to-face workshops offering instruction on intervention methods for the preservation of community heritage in areas with poor access to adequate internet service. Workshops will also provide archival resources such as acid-free and lignin-free storage boxes and folders that are constructed to protect documents and photographs, polyethylene and polyester envelopes and enclosures to prevent moisture, dirt, and dust from destroying family artifacts.



Figure 2 and 3. Volunteers, (descendants from freedom colonies, and TAMU students) assess Atlas, recommend improvements, and document challenges to freedom colony preservation during focus groups w/PLAN 622. (Downtown Bryan, COA - Communications, 2019).

These workshops will simultaneously help in the collection of missing place data in the Brazos Valley region. For example, Washington (5), Burlison (1), Brazos (1), Madison (2) counties require additional research to locate nine places which will require not only archival research but oral history interventions and discussions on the ground to increase and consolidate the depth of knowledge available about African American heritage in the region. In partnership with AAC volunteers from Brazos, Burlison, and Washington Counties, GCHPI can develop a robust approach to ensuring descendants' heritage is secure. X-Grant support will also sustain culturally responsive, University-led research essential to making this community-based archival preservation and participatory planning model a success. Partnerships with the Texas Target Communities (TTC) and University Libraries personnel affiliated with the Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance (TX-CERA) will ensure team members fill research gaps, create impactful, cross-disciplinary service-learning opportunities for students across colleges in engaged research and archive preservation, advance community priorities, and help communities sustain heritage preparedness long term.

The overall outcome of X-grant funded activities will be a replicable model for heritage preparedness that is evidenced-based, fulfills Texas A&M's land grant mission through its service focus, centers community voices through an engaged research approach, and produces research theorizing the relationship between heritage preservation and disaster preparedness.

RESEARCH PLAN

These four building blocks of the GCHPI model also serve as the team's research goals: 1) *culturally responsive guidance and self-assessment*; 2) *designing and testing of culturally competent educational and training material*; 3) *expanding the TXFCP Atlas' documentation of settlements*; and 4) *creating spatial hot spot analysis to inform model testing and heritage risk assessment*. Each goal will be informed by social science and humanities methods with an overarching community-engaged research approach. The outcome will be the creation of a replicable, integrated, heritage preparedness model.

The team advances an engaged research approach to reflect the four principles of culturally responsive preparedness: trust-building, inclusion, cross cultural communication, and support of local knowledge (FEMA 2019). Engaged research characterizes the relationship between the community and university researchers. An engaged research model is participatory and community centered. For example, this team's model invites descendants of freedom colonies from the Brazos Valley to collaborate with researchers by sharing local knowledge about disasters, heritage, and freedom colonies. To equip freedom colony descendants to make educated choices about their interaction with institutional archives and confidently engage with the University around heritage preparedness, the GCHPI team will use a train-the-trainer structure. This approach builds capacity and fosters participant trust because it involves descendants in all facets of the research process, including workshop site selection, priority setting, and hot spot analysis. Two groups manage engaged research approaches throughout the process: The TXFCP and TTC. For this project, TTC will train planning students to engage in culturally responsive communication and facilitation. Leaders of TTC will also structure engagement for the final workshop summit in which residents in the region will devise a plan for continued engagement and planning. TTC and TXFCP will co-develop a core task force comprised of volunteers and community stakeholders who will be involved throughout the research project.

Goal 1: Culturally Competent Guidance. There are numerous national-level resources and guides that help households and communities to prepare for natural hazards and climate-induced extreme events. The Heritage Emergency National Task Force, for instance, provides information and tools to help cultural stewards and the public prepare for and respond to disasters. This pilot project, and the resulting Gulf Coast Heritage Preparedness Initiative, will incorporate these existing resources but address two critical gaps. First, existing resources are typically developed through institutions of historic preservation and emergency management, which can be exclusionary of the heritage resources and practices in the African American and BIPOC communities this project will serve. Second, the resources are top-down and one-directional; they do not have the capacity to generate information or insights on community preparedness that lead to more effective targeting of regional resources, policies, or programs. Ultimately the GCHPI will contribute to these national level networks and information resources and will help inspire change regionally in the Gulf Coast as well as other parts of the United States. Training materials will enable both researchers and residents to assess current conditions and inventory local knowledge and social capital, while devising community-based archival and preservation solutions. Aligned with the overarching model, guidance will empower individuals to contemplate the situatedness of their materials in the context of their own complex identities as individuals, members of families, and community members and will help guide decisions about digitizing and publicly sharing artifacts, as well as retaining or donating relevant materials to community archives. Archival kits will contain materials targeted towards preparedness that can mitigate against ongoing climate-related damage to materials as well as protective tools, including mylar, folders, interleaving paper, a humidity indicator, and silverfish bait. USB drives, a guidebook and self-assessment form are included in the kit.

- **Objective 1:** Determine local and institutional heritage preparedness priorities, knowledge levels, cultural responsiveness of current instruments. **Methods:** Revise existing TXFCP Atlas' Black Settlement Survey to include assessment of disaster-related vulnerabilities, priorities, and capacity. Review studies and literature on best practices for identifying heritage values and priorities. Distribute surveys at workshops and through Atlas. Conduct content analysis of surveys and identify themes related to the role identity plays in heritage preparedness.
- **Objective 2.** Design enhanced archival material preservation guidance materials based on existing best practices in engaged research communications with freedom colonies and feedback from participants (Roberts, 2020; Roberts and Kelly, 2019; Vasudevan and Novoa, 2021). Newly designed materials will adapt current preparedness materials developed by the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, Texas Historic Commission, FEMA, Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance (TX-CERA), and other existing guidance. **Method(s):** Develop strategy for integrating input into guidance materials. Create feedback loop between freedom colony descendants and team members engaged in guidance revision.
- **Objective 3.** Make sure guidance addresses intercultural communication and anti-racist engagement. **Method(s):** Draw on workshop feedback from descendants to create briefs included in final guidance and

existing peer reviewed literature of culturally responsive communication and instruction. Revise materials and include briefs that enumerate barriers facing historic Black communities when attempting to protect their bibles, oral histories, and photos in guidance. Include strategies in workshops and in guidance on overcoming those barriers and leveraging intangible heritage to substantiate the historic significance of disappearing churches, cemeteries, schools, and communities (Roberts 2019). Collect data, surveys, and current guidance materials and evaluate along with partners, team members, and volunteers using four principles of culturally responsive preparedness materials (FEMA 2019).

- **Core partners:** TX-CERA (via Texas A&M liaison Muise), TTC, RESI, TXFCP, LIBR, SOCIO, AFST

Goal 2: Heritage Preparedness Education—Workshops, Cross-Training, and Train the Trainer. Heritage preparedness is an interdisciplinary approach requiring translation of terminology and conventions across fields to develop one effective set of protocols, guidance, and assessments. This includes an expansive notion of preparedness that is not only about the loss of materials, but the loss of culturally significant public spaces, cultural practices and traditions, and sense of place. Indicators of high preparedness levels include active systems for assessing social value, history, and risks of heritage sites and materials, while also securing their heritage materials using the appropriate archival materials. Education creates an even playing field for all project participants, creating equal opportunities to increase one’s heritage preparedness levels. This team will deploy a three-prong approach to raise preparedness levels through education: 1) cross-training within and across the GCHPI team; 2) service-learning opportunities for Texas A&M University students; and 3) conducting train-the-trainer workshops aimed at GCHPI team members and freedom colony descendants. Research activities that inform project-based learning through the GCHPI will cultivate cross-disciplinary preservationist training. Train the trainer workshops will package assessment, guidance, and capacity building as core deliverables of the overall heritage preparedness model. A cohort of graduate students, recruited to the GCHPI, will benefit from unique training in the methodologies, theories, and practices of preservation, attentive to the cross-disciplinary influences, theoretical foundations, and methodologies of project team members. These activities create the foundation for a future Aggie Heritage Corps engaged in service-learning projects.

- **Objective 1.** Assess efficacy of workshop instruction. Analyze the relationships descendants draw between their heritage and local preservation infrastructure. **Method:** Redesign surveys based upon existing TXFCP Black Settlement Surveys which collect data about heritage, existing social networks, quality of life, and grassroots preservation activities. and heritage practices. Assess freedom colonies and agencies’ capacity by administering surveys pre- and post- workshop. Identify technological tools that can enhanced data collection and curation.
- **Objective 2** (shared with goal 1). Develop manuals containing guidance which enable individuals’ assessment of their community’s resources. Guidance will include worksheets for self-assessment and the materials needed to implement the workshops (Roberts, 2020). **Method:** Create and test self-assessment worksheets during workshops; include ways to anonymously capture racial/income group participation rates, and a local “heritage values” assessment (Mason and Avrami, 2002). Develop as a project-based learning with Sociology courses and expertise (Gatson, Harden).
- **Objective 3:** Conduct cross-training within and across the GCHPI team. Forge a path between these distinctive traditions and facilitate “tacit knowledge exchange” (DeSouza, 2013) to serve shared goals and model inclusion. **Methods:** GCHPI team members will meet regularly to translate concepts across their own disciplines and anticipate an ongoing need for cross-training. All mediated discussions include an appreciative inquiry component in which facilitators of each workshop segment focus on participant strengths and knowledge about local heritage and disaster preparedness activities. Meetings will be structured to address systemic challenges to inclusion and collaboration. Topics include disciplinary traditions and assumptions around preservation (Architecture) and conservation (University Libraries), and the stunning lack of diversity among heritage conservationists and historic preservationists. Develop cross training in approaches to curation and documentation of heritage using digital preservation platforms.
- **Objective 4.** Create service-learning opportunities for students to increase their capacity to engage in culturally responsive engagement. **Method:** Team co-designs graduate and undergraduate course themes; identify shared content and methodological advancement for students through courses taught by members.
- **Objective 5.** Develop appropriate materials and instruction to increase likelihood of preparedness post-workshop. **Methods:** Provide kits containing the correct materials, which enable application of best practices and succession planning for their heritage materials when property owners or community members pass away, or disasters occur. Collectively create train the trainer workshops that integrate existing evidenced-based approaches to engaged research in disaster planning, archival sciences, and cultural resource mapping. Co-host pilot 2-day workshop with local task force which covers Atlas research capabilities, how to preserve and digitize materials, heritage values,

and how we translate personal or cultural intangible heritage to public data about places that can be used in planning, preservation, and funding processes.

For anticipated workshop design and course embeddedness, *see the Work Plan*.

- **Core partners:** TX-CERA (via liaison Muise), TTC, RESI, TXFCP, LIBR, SOCIO, ANTHRO, AFST

Goal 3: Expand the reach, depth, and research impact of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project Atlas and Study. A

key goal of the model is to facilitate locating and documenting settlements for which an origin story or location have not yet been verified by researchers. Cross-training and co-learning among team members and students through the TXFC Project's existing volunteer program, AAC is essential to making this possible. These trainings are held virtually and lead participants through research strategies while working in teams to locate the remaining settlements for each county.

- **Objective 1.** Increase targeted documentation of freedom colony heritage by increasing number of participants who add place histories to Atlas, making it a robust data source and public humanities tool. **Method(s):** Host a 2-day workshop in the region with one day dedicated to freedom colony history, storytelling, and digitization of materials to facilitate increased uploads to Atlas. Enlist support of TTC and local core task force who will act as project ambassadors to help recruit workshop attendees from Brazos Valley freedom colonies and heritage groups.
- **Objective 2.** Build volunteer, student, and community capacity to locate and identify gaps in public data and institutional archives about freedom colonies. **Method(s):** Cross-train volunteers and students in Atlas use and instruction for workshops. Require viewing of AAC training videos on YouTube; attend bimonthly AAC workshops or online meetups within secure intranet.
- **Core partners:** TXFC Project, ARCH, TTC, SOCIO, LIBR, AFST, TAMU-G

Goal 4: Equity-Based Modeling and Protocol. The team and Master of urban Planning students will create a spatial hot spot analysis method that will guide model testing, replication, and site selection to facilitate proactive preservation of material culture associated with the most endangered, disappearing Black settlements in the Gulf Coast region of the U.S. The existing protocols for determining what historic resources are at-risk – like the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) protocol that is widely used by FEMA and state and local planners and emergency managers – are narrow, top-down, and not inclusive of culturally responsive notions of heritage. This means that neglected and invisible forms of heritage, and their stakeholders, often fall between the cracks of formal mechanisms of hazard mitigation, climate adaptation and community disaster recovery. Our concept of a community protocol is unique in that it will allow us to utilize bottom-up data to assess heritage needs across scales or units of analysis. For example, there will be a dimension of the protocol that detects climate risk “hot spots” on a regional scale and allows for more targeted use of planning resources.

- **Objective 1:** Alter current approach to protocol development to get a fuller sense of which cultural assets associated with the historic settlement are at-risk. **Methods:** Dr. Rumbach, who has extensive experience analyzing natural hazard threats to cultural and historic resources (e.g., Appler & Rumbach 2016; Rumbach & Appler 2019; Rumbach, Bierbrauer & Follingstad 2020), will deploy spatial analysis and alter his current approach to include local knowledge about threats, values, and vulnerabilities.
- **Objective 2:** Capture local knowledge and data for inclusion in the new hot spot analysis approach. **Method(s):** This local knowledge or data will be collected during workshops in the form of self-assessments, checklists and worksheets that invite participants to define preparedness and heritage values and assess their knowledge. They can then plan to address both their gaps in preparedness knowledge while providing data that will expand public knowledge about freedom colony heritage for inclusion in the hot spot model.
- **Objective 3:** Integrate local knowledge into hotspot methodology. **Method(s):** Enlist urban planning students in disaster preparedness courses to process collected workshop forms and data. Then led by Rumbach, students will revise their initial statistical and spatial hot spot model. Teach students to use data from multiple individual and community-scale observations to inform a region-wide risk assessment methodology. Work with TXFC Project to ensure that it is grounded in culturally responsive language, mediums, and delivery.
- **Core partners:** ARCH-LAUP, TXFCP

SCHOLARSHIP DISSEMINATION, CONTRIBUTIONS

The community heritage preparedness protocol will be documented, described, and disseminated through publications, presentations, and symposia, with GCHPI team members sharing back to their disciplinary communities and synthesizing across these distinctive fields. We will publish novel, interdisciplinary peer-reviewed research on the relationship between heritage preparedness and overall local recovery, public history, and social cohesion, attentive to information science principles of appraisal and material preservation and disseminate results to policy makers.

Findings, protocols, and training materials from this planning grant will be propagated and sustained through several platforms and institutes represented through the team members' membership in campus departments, centers, institutes, professional organizations, and government agencies. Additionally, activities will persist through a TAMU Institute on Memory, Culture, and Place, under formation and led by several team members. Much of the workshop process will be video recorded for future use by other freedom colony descendants. For example, Brazos Valley AAC volunteers who represent Brazos, Burleson, and Washington counties will be a part of the local taskforce and receive training alongside students, faculty, and TX-CERA volunteers, thereby fostering sustainable, long-term impact within the communities we serve impacted by recurrent hailstorms, tornados, and recently Winter Storm Uri. All participants will leave trainings equipped to both identify and preserve materials, and to strengthen the networks and grow ownership in the process.

This planning grant's contributions are both scholarly and community based. While conducting research, the team will provide direct service to communities, catalyzing interdisciplinary research, expanding disaster preparedness levels, and creating the long-term infrastructure for students and faculty to participate in engaged research. The overall contribution is the model—guidance, mapping, engagement, education, and target documentation via public humanities. Our initial focus will be on historically African American communities in areas with little access to municipal planning infrastructure. Our long-term goal is to use this risk assessment methodology to propagate and target deployment of the overall model and inform action-oriented research on heritage and climate risk in BIPOC communities throughout the Gulf Coast to catalyze BIPOC heritage preparedness and documentation. The impact of this proposal will be evaluated based on our ability to:

- (1) Build local groups' and individuals' capacity to engage in preservation planning and heritage preparedness.
- (2) Increase documentation, listing the National Register, and preservation of endangered cultural resources.
- (3) Increase Texas A&M University's cultural heritage and planning engagement with marginalized groups.
- (4) Produce peer reviewed research and replicable protocols, to be propagated through a predictive model to map and identify vulnerable heritage

WORK PLAN

Research activity will occur September 2021 to September 2023. X-Grant funding will support the planning, cross-disciplinary education, and preservation activities described by semester in the timeline.

Timeline: Goals & Activities Year 1: 2021-22

Fall 2021. Goals: Recruitment; Community & Team Building; Literature Review

- Core partners assigned to multiple subcommittees: A) Archival/Preservation, Digitization; B) Engagement; C) Guidance, Protocol, & Assessment; D) Ethnography, Mapping, Digital Humanities
- TXFC Project orientation for extended research team; attend (AAC) workshops to identify emerging archival projects and local leaders
- Convene task force of freedom colony residents, leaders, AAC volunteers. Select workshop venue.
- Subcommittees lead literature review of available guidance on heritage preparedness, preservation, and community archives
- Draft guidance and assessment best practice report
- All subcommittees co-design shared course modules and research assistant guidelines
- All subcommittees meet to determine cross training needs, schedule
- Student researchers and workers recruited from courses team member courses
- **Courses:** SOCI 445/629 Sociology of Law (Gatson); AFS 289 Defining Black Heritage (Hankins)

Spring/Summer 2022. Goals: Create Guidance, Assessment Tools, Hot Spot Protocol; Design Workshops

- Research team convenes. TXFC Project orientation for extended research team and newly hired students
- Redesign draft guidance materials based on input from local core taskforce (descendants)
- TTC cross-trains faculty and students in principles of engaged research
- Subcommittees hold cross-trainings, student, and research team attendance mandatory
- Students attend AAC training meeting and practice leading cross-training with volunteers
- Workshop Prep - Archive Kit making party with team, students, and local task force
- Workshop Prep - Digitization, Oral History Interview, and Atlas Upload Process Designed
- Protocol, guidance, surveys, and assessment tools created with SOCIO and PLAN students

- PLAN 489 Mapping Risk students create hot spot methodology
- Entire pilot workshop design and materials completed and reviewed by local task force
- **Courses:** SOCI 229 Qualitative Methods (Gatson); SOCI 634 Sociology of Community (Gatson); PLAN 489 Mapping Risk (Rumbach); Curation/Museum Studies Capstone (Thakar); URPN 240 More than Monuments (Roberts)

YEAR 2: 2022-23

Fall 2022. Goals: Workshop prep, final cross training, and two-day workshops held

- Research team convenes. TXFC Project orientation for newly hired students
- Practice train-the-trainer event with students, local residents, and faculty
- Student and research team assembled kits and disseminate at workshops
- Entire Pilot Workshop Design and materials completed and ready for printing
- Students take observation notes, curate meetings (video recording)
- Workshop: Day 1. Introduction to Archives, Heritage, and Preparedness Concepts; Day 2. Freedom Colony Storytelling and Scanning Day - Digitization and Atlas uploads
- **Courses:** SOCI 445/629 (Gatson); PLAN 664 Planning History and Theory (Roberts)

Spring/Summer 2023. Goals: Host Brazos Valley Summit on Heritage Preparedness and Equity--What's Next?

- Create and send heritage values survey to public; invite to summit
- Local task force, TTC, and Master of Urban Planning Students lead visioning process on future of heritage preparedness in Brazos Valley
- URPN students determine which Atlas entries are eligible for THC markers listing
- Students curate meetings (video recording, photos)
- PLAN & SOCIO students process workshop feedback, evaluations, self-assessment content including student observations, notes
- Museum students curate video, photos, and materials associated with process on TXFC Project website and spatialize on atlas.
- Integrate input, data analysis into final protocol and guidance revision
- **Courses:** SOCI 229 & 634 (Gatson); PLAN 489 (Rumbach); Museum Studies (Thakar); URPN 240(Roberts)

Fall 2023 Goals: Sustainability Plan for Model testing and future Heritage Corps created

- All components --workshops, materials, methods--synthesized into final research model and protocol
- PLAN & SOCIO students process workshop feedback (continued)
- Findings and model presented to core local task force – plan shared conference presentations
- Research team creates sustainability plan and grant proposals
- Institutionalize extended research team into institute, standing Heritage Corps program (micro-extension model) for students seeking a community development or diversity certificate in College of Architecture
- Convene TXFC Project AAC volunteers and core task force to plan testing in Texas and Louisiana
- **Courses: Methods:** SOCI 445/629 (Gatson); PLAN 664 (Roberts)

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM PROFILE

The GCHPI team is deeply interdisciplinary, builds upon existing collaborations, and establishes new partnerships. Collaborative funding includes several internal awards: T3 (Roberts; Hankins); Glasscock Buttrill Ethics Grant (Roberts; Potvin); Center of Digital Humanities Research seed funding (Roberts; Hankins; Gatson; Laddusaw; Potvin); Innovation[X] (Potvin; Thakar). The complementary expertise of team members includes both relevant research expertise and embedded knowledge, including deep community ties, relationships with professional groups and agencies, and the technical skills necessary to engage in ethical participatory research with a goal of institutional change. Members' mutually informed research and expertise overlap and cluster around: African American studies; community-engaged participatory research; historic preservation and disaster preparedness policy; geographical information sciences; digital humanities; archival appraisal and information management; and documentary preservation. Team members, by college/department, are:

College of Architecture. Planning faculty member and GCHPI project leader **Andrea Roberts**, Assistant Professor of urban planning, Associate Director of the Center for Housing and Urban Development, fellow with the HRRC and CHC, and affiliated faculty of Africana Studies. She is director of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project, and a published, nationally recognized expert on social inclusion in historic preservation, participatory planning, ethnography, action research broadly, and African American planning practice. Her applied research solutions address access, visibility, and structural barriers to inclusion within planning through digital humanities and engaged research. She maintains collaborations with the Texas Historical Commission's Certified Local Government program (provided

workshops and demonstrations), Preservation Texas, TTC, National Trust for Historic Preservation, various county historical commissions, several ad hoc freedom colony organizations in central and east Texas and is a member of the State Board of Review. Planning faculty member, CHC and HRRC fellow **Andrew Rumbach** represents expertise in building actionable tools for community-based hazards planning. He also brings research and hands-on experience mapping communities relative to specific hazard threats, and showing the gaps in hazard data for rural, low-income and BIPOC communities. Rumbach leads the *Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado* guide alongside the state of Colorado, demonstrating open-source knowledge-to-action, and works actively with the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center and the Colorado Cultural and Historic Resources Task Force. He is currently at work on documenting exposure of historic resources to natural hazards, and critically examining the spatial geographies of risk relative to institutions of planning and disaster governance.

Texas Target Communities. Within the Office of Public Partnership & Outreach, the Texas Target Communities team represents extensive expertise with community engagement, including robust engagement methodologies and experience with facilitation, outreach, and logistics. Director **Jaimie Hicks Masterson**, who holds concurrent positions as the Associate Director of Outreach for the Center for Housing and Urban Development and HRRC, Engagement Coordinator for the Institute for Sustainable Communities, and Co-Director of the Community Resilience Collaborative with Texas Sea Grant, offers scholarship and leadership at TAMU in the areas of culturally competent research, resilience, and disaster recovery, particularly in communities of color. **John Cooper**, serves as Assistant Vice President for Public Partnerships & Outreach, focuses on participatory planning, particularly as it relates to emergency planners seeking to prepare socially vulnerable populations during and after disasters. Program coordinator **Jeewasmi Thapa** works with under-served communities to plan for resilience and liaises between the university and community partners on efforts related to environmental planning, hazard mitigation, and disaster recovery.

College of Liberal Arts. Sociologist and affiliated faculty of Africana Studies **Sarah Gatson** contributes qualitative methodological expertise and substantive expertise in issues of inequality, community, identity, legal studies, and culture. Gatson will help develop the survey instruments used to assess knowledge gaps and attitudes about race, disaster preparedness, and heritage conservation. Sociologist **Troy Harden**, the new director of the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute and a faculty fellow in the HRRC, works on social trauma and advocacy, studying the disproportionate impact of disasters on communities of color, the persistence of this impact, and the role of institutions. Anthropologist **Heather Thakar** brings an archaeological lens to cultural heritage preservation, drawing on community and artifactual experience as director of Museum Studies, curator and NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) coordinator for the Anthropology Research Collections, and director of the Paleocology and Archaeometry Laboratory.

University Libraries. Digital Scholarship Librarian and GCHPI co-leader **Sarah Potvin** studies the interplay between open access, ethical representation, and communities and will bring expertise in digital humanities, post-custodial models of digital stewardship, and computationally accessible collections. Archivist and Africana Resources Curator **Rebecca Hankins**, affiliated faculty of Africana Studies, has published widely on social justice in the fields of archives and library science and brings targeted expertise empowering individuals and communities to document, preserve, and maintain their heritage, including through workshops, consultations, and advice on developing community outreach strategies to archives, institutions, and organizations. In defining best practices in disaster planning, response, and recovery of cultural heritage materials, Preservation Librarian **Ian Muise** and Conservator **Jeanne Goodman** will draw on distinctive professional and community expertise, with Goodman representing conservation practices and principles and Muise advancing a preservation approach developed through work chairing the Libraries Collections Disaster and Recovery Team and serving on the American Library Association's Core Preservation Outreach Committee and on the board of the Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance (TX-CERA). These practices will consider the outreach model utilized by TX-CERA to connect with communities through workshops and events that promote emergency planning and training to mitigate heritage collections loss during disasters. Contributions by Maps Curator **Sierra Laddusaw** to geospatial metadata curation, map displays, and historic county mapping in the project are informed by recent work on the 1940 Census mapping project (T3) and to introduce ADA routing to Aggie Map, as well as expertise in digital exhibit creation, including material selection, digitization, and description.

Department of Liberal Studies, Texas A&M University - Galveston. **Carol Bunch Davis**, Associate Professor of English, brings expertise in literary cartography and literary studies, and experience working on black cultural production in Galveston and will extend outreach efforts to descendant communities in the area through her work with Galveston's Old Central Cultural Center and the Galveston Park Board of Trustees.

References Cited

- Aldrich, D. P., Meyer, M. A., & Page-Tan, C. M. (2018). Social capital and natural hazards governance. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Natural Hazard Science.
- Appler, D., & Rumbach, A. (2016). Building community resilience through historic preservation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 82(2), 92-103.
- Asari, S. (2013). Social capital and collective efficacy: Resources and operating tools of community social control. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*. (5)2, 75-94.
- Babcicky, P. & Seebauer, S. (2020). Collective efficacy and natural hazards: differing roles of social cohesion and task-specific efficacy in shaping risk and coping beliefs. *Journal of Risk Research*, (23)6, 695-712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2019.162809>
- Balachandran, S. (2016). Race, Diversity, and Politics in Conservation: Our 21st Century Crisis. 44th American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting.
- Blanks, J., Abuabara, A., Roberts, A., & Semien, J. (2021). Preservation at the Intersections: Patterns of Disproportionate Multihazard Risk and Vulnerability in Louisiana's Historic African American Cemeteries. *Environmental Justice*, 14(1), 1-13.
- Browne, Katherine E, Laura Olson, Jenny Hegland, Jenny Hegland Consulting, Ana-Marie Jones, Julie Maldonado, Elizabeth Marino, Keely Maxwell, Eric Stern, and Wendy Walsh. "Building_Cultures_of_Preparedness," 2019., 40.
- Khoja, L., Schubert, R., & Joerin, J. (2020). Social Resilience Indicators for Disaster-Related Contexts.
- Desai KV, Gatson SN, Stiles T, Laine GA, Stewart RH, Quick CM (2008). "Integrating Research and Education at Research-Intensive Universities with Research-Intensive Communities." *Advances in Physiological Education*; 32 (2): 136-141.
- Ersing, R. L. (2020). Disaster Response through Community Practice: A Social Work Perspective. *Community Practice and Social Development in Social Work*, 1-20.
- Gatson SN (2011). "Self-Naming Practices on the Internet: Identity, Authenticity, and Community." *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, 11 (3): 224-235.
- Gatson SN and Zweerink A (2004). "'Natives' Practicing and Inscribing Community: Ethnography Online," *Qualitative Research*, 4 (2): 179-200.
- Gatson SN and Zweerink A (2000). "Choosing Community: Rejecting Anonymity in Cyberspace," *Research in Community Sociology*, 10: 105-137, edited by Dan A. Chekki.
- Gatson SN (2011). "The Methods, Ethics, and Politics of Representation in Online Ethnography," In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Eds. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, 4th Edition, Sage, 513-527.
- Gatson SN (2007). "Assessing the Likelihood of Internet Information-Seeking Leading to Offline Drug Use by Youth." In *Real Drugs in a Virtual World: Drug Discourse and Community Online*, edited by Edward Murguia, Melissa Tackett-Gibson, and Ann Lessem, Lexington Books, 99-120.
- Hankins, R. (2021). The Archival Imperative: From Decolonization to Radical Inclusivity. *Difficult Campus Heritage*. 22nd Annual Historic Preservation Symposium. Center for Conservation Heritage, Texas A&M University.
- Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance. (2021). Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance. <https://hbtsa.org/>
- Laddusaw, S. & Wilhelm, J. (2018). Yours, Mine, Ours: A Study of a Successful Academic & Public Library Collaboration. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 10(1), Article 6.
- Lennox, Judanne Sharone. (2020). "Evaluating CERTS' Spatial Relationship to Marginalized and Unmapped Communities." Masters Thesis

Mapping the Issue of Values. (n.d.). Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions. Retrieved March 31, 2021, from <https://www.getty.edu/publications/heritagemanagement/part-one/2/>

Mason, R. (2019). Valuing Traumatic Heritage Places as Archives and Agents. Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions, 158.

Mason, R., & Avrami, E. (2002). Heritage values and challenges of conservation planning. Management planning for archaeological sites, 13-26; Mapping the Issue of Values Erica Avrami, Randall Mason.

Meyer, M. A. (2018). Social capital in disaster research. Handbook of disaster research, 263-286.

Minner, J., Holleran, M., Roberts, A., & Conrad, J. (2016). Capturing volunteered historical information: lessons from development of a local government crowdsourcing tool. In Geospatial Research: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 319-343). IGI Global.

Potvin, S. (2019). "A Local Habitation and a Name: Towards Specificity of Openness and Community." Roundtable on The Open Library and its Communication with Communities: Challenges, Commitments, and Actions. Libraries in the Open Environment: Education, Research, Information and Culture. XVII International Conference on University Libraries. Mexico City, Mexico.

Potvin, S. (2019). "Community before Computing." Libraries as Research Partner in Digital Humanities. Preconference to Digital Humanities. The Hague, Netherlands.

Potvin, S., Padilla, T., Varner, S., Allen, L., Russey Roke, E, et. al. (2018) . "What would the 'community' think? Three grant-funded teams reflect on defining community and models of engagement." Digital Library Federation Forum. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Roberts, A. R. (2019). "Until the Lord Come Get Me, It Burn Down, Or the Next Storm Blow It Away": The Aesthetics of Freedom in African American Vernacular Homestead Preservation. In Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum (Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 73-97). University of Minnesota Press.

Roberts, A. R. (2020). Preservation without Representation: Making CLG Programs Vehicles for Inclusive Leadership, Historic Preservation, and Engagement. Societies, 10(3), 60.

Roberts, A (2020). The end of bootstraps and good masters: Fostering social inclusion by creating counternarratives. In Avrami, E (ed) Preservation and Social Inclusion. New York: Columbia University Press, 109–122.

Roberts, A., & Biazar, M. J. (2019). Black placemaking in Texas: Sonic and social histories of Newton and Jasper County freedom colonies. Current Research in Digital History, 2.

Roberts, Andrea and Biazar, Mohammed. (2020). "The Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas." Esri StoryMap. The Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas & Study, A Black Settlement Database. <https://arcg.is/09vnS5>.

Roberts, A., & Kelly, G. (2019). Remixing as Praxis: Arnstein's Ladder Through the Grassroots Preservationist's Lens. Journal of the American Planning Association, 85(3), 301-320.

Rogers, Ayesha Pamela. (2019). "Values and Relationships between Tangible and Intangible Dimensions of Heritage Places." Values in Heritage Management, eds. E. Avrami, S. Macdonald, R. Mason, and D. Myers. Los Angeles: Getty Publications.

Rumbach, A., Bierbrauer, A., & Follingstad, G. (2020). Are We Protecting Our History? A Municipal-Scale Analysis of Historic Preservation, Flood Hazards, and Planning. Journal of Planning Education and Research, 0739456X20948592.

Rumbach, A., Makarewicz, C., & Németh, J. (2016). The importance of place in early disaster recovery: a case study of the 2013 Colorado floods. Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 59(11), 2045-2063.

Smith, Laurajane. (2006). *Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge.

Smith, L., & Campbell, G. (2017). The tautology of “intangible values” and the misrecognition of intangible cultural heritage. *Heritage & Society*, 10(1), 26-44.

Smith, Laurajane, and Natsuko Akagawa, eds. (2008). *Intangible heritage*. Routledge.

Vasudevan, R., & Novoa E, M. (2021). Pluriversal planning scholarship: Embracing multiplicity and situated knowledges in community-based approaches. *Planning Theory*, 14730952211000384.

Wells, J. C. (2020). Does intra-disciplinary historic preservation scholarship address the exigent issues of practice? Exploring the character and impact of preservation knowledge production in relation to critical heritage studies, equity, and social justice. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 1-21.