

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **Regarding the National Endowment for the Humanities' Section 106 Review of Vanderbilt University Archaeological and Ethnographic Field Research award, RFW-292005-23, titled "Descendant-led Excavation at the Reconstruction-Era Black Civil War Veteran Community at Bass Street, Fort Negley Park."**

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded Vanderbilt University a grant to support archeological field research on archaeological research on the Bass Street Community area of the Fort Negley/St. Cloud Hill site (archaeological site #40DV189), one of the first post-emancipation Black residential enclaves in Nashville, Tennessee. The project is a collaboration between Vanderbilt University Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) to collect descendant testimony in oral histories which will guide an excavation of a Reconstruction-era home and two public spaces in the neighborhood, revisiting questions of US history throughout the Jim Crow era. The work will result in presentations, publications, and public programs on the experiences, material culture, and land use patterns of the formerly enslaved, conscripted, United States Colored Troops, veteran Black Americans, and their descendants as they navigated citizenship, community building, self-reconstruction, and the struggle for Civil Rights in the late-19th- through mid-20th-century urban South.

NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. This public notice is issued as part of NEH's responsibilities under 36 C.F.R. Part 800, the regulations which implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. § 470. NEH, a funding agency, is required by regulation to identify and assess the effects of any proposed actions on historic properties.

Fort Negley was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Ref# 75001748) in 1975 and was designated as a UNESCO Slave Route Project Site of Memory in 2019. In consultation with the Tennessee Historical Commission, NEH has found that the proposed archeological excavation will have an adverse effect on the Fort Negley/St. Cloud Hill property. This determination is based on the agency's review of the Foundation's proposal and on the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Historic Resources (VDHR)'s view that archaeological data recovery on National Register-eligible or -listed sites constitutes an adverse effect on historic properties because of its inherently destructive nature.

The proposed scope of work for the project involves The Vanderbilt University and MTSU researchers conducting archaeological excavations to compare three different contexts: a private residence, a liminal/central green space, and a public-use area to explore the tension between individualism and communitarianism that early Black communities wrestled with. This project continues previous research from the MTSU Bass Street Community Archaeology Project and the Vanderbilt University Fort Negley Descendants Project.

Prior to this award, MTSU archaeological fieldwork consisted of exploratory test units to examine the feasibility of more long-term excavation of trenches under this grant. This work was funded by MTSU.

The proposed undertaking will take place in three locations:

- the remains of an interior area of a residential structure which was razed along with the rest of the neighborhood for the Edgehill Urban Renewal Interstate 65 project;

- a historically open area 15 meters southwest of the former residence; and
- a second historically open area 30 meters southwest of the former residence (15 meters southwest of the second location) that likely saw an abundance of communal activity due to it being in close proximity to the former area of the neighborhood's cistern and double-seater privy (approximately 1.5 meters).

The project will exclude any work that would impact the Fort Negley structure and areas that are thought to potentially contain burials of conscripted Black workers who died while building the fort. Reference Attachment A for the Area of Potential Effect and the sites to be excavated.

Reference the following attachments for more information:

- A. Area of Potential Effects and Proposed Excavation Sites
- B. TN Historical Commission/State Historic Preservation Office Section 106 Consultation Response
- C. Scope of Work
- D. Consulting Parties

To avoid, mitigate, or minimize the adverse effect to the historic properties, the Foundation proposes to draft and execute a Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consult with the State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and other parties to negotiate and execute a Section 106 agreement document that sets out the measures the federal agency will implement to resolve adverse effects on historic properties.

As required by Section 106, NEH is providing the public with information about this project, as well as an opportunity to comment on any knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the proposed project area, and issues relating to the project's potential effects on historic properties. Comments may be submitted to the NEH by e-mail to [FPO@neh.gov](mailto:FPO@neh.gov). The deadline for submitting comments is **(/INSERT DATE 30 BUSINESS DAYS FROM POSTING/)**.

## Attachment A: Area of Potential Effects and Proposed Excavation Sites

The Bass Street site is within the 100 Fort Negley Blvd, Nashville, TN 37203. The address specific to the project parcel upon which our project will occur is 609 Bass Street, Nashville, TN 37203, lot 406, Ewing and Wetmore Subdivision". This lot is a small subset of the overall Bass Street Community Archaeology Area of Interest, which itself is a subset of the official Fort Negley archaeological site boundary. The coordinates (NAD 1983(2011) UTM Zone 16N) of lot 406's corners are:

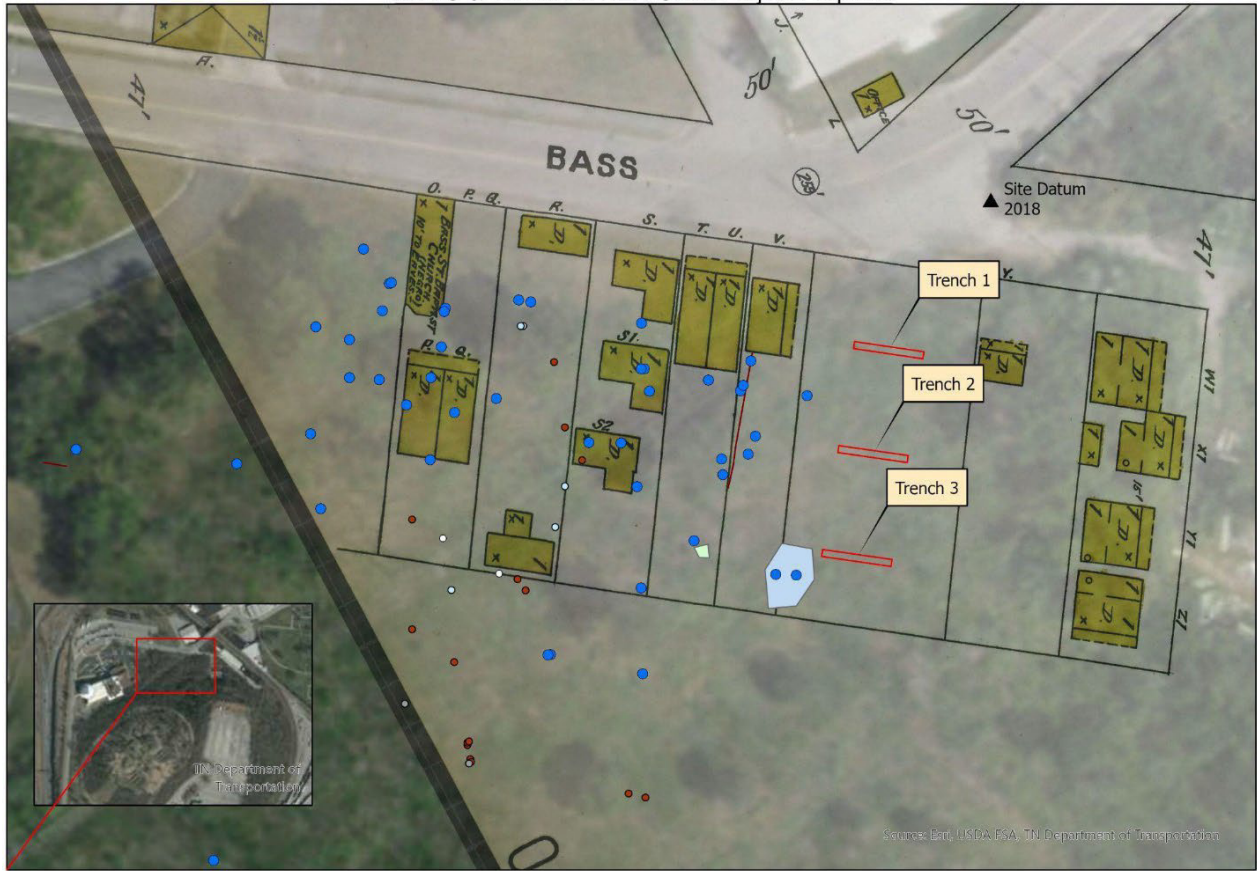
- NW Corner: -86.7734215°E 36.1471069°N
- NE Corner: -86.7732592°E 36.1470859°N
- SW Corner: -86.7734838°E 36.1466946°N
- SE Corner: -86.7733292°E 36.1466780°N

View of the project parcel site (light green) within the context of Fort Negley.



The area of potential effects is limited to the 3 trenches marked in red on the map.

**Bass Street Community Archaeology:  
MTSU & Vanderbilt NEH Grant Project Proposal**



- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <span style="color: red;">▭</span> Trenches                               | <span style="color: lightgreen;">▭</span> Privy  | <span style="color: lightblue;">▭</span> Surface Collection | <span style="color: black;">▲</span> Survey Datum |
| <span style="color: blue;">●</span> MTSU Exploratory Test Units 2017-2021 | <span style="color: lightblue;">▭</span> Cistern | ○ Tile  |   |
| <span style="color: black;">—</span> Features                             |  | ● Brick   |   |
|   |  | ○ Glass   |   |
|   |  | ● Metal   |   |

Data Collection/Analysis & Cartography: Clelie Cottle Peacock  
Surveyor (2018-2019); Michael Peacock  
Date: 9/13/2022  
1897 Sanborn Map: Sanborn.umii.com

## Attachment B: TN SHPO Section 106 Consultation Response



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
2941 LEBANON PIKE  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442  
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550  
[www.tnhistoricalcommission.org](http://www.tnhistoricalcommission.org)

07-11-2023 13:32:43 CDT

Ms. Ann Piesen  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
apiesen@neh.gov

RE: National Endowment For The Humanities (NEH), Archaeological and Ethnographic Field Research at Bass Street Community, Fort Negley Park (40DV189), Project#: SHPO0003427, Nashville, Davidson County, TN

Dear Ms. Ann Piesen:

In response to your request, we have reviewed the documents submitted regarding your proposed undertaking. Our review of and comment on your proposed undertaking are among the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This Act requires federal agencies or applicants for federal assistance to consult with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office before they carry out their proposed undertakings. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has codified procedures for carrying out Section 106 review in 36 CFR 800 (Federal Register, December 12, 2000, 77698-77739).

Considering available information, we find that the project as currently proposed may adversely affect archaeological site 40DV189 (Fort Negley) a property that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We further find that as currently proposed, the undertaking will not adversely affect the architectural resources of Fort Negley. You should continue to consult with our office to resolve these potential adverse effects. Provide your Project # when submitting additional materials related to this undertaking. Please direct questions and comments to Jennifer Barnett, who drafted this response, at Jennifer.Barnett@tn.gov, +16156874780. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.".

E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.  
Executive Director and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Ref:MSG8994630\_wCbqfCs3IskpYCiiGs4r

## Attachment C: Scope of Work

### Narrative Substance and Context

In 2019, Fort Negley Park near downtown Nashville, Tennessee, was named a “Site of Memory” by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and included in their prominent international Routes of Enslaved Peoples: Resistance, Liberty, and Heritage project. This marks the park as a fundamental site to the public’s understanding of slavery and its legacies. It is home to the largest inland stone fortification of the Civil War, which was built exclusively by enslaved and free Black people and defended by the segregated regiments of the US military, the United States Colored Troops (USCT), in the Battle of Nashville. This battle was among the final major conflicts of the war, and also the battle with the largest participation of soldiers who had been formerly enslaved. After the war, many of the emancipated veterans refused to return to their places of enslavement and instead remained in the area, founding one of Nashville’s first post-emancipation free Black communities right at the foot of the hill: the Bass Street Neighborhood.

White terror groups tried unsuccessfully several times to intimidate the newly free citizens of Nashville, and repeatedly, veterans of the USCT used their martial experience to insist on racial justice and repel them by force. A group of veterans led by Leander Woods defeated the Klu Klux Klan in armed conflict in 1868 to finally put an end to the violent harassment. For this, white reporters of the *Tennessean* newspaper shamed him, writing that “the respectable colored men of the city denounced [Woods] as the vilest and most corrupt scoundrel in Nashville,” (Phillips, 2017).

For three generations, the descendants of this tight-knit community lived together at Bass Street until Nashville’s Urban Renewal policy destroyed the neighborhood in the 1950s to make room for a Children’s Museum and Interstate 65. For decades, it was assumed that this process had destroyed all vestiges of this neighborhood, until an exploratory dig in 2017 led by Andrew Wyatt of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) uncovered foundations and intact cultural deposits of this community on the grounds of Fort Negley Park. Continued excavations through 2021 have reaffirmed the value of continued archaeological explorations at the site. Wyatt reached out to Vanderbilt University’s Angela Sutton, the director of the Fort Negley Descendants Project (FNDP) and creator of the [Builders & Defenders database](#) to seek out descendants of the Bass Street Community. Working with Jeneene Blackman, the CEO of Nashville’s African American Cultural Alliance, who is herself a descendant of the Bass Street neighborhood, they identified several others who had lived as children or young adults at Bass Street during its final years and were eager to speak about it. In October of 2021, the descendants visited the archaeological site during a dig where they shared memories and answered Sutton and Wyatt’s questions regarding historical memory and use of the space. Wyatt and his team, including Clelie Cottle Peacock, adjusted their plans for the next excavation based on descendant observations and guidance. This guidance included information on community activities and their locations on the hill, unrecorded occupations of residents and small businesses they conducted on site (such as a barber shop and brick cleaning), details about the exterior and interior of the Bass Street Community Church, where the residents had gone to school, where and how they played as children, and other memories and recollections from their lives as Bass Street Residents.

This community of Bass Street descendants is now spread all over middle Tennessee and further. The descendants range in age from 64 to 93 years old. These next few years may be the final opportunity to record the last impressions of this Reconstruction-era veterans' community. Archaeology of African American sites in the United States overwhelmingly focuses on plantations and enslaved communities, though the last few years have seen a turn toward expanding our understanding of the crucial years following enslavement (Agbe-Davies 2010a, 2010b; Barnes 2011, 5; McDavid 2010). The Bass Street neighborhood provides a rare opportunity to explore the history of a community of people who, because of the legal constraints of enslavement, were not in the position to leave behind much written evidence about their first few years of freedom. The remnants that Civil War veterans and their families left behind allow us to understand the genesis of Black freedom, and crucial underexplored questions of not only African American history, but US history throughout Reconstruction and most of the Jim Crow era. The proposed collaboration falls under the NEH Initiative of *A More Perfect Union: Exploring America's Story and Commemorating its 250th Anniversary* and will allow descendants of an under-represented group of Americans to help archaeologists and historians recover cultural remnants that were lost or actively suppressed in the evolution of the American landscape. These remnants are key to helping Americans reexamine our understanding of the wide-ranging effects the Civil War and lack of sufficient Reconstruction process have had on issues of racial equity and equality.

The research focuses on the ways that Bass Street residents utilized material culture in both public and private spaces to socially confirm and fortify their new status as free Black Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is a deep body of research in historical archaeology that dissects the relationship between material culture and identity (Beaudry and Cochran 2006). Individuals employ material culture to cement individual identities and manipulate social relationships (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005). As Black neighborhoods were established during Reconstruction and grew up to and through the Civil Rights Era, individuals and families found ways to create community identities through different means, including the establishment of neighborhood institutions like businesses. The purchase, display, sharing, and repurposing of material culture, such as fine tableware, decorative display items and nationally advertised items such as foods, toiletries, pharmaceuticals, and other household goods also provided a very visible means for Black Americans to demonstrate their self-reconstructed identities as free citizens while upholding communitarian principles, which emphasize that community can make up for and provide that which a government committed to racial injustice refuses (Mullins 1999a). We draw upon archaeologically documented consumer trends in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Black Americans leveraged purchasing power and consumer tactics to resist racism, reinforce belonging, and establish and negotiate community identities in the post-Emancipation Jim Crow Era South (Bridges and Salwen 1980; Fennell in Barnes 2011; Mullins 1999b; Mullins and Jones in Barnes 2011; Palus in Barnes 2011; Teague and Davidson in Barnes 2011 among others). By documenting how these trends in material culture, consumerism, land use, and public infrastructure access remained consistent or changed over time, we will explore how the Bass Street neighborhood persisted and thrived, despite the institutional racism and the violent intimidation tactics directed against their community. Further, since communities and racial groups and their practices are not homogenous, we will examine how the Bass Street residents' approach conformed with or deviated from the documented majority trends at other sites.

Archaeological sites of Free Black populations in the US can be found in Bronzeville,

Chicago, Weeksville and Skunk Hollow in New York, New Philadelphia, Illinois, Nicodemus, Kansas, as well as several Black towns and communities in New Mexico (Agbe-Davies 2013, Price 2003, Wood et. al. 2018). These sites are sites of the Black people who fled the Jim Crow South for opportunities in the North and West. In the South, work has been done on some urban free Black settlements, but many originally fell outside of the city boundaries, such as North Dallas Freedman's Town in Texas (Davidson 2004), in Annapolis, Maryland (Shackel 2011) and community sites in and around Washington, DC (Johnston 1993, Furlong and Washington 2013). Specifically in the Southeast, the studies that have been done were mostly prompted by cultural resource management projects (Birmingham, AL- Reed 1989; Mobile, AL- Reed 1994, Joseph et al. 1996; Springfield in Augusta, GA- Joseph 1993, 1997; Charleston, SC- Zierden and Calhoun 1984,1986;) and/or are four decades old (Alexandria, VA- Cressey et al. 1982, Cressey 1985). There are virtually no active archaeological sites of urban communities of free Blacks in the South who remained during Reconstruction and throughout the virulent backlash of the Jim Crow era, such as the Bass Street Community.

The Bass Street site at Fort Negley specifically is significant for a number of other reasons. Edgehill (the larger neighborhood district in which Bass Street fell) and the other early Black neighborhoods in Nashville were the reclaimed and expanded sites of refugee ("contraband") camps. Consequently, these neighborhoods were right in the middle of the city from the onset- not land that freed Black individuals specifically chose to make their own permanent settlements (like Freedmen's towns) that stood apart from the rest of the city. Even the one other known example of a Black neighborhood that grew out of a refugee camp that has been studied archaeologically, "The Fort" community in Alexandria, Virginia, still existed on the edge of town (Furlong and Washington 2013). Centrally-located urban neighborhoods like Bass Street and the experiences of the Black Americans who established them were prevalent throughout the Southeast, but only a small fraction remain accessible to archaeologists. Often the remnants of these sites were the first targeted for development by a region eager to literally and figuratively bury this aspect of history, as Fort Negley itself nearly was in 2018 when part of the park was sold for condos (Wilson 2017). Only a determined coalition of descendants and public history advocates were able to prevent the development from destroying the site (appendix L). The park recently approved a master plan for enhanced historical interpretation, and where we plan to dig is space that is currently unused by the park. We propose to take advantage of the rare opportunity of an accessible site to initiate a descendant-led archaeological excavation to find out more about urban Black self-Reconstruction and Jim Crow-era neighborhoods.

## Archaeological Field and Laboratory Methods

The two specific research questions that the archaeological research aims to address are:

1. How did the Bass Street residents use reclaimed private and public spaces, consumer choice, and repurposed materials to reconstruct their individual identities and fortify their status as free citizens? Does the evidence from Bass Street align with or deviate from other historically and/or archaeologically documented models?
2. How does the material culture of the open and public-use areas reflect a shared community identity and communitarian principles among the Bass Street residents? In what ways are those principles related to lack of access to public infrastructure?



To address the archaeological research questions, Wyatt and Cottle Peacock propose to recover assemblages from both a known private residence context and a known public/communal space context, along with a liminal space between the two of unknown use. These assemblages, when analyzed individually and collectively, along with the histories shared by former residents and descendants, will provide key insights into the community's use of objects and spaces. The team will open three 1-meter by 10-meter trenches in key locations at the eastern portion of the Bass Street site at Fort Negley Park (shown in the maps in Attachment A).

To look at a private space, these three trenches will include one that spans across the former location of a residential structure at 607 Bass Street including the east-facing front porch (Trench 1- northernmost trench). The ten-meter length of the trench, which extends beyond the recorded width of the structure, will account for possible horizontal variations between the house structure's location shown on the hand-drawn Sanborn maps and the actual physical location of the structure's foundation. If the maps do accurately represent the location, the 1.5-meter extensions to the east and the west will allow for data collection in the areas immediately in front of the porch and in the rear of the house (the "backyard"). The 607 residence was chosen specifically because it was erected between 1897 and 1914 - over a decade after the neighborhood was established (Lovett 1999, 75) but still relatively early in its 100-year residential occupation-on a lot that was apparently vacant (or at least did not contain any permanent structures) in 1897. The empty lot created a spatial separation between the early structures on lots 605 and 603 (see map 2 in Appendix P). This construction of this home- whether intentionally or not- served to connect the early eastern and western portions of the block into a continuous row of residences, making it unique among the others that flanked it. In addition, the 607 dwelling may increase the likelihood that our sample will include materials related to nuclear families as it is located farther away from the clustered dwellings on 603 and 605, which may have housed one or more extended families and would not provide the same privacy that 607 appeared to have.

Regarding the questions concerning material culture and land use in public spaces, a second trench will be opened between trenches 1 and 3 in a large space south of the aforementioned residence that was consistently open (with no structures) throughout the neighborhood's existence (Trench 2- 13 meters south of Trench 1 and 13 meters north of Trench 3). Finally, the third (Trench 3) will be placed in a space approximately 2 meters northeast of the block's communal cistern.

Each trench will be approached as 5 1x2 meter units and excavated in standard arbitrary 10-centimeter levels using shovels and hand-trowels to maximum depth. All removed soil will be screened using 1/4- inch screens. Maximum depths will be determined by reaching sterile subsoil and/or bedrock. Each level of each unit will be recorded, photographed, and mapped with particular attention paid to the profile stratification which could not be clearly seen in the team's previous, small (50x50 cm) exploratory test units. Exceptions to the exact placement of the trench units may need to occur based on geological, environmental, and property limitations. Those decisions will be made on-site at the time of the excavation. Artifacts will be collected and bagged in the field according to unit and level. After each day of excavation, the recovered artifacts will be taken to the Middle Tennessee State University Anthropology and Public History laboratory in Wiser-Patten Science Hall for cleaning, sorting, cataloging, and analysis. During this process, MTSU will house and store the artifacts in the laboratory, which is a locked room only accessible to

those with documented permission via a personal keycard.

When the project is completed, the artifacts will be returned to Metro Parks and the Fort Negley Visitor Center for curation and storage with the rest of the Fort Negley/Bass Street collection.

After the excavation of a trench is completed and all data has been documented, it will be backfilled with the same soil that was removed until it is full, allowing it to be fully and seamlessly reintegrated with the landscape of the site and preventing any long-term damage. We will avoid any trees by either adjusting our unit/trench placement or working around roots (as opposed to removing them) to mitigate any long-term damage to the current visual landscape and natural environment. Further, by limiting our excavation to three trenches in very specific locations and forgoing any use of heavy machinery, we will ensure minimal impact from our project while also providing information on the (previously unexplored) eastern portion of the site. This information should suffice to reduce- if not totally negate- the need for additional exploratory test pits that would further disturb large areas of the site. Any future projects will have the ability to further minimize impact on the site and target specific locations because of the data from this proposed excavation. Additionally, by performing excavations in partnership with the descendants and open to the public and sharing our findings, we will bring more attention to the site and aid preservation efforts, further mitigating long-term damage through development.

Regarding laboratory methods, each of the trench assemblages will be cleaned as appropriate for each type of material, type-sorted, cataloged in an Excel database with record of excavation year, provenience, material, count, measurements, and presence or absence of diagnostic features. If a date-range for manufacture can be determined, this will also be included. The Excel database will be formatted consistently with the current accession catalog in use at the Fort Negley Visitors Center for ease of eventual integration. Finally, the artifacts will be analyzed and interpreted. Special attention will be given to artifacts that are able to be identified and determined to have been manufactured within or before the date-range of the camp and resulting community occupations (roughly 1860-1970) as they are more likely to have been deposited by the community members. Materials originating in the years since 1970 will be cataloged but excluded from the analysis.

It is anticipated that the artifacts will fall into two distinct categories of construction materials (e.g. brick, cut limestone, nails) and household goods (glass bottles/jars/containers and ceramic, glass, or stone dinnerware and serving-ware) based on prior experience with the site. Additional categories for residual items may be included and will be characterized based on those residuals and how they would be classified in PastPerfect Museum Software.

The qualitative aspect of artifact analysis and interpretation will be approached with these expectations in mind. Based on the former residents' shared recollections and documentary sources regarding the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood, our methodology will incorporate, draw inspiration, and adapt methods and perspectives from a broad theoretical perspective. These diverse perspectives include a focus on descendant collaborations and alternative artifact interpretations that challenge stereotypical notions of the lives of the poor and marginalized by displaying the self-reliance and ingenuity seen in artifact salvage, reuse, and repurposing (Marín-Aguilera 2021, Reilly 2016); studies that emphasize intersectionality and reject ideas of homogeneity in African American

communities (Wall et al. 2008, Linn et al. 2020, Yamin 2020); research that actively addresses, and offers suggestions and methods for, dealing with issues inherent in working with disturbed urban sites, sites of former Civil War refugee camps, and sites of urban renewal (Bridges and Salwen 1980, Furlong and Washington 2013, Howard et al. 2015, McBride and McBride 2011, McDavid 2010, Minkoff 2015, Mullins 2006); and works looking at the re-creation and reclamation of space (Agha 2006, Apaydin 2020, McDavid 2006, Stack 1996).

Pulling from such a variety of methods will allow methodological adaptation based on the nature of the Bass Street trench assemblages. For example, past exploratory test units appeared to display disturbed contexts due to the construction of the Adventure Science Center and the razing of the neighborhood during urban renewal- though the full profile was difficult to record due to the small size (50x50 cm) of the units and shallow bedrock. Excavating the trenches will provide a much clearer view of the stratification and possible disturbance. If the stratification of the trench areas prove to be too disturbed to utilize a standard chronological approach, the team will heavily focus on and use the methods developed by Salwen and Bridges for use at the Weeksville free Black community site in Brooklyn, NY (Salwen and Bridges 1974; Bridges and Salwen 1980). Because the Weeksville site was disturbed due to urban renewal, Salwen and Bridges approached the artifact assemblage as an undifferentiated surface collection. Salwen and Bridges chose to focus their initial interpretations on recovered household ceramics due to their connections to the residents' daily lives, the fact that many could be easily dated, and their abundance at the site. They then used careful analysis of the ceramic artifacts' attributes and manufacture dates, supplemented by oral histories and other historical data, to group the artifacts chronologically, look for patterns and clusters, and draw tentative conclusions regarding the community's socioeconomic and demographic changes (1974). However, as this project will not be under the same strict time constraints that the Weeksville project had to contend with and is examining both a household context and public areas, the analysis will not prioritize any one specific material. The consideration of the assemblage as a surface collection depending on the stratigraphy observed in the trenches will be useful nevertheless.

As previously mentioned, Matthew Reilly's work in Barbados will also provide a methodological framework for how to approach interweaving traditional archaeological analysis with oral history accounts from the former Bass Street residents and their descendants, especially regarding how and when to collect the oral accounts. Additionally, Reilly's work provides guidance on approaching sites of impoverishment from unconventional perspectives that challenge biased historical narratives. For example, Reilly underscores how the absence of certain artifact types can lead to alternative interpretations of others, especially when paired with their in-situ context. His excavations recovered an abundance of tin cans recovered from within dwelling-contexts (as opposed to being in the associated trash pits, which would be more typically expected), which he then considered alongside the lack of glassware/stemware in the same context, leading to tentative conclusions about cans being used as drinking vessels- which was ultimately (and independently) supported by the former residents (2016:331- 333). The team will follow Reilly's model of considering obvious interpretations as well as alternative ones, making connections between absence and presence of artifacts, and supplementing archaeological research with former resident and descendant oral histories and insights in order to create a more complete and accurate picture of what life was actually like on Bass Street, as opposed to how it has been stereotyped and characterized by others, and complicate the existing historical narrative.

## Work Plan

### *Proposed Work Plan*

Following is an outline of the work plan for the archaeological excavations and oral history interviews.

1. Conduct Oral history interviews with descendants of the Bass Street neighborhood.
2. Consult with the African American Cultural Alliance (whose CEO Jeneene Blackman is a descendant) to ensure respectful, descendent-led archaeology of the space.
3. Complete excavations (3 trenches) at the Bass Street Community at Fort Negley with student volunteers at MTSU.
4. Artifact analysis at the Archaeology lab at MTSU. This includes cleaning, counting, weighing, and identification of artifacts, and seeking descendant input on interpretations of artifacts.
5. Creation of artifact database. This includes inputting artifact data into an Excel spreadsheet and incorporating this data with the existing accession register.
6. Interpretation. This is an ongoing process consisting of co-creating a narrative of the history of the Bass Street Community with the descendants through the combined data from excavations, artifact analysis, and oral histories.
7. Dissemination- engaging in multiple multi-modal conversations regarding the history of Bass Street. Includes the expansion of the Fort Negley Descendants Project to include Bass Street descendant oral histories, and the creation of a Bass Street website to explain the collaboration and co-creation between descendants, MTSU, and Vanderbilt faculty, staff, and students.

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#### **Attachment D: Consulting Parties**

- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Cherokee Nation
- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- Muscogee Nation
- Tennessee Historical Commission
- Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation
- Friends of Fort Negley Park
- African American Cultural Alliance
- Afro American Genealogical Society, Nashville Chapter
- Nashville City Cemetery Association
- Metropolitan Historic Commission
- Sons of Union Veterans, Fort Donelson Camp #62
- Bass Street Missionary Baptist Church
- Adventure Science Center
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Vanderbilt University
- American Battlefield Trust