FOLK NARRATIVES, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES:
A CASE STUDY OF THE ALBERT J. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CEMETERY (41GV125), GALVESTON COUNTY, TEXAS

A Thesis
by
LEAH CARSON POWELL

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of Texas A&M University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

May 1998

Major Subject: Anthropology
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ABSTRACT

Folk Narratives, Archaeology, and Descendant Communities: A Case Study of the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery (41GV125), Galveston County, Texas.
(May 1998)
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The excavation of historic cemeteries often incorporates a variety of sources not available to prehistorians, including written documents, headstones, and oral history. One important source of information that is rarely included in these analyses is the performance of traditional narratives. The relocation of graves at the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery (41GV125), an African-American burial locale in southeast Texas, provided numerous opportunities for interaction between archaeologists and members of the descendant community. The social context of these interactions and their contribution to understanding the archaeological record were the foci of this analysis.

The contextual analysis of traditional narrative performances, including family and occupational lore, “catch questions” and other narratives related to the exhumation of graves at the site, demonstrated that the narratives reflected both past and present conflicts within the community and between community members and the archaeologists conducting the cemetery relocation. Recognition of the mnemonic-cognitive presence of historic cemeteries within descendent communities can enable archaeologists to further their understanding of dynamic historical processes and can enhance the accessibility of their research by making it relevant to the communities in which they work.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, archaeologists seek to understand human behavior and cultural change through the analysis of "material remains of the human past" (Trigger 1989). Some archaeological theorists such as Schiffer (1976) and Clarke (1968) have argued that archaeological research should more broadly focus on the "relationship between human behavior and culture in all times and places" (Schiffer 1976:4), although some would claim that this is not and cannot be a goal for archaeological investigation (Binford 1981:27). Unlike ethnologists, who concentrate on understanding human behavior through the observation of the actions of living peoples, archaeologists focus on the recovery, analysis, and interpretation of material culture-- the physical products of behaviors that can no longer be observed. The people who deposited the archaeological record and who might contribute some understanding of how the pattern of material culture at a site relates to an actual set of behaviors are not alive and cannot be interviewed, questioned, or directly observed.

Despite these difficulties, "archaeologists have succeeded in creating a large and growing corpus of data and low-level generalizations about the past.

This thesis follows the style and format of the Journal of American Folklore.
that over the years has withstood careful scrutiny" (Trigger 1989:382), particularly when those generalizations apply to subsistence, technology, exchange, residence patterns, and political organization (Trigger 1989:386). Part of this success may stem from the integration of ethnoarchaeological investigations into the study of material objects. Ethnoarchaeologists study living peoples to determine how their behavior is manifested materially, and apply this information in understanding the prehistoric archaeological record (Schiffer 1976:8-9; Trigger 1989:371). However, the approach relies heavily on ethnographic analogy; problems arise in applying analogy "because archaeologists are unable to distinguish what is characteristic of humanity in general (or of a particular mode of production) and what is specific only to historically related cultures" (Trigger 1989:364).

Deagan (1982) notes that historical archaeologists are perhaps better poised to study the connection between past behavior and material culture, in part because historical documents provide a specific context for the interpretation and understanding of patterns of material culture. In addition to material culture recovered in archaeological excavations, historical archaeologists have at their disposal a variety of different sources of information for understanding past behaviors. In the case of historical archaeological investigations, this includes a wide variety of documentary resources such as personal diaries, equipment or stock lists, tax records, church records, court
records, land deeds, and contemporary histories (Deetz 1977:7). When available, the archaeological and documentary records can compliment one another, though neither by itself provides all of the information about how and why certain behavior occurred. Deetz (1977:7) also notes that historic archaeologists find "on occasion an information source that few if any prehistorians have encountered: the archaeological informant." Such informants can be interviewed and questioned about past events, patterns of behavior, and the material culture left at an historical archaeological site. Data collected in such interviews include reconstructions of community structure and kinship, oral histories, folklore and legends, and traditional narratives related to the site, artifacts, or events of the past.

The excavation of historical cemeteries provides an opportunity to combine information from the wide variety of sources noted above, in order to provide as complete a context for understanding its function not only as a place to lay the dead to rest, but also as a symbol of significant past and current events within the community. This thesis examines the use of folk narratives and sources of information other than the archaeological record as part of the archaeological investigations at the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery in Texas City, Texas. The Phillips Memorial Cemetery was the only cemetery available to African Americans in the area from the late 1800s to the late 1920s or early 1930s. It is currently located in Texas City, however, while it was
active, the cemetery was within the boundaries of La Marque. Both Texas City and La Marque are located approximately 15 miles northwest of Galveston Island (Figure 1). Descendants of many of the individuals interred in the Phillips Memorial Cemetery still reside in La Marque. The cemetery was bisected by the construction of State Highway 3 in 1927. When expansion of the highway began in 1991, archaeologists from Texas A&M University were contracted to excavate and analyze the contents of grave shafts within the right-of-way, and to prepare the contents for reburial at another location on the same day.

The Phillips Memorial Cemetery excavation provided numerous opportunities for interaction between archaeologists and members of the descendant community. The social context of these interactions and their contribution to understanding the archaeological record are the foci of this analysis. After reviewing previous uses of oral data as a source of information about historic cemeteries, I present the methods of data collection used here, and the past and present social context of the cemetery and of the community who buried their dead there. Folk narratives related during the exhumation and relocation of graves at the Phillips Memorial Cemetery provided valuable information about both past and present conflicts in the community. I also discuss how the archaeological investigation benefited from examining the
Figure 1. Map of project location in Galveston County, Texas.
context of such narratives and use these data for re-examining research objectives.

*Process and Context in Archaeological Investigation*

Folklore methodology, particularly the analysis of traditional narratives, is rarely employed in the analysis or interpretation of archaeological investigations, nor in the examination of the process of the archaeological investigation itself. This stems in part from the strong influence of processualist approaches and the New Archaeology during the past 25 years of archaeological research (Trigger 1989). Although processualist approaches to archaeological investigation have employed the use of ethnographic data to interpret the function of artifacts and archaeological features (Binford 1983; Trigger 1989), they have largely ignored the social context of such behavior, seeking instead to understand the processes of formation that can be applied cross-culturally and diachronically in interpreting human behavior. One example of this approach is Binford's (1983) interpretation of Paleolithic archaeological sites using behavior observed in modern (fur-trading) Nunamiut hunters (Binford 1983:144-192).

While processualist uses of ethnographic data are a step in the right direction, they tend to view living people as relatively static and as "relics." As
a result, certain types of ethnographic data, including symbolic behavior and folk narratives, are excluded from the interpretation of the archaeological assemblage altogether (Trigger 1989:364-365). Trigger points out that methods that largely ignore social context have been countered by a more "contextual" approach, in which material culture is an active element of social interaction (Trigger 1989:328). The contextual approach allows elements such as cultural beliefs and tradition to play a greater role in understanding the archaeological record (Trigger 1989:330), and in understanding the social context in which archaeological investigations occur (Powell and Dockall 1995). Recognition of the limitations of processualist approaches should "...encourage archaeologists to seek to discover how other types of information can be combined with archaeological data to promote a better understanding of the past" (Trigger 1989:356-357).

*Archaeology, Folklore, and History*

Historical archaeologists have incorporated a variety of sources of information into the analysis and interpretation of historic archaeological assemblages. These sources include historical documents, archaeological informants, oral traditions of the community, and the archaeological record itself (Deetz 1977; Hodder 1986; Orser 1985; Schmidt 1978; Vansina 1985).
Ideally, each of the sources utilized by the archaeologist will complement one another, and provide a more accurate and complete picture of site formation processes, and of the individuals involved in these processes (Deetz 1977; Hodder 1986). If a conflict exists between resources, the archaeologist must reevaluate the research design and ask different questions of the available material (Deetz 1977).

The archaeologist must be cautious and recognize the weaknesses of each of the utilized sources. Historical documents are recorded by humans who occasionally make mistakes; who only know part of the information; who see only their own perspective; who are biased; or who may have ulterior motives for changing the story. Folk taxonomies change through time (Deetz 1977), forcing the archaeologist to be aware of past taxonomies, rather than attempting to fit past materials within the order of the modern world; the looking glass - chamber pot confusion discussed by Deetz (1977:10) is a good example of this problem. Valuable and sincere archaeological informants may recall events selectively, may have been influenced by a distorted perception of the events when they occurred or by the interview process, or may simply have a poor memory (Dorson 1984; Orser 1985; Vansina 1985; Wilson 1973). The archaeological record itself may provide unexpected materials that necessitate a reformulation of questions and a modification of the research design (Deetz 1977; Dockall et al. 1996b; Powell and Dockall 1995).
While oral and archival sources are extremely useful for a better understanding of the social context of objects left in the archaeological record, many investigators fail to recognize the importance of the social context of the excavation itself. Interaction with descendant communities frequently occurs during the excavation of historic cemeteries and other historic sites. This interaction provides an opportunity to expand on the conventional uses of oral and archival sources, and adds a new dimension to the archaeological investigation.

Folk narratives are one type of data that archaeologists can collect during interactions with descendant communities. A contextual analysis of narratives provides information about the social context of the site (particularly important for mortuary sites) and about the impact of archaeological research on the community:

While interaction with community members and oral history research are great assets to archaeological studies, the collection of folklore adds another dimension to a project. The reflexivity and subjectivity inherent in the performance of such narratives can yield information about the community in which these narratives are performed, about the archaeological site, and about the past
and present social climate and its effects on the community, the site, and the archaeological project...

(Powell and Dockall 1995)

Folklore and Anthropology

At the end of the 19th century, Europeans and Americans experienced increased exposure to other cultures. The curiosity aroused by contact with a variety of cultures gave birth to the field of anthropology. Anthropologists used the theory of cultural evolution, which stated that all cultures progressed through a number of technological stages, to explain the unfamiliar lifeways of the groups they encountered. While most anthropologists restricted their studies to "exotic" cultures, widespread industrialization motivated some, mostly European, scholars to document the customs, beliefs, practices, traditions, etc. of the rural members of their own culture. These scholars, who also subscribed to cultural evolutionary theory, began the documentation process out of the fear that, with rapid industrialization, the "quaint" traditions of the peasants would be lost as they advanced to a higher evolutionary stage. The agrarian peasants were believed to have "evolved" out of the "primitive" stage, but had yet to "progress" into the stage of industrialized and educated Europeans, who considered their culture the most evolutionarily advanced form
of civilization. English antiquarian, William John Thoms coined the term "folklore" in 1846 (Dorson 1972:1), in reference to both the study of the traditional practices of the rural peasants and to the traditional practices themselves. The term was accepted by folklorists and anthropologists, and gained popularity during the period when the theory of cultural evolution dominated the fledgling field of anthropology.

Although anthropologists have long since rejected cultural evolutionary theory, the term "folk" retains negative connotations among laypersons and academicians alike. In everyday use "folk" has come to mean "common," as opposed to elite, reflecting the hierarchy established by nineteenth century cultural evolutionary theory. Furthermore, when scholars used "folk" in the 19th century to describe traditional practices and beliefs that were believed to be inferior to those of the more "advanced" civilization, the term acquired negative connotations that prevail today when individuals mistakenly associate the preface "folk-" with "falsity, wrongness, fantasy, and distortion" (Dorson 1972:1).

Folklorists today argue that "The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" (Dundes 1965:2 emphasis in original). Each individual belongs to a variety of folk groups, such as occupational, regional, familial, etc., and every group possesses its own set of narratives, traditions, customs, and beliefs that are shared among its members.
Folklore is transmitted through a traditional process, rather than through formal education. Transmission occurs orally (for verbal forms of folklore such as narratives, jokes, ballads, gossip, etc.) or through informal demonstration, observation, or imitation (in the case of non-oral folk practices such as basket weaving, quilting, etc.) (Brunvand 1986:7-8). The forms of folklore addressed in this thesis include personal experience narratives, family lore, gossip, and occupational lore, which were performed by members of the descendant community, and by members of occupational folk groups.

Folklore and Oral History

Archaeologists have incorporated oral history data into the research design of cemetery excavations (Deming et al. 1993; Elia and Wesolowsky 1991; Lebo 1988; Winchell et al. 1992). For these cemetery investigations, oral history interviews emphasized obtaining information on the location and period of use of the cemetery, and on collecting kinship data for those individuals known to be interred in the cemetery, (Deming et al. 1993; Fox 1984; Jurney 1987; Lebo 1988; Rose 1985; Taylor et al. 1986; Winchell and Moir 1992).

While conducting oral history interviews is a valuable technique for gathering information, collecting folklore also can provide historically valid information (Dorson 1984; Vansina 1985) and insight into the folk perceptions of
past events (Dorson 1984). Although the fields of oral history and folklore are closely related and overlap significantly, they differ in methodology and basic concepts (Dorson 1984). Dorson (1984:293) explains that oral historians interview sources to obtain personal data of contemporary history, and folklorists collect information and examine this information for evidence of folk traditions. Due to their reflexive nature, folk narratives can provide insight into the group's perception of past events and analysis of these narratives can reveal how these perceptions may have affected subsequent events (Abrahams 1963; Brunvand 1979:53; Deetz 1977; Powell and Dockall 1995). Given the negative connotations associated with the term "folklore," historians have rejected folk narratives as a valid source of information (Vansina 1985:xii), believing them to have no historical value. Folk narratives often preserve historical facts (Dorson 1984; Vansina 1985), particularly when the following conditions exist: "continuity of residence in the area of the tradition; reinforcement of the tradition with reference to surrounding landmarks; and the training, formal or informal of oral chroniclers within the society" (Dorson 1984:299). Additionally, by recording contextual information while conducting fieldwork, folklorists collect not only "the plain unvarnished fact but all the motions, biases, and reactions aroused by the supposed fact, for in them lie the historical perspectives of the folk" (Dorson 1984:293).
This research focuses on a contextual analysis of folk narratives related to the excavation and relocation of portions of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. Just as archaeologists examine the context of a recovered artifact to help reconstruct past human activity, folklorists examine the context in which traditional narratives occur (Powell and Dockall 1995). Context is the "time, place, and company in which folklore actions happen" (Ben-Amos 1971:11), and encompasses a variety of dimensions including social, cultural, historical, economic, psychological, ecological and ideological realms (Walls 1990). Immediate context is important for understanding the social and cultural significance of the folk narratives for investigating "the cultural values and conflicts reflected in narratives (Abrahams 1963; Deetz 1977), and the ideas and beliefs of the individual producing those narratives (Brunvand 1979:53; Deetz 1977; Powell and Dockall 1995). In addition, the context of the larger sphere of world events in which the narrative takes place allows the anthropologist, as an outsider, to better understand the importance of the narrative for his or her own life (Walls 1990).

Research Objective

Through contextual analysis I will demonstrate how the information conveyed through narrative and archival sources expresses the conflict
associated with the archaeological work at the Phillips Memorial Cemetery and the descendant community. I will also show how these sources provide a diachronic view of the social climate surrounding the cemetery. In Chapter II, I review literature concerning attitudes toward skeletal remains of various ethnic groups, and the use of oral data during archaeological investigations of historic cemeteries. Chapters III and IV provide a description of the materials and methods used for this study and a historical overview of La Marque and the community associated with the cemetery. In Chapters V and VI, I present narratives, oral history, and archival evidence of conflicts relating to the Phillips Memorial Cemetery in both early and contemporary La Marque. The final chapter examines the data presented in Chapters V and VI from four perspectives: the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the cemetery (the memories and emotions triggered by the existence of the cemetery), emic/etic perceptions of folk groups, pride in family history, and the benefits to the archaeological investigation.
CHAPTER II

ARCHAEOLOGY AND DESCENDANT COMMUNITIES

The excavation of historic cemeteries provides a unique opportunity for interaction between archaeologists and community members who are descendants of those interred at the site. Before beginning discussion of the use of folklore in archaeological investigations, it will be helpful to review current trends in which descendant communities have been included or excluded in the process of archaeological research. In recent years, input regarding the excavation of human remains and funerary objects has been solicited from descendant communities representing a wide range of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. This stems, in part, from the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 (Public Law 101-601). The purpose of this review is not to provide in depth coverage of reburial issues, but to provide the basic context of how the inclusion of oral data is becoming an integral part of archaeological field research.
Community Involvement in Archaeology

Since the first excavation of a burial mound by Thomas Jefferson in 1784, archaeological investigations in the United States primarily have consisted of outsiders examining remnants of the past and making pronouncements based on their observations, with little input from descendant or related communities (Hubert 1994; Trigger 1989:110-111; Zimmerman 1994a). Early archaeologists held a romantic idea that archaeology served to document dead or dying cultures (Trigger 1989:110-11), similar to the early folklorists' belief that they documented the traditions of vanishing cultures (see Chapter I above). Native Americans and archaeologists observed that this attitude fostered the impression that "...Indians never cared about their past before [archaeologists began studying them]" (Zimmerman 1994a:213).

Recent trends, however, are towards greater inclusion of descendant communities in archaeological research. For example, a recent volume published by the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), *Ethics in American Archaeology: Challenges for the 1990s*, provides new guidelines for ethics and professional accountability for practicing archaeologists (Lynott and Wylie 1995). The SAA guidelines for accountability state that:
Responsible archaeological research, including all levels of professional activities, requires an acknowledgment of public accountability and a commitment by the archaeologist to make every reasonable effort, in good faith, to consult actively with affected group(s), with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to the discipline and to all parties involved.

(Watkins et al. 1995:33)

Watkins and coworkers, when discussing how archaeologists should interact with descendant communities, note that:

It should not be up to the people we study to ask us to consult with them. Rather, it should be a part of our everyday procedures and pre-research checklist to see to it that we approach those affected groups. We should want to get them involved in our research before and during the work, rather than trying to get them interested after the research has been completed.

(Watkins et al. 1995:34, emphasis in original)
This change in direction for archaeological research has been advocated by a number of authors (Clark 1990; Emerson and Cross 1990; Harrington 1993; Hubert 1994; McGuire 1994; Parrington and Roberts 1984; Powell and Dockall 1995; Roberts 1984; Zimmerman 1994a,b).

Dialogue between archaeologists and members of the descendant community is now viewed as an integral aspect of field research, in addition to being a part of the archaeologist's ethical responsibility to individuals outside of the profession. However, we must keep in mind that archaeologists can influence whether the result of these interactions with the affected communities will be negative or positive.

Archaeologists at the First African Baptist Church Cemetery (FABCC) in Philadelphia established a cooperative relationship with the affected communities through a variety of means (Parrington and Roberts 1984; Roberts 1984). The FABCC was discovered while archaeologists monitored the subsurface cut for the construction of the Philadelphia Commuter Rail Tunnel in 1981 (Roberts 1984). Although the exposed portion of the cemetery was covered and protected by concrete at that time, further construction plans for the area over the next few years resulted in the decision to excavate the cemetery to mitigate the destructive effects on the site (Roberts 1984:236).

The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia accepted the proposal prepared by John Milner and Associates, Inc. (JMA) that outlined research goals
and strategies for data recovery. Recognizing the sensitive nature of the project, JMA held press conferences and gave interviews to stimulate public interest and to report on the progress of the project, encouraged the involvement of the nearby Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum (AAHCM), arranged for staff members of the AAHCM to conduct tours of the site for community members, welcomed visitors to the site by providing informative handouts, constructing viewing platforms, and providing impromptu lectures by field workers, contacted the First African Baptist Church officials and members to inform them of research goals and strategies, and provided periodic progress reports to the church and to other interested parties as excavations proceeded (Parrington and Roberts 1984; Roberts 1984). Daniel Roberts (1984:240) credits the above measures for the success of the project:

As a result, this project as well as urban archeology in Philadelphia as a whole, has benefited from a considerably heightened community and public image and, in turn, a greater awareness of the nature and importance of urban and historic archeology has been fostered among the public. . .Indeed, the recovery of [data] may have been considerably more difficult without all of the elements noted [above] occurring in a fully cooperative atmosphere.
In contrast to the cooperative relationship between the descendant community and the archaeologists excavating the FABCC (Parrington and Roberts 1984; Roberts 1984), the highly publicized excavations of the African Burial Ground in New York City resulted in a prolonged negative relationship with concerned African Americans in the area (Harrington 1993). Although the impact statement prepared by Historic Conservation and Interpretation (HCI), an archaeological salvage and consulting firm, discussed the African Burial Ground, HCI predicted that few, if any, human remains would have survived previous construction on the site (Harrington 1993:32). In order to facilitate the construction of the Government Services Administration's (GSA) office complex, the GSA hired HCI to excavate any undisturbed burials in the construction area.

African Americans in the area became outraged when human remains were unearthed by a backhoe while digging a building foundation (Harrington 1993:33). The African-American community was upset that they had not been contacted about the excavations, that there were no African Americans associated with the project, and were worried that the skeletal remains were being curated improperly (Harrington 1993). The community used a variety of methods to voice their concerns, including vocal protests, seeking (and gaining) the intervention of their U.S. congressional representative, and blockading access to the site (Harrington 1993). After HCI was unable to produce a research design that stated the conservation measures and the scientific study
goals for the project, and after confirmation by Howard University physical anthropologist Dr. Michael Blakey that the skeletal remains were not being stored properly, GSA addressed some of the concerns of the descendant community (Harrington 1993). JMA, the archaeological firm that had just completed the successful excavation of the First African Baptist Church in Philadelphia (see above), was contracted to complete the excavation (Harrington 1993:35). Michael Blakey drafted a research design for analyzing the skeletal remains of approximately 420 individuals that were transferred to Howard University for curation (Harrington 1993:37). While the results of the analysis will be a significant contribution to African-American bioarchaeology, the study probably would not have been possible if the African-American community had not waged a bitter battle to hold archaeologists accountable for the study of the remains of individuals whom the community viewed as ancestors.

While the archaeological investigations mentioned above provide examples of the extremes of descendant community involvement, many archaeologists excavating historic cemeteries have had, in comparison, minimal contact with descendant or affected communities (Deming et al. 1993; Elia and Wesolowsky 1991; Emerson and Cross 1990; Fox 1984; Lebo 1988; Rose 1985; Taylor et al. 1986; Winchell et al. 1992). When conflicts arise, they are often resolved with a moderate amount of effort, usually in the form of educating
interested parties about the goals of the project and the methods employed for achieving those goals (Elia and Wesolowsky 1991; Owsley et al. 1985). More often, the descendant or affected communities are passive observers (Emerson and Cross 1990) or are used only as resources for information on location of features, dates of use, etc. (Deming et al. 1993; Fox 1984; Jurney 1987; Lebo 1988; Rose 1985; Taylor et al. 1986; Winchell and Moir 1992).

Legal objections from the descendant community were raised prior to the excavation of the St. Peter/Toulouse Street Cemetery in New Orleans, Louisiana (Owsley et al. 1985:4-12). Media reports fueled dissension among individuals who believed they were descendants of individuals interred in the cemetery, and among legal representatives of the city and the region. After educating the complainants about the authorizations received from various authorities to conduct the excavations, about the research objectives of the project, about the support of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and about plans for subsequent reburial of the human skeletal remains, complaints were withdrawn and excavation proceeded.

During the excavation of the Uxbridge Almshouse in Massachusetts, archaeologists found that Native Americans believed the cemetery was an "Indian burial ground" and were distrustful of the archaeologists (Elia and Wesolowsky 1991:xiii). The excavators welcomed the Nipmuck Indians on the site, and by establishing an amicable and cooperative relationship with the
visitors, suspicions were eliminated. The archaeologists established lasting friendships with the Nipmuck and benefited from their contributions, which included assisting with site security and screening soil excavated from the grave pits (Elia and Wesolowsky 1991:xiii).

In a review of the treatment of historic and prehistoric remains in the Midwest, Thomas Emerson and Paula Cross found that in most instances when graves were disturbed (with the exception of vandalism or looting), the descendants were cooperative with archaeologists and expressed interest in the project (Emerson and Cross 1990). The emphasis of their review is on the differential treatment of various skeletal remains (European, Native American, etc.) and public attitudes toward various forms of disturbance (archaeological excavation, looting, vandalism), not on methods of data collection. However, the review does provide insight into the interaction between archaeologists and descendant communities.

Descendants of individuals buried in a central Illinois Old Irish Cemetery, which was in use from 1848 - 1871, visited the cemetery during its excavation in 1981. Emerson and Cross noted that "Standard morphological information was collected [from the skeletal remains] providing data about sex, age, diet, health, and disease as well as genetic connections..." and that the descendants "...were interested in the information that the analysis could provide them about their relatives" (1990:561). The authors do not indicate that
the archaeologists attempted to collect any information about the individuals interred in the cemetery from the descendants of the deceased. A similar oversight may have occurred during the excavation and analysis of 3 burials from the Hidden family cemetery in Illinois. The graves, which were supposed to have been relocated in 1965, were eroding out of the bank on Lake Shelbyville. The daughter of the Hidden family representative who had provided authorization to relocate the cemetery was informed of plans to excavate, analyze and relocate the burials. No mention is made of attempts to obtain information from Ms. Hidden about the family or about the cemetery (Emerson and Cross 1990:562).

Oral Data Collection and Historic Cemetery Excavations

Archaeologists have used oral data collection, to various degrees, in a number of archaeological projects involving historic cemeteries (Deming et al. 1993; Fox 1984; Jurney 1987; Lebo 1988; Rose 1985; Taylor et al. 1986; Winchell and Moir 1992). Archaeologists on an historic cemetery project in Fort Myers, Florida (8LL1758) noted that a local historian "uncovered further evidence concerning the location of the cemetery during oral history interviews" (Deming et al. 1993:2-5). Investigators of the Morgan Chapel Cemetery (41BP200) in Bastrop County, Texas sought information from local residents primarily about
the location and the number of graves within the cemetery (Taylor et al. 1986:7). They also obtained speculation about whether various individuals were interred in the cemetery, recollections of a few burial services, and accounts of a "squatter" removing headstones from the cemetery (Taylor et al. 1986:7-8).

Excavators of the Tucker (41DT104) and Sinclair (41DT104) cemeteries in Delta County, Texas reported using tape recorded interviews to obtain "information relating to the location, age, number of individuals interred at the cemetery when the cemetery was abandoned and when the markers were removed" (Lebo 1988:119). One informant also provided information on materials used for grave markers (Lebo 1988:120). Archaeologists were provided with a list of individuals who were known to be buried in the Cedar Grove cemetery from the deacon and eldest member of the Cedar Grove Church, as well as from members of the congregation (Rose 1985).

Archaeologists assessing archaeological resources associated with the Richland Creek Reservoir project in Navarro County, Texas found that four cemeteries would be affected by reservoir impoundment (Jurney 1987:255). To alleviate any adverse effects of cemetery relocation, archaeologists conducted extensive surveys of the cemeteries, archives, local informants, and descendants of the deceased before excavation plans were finalized (Jurney 1987:255). Investigators recorded names on existing grave markers and conducted a thorough search of all available historical documents for information on the
individuals. Local informants were questioned about the location of the cemeteries, accounts of vandalism, and location of living descendants. Because one of the cemeteries was used by slaves of the Burleson family, some members of the community provided information about the Burleson Plantation activities. After compiling the information on the individuals, researchers contacted living family members and used the information to help jog their memories during interviews that emphasized kinship and the social structure of the area during the period the cemeteries were in use (Jurney 1987: 265-266).

Summary

Archaeologists have developed new standards and guidelines for incorporation of descendant communities into archaeological research (Watkins et al. 1995; Zimmerman 1994a,b). However, these new standards remain to be implemented on a consistent basis. The lack of community input on the initial excavation of the African Burial Ground site serves as a reminder of why the cooperative involvement of descendants is necessary for successful completion of research on historic cemeteries (Harrington 1993). In cases where cooperative relationships are developed, projects achieve greater success (Parrington and Roberts 1984; Roberts 1984). Interaction between archaeologists and descendant communities can also provide opportunities to gain new insights about
cemetery age and use through oral histories (Deming et al. 1993; Fox 1984; Lebo 1988; Taylor et al. 1986) and other types of data. While such approaches are beneficial (Clark 1990), there is even more useful information to be gained through collection of traditional narratives and incorporation of folklore methodology as part of the research design (Powell and Dockall 1995). In the following chapters, I present materials, methods, and case examples of how a broader analytical framework was used in the investigation of the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery, in La Marque, Texas.
CHAPTER III
MATERIALS AND METHODS

State Highway 3 was originally constructed in 1927. The original road ran through the Phillips Memorial Cemetery, the only cemetery at that time that was available to African Americans in the area. County workers were responsible for exhuming the graves within the right-of-way, and county records indicate that grave plots were purchased within the cemetery for the reinterment of the exhumed individuals. Therefore, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) workers were surprised when they encountered human skeletal remains and casket hardware during the expansion of the highway in the spring of 1991.

During the summer of 1991, archaeologists from Texas A&M University were contracted by TxDOT to excavate and analyze the contents of each exposed grave shaft within the right-of-way, and to prepare the recovered human skeletal remains and personal effects for reburial at another location on the same day. With the assistance of workers provided by TxDOT, archaeologists excavated 44 grave shafts. In the summer of 1992, Texas A&M archaeologists returned and excavated the eight graves that had been covered
by the highway concrete during the 1991 field season. I returned to the La Marque area in the summer of 1993 to conduct tape-recorded interviews with community members that visited the site during the excavation and to examine archival documents.

During the course of the project, we found that only the bodies were removed from the graves, and that the caskets were returned to the grave shaft and buried beneath the highway. Only three of the 52 grave shafts contained over 90 percent of their skeletal elements (Dockall 1996:204). The majority of the skeletal remains exposed by TxDOT and recovered by archaeologists were elements that fell out of clothing during the 1927 exhumation (Dockall 1996). All human skeletal remains and personal effects from each grave shaft were placed in individual caskets and reinterred at Mainland Cemetery, a predominantly African-American cemetery in the nearby town of Hitchcock, Texas.

During the excavation process, some members of the community associated with the Phillips Memorial Cemetery visited the site and provided crew members with valuable information relating to cemetery usage, layout, and associated features. Visitors used a variety of traditional narrative genres, including family history, personal experience narratives, occupational lore, and gossip, to convey information about the cemetery's establishment, site formation processes, and the past and present social climates that have affected the
cemetery. Highway workers also provided information about site formation processes and artifact function, in addition to providing insight into the current social climate through the exchange of gossip. Members of the archaeological crew recognized the importance of the visitors' comments to the archaeological investigation and noted the information in field notebooks. I volunteered for the project and assisted the field crew on August 3 and on August 9 through August 11, 1991. While there, I witnessed and participated in several conversations with community members and highway personnel. Because community members were upset about the disturbance of the graves, the initial interaction between archaeologists and site visitors was strained. However, after the archaeologists asked questions about the cemetery, and I asked about the history of the community, relations improved. Community members appreciated our interest in incorporating their views and became eager to share their knowledge about the site and its surrounding community. After talking with community members and reviewing the notes made by the archaeologists, I realized that the Phillips Cemetery project provided a unique opportunity to supplement the basic archaeological investigations by collecting folk narratives and oral history about the site and its associated community.

The principal investigator of the project, Dr. D. Gentry Steele of Texas A&M University, also recognized the value of the data provided by community members. I was hired as part of the field crew that returned to the site the
following summer to excavate eight graves that had been under the existing highway during the 1991 excavation. In addition to assisting the crew with excavating and documenting the graves, I made arrangements to conduct tape-recorded interviews with two prominent descendant community members. These individuals, Mr. Nathan Bell, who claims ownership of the cemetery, and Mr. Robert Williams, a resident of La Marque since the early 1900s, had provided the most valuable information to the project during the previous season. Unfortunately, Mr. Bell was involved in a legal dispute over whether his family had been properly compensated for graves within the right-of-way when the highway was originally constructed. Prior to the first scheduled interview, Mr. Bell informed me that he and Mr. Williams had been advised by his attorney to postpone the interviews until after the case had been resolved.

*Historical Documents*

I returned to Galveston County in the summer of 1993 to conduct archival research at various libraries, at the Galveston County Courthouse, and at the local funeral home in Texas City that serviced the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. A search for documents relating to the history and economic development of the region was conducted at the Rosenberg Memorial Library. At the Moore Memorial Library in Texas City, and at the La Marque Public
Library I reviewed documents that contained information on the Phillips Cemetery, on the social organization of La Marque, and on La Marque's African-American community during the period of cemetery use. I examined transcripts of the Texas City Oral History Project and photocopied excerpts that contained information about the social climate of the La Marque and Texas City area during the period that the cemetery was in use. At the courthouse, I located and photocopied deed transfers and Galveston County Commissioners Court Minutes related to the establishment of the cemetery and to the original construction of Highway 3. Emken Linton funeral home provided access to their accounts ledger, which contained the names of some individuals who were interred in the cemetery. The ledger also provided information about demographics, genealogies, and social relationships of those individuals. The only burial records available for examination dated from 1914 - 1929. Since the Phillips Cemetery was the only cemetery available to African-Americans during that time period (Button 1991), all records in which the individual was listed as "colored" and buried in La Marque were photocopied. Local newspapers published during the period of 1880 - 1927 were examined for articles about the Phillips Memorial Cemetery.
Tape Recorded Interview

As I planned the summer 1993 trip to La Marque to conduct archival research, I telephoned and wrote to several individuals, including Mr. Bell, to arrange tape recorded interviews during my visit. I received a positive response from everyone, however when I called to confirm our appointments, Mr. Bell once again declined to participate because of the ongoing litigation. All of the others also declined to participate, possibly in deference to Mr. Bell's wishes. Fortunately, while reviewing a book on the history of La Marque, I noticed that the contribution on African Americans was written by a member of the Bell family. I contacted the author, Mrs. Pearl Bell Dorsey, and she agreed to participate in a tape-recorded interview. The interview was conducted in Mrs. Dorsey's home in La Marque on July 8, 1993 and focused primarily on the Phillips Cemetery and on life in the African-American community during the period that the cemetery was in use. Mrs. Dorsey began by tracing her family's genealogy and told stories illustrating their history. She also talked at length about the early African-American community in La Marque. I attribute much of the success of the interview to "stranger value," a phenomenon documented by field interviewers in which informants feel more comfortable being interviewed by an outsider than they do by someone with whom they have an established relationship (Goldstein 1964:64; Ives 1980:38; Jackson 1987:66-67). I recorded the
interview with a hand-held audio cassette recorder and transcribed the tape after I returned from the trip. The transcript of the interview comprises Appendix I.

*Contextual Analysis*

Folklorist Alan Dundes emphasized the importance of collecting contextual information along with text because "only if such data is (sic) provided can any serious attempt be made to explain WHY a particular text is used in a particular situation" (1964:254 emphasis in original). When appropriate contextual information is collected (Abrahams 1963; Ben-Amos 1979; Brunvand 1979; Deetz 1977; Young 1985), much more information can be obtained than just why a text was chosen. Roger Abrahams asserted that folklore "...reflects the preoccupation and values of those who transmit it" (1963:393). With contextual information, folklorists can investigate, among other things, the cultural values and conflicts reflected in the texts (Abrahams 1963; Deetz 1977), and the ideas and beliefs of the individual producing the text (Brunvand 1979:53; Deetz 1977).

In an early argument for incorporating contextual analysis into folklore methodology, Dan Ben-Amos (1971) characterized folklore as an artistic, communicative event. He defined context as the "time, place, and company in
which folklore actions happen" (Ben-Amos 1971:11) reducing the concept of context to a setting, which is only one aspect of context. Katherine Young (1985) and Erving Goffman (1974) asserted that context is more fluid and meaningful than a setting. Later, Ben-Amos provided a more inclusive description of context and contextual analysis:

...context is not an appendix to the text that can be removed or maintained at the discretion of the folklorist. In reality there is a complete integration between text and context, although the exact nature of these interrelationships could be subject to some of the most interesting and challenging folklore studies. In an eclectic discipline like folklore, it is possible to abstract text from context for analytical purposes, but such a research strategy limits the nature of applicable and possible solutions.

(1979:50)

This thesis examines the integration between text and context. The narratives were performed in a context laden with cultural messages and conflicts. The performers watched as their audience removed the remains of former community members, and conceivably family members, from what was intended as their final resting place. Although the archaeologists performed
their jobs with respect for those being exhumed and for descendants of the dead
still living in the community, the nature of the project and the arduous
conditions forced the archaeologists to break a number of social taboos. Some
eamples include stepping in a grave, removing items from not only a
graveyard, but from the grave itself, handling human remains, and dismantling
the coffins for reburial. These actions and the community’s previous
experiences relating to the Phillips Memorial Cemetery influenced the
presentation of the narratives presented in this thesis.

Many of the narrative performances revealed conflicts, past and present,
relating to the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. Roger Abrahams stated that "It is
vitally important to present any corpus of lore with some analysis of the
conflicts which exist within the culture. . . and to attempt to relate the lore, as
strategies within this universe of conflict, to the conflict itself" (1963:394). By
investigating the conflicts alluded to in narratives performed by community
members visiting the site, this thesis more thoroughly depicts the dynamic
social context surrounding the Phillips Memorial Cemetery project.

Summary

During the excavation of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery, a variety of
traditional narratives were recorded which related to historical events involving
the site, and to the broader context of the site within the community's history. These narratives were supplemented with archival documents on changes in community structure, socioeconomic patterns and conflicts within the communities of La Marque, Texas City, and the broader United States.

John Clark, Jr. recently advocated the use of a wide range of historical resources in historic archaeology, and a new methodology for taking advantage of the wealth of data available for interpreting historic archaeological sites (Clark 1990). In addition to discussing the value of analyzing data on economic patterns, family and social relationships, and genealogy, Clark notes that traditional narratives and oral historical sources are invaluable for fully understanding the context of excavation and for interpreting the historic archaeological record:

Archaeology provides an unique opportunity to consider and study cultural patterning and change. While we are excavating historical sites, we sometimes have visitors who offer personal reminiscences about the site, and sometimes people who are familiar with the site are sought out and interviewed... By questioning informants, we can get information on the feelings and perceptions of former site occupants or their descendants about cultural change. It should be kept in mind, however, that the
memory of any individual may be faulty, so that we should always have supplementary data—excavated archaeological remains, documents, or supporting testimony from other informants.

(Clark 1990:315)

He further notes that historical archaeological research does not achieve its full interpretive potential unless the archaeological, documentary, and oral historical evidence are presented in proper context, which he defines as "...the relationship that the site has to the broad cultural and historical developments of the local area, the region, and the nation" (Clark 1990:318).

This thesis takes such an approach to the mortuary remains recovered from the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. A wide variety of data were available, including data from archaeological excavation, archival and narrative data that placed the cemetery within a larger sociohistorical framework. These data provide valuable information about how the descendant community perceived the site, the archaeologists, and the past and present conflicts within the community.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND EARLY CONFLICTS

In this section I present the historical and social context of Phillips Memorial Cemetery. The chapter begins with a general description of the city of La Marque, and the history of the city and of African-American founding families in the area. I review the history of cemetery use in the area, including conflicts between members of the African-America community and county and state officials over the 1927 exhumations. Finally, I present evidence of early conflicts relating to the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. This is particularly important for understanding how narratives contain information directly related to the site and its investigation, and also how the community viewed the process of the archaeological investigation itself.

*General Description*

La Marque was known as Buttermilk Station prior to 1867, when residents of the town changed the name to Highland City (Cappolino 1986:2; Dockall et al. 1996a:25). Highland City's first post office was founded in 1869 (Cappolino 1986:3; Dockall et al. 1996a:25), but because mail for High Island
was consistently misrouted to Highland City, Highland City changed its name to La Marque in either 1882 (Webb 1952:15) or in 1886 (Cappolino 1986:3). La Marque remained unincorporated until 1953 (Branda 1976:501; Dockall et al. 1996a:25). Only the encroachment and threat of being annexed by neighboring Texas City prompted the residents of La Marque, the largest unincorporated city in Texas at the time, to complete the final legal phase of incorporation (Cappolino 1986:27-29; Dockall et al. 1996a:25).

Today, Texas City lies at the northern border of La Marque. The respect populations of Texas City and La Marque are 40,822 and 14,120 (Kingston 1991:228). Both cities are in Galveston County, which has an area of 876.3 square miles and a population of over 200,000 (Kingston 1991:228). In 1990, the average per capita income of Galveston County was $16,995 and the ethnic composition consisted of 75.5% Anglo Americans, 17.6% African Americans, 14.2% Hispanic Americans, 1.6% Asian Americans, 0.3% Native Americans, and 4.9% others (Kingston 1991:228). The area economy is driven by the Port of Galveston, industrial and petrochemical plants, ship construction, commercial fishing, and tourism (Kingston 1991:229).
Mrs. Pearl Bell Dorsey and Mrs. Vera Gary provided information about the founding African-American families in La Marque. Mrs. Dorsey relayed the information during the tape recorded interview, which is included in this thesis as Appendix I. Mrs. Gary provided the Moore Memorial Public Library with a copy of the Bell, Hobgood, and Britton family history that she prepared for a family reunion in 1990. The kinship information is divided into family groups and lists the descendants of the founding families as "children of . . ." and "grandchildren of . . ." and so on. The names are not listed in birth order, and the names of the parents of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren are not provided. Therefore, I have not provided a kinship chart for the founding families. The names in parentheses below are variants that have been used in reference to the same person in other forms of documentation, such as census records, grave markers, and interviews.

The founding African-American families of La Marque were the Brittons, the Phillips, and three unrelated families with the surname Bell (Appendix I). The first Bell family to settle in La Marque were Calvin and Kate (Johnston) Bell, who arrived in the 1870s (Appendix I). Calvin Bell was born in Mississippi (date unknown), and served as a slave to the McCray family who lived near Jasper, Texas. Calvin left Jasper as a young man and worked as a cattleman in a
cattle station near League City, Texas (Gary 1990), where he met his future wife, Kate Johnston (Appendix I). Neither Mrs. Vera Gary or Mrs. Pearl Bell Dorsey explained whether Calvin Bell was freed by the Jasper family, ran away, or left after the Civil War. Kate was a white German immigrant who was born in 1834, came to the United States in 1839, and married Calvin in 1870 (Gary 1990). The following children were born to Calvin and Kate: George, Calvin Jr., William, Henry, Flavery (Florie), Mary, and Louise (Gary 1990).

The family of Norvell Bell and his wife Catherine (birth name unknown) were the second Bells to arrive in La Marque. Norvell was born in North Carolina and Catherine was born in Virginia. They met and married in Tuskegee, Alabama and moved to Texas between 1871 and 1876 (Gary 1990). The following children were born to Norvell and Catherine: Walter, Gratton, Frank, Norvell Jr., Nathan (King), Robert, Ellen, Mary, and Phoebe (Gary 1990). Norvell and Catherine's eldest daughter Ellen married Dave Hobgood in Alabama and moved to La Marque in the early 1880s from Virginia (Gary 1990). Mrs. Vera Gary's manuscript does not explain why Ellen was in Alabama and Virginia while her parents lived in Texas. Dave and Ellen's children were: Henry, James, Robert, Millie, Pearl, Claudia and Catherine (Gary 1990). After Norvell Sr.'s death, William Bell (the last Bell to arrive in La Marque) married Catherine (Appendix I). William and Catherine had one child, Sandy Bell (Appendix I).
Another prominent founding African-American family in La Marque were the Brittons. Tom Britton, Sr. was born a slave in Texas in 1850. Tom worked as a cattleman at the same cattle station as Calvin Bell (Appendix I; Gary 1990). While there, he met and married Molly Whittington (Needs), a white English immigrant who worked as a cook (Appendix I; Gary 1990). Tom had a daughter, Henrietta Marks, before he married Molly. Tom and Molly had the following children: Tom Jr., James, William, Albert, George, Neil (Neal), Dean (Deon). Tom Sr.'s sister, Priscilla (Pricilla) also moved to La Marque with her husband, Albert J. Phillips, for whom the cemetery was named. Priscilla and Albert's children were: Rosa (Rose), Mary (Heddi), Menny (Minnie), and Priscilla (Pricilla) (Appendix I:113). Later, Mary married Norvell and Catherine Bell's son, Nathan (King), who had a later influence on events affecting the Phillips Memorial Cemetery.

Community Development

The size of La Marque increased through the years and the African-American residents formed a close community. Members of the founding African-American families married each other as well as newcomers to the community (Appendix I; Gary 1990). When asked about economic stratification
within the community when she was a child, Pearl Bell Dorsey fondly recalled
the close relationships forged over time:

They (Arthur Britton's family) lived in the next house. And well
whatever we had, they shared. And whatever they had, we
shared. And he had a garden and Mama would go over and get
some of his greens or something out of the garden or if we had it,
they'd come over here. We're still like one family... And so... if
we were milking our cow, they had milk. If they were milking,
we had milk. So this is the way people lived. Somebody got sick,
everybody would send something to the mom. If they were very
sick, they would go and sit with them. And at night, I can
remember my father going at night to sit with - well he was a
Mason, and he would go and sit with anybody, it didn't make a
difference. And once in a while, I can remember Mama going, but
Dad would walk her wherever she was going and then go back
and walk her back home. They would take shifts, you know.
They would cook and send food with - for the people who were
sick. We had a good neighborhood...  

(Appendix I:128-129)
The strong sense of community was evident when Mrs. Dorsey spoke of racial tension in later years (Appendix I:145-148). When asked about racial conflicts in the area as she was growing up, Mrs. Dorsey claimed that there was no strife and she attributed later problems to the influx of outsiders into Texas City:

...we never had any problems. It was always the same problems, you know, they had the drugstores- when they started- that we couldn't go in. We went into the grocery stores, we always had an account there we could go in and get what we wanted and were treated nice. But as time went on you had new people moving in and also the older black and white people are gone... But still, we don't have any major problems.

(Appendix I:148)

The influx of outsiders mentioned by Dorsey is consistent with the pattern of economic development of the area during the early part of this century (Burch 1986; Cappolino 1986; Dockall et al. 1996a). In the late 19th century, the community relied primarily on farming and ranching for economic support (Cappolino 1986:3; Dockall et al. 1996a). The completion of the bridge connecting Galveston island with the mainland increased business in La
Marque, (Cappolino 1986:4) and provided job opportunities to community members and workers from surrounding areas (Dockall et al. 1996a).

The alternatives for African Americans were not as plentiful as those for Anglo Americans, as evidenced by the variety of jobs listed for members of each group in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 census records for the area (Dockall et al. 1996a). In 1900, Anglo Americans held 84 different jobs and African Americans occupied 14 (Dockall et al. 1996a). In 1910, the gap was smaller with Anglo Americans performing 30 different jobs compared to 19 occupations listed for African Americans (Dockall et al. 1996a). The opportunities for Anglo Americans had increased by 1920 to 61 occupations, and held the same for African Americans who listed 20 different jobs (Dockall et al. 1996a). The jobs listed by African Americans were primarily hard labor or service oriented, while Anglo Americans occupied professional positions (such as engineer, doctor, and store owner) (Dockall et al. 1996a).

*Early Conflicts Within the Community*

Several narratives were collected throughout the duration of the project that reflected early conflicts within the community surrounding the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. Because these narratives are about people and events so far in the past, they initially appear to be unrelated to the 1991 and 1992
archaeological excavations at Phillips Memorial Cemetery. However, examination of these narratives reveals the complex relationships between members of prominent families in the community. Most importantly, the narratives relay events that formed the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the cemetery in the minds of past community members. The same narratives that were shared with the archaeological crew have been passed down to descendant generations and combined with subsequent events related to the cemetery to form the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the cemetery in contemporary community members (Herman 1985; also see Chapter VII). It is this presence that has affected the site formation processes at the Phillips Memorial Cemetery and that triggered the numerous and varied reactions within the community when excavations began for highway expansion (Powell and Dockall 1995). Consequently, these narratives and supporting historical documents are crucial to a complete understanding of the social climate in which these excavations took place.

Racial Tension

The transcripts of interviews conducted as part of the Texas City Oral History Project provide evidence of racial tension. Mr. Emmett Lowry, former mayor of Texas City, recalled driving out to La Marque with his mother as a
child in the early 1920s to a Ku Klux Klan gathering (Moore Memorial Public Library 1981:15). Mr. John Wilcox, a member of one of the oldest families in the area also recalled the Ku Klux Klan in Texas City.

There was a Ku Klux Klan here, but it was very quiet. I don't think they ever caused any trouble ... The white boys and the Negro boys used to fight all the time; the white boys (sic) "gang" would go down there and fight the Negro boys ... back in the twenties ... thirties.

(Moore Memorial Public Library 1988:64)

Mr. Wilcox also acknowledges that, during this same time period, there was an "unwritten rule" that "a black person was not to be on the north side of Texas Avenue after sundown" (Moore Memorial Public Library 1988:65). He added "I never did notice any hard feelings; 'course there were feelings, I am sure-- but they were never brought to light" (Moore Memorial Public Library 1988:65).

Mrs. Pearl Bell Dorsey echoed these sentiments during a tape recorded interview when she recalled that there was no racial tension when she was a child in La Marque (Appendix I:124-125). However, the existence of racial tension was evident in a story that Mrs. Dorsey relayed
about her grandparents, Calvin and Kate Bell. After living in La Marque and starting a family, Kate Bell was reported to authorities for being married to a black man. Mrs. Dorsey explained that Kate was imprisoned for two years for marrying a black man.

She was in for two years and she came back home and came right on back to her children. . . . According to the state law, it was that she should have known better than to marry a black man. So he didn't know any better. But . . . it was kind of a hate thing that started. That's how she- Somebody reported that she was married to a black man and they came and got her. But they never did- I don't think they ever bothered Mrs. Britton [also a white woman married to a black man].

(Appendix I:144)

Conflicts Involving the Phillips Memorial Cemetery

The Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery (41GV125) is currently located in Texas City, Texas, approximately 15 miles from the county seat of Galveston. The cemetery is bordered by Mentor Drive and by State Highway Three (Figure 2). During the period that the cemetery was active, the cemetery was
Figure 2. Map of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery (41GV125), Galveston County, Texas (modified from Powell and Dockall 1995).
under the jurisdiction of what is now the city of La Marque. Community members recalled that the only cemetery available to African Americans in the area at that time was the Phillips Memorial Cemetery (Nathan Bell, personal communication August 1991; Button 1991; Dockall et al. 1996a; Appendix I). Mrs. Dorsey also recalled that "Mr. Emken buried all of the black people... Yeah, he did, you know. Everybody used Emken's funeral home" (Appendix I:112).

Funeral records from the Emken Linton Funeral Home dating from 1914 - 1929 refer to the "La Marque colored cemetery" as the place of interment for all individuals listed as "colored" who were not shipped elsewhere for burial. Later funeral records, dating from 1938-1946 (records for the intervening years, 1929-1938, no longer exist), distinguish between two cemeteries for African Americans in the area, the Rising Star cemetery and what is now the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery (Button 1991:2). The switch in funeral records from the general descriptor "the La Marque colored cemetery" to using the specific name of the place of interment supports the assertion that the Phillips Memorial Cemetery was the only cemetery available to African Americans until the creation of the Rising Star Cemetery, which began around 1929 (Button 1991:2; Dockall et al. 1996a:42).
Establishment of the Cemetery

Based on discussions with present-day residents of La Marque, many believe that Albert J. Phillips donated a portion of his land for use as a cemetery. Others believe that Calvin Bell was the donor. Galveston County deed records indicate that on September 22, 1884, William J. Jones donated land for use as a school and for religious purposes. This land which may have become the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery:

...I William J. Jones of said state (Texas) and county (Galveston) for good and sufficient causes do hereby donate to William T. Austin County judge of said count this successors in office for free school purposes one acre of land at Highland Tank being part of a three hundred twenty acre survey patented to me by the state of Texas said one acre to begin seventy five feet from the center of the track of the Galveston and Henderson Rail Road at the S.E. corner of a ten acre tract sold and conveyed to Sylvia Britton guardian of Wm. Britton through seventy five feet on the line of the right-of-way of said Rail Road and run back on the line of said William Britton survey parallel to the said Britton line to a
sufficient distance to make the said area of one acre to be used for
the purpose indicated and for religious worship if required.

The connection between Albert J. Phillips and the land referred to in the
deed is tenuous at best. Pearl Bell Dorsey indicated that the land used for the
cemetery once was associated with a local church, Bell Zion, and used as a
school (personal communication July 1993). The Campbellville Missionary
Baptist Church was dedicated in 1885, and later became Bell's Chapel and then
Bell Zion (Moore Memorial Public Library 1986:5). According to documents
housed at the Moore Public Library in Texas City, "the original edifice [of the
church] was located near Hwy. 3 on a plot of land that had been donated to the
community by W.J. Jones" (Moore Memorial Public Library 1986:5). Albert J.
Phillips was a founding member of the church, along with Charles Anderson,
T.J. Britton, Walter Bell Sr., Dave Hobgood, William Bell, Catherine Bell and
Ellen Hobgood (Moore Memorial Public Library 1986:5). This may be the parcel
of land that was later used as the Phillips Memorial cemetery. However, the
date that it first was used as a cemetery, and how and when ownership was
attributed to Albert J. Phillips, have yet to be determined.

A minor controversy regarding the Phillips Memorial Cemetery was
reported by Pearl Bell Dorsey. King Bell (Nathan Sr., son of Norvell and
Catherine Bell) married Mary (Heddi) Phillips (daughter of Albert J. Phillips).
When Albert J. Phillips passed away, his land was divided between his two daughters, Mary Phillips Bell and Rosa Phillips Johnson. Although the community had been using the land as a cemetery for years, free of charge, King Bell apparently began charging for grave plots. Mrs. Dorsey reported that some in the community objected to King Bell charging for plots and believed that any economic gain from the cemetery should have been divided by Phillips' daughters (Dorsey, personal communication July, 1993). That King Bell charged for grave plots is substantiated in both the Emken Linton funeral records and the Galveston County Commissioners' meeting minutes related to the 1927 exhumations at the Phillips Cemetery.

1927 Exhumations

The construction of Highway 3 (then known as Highway 6) in 1927 created some controversy over the Phillips Memorial Cemetery. The road ran through what is now Phillips Memorial Cemetery, the only cemetery available to African Americans in the area in 1927. County workers removed the bodies from graves within the right-of-way, and records indicate that the county purchased individual burial plots for reinterment of the bodies. The Galveston County Commissioners' notes dated July 12, 1927 record the recommendation of the Road and Bridge Committee that the court allow Commissioner Dantin to
enter into a written contract with King Bell of La Marque for
the purchase by the county of 50 or more lots in the La Marque
Colored Cemetery, at a cost not exceeding $5.00 per lot, these lots
being needed for the removal of the bodies on the new right-of-
way of Highway no. 6 between the two La Marque crossings. ... 

This agreement allowed King Bell to sell plots within the cemetery for the
reinterment of individuals whose remains were exhumed from the new right-of
way. The August 16, 1927 meeting of the Commissioners' Court upheld the
previous month's agreement.

It is ordered that this work be done by force account under the
supervision of the Road and Bridge Committee and the County
Health Officer at a cost not exceeding the sum of $500.00; the
county is to furnish all materials. ... It is further ordered that the
Road and Bridge Committee be and they are authorized to
purchase the necessary land for new graves, at a cost not
exceeding $5.00 per grave.
A group of citizens appeared before the Commissioners' Court on September 12, 1927, questioning the allocation of funds for the purchase of the new grave plots. The Road and Bridge Committee was ordered by the court to investigate the matter. On October 25, 1927, the court decreed that the money would be divided between King Bell and the estate of Rosa Johnson (daughter of Albert and Priscilla Phillips).

...it is agreed that the county shall pay one-fourth the sum of $300.00 for the purpose of certain grave spaces near La Marque on property owned jointly by King Bell and the estate of Rosa Johnson, to the estate of Rosa Johnson and three-fourths of said sum to King Bell.

By granting three quarters of the payment to King Bell, the court implicitly acknowledged his ownership of the cemetery. Carolyn Button (1991), a local historian noted that the records from the 1940s at Emken-Linton funeral home refer to the cemetery as King Bell's cemetery to distinguish it from the Rising Star cemetery, which became available to African-Americans in the area sometime around 1929. That the cemetery was referred to as "King Bell's cemetery" indicates that King Bell was perceived as the owner, and that, even as late as 1946, the cemetery had not yet become known as the Phillips Memorial.
Cemetery. However, the fact that the Commissioners’ Court granted the estate of Rosa Johnson one quarter of the money allocated for the purchase of grave plots suggests that other descendants of Albert and Priscilla Phillips had a legitimate claim of ownership.

The Commissioners’ Court documents indicate that King Bell sold plots within the cemetery to the county for the reinterment of individuals whose graves were located within the highway right-of-way. However, an eyewitness account of the removal and reburial of the bodies, recorded in field director Joseph F. Powell’s field notebook, along with archaeological investigations in 1991 and 1992, reveal that county workers removed only the bodies from the graves. The caskets and liners were left in the original graves within the right-of-way, and the exhumed bodies may have been reinterred in a mass grave in the northeast section of the cemetery (see Figure 2), rather than in the individual plots purchased by the county.

Mr. Robert Williams, an occasional visitor to the site during the 1991 excavations provided a personal-experience narrative about the exhumation of the graves in 1927. The following account is taken verbatim from the field director’s field notebook:

Mr. Williams said he was a child in 1927 and remembers playing on the concrete slab [covering Burial 38] waiting for cars going to
Galveston to pass. He said that there was an old fence marking the property line of the cemetery near the last flag in the trees [north] of Burial 5, and that graves extended to the railroad right-of-way. He also said he recalls burials in the section of the cemetery we are working on. According to Mr. Williams, burials began in the 1890's and continued in this portion [of the cemetery] until 1927. At that time, the County came out, exhumed each grave in the direct area of the road. He watched as they used mules to reopen a huge plot for reburial. Each casket was "popped open" - suggesting that lids were intact - and he said workers let the kids look in to see skeletonized individuals. All the exhumed bodies were taken to the single mass grave and reinterred.

The representation of skeletal elements recovered from the graves excavated in 1991 and 1992 support Mr. Williams' description (Dockall 1996; Powell J. 1996). The typical casket contained only those elements that would have fallen out of clothes during relocation (Dockall 1996; Powell J. 1996). Also, a large depression in the area of the cemetery indicated by Mr. Williams as the location of the mass grave was exposed when the unexcavated portion of the cemetery was cleared in 1992 for mapping (see Figure 2).
Summary

In this chapter I have provided information necessary for a contextual analysis of the narratives and archival documents presented in this thesis. Genealogical information about the founding African-American families in La Marque and discussion about how they developed a close community provides a social context for the narratives and historical documents. The information on the African-American community also revealed how the Phillips Memorial Cemetery has become entwined with the history of many families in the area. Economic data illustrated the shift from an independent rural community to one that depended increasingly on employment in hard labor and service positions. The increased job opportunities brought an influx of outsiders into the area, which contributed to the peripheralization of the African-American community in La Marque and to the increase in racial tension in the area. The 1927 construction of Highway 3 contributed to economic growth for the shipping and petrochemical industries of Galveston, Texas City, and Houston. For La Marque, the construction represented the desecration of family members' graves and the community's inability to prevent it. The 1991-1992 excavation and expansion of Highway 3 resurrected these feelings, and provided an outlet of expression for tension within the community.
CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS AND OTHER NARRATIVES

Archaeologists gained insight to the social climate in which the excavation took place through the actions of the descendant community, and through narratives performed by site visitors and TxDOT workers associated with the project. Descendant community members protested at the site, obtained local media attention featuring the cemetery relocation, and filed lawsuits in an attempt to prevent disturbance of the graves. Although the cemetery had not been active since the 1950s, and had fallen into a state of neglect, it remained an important symbol of identity for the residents of La Marque. As excavation proceeded, community members and highway workers distinguished themselves as members of their respective folk groups through their use of traditional narratives.

*Modern Conflicts Relating to the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery*

When the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) began widening Highway 3 near the cemetery in the spring of 1991, the Phillips Memorial
Cemetery once again became the center of controversy within the community (Powell L. 1996; Powell and Dockall 1995). Angered by the disturbance of family graves, older members of the community filed a lawsuit and asked that the graves not be disturbed, and younger community members initially displayed hostile behavior toward members of the archaeological field crew. Additionally, traditional narrative performances by community members and by highway construction workers at the site revealed some animosity between African Americans and Anglo Americans who lived in the area.

Initial Descendant Community Reaction

The community's indignation over the disturbance of the graves was manifested in protests against removal and relocation of the graves. Several area newspapers, including The Galveston Daily News, Texas City Sun and The Houston Chronicle, published a minimum of eleven articles relating to the Phillips Cemetery controversy. In addition, several television stations reported on the relocation project. The high level of community concern was evident in the field director's notes about the county court judge's visit to the site:

At about 2:30 [p.m.], a news helicopter flew over the site, then landed. Lots of reporters and local folks arrived (approx. 50
people). Judge (Thoma) decided to postpone the decision [regarding the right-of-way] until tomorrow at 10:00 [a.m.]. We left the site after witnessing one auto accident [caused by people stopping in the road to see what was going on].

The anger of various community members was particularly well documented in newspaper accounts. Nathan Bell, grandson of Albert J. Phillips, thought that it was "disgraceful, disturbing the dead" (Simsen 1991). County Commissioner Wayne Johnson stated that he was "...appalled that anyone would have been so callous as to have built a highway through a cemetery and possibly on top of people who are buried" (Curry and Maynard 1991).

Community members not only were upset by the disturbance of the graves, but also questioned whether the highway department had properly obtained the new right-of-way, and protested against the removal of the graves (Texas City Sentinel Staff 1991). Mr. Nathan Bell contended that the highway department had only 75 feet of right-of-way, challenging the TxDOT’s claim of 100 feet of right-of-way. County Court Judge John Thoma granted the highway department 75 feet of right-of-way while deeds were reviewed, then rescinded his decision (Texas City Sentinel Staff 1991). After visiting the site on July 24, 1991, (see above) Judge Thoma granted the TxDOT 100 feet of right-of-way. Mr.
Nathan Bell was not pleased with the decision and viewed Judge Thoma's actions with suspicion. In 1992 Mr. Nathan Bell filed a lawsuit seeking restitution from the state:

"The state alleged it had 100 feet of right-of-way that it had purchased," Richard Bell [Nathan Bell's attorney] said. "Then they backed off from that and said they had 75 feet. But upon examination, I have discovered they're only entitled to 15 feet of right-of-way, which is quite a bit of difference."

(Maynard 1992)

Community members attempted to maintain control over events affecting their cemetery through the protests, statements, and actions described above. After their unsuccessful attempts at preventing the removal of burials within the right-of-way, the presence of an Anglo-American field crew probably intensified the community's frustrations with the dominant culture. The frustrations were evident in confrontations with the field crew at the beginning of the project. Occasionally, drivers on adjacent roads would slow their cars as they approached the site and shout at the crew members. Visitors initially asked accusatory questions such as "Why are y'all digging up these poor black folks?", and claimed that "you won't find no black people in Evergreen
[pseudonym for a nearby Anglo-American cemetery], they don't let them in
down there. But you don't see them building a highway through it either!"
Racial tension was especially evident during the 1992 field season.
Archaeologists arrived in the field approximately one month after riots erupted
across the country when four Los Angeles police officers accused of using
excessive force to subdue African-American motorist Rodney King were
acquitted.

Lawsuit

In an effort to prevent disturbance of the graves, older community
members, led by Nathan Bell, Jr. (son of King Bell and grandson of Albert J.
Phillips) filed a lawsuit asking the state to halt expansion of Highway 3. In an
effort to gain community support, Nathan Bell allowed himself to be
interviewed by local television news and newspaper reporters. The news
stories heightened local interest and resulted in numerous visits to the site by
local residents during excavations. The county judge refused to issue an
injunction that would halt excavation of the graves and expansion of the
highway. Another lawsuit concerning ownership of the cemetery and
compensation for use of the land within the right-of-way has yet to be resolved.
Destruction of Surface Grave Goods

When archaeologists arrived at the site to begin excavation in 1991, the section of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery that was not impacted by highway expansion was overgrown and barely recognizable as a cemetery. A few years prior to the expansion of Highway 3, some individuals had become concerned about the cemetery's state of disrepair. A long time community member Lovett Brown

...started a campaign to clean up the graves. I think he went to the city and asked them to clean up the graves, the cemetery. And they just destroyed a lot of markers during that time...They probably used tractors or something...to clean up, and they destroyed a lot of the markers.

(Appendix I:117)

Many of the graves in the Phillips Memorial Cemetery were never marked with headstones or other items (Appendix I; Dockall and Powell 1996; Powell and Dockall 1995). Most of the existing markers in the portion of the cemetery that was not affected by highway expansion are no longer standing,
and there are many piles of concrete rubble that probably were once grave
markers.

*Social Climate Within the Community*

Although hostility toward the archaeologists eventually dissipated, racial
tension remained evident throughout the excavation process. The interaction
between archaeologists and TxDOT workers assigned to help with excavation
and with members of the descendant community provided further evidence of
the social tension aroused by the excavation of the cemetery. Members of each
folk group used traditional forms of communication to inform outsiders about
their group and to reveal their perceptions of the other group.

Texas Department of Transportation Workers

The Texas Department of Transportation assigned some of its employees
to assist the archaeologists with excavating the Phillips Memorial Cemetery.
The majority of the workers, who came from different offices (and even
different cities) within TxDOT, were not pleased with their reassignment.
Because the workers did not know each other, much of their interaction served
to establish a bond as members of a common occupational folk group. The
highway construction workers exchanged numerous legends about highway construction, exhibiting their familiarity with the lore of their folk group and displaying the group to outsiders in a favorable manner. They also demonstrated their frustration with the effects of the cemetery excavation on the expansion of Highway 3 through gossip that centered on the descendant community's resistance to the road expansion and cemetery excavation.

I was not present at the cemetery when the highway workers participated in an extended legend session that lasted an entire work day, and therefore will only be able to comment on the content of the narratives. However, several archaeological crew members provided accounts of the session with enough contextual information to make some analysis possible. The session was triggered by one accident and a series of near-accidents caused by drivers slowing and stopping to watch the archaeologists work. The content of the legends emphasized the excitement and danger of being a highway construction worker.

Two young men (approximately 19 - 20 years old) who worked for TxDOT only during the summer were assigned to assist the archaeologists. Their normal duty, painting lines on highways, exposed them to the dangers of motorists traveling at high speeds. They relayed many descriptions of near-misses and automobile accidents caused by inattentive drivers in which the construction worker barely escaped with his life (there were no female
characters). Usually the worker was able to walk away from the incident because of his quick reaction and reflexes. A TxDOT supervisor, who was visiting the site that day, responded to these tales by describing the more dangerous construction assignments. He also highlighted the importance of safety gear, particularly hard-hats, as he told his tales. The supervisor told of a construction accident in which a TxDOT worker was decapitated by a metal support beam for an overpass. Amazingly, the hard-hat was still on the severed head "as it rolled on the highway." The construction workers were impressed with the fact that, in spite of the severity of the accident, there wasn't a scratch on the deceased worker's head.

Another form of traditional communication in which the highway workers participated was gossip. TxDOT workers used this traditional form of communication to establish a common membership in an occupational folk group. In addition to the standard co-worker gossip, much of the gossip focused on the Mr. Nathan Bell's legal dispute over the right-of-way. The archaeologists did not participate in any conversations regarding the legal proceedings, and therefore were not active participants in gossip sessions. However, the TxDOT workers' favorite gossip topic concerned the legal proceedings and frequently resulted in long discussions in which the "the greed of the blackman" was the dominant theme.
Descendant Community

Members of the community who visited the site made numerous observations revealing their perceptions of highway workers. Although the TxDOT workers provided invaluable assistance to the archaeologists, the visitors to the site only noted behavior that reinforced the stereotype of highway workers as overpaid and lazy. The field director recalled a visit to the site by a local mortician, Mr. Richard Taylor. It was a particularly hot day, with temperatures over 100°F, and when Mr. Taylor arrived, he commented about two TxDOT workers who were taking a break while archaeologists were shovel-skimming the fill above a coffin lid. "How're these highway boys working out?" he asked. "They all get paid to sit around on their butts. Y'all [the archaeologists] are putting them to shame."

Mr. Bell was impressed with the stamina of the archaeologists, particularly the female archaeologists, working in the sweltering heat of a coastal Texas summer. During his daily visits, he frequently commented to the director and to other community members that the female archaeologists made the highway workers look bad. On one of his visits during the second field season, he observed myself and Helen Dockall, calf-deep in mud, shoveling grave shaft fill out of one of the graves while the TxDOT workers were on
break. Mr. Bell remarked to the field director that he "would be ashamed to be a highway worker around those girls."

The members of the community provided further insight to the social climate during the field seasons through a traditional exchange of dialogue, resembling a catch question. A catch question is a question whose answer is intended to embarrass the respondent (Brunvand 1986:97). The exchange of dialogue between the field director and community members occurred many times. Although news reports had indicated the cemetery in which the excavated remains were to be reburied, Powell recalled that visitors often approached him at the site and asked "Where are y'all burying these folks?"
The cemeteries closest to the La Marque community, in terms of location, were predominantly used by Anglo-Americans in La Marque and Texas City. However, Powell's reply to the inquiry was "Mainland Cemetery in Hitchcock," which is a predominantly African-American cemetery in a nearby town. The response to Powell's reply varied, depending on the participants and on whether the individual was alone or not. The following routine was performed repeatedly by pairs of older visitors, usually by a first-time visitor and a return visitor. The first-time visitor asked the first question, and after Powell's reply, asked "Why don't they bury 'em in Evergreen?" Powell explained that, at the request of the families who had relatives buried in Phillips Memorial Cemetery, the state had contracted for reinterment in Mainland Cemetery rather than in
the predominantly white cemeteries, the two men smiled, nudged each other, and made joking and good-natured comments such as "Must not've been enough money in it for 'em to let black folks in a white cemetery." The questioners also appeared to be amused at Powell's slight discomfort during the exchange. The patterned exchange of question, response, and resulting dialogue, along with the participant's amusement at Powell's mild discomfort during the exchange, resembles that of a catch question. Powell recalls that when he was approached by middle-aged and younger visitors, the pattern remained the same. However, the younger participants reacted with anger and, like the older visitors, made reference, in relatively hostile terms, to their perceived "greed of the whiteman."

Members of the La Marque community that visited the site, like the highway workers, also told narratives that identified them as members of a common folk group and that portrayed their group in a positive light to outsiders. Many visitors chatted amongst themselves, or with the archaeologists as they worked, about relatives who were buried in the cemetery or who lived in La Marque at the time the cemetery was in use. One of the most memorable histories that I heard was from Jacque Bell, great-great grandson of Norvell Bell, regarding the founding of La Marque.

Jacque visited the site and told stories while artifacts were being processed and recorded. Jacque informed us that his aunt, Vera Gary, was
the process of recording the family history. Although he appears to have confused some of the facts and may have embellished others, he was excited about the opportunity to share his family history with us.

The following account is a reconstruction of Jacque's narrative as recalled by the field director and myself, with help from an outline in my field notes.

The original Bell was a German man who lived in a nearby town in the early 1800s. He was married, but also had a slave mistress in La Marque with whom he had children. He provided his mistress and their children with two hundred and some-odd acres of land by taking all the rope he could and roping off the property. The property has been divided amongst Bell offspring ever since.

Jacque described how, when the community needed land for a church, the original Bell offered the use of a corner of his property.

Jacque also told of Kitty Bell, whom he described as "an English woman who married a black Bell and had his children." Jacque claimed that in the 1820s she was jailed and later committed to a mental asylum for her "unnatural" relations with a black man (see Chapter IV).
Summary

Several members of the descendant community and many highway workers performed narratives that reflected the contemporary social climate in La Marque during the 1991 and 1992 field seasons. The majority of the narratives served to identify the performer as a member of a particular folk group, and to portray the group in a favorable manner to outsiders. Individuals also performed narratives and other traditional exchanges that revealed the folk group's perception of outsiders. Interestingly, members of each group attributed the reviled trait of greed to members of the other group through these performances.
CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the Phillips Memorial Cemetery exhibited signs of neglect in the early 1990s, the descendant community’s reaction to the exhumation and relocation of graves within the right-of-way demonstrated the importance of the cemetery in the community’s consciousness. The cemetery served as a reference point for interaction between the individuals and groups involved with the relocation project. Past and present events associated with the cemetery shaped this interaction. The traditional narratives and the performance style chosen by the participants provide insight into the social climate surrounding the cemetery relocation.

*Mnemonic-Cognitive Presence of the Cemetery*

Bernard Herman’s (1985) application of the mnemonic-cognitive presence of an artifact to vernacular architecture provides a framework for exploring the role that the Phillips Memorial Cemetery plays in the consciousness of the descendant community. Herman (1985:157) explains the diachronic evolution
of vernacular architecture with the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the structures:

Once the artifact has been made, it endures through subsequent changes and expressive overlays as a statement of both a competence in the articulation and execution of ideas and as a memory looking back to physical and conceptual antecedents, and forward as an antecedent in its own right. ... Perception is rooted in empirical experience, and perception thus provides the core of abstraction for a grammar of working ideas. In this sense the object functions as a bearer of articulated competence and manifest memory; but it is in the mind of the builder, client, and audience that those perceptions are ordered into a cluster of available options left open to interpretation through performance.

(emphasis added)

Herman (1985) illustrates this concept by tracing the evolution of two homes from the time they were constructed, the initial performance, through several structural and stylistic modifications over time, the subsequent performances. He uses historical documents about the occupants to piece together their
relationships and status within the community and to correlate these with the subsequent performances evident in the homes.

Inherent in Herman's approach is the concept that, through subsequent performances, the object becomes "a document made meaningful through contextual relationships . . . [and] records through the passage of time the vitality and frailty of individual human needs and aspirations" (1985:174). Individuals derive the meaning of the object through cognitive and affective associations acquired through the utilization of the object and through the participation and/or observation of subsequent performances.

Herman (1985:171) states that "Houses in particular, are monuments to the living, and in the multiple layers of subsequent performance they display continuous and yet disparate attitudes to utility, community, style, and self." If houses are "monuments to the living," then cemeteries are monuments to the dead. The same processes affecting houses - additions, stylistic changes, etc. - also affect cemeteries and reflect attitudes toward "utility, community, style, and self." Analysis of the archaeological record at Phillips Memorial Cemetery and of related historical documents reveal discernible patterns reflecting temporal and stylistic changes, and competitive displays of wealth (Powell J. 1996). The analysis of the narratives related to the Phillips Memorial Cemetery relies primarily on the affective and cognitive associations that have formed in
the descendant community since the founding of the cemetery, and subsequent performances.

The Phillips Memorial Cemetery evoked memories and emotions among descendant community members that framed their interactions with individuals involved with the relocation project. Like all community cemeteries the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery triggered personal memories of the lives, deaths, and funerals of those interred there. However, the mnemonic-cognitive presence also evokes the memories and emotions of a period of oppression and persecution, which was exemplified by the exhumation of graves during the original construction of the highway. Older community members provided personal experience narratives recalling the original exhumations, and younger community members told archaeologists about the 1927 construction, indicating that the events had been passed on in family lore.

The assertion that the 1991 and 1992 relocation triggered the memories and emotions associated with the 1927 exhumations is supported by an incident that occurred in 1994, two years after the completion of the highway expansion. Four members of the archaeological crew (including myself) returned to the cemetery in March 1994 to photograph the unexcavated portion of the cemetery, which had been recently cleared. Many drivers on State Highway 3 slowed their cars to observe our actions as we examined and photographed headstones
and the remains of headstones and concrete curbing. As we took our final photograph, we noticed a car heading north on the highway making a U-turn. We returned to our vehicle, and the car that had reversed course entered Mentor Drive and parked next to the cemetery. We rounded the residential block to the south, then headed north on Highway 3, and drove past the cemetery. We observed the driver and two passengers from the car mentioned above walking through the cemetery and examining the features that we had photographed. These community members indicated that the television news stories and newspaper articles announcing our presence in 1991 and 1992 were not necessary to arouse concerns about the intrusion of outsiders. The actions of the individuals who reversed their course to examine the effects of our presence at the cemetery in 1994 demonstrated the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery within the community. The traditional narratives related to the cemetery and to the descendant community collected during the relocation project also revealed the mnemonic-cognitive presence of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery.
Racial Tension

Many of the narratives about early La Marque pertain to racial relationships during the period when the cemetery was in use. Mrs. Dorsey recalls a period of racial harmony, followed by trouble caused by outsiders from Texas City. The former mayor of Texas City, Mr. Lowry, and lifelong resident, Mr. Wilcox, recalled Ku Klux Klan meetings in the 1920s and 1930s (Moore Memorial Public Library 1981, 1988). Mr. Wilcox also recalled that "the white boys [sic] 'gang' would go [to La Marque] and fight the Negro boys" (Moore Memorial Public Library 1988:64) and that "there was an 'unwritten rule' that 'a black person was not to be on the north side of Texas Avenue after sundown'" (Moore Memorial Public Library 1988:65). These recollections represent a decrease in economic and social status for African Americans as the local economy moved from a farming base to an industrial base (Dockall et al. 1996), and an increase in animosity between the local community and the outsiders who moved to the area for job opportunities (Moore Memorial Public Library 1988; Appendix I).

Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Lowry's recollections of Ku Klux Klan meetings during the 1920s and 1930s support the assertion that the 1927 exhumation of
bodies at the Phillips Memorial Cemetery occurred during a period of oppression and persecution of African Americans. The 1991 and 1992 excavation and relocation triggered the memories and emotions associated with the 1927 exhumations and affected the reaction of the descendant community.

The seeds of frustration and powerlessness that were planted during the 1927 exhumations sprouted during the 1991 and 1992 relocation project. The community engaged in legal proceedings and informal protests in an effort gain some control over events affecting their community-actions which would have been severely limited by the social climate of 1927. The presence of a predominantly Anglo-American construction crew, and an Anglo-American archaeological crew probably reinforced the descendant community's frustrations with the dominant culture. The accusatory questions and confrontational attitudes of some community members during the first days of the project support this assertion.

Family Lore

Family lore was the other prevalent narrative form relating to the early La Marque community. Zeitlin et al. (1982b:8) state that family lore holds secrets "about the past...[and] about the way we choose to think of ourselves, about the dreams we project backwards on our ancestors concerning what we
would like them to have been, and what we need from them now.” The family lore performed at the site included tales about African Americans settling in La Marque, marriages and family feuds.

Jacque Bell told of how the original Bell “founded La Marque” and staked out his land by encircling it with a rope. Jacque also told of how, when the community needed a church and cemetery, the original Bell offered the use of a corner of his land. Historical documents and community recollections indicate that the cemetery is on land that was donated to the community by William J. Jones. The tale told by Jacque reflects a pride in his heritage and may be an example of a dream projected backwards on an ancestor (Zeitlin et al. 1982b:8). However, Jacque simply may have confused two incidents in the family history, as often happens in family folklore (Zeitlin et al. 1982a). The original church associated with Phillips Memorial Cemetery was located on land donated by William J. Jones (Moore Memorial Public Library 1986:5). Fire destroyed the building approximately 30 years later. The congregation relocated the church to a plot of land donated by William Bell (son of Calvin Bell) and changed the name to Bell Chapel (Moore Memorial Public Library 1986:5).

The accounts of the marriage of Calvin Bell and Kate Johnston provided by Jacque Bell and Pearl Bell Dorsey also revealed a pride in family heritage. Although Jacque confused some of the details, he appeared excited about the
opportunity to discuss his family history with outsiders. The Texas
sesquicentennial in 1986 caused a surge of interest in local history. Mrs. Dorsey
indicated that longtime residents and prominent community members lectured
and published stories, often inaccurate stories, on local history. Mrs. Dorsey
was proud of being one of the few active tradition bearers (Von Sydow 1965) in
her family and enjoyed the opportunity to provide an accurate family history:

Reverend Birch had. . .given a lot of information. . .and everybody
was upset [because the history] wasn’t true. So the last time he
gave it, in his story he kept saying “the legend said this, the
legend was this, and the legend was the other thing.” So several
of [the family] kept calling me asking me “Pearl, why don’t you
talk to the Reverend Birch?” and I said “Well why don’t you talk
to the Reverend Birch?”. But anyway, I finally called him. And I
told him who I was. And I said how my father’s family was the
original first Bell. And I said “So much of the information that
you have given is not true, so I would like to know where you got
your information. I would like to know-you keep saying the
legend says this and the legend- now what legend, I want to know
something about what you’re writing.” And so he says. . .“Now
who are you?”. And I told him and he didn’t want to give me any
information. He didn't want to say anything so he said he had collected this information over a period of time. [And] he said "What about it is not true?". I said, "First place you said in the book, in the news article that Mrs. Phillips was a white teenager, she was a baby, he said it was a white baby. And the baby was born a cripple with (unintelligible) legs, and the parents had brought the baby up here and left it on the doorstep of a black family, and the child grew up and married one of the boys." So I said "That's not true." And he said "Now how do you know?". And I said "Well I have a picture here of Mrs. Phillips if you'd like to see it." I said "Mrs. Phillips was black as coal."...And then I said to him, "you said the other one was a white girl that ran away from home and settled with a black family. well that wasn't true because that white girl your talking about was my grandmother. . .She came here a grown woman. And when she married my grandfather, she was a full grown woman, and had been married before and had children. And so I know what I'm talking about... And so I said "Didn't anybody make her marry him, or make them marry, they wanted to get married."

(Appendix I:136-138)
This passage illustrates the community's concern about the misinformation provided by outsiders, about the etic perceptions of their community. They contacted an active bearer of tradition (Von Sydow 1965) in order to rectify the damage done, and to promote a more accurate representation of events in their community's past.

Discussion of Narratives Reflecting the Social Climate of the Phillips Memorial Cemetery Relocation Project

Catch Question

The exchange between the field director and archaeologists described in Chapter VI as a catch question, provides an example of how individuals displayed membership in a folk group. Archaeologists and members of the descendant community found a common link and used speech patterns to demonstrate a shared identity.

The use of traditional southern vernacular speech by the visiting pairs occurred after a friendly rapport was established between the descendant community and the archaeological crew. The field director, originally from Kentucky and a resident of Texas for nine years, and the archaeological field crew, all of whom were native Texans, invariably code-switched to traditional
southern vernacular speech during informal conversations among themselves and with regular visitors to the site. After establishing a cooperative relationship with the field crew, the regular site visitors also switched from the use of standard, or cultivated, speech to the use of traditional southern vernacular. By doing so, the archaeologists and members of the descendant community established a common bond as southerners, more specifically as Texans. They signified this shared identity by displaying membership in a common folk group through the use of traditional southern vernacular (Brunvand 1983; Gumperz and Hymes 1972:vii; Richmond 1972).

Gossip

The gossip sessions described in Chapter VI provided a means for participants to establish their membership in a folk group, the occupational group of TxDOT employees, and to set themselves apart from others, members of the descendant community. Among other things, gossip defines "who one is by the delineation of who one is glad not to be" (Brenneis 1992:151). Thus, in addition to serving as identity markers, these gossip sessions revealed the highway workers' perception of greed within the African-American community and reflected the social climate in La Marque at the time of excavations.
Because the archaeologists had established a cooperative relationship with the community, the TxDOT employees rarely attempted to engage the crew in gossip sessions. On occasion, a highway worker worked questions such as "Is it true that Mr. Bell's tryin' to get two million dollars outta the state?" into conversations with the archaeologists. The archaeologists explained that they knew none of the details of the lawsuit. The archaeologists worked very hard not to offend representatives of TxDOT or members of the community and avoided any discussions about the community's reactions to the highway expansion. In doing so, the archaeologists excluded themselves from gossip sessions related to these topics. The highway workers' gossip about the community was not divided along ethnic lines. Workers of Anglo, Hispanic, and African descent were equal participants in the exchange of gossip. The participation of minority members, particularly African-Americans, in the gossip sessions affirmed their membership in the TxDOT employee folk group, and prevented any associations with the descendant community.

Summary

This thesis examined the use of folk narratives as part of the archaeological investigations at the Albert J. Phillips Memorial Cemetery in La Marque, Texas, and highlighted the importance of this type of data collection as
an integral part of the research design and project implementation. The Phillips Memorial Cemetery project provided numerous opportunities for interaction between archaeologists and the descendant community. By observing these interactions and by participating in the performances of folk narratives, archaeologists gained a greater understanding of the descendant community's reaction to the project, and were able to establish the project as a cooperative endeavor between the archaeologists and the descendant community.

The context in which the narratives were performed held the key to understanding the interactions of individuals and groups involved in the cemetery excavation, and was the focus of this analysis. The context of the folk narratives performed during the exhumation and relocation of graves at the Phillips Memorial Cemetery provided valuable information about both past and present conflicts in the community. By recording these narratives, the archaeological crew discovered the role of the cemetery as an identity marker within the community.

Archaeologists working with descendent communities have a unique opportunity to understand how cemeteries and other archaeological sites or features functioned both in the past, via traditional archaeological investigation, and in the present, through the collection and analysis of folk narratives related to the site. Archaeological investigations can benefit from examining the context of such narratives and use these data for re-examining research
objectives. In the present case, such re-assessment of research objectives lead to a better understanding of the cemetery's function, development, and significance for both past and present members of the La Marque community. Integrative and cooperative efforts such as these provide archaeologists with the opportunity to further their understanding of dynamic historical processes and to increase the accessibility of their research by making it relevant to the communities in which they work.
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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. PEARL BELL DORSEY

The interview with Mrs. Pearl Bell Dorsey ("P") July 8, 1993 took place in her home on Edgar Street, La Marque, Texas. Interviewers: Leah Carson Powell ("L") and Joseph F. Powell ("J"). Mrs. Dorsey met us outside where our conversation began. The tape begins approximately five minutes later at Mrs. Dorsey’s dining table.

1 P: It goes back, way back, since anybody's been buried there. I think maybe King Bell was buried there - maybe among the last ones, I don't know. But that's Nathan's daddy, he would know where his daddy's buried.

6 L: Right.

8 P: Did he say his father was buried there?

10 L: I believe he did, and his grandparents are buried there.
Oh yeah, well everybody from Hitchcock, Texas City, and La
Marque were buried there.

Were there any other cemeteries that were used during that time?

No.

Okay.

Well, there's a little cemetery right over here (points toward
1765?) about two blocks from me on the highway, but that was
this fellow - that was privately owned and he had a few people
buried in there.

Was that just his family members?

No, he was selling plots to anybody that wanted them. There's
not too many graves. It's right here, you'll see the little patch of
trees right across the street about two blocks down. But that came
in much later than this cemetery (Phillips), because this is the
original cemetery.

34  L:  Okay...Now how long have you lived in La Marque?
35
36  P:  Well, I was born here.
37
38  L:  You were born here, and...
39
40  P:  Right across the street..
41
42  L:  you said that you were 73 years old...
43
44  P:  yes...
45
46  L:  So, you were born in 1920 (nods). Okay. You were born in the
47  yellow house.
48
49  P:  On the corner.
L: On the corner. That's great! And your parents were...

P: Cubie and Calvin, .. Calvin and Cubie Bell.

L: Calvin and Cubie, okay. We have the family history that y'all did and deposited at the Moore Library, so...

(Joe pulled out the history to show Mrs. Dorsey.)

P: What's this?

J: The 1990 family reunion.

P: Right.

L: Did all of y'all get copies of –

P: This is the Bell and Hobgood..., the Bell, Hobgood and Britton, okay.
71 L: Right. Did all of y'all get copies of that, or..

72

73 P: I helped to get it together, so... No, I wasn't here at this. And this is why I didn't get. I guess I didn't get a copy of it. I was... I guess I was in California at that time, visiting. Okay, this is the Bells. Now these... You know there's several sets of Bells.

77

78 L&J: Right

79

80 P: Okay, So...

81

82 L: There were three sets of Bells that started out as unrelated, but then

84

85 P: They are unrelated.

86

87 L: Right.

88

89 P: From the beginning. But they've been marrying so...
Through marriage they've...(become related)

Uh-huh. I was trying to see where is my father, right there. Well, see like this is one set, Frank Bell is one set and Flavia's another set. She's my father's sister. Okay. So, the two, the Bell's integrated and then one of the bells married a Hobgood, and that's where the Hobgoods come into the family. And then... but now I'm not related to the Brittons and the Hobgoods and some of the Bells. Some of them, as I said, Ellen Hobgood was a Bell, and that's how the Hobgoods got in. Then and had children, and one of her children married a Britton and that's how the Brittons got into there. So the majority of them are related. But my mother's four children I think are about the only ones that is not related to all of them. My mother is a Caldwell. And I think they have one other Caldwell that was married to Frank Bell Jr. That was my mother's sister. But here again. Frank Bell was my father's nephew, and he married my mother's sister. So we were (unintelligible, but refers to complex genealogy)
L: Doubly related... What about the Edwards and the Taylors? When we were excavating the cemetery, there was one grave that had the large cement slab over it and it said John Edwards, and...

J: We've run across the name Edwards going back to 1910, 1920, that period of time. But we've never found a John Edwards, though. We would find other people that were named Edwards.

L: We were wondering if you knew of an Edwards family... Isn't Minnie Edwards...

P: Yes, okay. Minnie, I never did know what Miss Edwards name was, but Minnie, um... I have a have a half sister and Minnie was her mother.

L: Okay. Do you know, would she have been married to John?

P: Yes. She was a Phillips. Minnie Edwards was a Phillips. And they left here and went to New York when Minnie was quite
young. And they all died in New York. He probab...he might have died before they left here, John Edwards.

L: That fits.

We've just had the hardest time trying to track him down because, apparently he's not in ... We've gone back to the old census records up to I guess 1870s now we haven't been able to find John Edwards anywhere. We've found Minnie though.

Okay. Well Minnie.. yeah they would be pretty.. they were pretty.. Well let's see they must be about my father's age Minnie was probably.. and dad was born about 1876 so she would go back about that time. But Minnie was originally a Phillips.

Do you remember anything about the Phillips cemetery when you were a child?

Oh yeah. My grandmother... everybody was buried there. I know about where my grandmother was buried and my Part of
the family - but it wasn't over by the highway. It wasn't over in that area. It was up on this end, near the middle but on this end.

L: Okay. So you don't think that they were disturbed.

P: No, I don't think they were. I don't think so.

L: Did you attend their funerals?

P: Well, L. no. Because I was ... my grandmother died, let's see, must've been about 1908, something like that. You see, and I was born in the 1920's. In fact my mother wasn't even married when she ... Now I can remember my uncle was buried there, Frank Caldwell, but he was buried along there with the family. In fact all of them were buried there until, well, my grandfather Caldwell was buried over here in '42, 1942. They probably stopped burying over there about that time.

L: Did you attend any of the funerals when you were..
169  P:     Oh yes..

170

171  L:     like in the 1920's, when you were that young?

172

173  P:     Oh, not over there. No, no, you see in the 1920's I was always too
174
175       young.

176  L:     I mean, the late twenties

177

178  J:     Even in the thirties

179

180  P:     I can remember...Yes, I can remember the Hobgoods. Ellen
181       Hobgood was buried over there. And I can remember Miss
182       Jackson... Let's see I'm thinking of th(eir?) children, trying to..
183       Gratton Bell was probably buried over there, he's been dead a
184
185       long time.

186  J:     I think we have the records. We went to Emken Linton and
187       found some of the old records they still have them. Gratton Bell,
there you go (Joe pulled out the photocopies from Linton's account register to show Mrs. Dorsey).

(Mrs. Dorsey is reading through the documents which trigger comments) Yes, Reverend Gratton Bell. His wife, she was a Jackson. His wife was a Jackson. ... Sandy Harris he was from Hitchcock, yes you have Hitchcock here. It's nice that you went over there and... I had told Mr. Linton I was coming over there and get some of these records myself. ... And let's see, I don't know the Whites, Baby Steve Salwell (?) I don't know who that was. ... Mary Bell was Gratton's wife. I don't think she was b- she might have been buried there, but I don't remember.

Can you describe the funeral services at the time? Were they similar to what they are today, or...

I can't really... (Shakes her head) I just remember ... Sara Johnson, I can remember quite a few of these, some of 'em are black, Mary Smith.
208 L: What we did was we went down and we just recorded the ones that said they might actually be buried in that cemetery.

210

211 P: Well, they all were buried over there when Mr. Linton, um, when Emken was burying them. They were all buried over there.

213

214 L: That helps.

215

216 P: Yeah, because Mr. Emken.. Let's see I can remember my mother saying when her mother died there was a funeral home in Galveston named Estelle (?) and he came out and Mr. Emken let him, well he rode with him and let him use his (unintelligible) and his horses and everything for the funeral. Because her brother was taking care of the parade. But Mr. Emken buried all of the black people.

223

224 L: That's interesting.

225

226 P: Yeah, he did, you know. Everybody used Emken's funeral home.

227 Do you have any (more photocopies)?
L: There's some more names. I was going to show you a map, there's a map of the cemetery down here. I was wondering ... ask you to describe what the cemetery looked like, back before the highway came through. These are the graves that we excavated, so the highway is coming right like this.

J: The railroad tracks are down here

P: Okay. This cemetery went all the way back to the railroads. When highway three came through, they were supposed to have dug up some graves and set them further back into the cemetery, but I don't think they did all of them.

L: Do you remember where the entrance was?

P: Yes.

L: We were confused by this space right here.
248  J:  There weren't any, well we couldn't find any graves if there had been.

250

251  L:  These are the graves that are still in existence, and this is Albert and Priscilla Phillips, the marker.

253

254  P:  Oh really?

255

256  L:  Um-hm. Their marker is still there. And this is the monument or t–

258

259  P:  Okay. Is this the end of the cemetery

260  J:  Yeah, that's that house the first house on Mentor Drive.

261

262  P:  Oh, okay. Okay, let me see. There was a tree right in here... and my grandmother was buried along... it was a gate, there was a gate right here. And this was the entrance to... it was just a small... let me see it was... it was about well, I'd say fifteen feet maybe from the fenceline by that house to the gate. And I can remember people being buried in this little (unintelligible) but I
can't remember who. But my grandmother and the Caldwell
people were buried about eight or ten feet from the gate. But that
was the entrance.

L: Do you remember, before the road came through what sort of
grave markers there were? Were there fences around the graves?
What sort of headstones, were they wooden, or...

P: No, I can't remember that. I know there was a baby's headstone
over in here, like right over here. And it was Zadell Bell.

L: Z-A-D-E-L.

P: Z-A-D-E-L-L, I think. Bell, she was a baby. Her mother lives
right around the corner, but she would be able to talk to you
about it. But they did have a baby, I can remember that. I don't
know ... her husband was Norvel Bell's son, not the old original,
he would be Norvel the third, he was. And this was his baby that
was buried there. Now his father was buried in here. I don't
think his wife was buried in here. She might have, but I don't
know. Here again I was really really young at the time she died.

So this is no, even longer than that... when did she die? She died
about fifty, she must have died in the early fifties

L: So this is the newer part?

P: This is what?

L: Is this the newer section? Or did it matter?

P: No. Some of the ... quite a few people were buried over in here.

In this area. Now I can't... are you sure this is part of the
cemetery? Is that where the fence was over here?

J: The old fence line would have come right across here and the
railroad track would be about right there.

L: These... We were confused because these two graves that were so
far away from these were just... you know we graded off all of the
land in between here and there was no sign of any graves. And
we got to here and there were two more and we went out further
but we couldn't find anymore.

P: All right, maybe that's two graves that were moved from over
here somewhere, maybe. Because there were quite a few graves
that were moved from over there. And maybe that may account
for so many in here.

J: Yeah, that's true. Because Mr. Bell, when we were first working
out there, he said, you know "Y'all need to go.." we were, we had
stopped about right here because that's where we thought the end
of the cemetery was and he said "Y'all need to go out 20 or 30 feet
more" and so we did and that's when we hit those other two.
And we had checked very carefully in all that area and didn't find
a thing. So maybe that's what happened.

P: Um-hm, that may be. I can remember... I can remember
somebody from Texas City was buried over in there. I can't really
right now remember who it was. Seems like most of the Texas
City people were buried over in this area to me. Seems to me that
way, as I can remember. But most of all of the La Marque families were buried right in this area, as I remember. And some years back, they started cleaning up the cemetery. You might have heard 'em talk about Lovett (?) Brown, he was the person that started a campaign to clean up the graves. I think he went to the city and asked them to clean up the graves, the cemetery. And they just destroyed a lot of markers during that time.

L: Oh. Did they use machines.

P: They probably used tractors or something and graders (?) you know to clean up, and they destroyed a lot of the markers.

L: Instead of using hand tools, they used the...

P: Yes, uh-huh.

L: Oh, that's too bad.
And then some of them didn't have markers. But I don't remember my people having any markers. Now my father's father was buried in there, but I never did know exactly - and his mother too, so I don't know where they were buried.

Do you think they could have been- had temporary markers that just, like wooden markers or...

Something

Maybe something like that. Do you remember any decorations? A lot of graves up here have a lot of seashells on them, or bottles or bricks. Do you remember any of that?

No, I really don't. I remember, somebody had a little fence, like a picket fence around one. But all of that, as I said was destroyed when they cleaned the cemetery.

Right. The picket fence was destroyed when they cleaned out this end of the cemetery.
367

368  P: Because it had rotted, you know. It was over here, and it had

369  rotted and they just destroyed everything.

370

371  L: Do you- Were you around when they originally built the

372  highway?

373

374  P: Oh yes.

375

376  L: Do you remember that? Did you watch?

377

378  P: Building the highway?

379

380  L: Highway 3.

381

382  P: Yes.

383

384  L: Did you watch them do that?

385

386  P: Yes.
Can you describe how they did it? How they moved- or did you
watch them move the graves?

No, I didn't (unintelligible)

Okay.

No. I was in, oh, I'd say I was probably 11, 12 years old then.
Because it was in the Depression, I distinctly remember that. My
father worked for the railroad and we lived right there in the big
house. And during that time, they used to have a lot of flatbed
cars on the trains and people were going from place to place
trying to find jobs. And I can remember, well they called them
bums then- but just going from place to place, you know. And
they would always stop at our house, well we were the first
house. And they would always come and ask for food and we
would give them something to eat. And oh, they don't mind
cutting wood, or cutting some grass for you or something. But
Dad would always say "Don't let the people work. The boys are
here, let them cut the grass and cut the wood and everything. Just feed them." That's all they wanted, something to eat. So we would always feed, whoever's home—but he would always tell us if the girls are home now don't open the door and don't feed anybody. But he said now you boys—we were rarely left alone, if Mama happened to be gone to visit somebody sick or somewhere, then the boys "you talk to the people while your sisters fix an egg sandwich or something quick for them", you know. So we always fed everybody that came by.

L: Wow, that's great.

P: And we always wondered why everybody stopped at our house. But Dad said as they traveled, the ones coming down would meet the ones going and they would inquire, you know, about work and giving things and they would always say, "You go to that house and you'll get something to eat" you know.

L: That's great.
Because this was a railroad crossing here, right here on Texas. So they slowed down sometimes and they could easily hop on and then catch another one, you know going in another direction, if they wanted to go in another direction. People just didn't have jobs, couldn't get jobs. And there wasn't really too much to do, not anything out here to do hardly. In Galveston, they had more work and they would be going to Galveston up on the back of these (unintelligible).

Well what did most of the people out in this area do for a living?

What did they do?

You said your father worked for the railroad, did most of them do that?

My father worked for the railroad. They had section gangs. See, my father started working for the railroad when he was fourteen on a section gang, but at that time he was living in League City.
He was born here, they were the first Bells, and they had kinda-as they grew up, they went to League City. Well he was young, you know, but his family still remained and he started working on the railroad and he was on a section gang. During that time in '31, -2, and -3 like that, he was a (unintelligible) and he worked 50 years on the railroad, he retired from the railroad. So, that's really the only job that he'd had, was on the railroad.

J: What about people in the neighborhood, what about other families?

P: Well, at that time, if I can remember, the Texas City refinery was there in Texas City. And then they had another refinery called Knox and it was right at Highway- I mean Texas and 23rd street, I think it was 23rd street, because we would just go straight out and go and then the street turned and went back then it would turn when it got to Texas and go back to Texas City. But it was a Knox refinery and some of them worked there. And some of them were bums, you know. Mr. Britton, mostly he did was farm, you know. They raised their own cattle and hogs, and
they'd go hunting, because see there wasn't anything out in
what's west Texas City now, there wasn't anything out there.
And even right here it was nothing. My father farmed his
property across the street here. The railroad owned it. And my
father leased it for a dollar a year. And he farmed it and he put
his cattle on the other end to graze. And there used to be some
plum trees that grew kinda wild and things. (unintelligible)
And there was no- there wasn't anybody living way out over in- I
guess it went to about - Well, along in there where the funeral
home is, the Linton funeral home, that was way out to us then.
But further out of the (unintelligible) was a white family that
lived out along where the Bonesburger place is. I think the old
Tower home is still there. And they lived out way there, but there
wasn't many people here- wasn't too many people here. The
school was right around the corner there. The Black school. The
Black school. And they moved it from here up to Lincoln where
Lincoln, uh-huh.

L: And where was the Black school?
P: It was right there on the corner of Nasby and Johnson. Where that big green house sits on the corner, that was where the school was.

L: What was the school like? Did all the - there wasn't very many kids, I guess.

P: Well at first it was one room, and then they built another room. And I never did go when it was one room, I started out when it had the two rooms. Then finally they added a third room. And then they added - had a little space on the back for like a little sewing room. And on the other side they had a little space for that they did- the boys did anything, you know. And then- they played--. Professor Simms came in let me see, Miss Pollet (?), she was a Britton, and she was the first principal.

L: And what was her name again?

P: Pollet, Britton Pollet. They had some property up there. She was not the first p- the first principle. She was the principle over here.
But now the old original school was further up, above the cemetery. No, no I'm wrong. It was on this side. You know where that little church is, there's a little brick church there now? Right over here on this side of the cemetery?

L&J: Yeah...

Okay. Right along over in that area it was the old original school, back when my mother went to school. But my mother lived over in Hitchcock and they came over here to school. And it was Ms. Washington, my mother said was the teacher. And I don't know how the scho- when the school was built over here. But my -the first on that I can remember as principal was Miss Dolly (?) Pollet, she was a Britton and then she married to a Pollet.

Was there a lot of- Was there any economic stratification within the Black community? Were there some that were really wealthy and others that were not? Or was it all- were they about the same?
526 P: Not really, we had a few people that had more, you know. But everybody mixed. We didn't, you know, there were no barriers there because you had more than anybody else. My father had a job, fortunately, all the time. So we didn't- the depression didn't hurt us. I'll say it that way. But here again, we didn't have a whole lot, you know. And mama cooked every day. And my brothers, my brothers used to say we had beans: white beans one day and red beans another.

535 J: Sounds like graduate school!

537 L: Yeah, we've done that!

539 P: Yeah. So.. and we came home for lunch from school because we were right here. And we had cows for milk. And people were neighborly then, you know. If we had anything the Brit- Arthur Britton, his mother was Phoebe Bell, and his father was James Britton- that's Tommy and Neal and all of them's brother- and they were our neighbors. They lived in the next house. And well whatever we had, they shared. And whatever they had, we
shared. And he had a garden and Mama would go over and get
some of his greens or something out of the garden or if we had it,
they'd come over here. We're still like one family.

L: That's great.

P: And so, we- our cow- if we were milking our cow, they had milk.
If they were milking, we had milk. So this is the way people
lived. Somebody got sick, everybody would send something to
the mom. If they were very sick, they would go and sit with
them. And at night, I can remember my father going at night to
sit with- well he was a Mason, and he would go and sit with
anybody, it didn't make a difference. And once in a while, I can
remember Mama going, but Dad would walk her wherever she
was going and then go back and walk her back home. They
would take shifts, you know. They would cook and send food
with - for the people who were sick. We had a good
neighborhood, we didn't have any strife or anything in the
neighborhood.
L: Sounds wonderful.

P: It was.

J: What church, if I may ask, what church did y'all go to?

P: Bell Zion, it was Bell's Chapel then.

J: Was it where it is today, here across from Lincoln school?

P: Oh no. Do you know where Carver street, where the church is now, start right there on Bell drive? Well the church was right directly in front of the street, on this side. That was Bell's chapel. Well it had been further back, originally, back towards I said the school was. In fact the school was in the first church. Because the church was organized over at my uncle Walter's, that's off of Eunice street, in their home, in their yard, Mama used to tell me, under a tree. And they organized over there then they finally, and I can remember Dad saying- that was in the 1900 storm he helped to - there was a lot of lumber available, and he helped to
gather lumber to build the church. Because everything—so many
things was destroyed at that time. But we went to the church
right there on Bell Drive. And right next door was this fellow
Lovett (?) Brown, the house is still there.

J: Oh yeah, I know that name, because he had a wife named Lilian,
I think.

P: Lulamae.

J: Lulamae. Because that was one of the markers we found in

P: Oh really?

J: Yes m'am. Let me show you some of the—there were a few
headstones back there—
P: I didn't know she ever had any children. I have some here (names, the funeral home photocopies- Joe is looking for the names on the headstones)

L: Do you have the names on the markers?

J: I have them with me somewhere, I'll have to dig for them.

P: I never knew Lulamae had any children...

J: These are the names that we've been able to get off of various things, now this bottom set here, these are the headstones we were able to find in the cemetery itself, the ones that are still in existence.

P: That's the Estons, he was- that was from Hitchcock- Texas City. Laura Jones (?) Albert Phillips, okay, Priscilla Phillips and they had a marker?
J: It's a big one and it's still there, it's just kind of overgrown. When they cut the grass down last year, you could see all of those.

P: Oh really?

J: Yeah. And then, back there by that house is one that's laying down on the ground and it says "Infant of L.J." and it said "Lilian".

P: Okay. Now, Lilian well okay. His first wife was named Lilian. Because Lulamae I know didn't have any children, I didn't think. So, okay now- Lilian- they had another daughter and she just died not too long ago. But that is her grandchildren who live in that house- her great-grandchildren that live in that house.

J: And the note, that's just some information we've tried to piece together.

P: German, who is that? Bell?
J: Right, I think that was, I think Kate Bell.

P: Okay, that was my grandmother.

J: And she was from Germany?

P: Yes, I have her picture.

L: You have a picture?

J: Can we see that? We would love to see a picture of her.

P: She was- that was my grandmother.

J: We have heard so many different stories. Jacque Bell came out, I think he's your neph- is he related to you? Or he's related to Gary I think- (Vera Gary)

P: Yes, he's related to Gary.
He came out and told us about- (Mrs. Dorsey gets up to retrieve
the picture and bumps into a table displaying glassware). Kate
Bell and,

Yes, he's Frank Bell's son. You know, there was quite a few things
that were told was not true. I had to- in the newspapers and-
when Mrs. Rice did this story, they did a book, you might have
seen or heard of it. Yeah, they had a book. They did- Do you
know Mrs. Rice?

No, I don't.

She's a white woman. What is her name? I'll (unintelligible)

Is she from Texas City?

No, she lives here in La Marque. Anyway, they did a book. She
had this printer down here on Highway 3 to print it. And so
much information they had was wrong. The History-
J: (Joe pulled the photocopies of the book *The History of La Marque* out of his bag) Is that it?

P: Let's see.

J: There's no author listed on this book, *The History of La Marque*.

I've got a little thin book (a different book)

P: It's a little book about this-

J: Yeah, a little white book?

P: Yeah.

J: Yeah, that's the same one then... Oh- Bonnie Rice.

P: Okay. Reverend Birch had given a lot of information- he's at Paul's Union Church- he'd given a lot of information. So, and everybody was (unintelligible name) was so upset because they gave- about three different times in three different years it was-
we were history or something- and they gave, would give this
information. And everybody was upset because it wasn't true. So
the last time he gave it, in his story he kept saying the legend said
this the legend was this and the legend was the other thing. So
several of them kept calling me asking me "Pearl, why don't you
talk to the Reverend Birch?" and I said "Well why don't you talk
to the Reverend Birch?". But anyway, I finally called him. And I
told him who I was. And I said now my father's family was the
original first Bell. And I said "So much of the information that
you have given is not true, so I would like to know where you got
your information. I would like to know- you keep saying the
legend says this and the legend- now what legend, I want to
know something about what you're writing." And so he says, he
finally says "Now who are you?". And I told him and he didn't
want to give me any information. He didn't want to say anything
so he said- he finally said he had collected this information over a
period of time. I said- So he said "What about it is not true?". I
said, "First place you said in the book, in the news article that Mrs.
Phillips was a white teenager, she was a baby, he said it was a
white baby. And the baby was born a cripple with
(unintelligible) legs, and the parents had brought the baby up here and left it on the doorstep of a black family, and the child grew up and married one of the boys. "So I said "That is not true". And he said "Now how do you know?". And I said "Well I have a picture here of Mrs. Phillips if you'd like to see it". I said "Mrs. Phillips was black as coal".

L: That would put a dent in his story.

P: And then I said to him, "You said the other one was a white girl that ran away from home and settled with the black family. Well that wasn't true because that white girl you're talking about was my grandmother." And I said, "She came here a grown woman. And when she married my grandfather, she was a full grown woman, and had been married before and had children. And so I know what I'm talking about." And I said "Didn't anybody make her marry him, or make them marry, they wanted to get married." She came- they came- they were working together in League city (unintelligible) of Mrs. Britton, Mrs. Britton was a white woman.
L: Mrs. Britton was a white woman?

J: From England?

P: She was from England.

L: Okay, okay, yeah.

P: And she- Now some of that may be in there (the family history from the reunion) I don't know.

L: It doesn't say.

J: It just lists her maiden name as "Needs". Molly or Mary A. Needs.

P: Molly.
J: Molly is what she went by? But when Emken buried her, they listed her as a Needs, as her married name and then she was married to a Tom Britton.

(Mrs. Dorsey had gone to get the photographs of Calvin and Kate Bell, and returned with the pictures).

L: Oh how wonderful!

J: Wow! Those are great!

P: I just had those made recently.

L: These are wonderful pictures.

P: She was a Johnston when they married. I also have the marriage certificate. I went to the census records, then I went to the courthouse and found out information, and then- we had these pictures here. I had these made in the last couple weeks. I just have those to send to my brother. And this is my mother.
L: And this is.

P: Caldwell, that's my mother's mother and father.

L: These are great pictures.

J: Do you know when these pictures were taken, about what date?

You don't have any idea?

P: I know about when these were made. This one was made about 1911 or 12 maybe. She was 57 when she died and I think this one was made not long before she died. And she died about 1912, or 1913 I think. Now this is my grandfather, he was ninety- almost a hundred years old. He's buried right over here in Rising Star cemetery and he- this picture was made not long before he died.

L: Where is the Rising Star cemetery?
P: It's right- You go down and get to this church and turn right here on this corner and go down to that church and turn left and it's about two blocks down.

J: We've heard references to it, but we couldn't find it on any of the maps of the city. It's not listed as- that we can tell. We found the La Marque cemetery.

P: Oh, the La Marque cemetery that's up on Oak?

J: The one next to Paul's Union Church?

P: Yes.

J: Yeah.

(All are looking at a map of La Marque)

L: And then, this is where the Phillips cemetery is.
P: Okay, it would be down in my area, it would be..

J: Right, it would be down in here and see it's not marked as a
cemetery anywhere.

P: Let me see. Okay, you've just got to give me time to find it, let's
see. Highway 3.. okay 519's here.. Texas.. Highway three and
Texas would be right here... I'm looking for my street, Edgar..
now see..

J: There's Edgar right there, it's upside down

L: Right

P: Okay, Edgar. This is- this is the way it- (turns map around) okay.
It would be on- Empire. It would be on Stuart.. Albert.

L: On Albert?
P: Albert and Petroleum. Right here is Petroleum. So this is the
cemetery right here.

L: Right here. We'll drive by and look at that. So did the Rising Star
Church use to be... (END OF TAPE, SIDE A) And how long was
the- Do you know when the Rising Star Cemetery was in use?

P: It's been there a long time. Do you know- Letha (?) Reynolds
could tell you because she takes care of the cemetery up there and
she could probably give you information. She's a member of
Rising Star. Now she lives right behind where I said Levi Brown
lived. You can call her and talk to her, she could give you
information on that cemetery.

L: Great. Okay.

P: So much of the history that you hear is not true.
L: You know, we had heard... and I forget (to Joe) do you remember who told us about, either, this is Calvin Bell or Kitty being put in prison.

P: That was Kate.

L: She was put in prison?

J: Do you know why?

P: Because she married him.

L: Was she released afterwards?

P: She was in for two years and she came back home and came right back to her children. She died here.

L: And she was a midwife? (Mrs. Dorsey nodded)

J: Well, did anything happen to her husband, to your grandfather?
No he didn't- According to the state law, it was that she should have known better than to marry a black man. So he didn't know any better. But they never- it was a- it was a- it was kind of a hate thing that started. That's how she- Somebody reported that she was married to a black man and they came and got her. But they never did- I don't think they ever bothered Mrs. Britton. I understand Mrs. Phillips was the one that reported it.

One of the Phillips? She got angry at.

She got angry at her. Well one of her daughters had gotten pregnant and she said it was one of the Bell's. But it wasn't.

That was just her way.

..of fighting back. Yeah she did that. So she went (to) prison for two years and she came right home.
J: Well, when you were a young child growing up, were there any problems with white people and black people getting along in La Marque?

P: No.

J: Yeah, everybody just sort of.

P: Everybody got along.

J: Was there ever a time when they didn't?

P: Not that I know of.

L: Were there problems in Texas City that you knew of? I'm just asking because we had seen those oral history reports. I don't know if you knew about the—there's a series of oral histories where historians interviewed different people in the community and in a few of them—a few of the people talk about problems
with the Ku Klux Klan and people coming down into the black communities and beating up people ...

P: Well I'll tell you, as I understand it, it seems as though they had the army, some of the army people lived in here so people were coming from everywhere. And they lived in Texas City, they didn't- I don't think any of them lived over here. They lived in Texas City because I can remember my mother saying that they used to go over to- seems like they washed and ironed for some of them. My mother wasn't here through all of that because she lived in Galveston and Dallas because she lived with some white people. And she was always treated like the family. And they always loved her, still until they died they always kept up with her and us until- But then she moved to Dallas with a family and took care of a little baby and when her mother died, she came home. But they would go over and get clothes from these soldiers and wash (unintelligible). I never heard any of them say about them living here in La Marque, but they were over that way. So this may be were some of the stories started and things happened.
L: Right. And it was histories of Texas City and it described the area in Texas City, I was just wondering if it had spilled over..

P: No, we never had- we never had any problems, that I know of. We were talking the other day, my brother and I, he left here in about '44 or '43 and went to California to work. He just moved back here after 50 years. So he's looking for- every once in a while he'll think up something and he'll come and say "Sister where is so-and-so, what is so-and-so". He was asking me about a house a lady where he used to work for her. And I was telling him about the location, and he said "I done rode around and tried to find it and I couldn't." But we never had any problems that I could remember we had. Because Dad had a lot- well all of them were friends, really. And then they came up if they needed Dad, Dad went, and if Dad needed them, they came. So we didn't ever have any problems. And we were the first house on the road. Dr. Danforth was the doctor for everybody and he used to come over and many times it wasn't medical, and it was mud streets- and he would come and stop there and Dad would get the boys to take the horse or buggy or whatever and take him wherever he
needed to go. So we never had any problems. It was always the
same problems, you know, they had the drug stores- when they
started- that we couldn't go in. We went into the grocery stores,
we always had an account there we could go in and get what we
wanted and we were treated nice. But as time went on you had
new people moving in and also the older black and white are
gone, we have almost a new generation in here.

J: It's changed a lot huh?

P Yes. But still, we still don't have any major problems. I think
most of the problems started when they started integrating
schools. But we never had any problems.

L: That's good to know.

J: I wanted to ask you if we could possibly make a photo of your
family photographs if that would be all right?
I don't know. I don't think I—these are really going to my
brother, uh-

I was jus- I have a camera out in the car and I was just going to
take a snapshot of the

Well now this picture was made from that snapshot- that picture
up there.

That worked out really well.

Yeah. I took this with the camera and then I had this made. But I
don't know how the rest of the family would feel about it. Not
my family, but the whole family, the total family.

Okay, that's fine.

Those are wonderful photographs.

Yeah, those are really neat.
P: Aren't they nice?

J: It's good that you all have those. My family goes back to, in Kentucky, to the early 1800s, but we don't have any family photographs. Of course they didn't have - we don't have paintings or anything but even back from the turn of the century we don't have any family photographs of anybody, so you're very lucky to have those. That's nice.

P: Oh, I know that. I really treasure them. And I'm trying to - I'm sending these to California to my brother. He doesn't have any idea I'm sending those but now he's seen this one I think, and he's seen this one from that one up there, but he doesn't have - I had a cousin came in from California last month and she saw these and said "Oh Pearl, I'd like to have a set of those" and I said "Well okay I'll probably get you a set." She's a grandchild of great-grandchild of Norvell Bell and her grandmother was (unintelligible). We're quite tangled up there. Well the Caldwells married into the Bells and one Caldwell married a Britton and so
that's how we - But every once in a while we have to sit down
and get everything untangled. But they'll always say "Pearl-
well my family, both sides of the family say "why don't you make
a tape or something" so, because they don't have any
information. I seem to be the only one had sense enough to talk
to somebody and try to remember some of the things. Like my
sisters and brothers weren't interested in it. I used to talk to
Mamma a lot and she'd tell me, Dad never talked too much, but
Mamma would talk to me and tell me things.

L: Both of my grandparents, my mother's parents, were very good
about keeping up family history and we were all really- we had
all meant to sit them down and talk to them about it and get it on
tape or write the stories down- and we were all really
disappointed when they both died recently. We lost the
opportunity...

Well that's the- I think they're afraid I'm going to die and won't
anybody know anything. I gave Vera and them most of this
information. I just- all at once, I was going to start looking up-
because at the time I wasn't working- and I was going to start
looking up some history. And I walked into the Rosenberg
Library and the first person I met was Mary Lee Leal and I knew
her and she (said) "Pearl, what are you doing in here?" And I told
her, "I'm looking for some family history." And so she guided me
in what direction to go and then I started looking.

L: That's great. Someday we plan on doing that.

P: It's quite interesting. I had a friend in Texas City, she traced her
family back to Jesus.

L: Well, I'm going to turn this off now.

J: Thank you very much, we really appreciate you taking the time to
talk to us.

P: But if you talk to Ms. Reynolds she can tell you more about Rising
Star Cemetery. But I know my grandfather was buried there in
1942, so that's 51 years ago. So they had, I guess about stopped
burying in Phillips Cemetery, again, there may have been a few people buried since then.

1058  L: I think that's what- Emken-Linton's funeral records indicate. They have a ten year gap- feel free to look through those (the photocopies of Emken-Linton's ledger)- but they had a ten year gap and then everyone is buried in Rising Star instead of the Phillips Cemetery. [end of interview]
VITA

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In 1991 she began graduate work in folklore and anthropology at Texas A&M University, where she received a Minority Merit Scholarship to attend graduate school. Her research included the study of traditional medicine, culture-bound syndromes, "night hag" experiences, traditional narratives, modern festivals, and dental anthropology. She has presented the results of this work at meetings of the American Folklore Society and the Society for American Archaeology, and her scientific publications have appeared in the Journal of Field Archaeology and Dental Anthropology News.

Leah was employed from 1991-1993 as a field archaeologist and folklorist by the Texas Department of Transportation and Texas A&M University. In 1995, she served as crew-chief for historic excavations in Grafton, Illinois through the Center for American Archeology, Kankakee, Illinois. Leah organized and led archaeological and cultural educational tours for Far Horizons in 1996. She is currently employed as an archaeologist at Lone Mountain Archaeological Services in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her permanent address is 506 Richmond SE, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87106.