An Archaeology of Community Life: Appalachia, 1865–1920

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Abstract Archaeology has the potential to contribute significant information about community building in the lives of former enslaved laborers. In this article, I consider the role of race and racism in the creation, maintenance and material manifestation of community in post-emancipation Appalachia.

Keywords Community · Race · Appalachia · Freedom

Introduction

What is a community? Archaeologists have considered this question in regards to doing "community archaeology" or working with descendants and other interested groups in archaeological research (e.g., Derry and Malloy 2003; Marshall 2002; Shackel and Chambers 2004). Yet only recently have archaeologists begun to consider what community means historically or archaeologically (e.g., Canuto and Yaeger 2000). Archaeology, with its emphasis on time and materiality, has the potential to contribute significant information to our understanding of how communities were built and maintained in specific historical moments. Here I focus on postbellum Appalachia to consider the role of the genealogies of slavery, race and racism in the material manifestation of a mountain community. By examining everyday interaction, I question how a spatial area was made into and maintained as an "African American community" and consider what this means for the archaeology of the African diaspora and the study of Appalachia.

The research area, or the Brown Mountain Creek community, is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Amherst County, Virginia along Brown Mountain Creek. Amherst County is situated along the north bank of the James River and straddles a dividing line between the Appalachian Plateau and the Blue Ridge Mountains (Fig. 1). Brown

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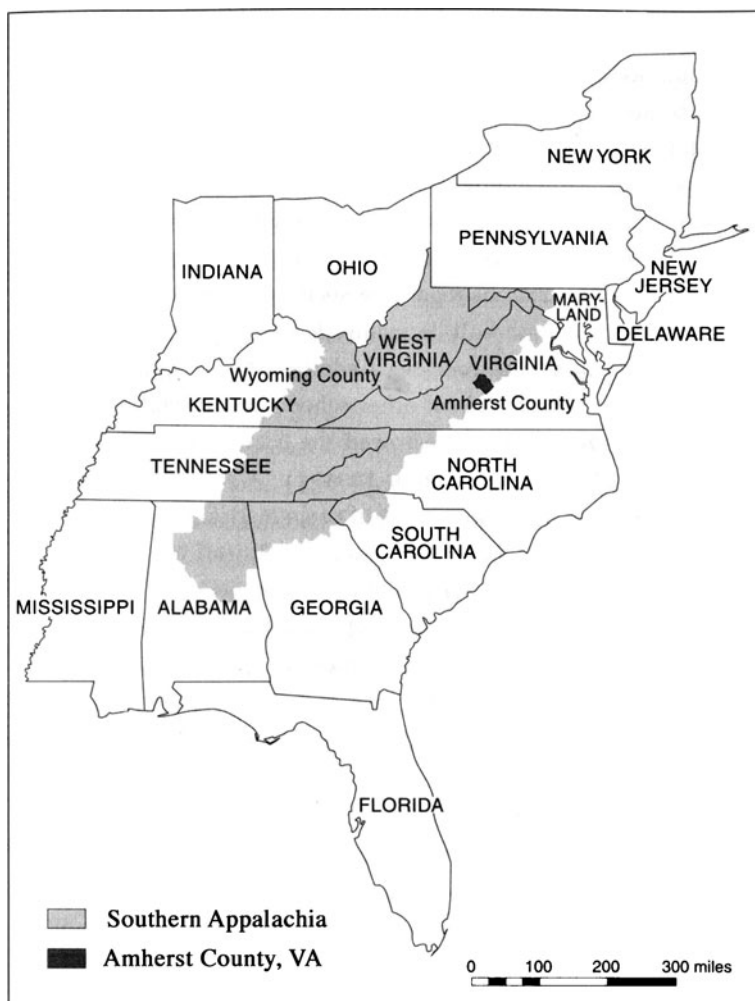
Fig. 1 Appalachia

Mountain Creek flows between Long (2,080 ft [634 m] above sea level) and Brown (2,383 ft [726 m] above sea level) Mountains into the Pedlar River which flows into the James River. The mountain hollow setting provided fertile soil, protection from the wind, and water (Tolley 1995); these elements resulted in conditions favorable to settlement, but also shaped community formation and identity (Fig. 2). With its mountain setting and its social history, the small community can be seen as a microcosm of Appalachia and therefore provides insight into the ways emancipation and Jim Crow were experienced in the region.

Research began in 2005 with archival and genealogical research combined with community workshops and informal interviews to encourage the involvement of community members in aspects of the archaeological investigations (Barnes and Robbins 2006). The research built upon an oral history compiled by Benavitch (1992) based upon interviews with Taft Hughes who grew up along Brown
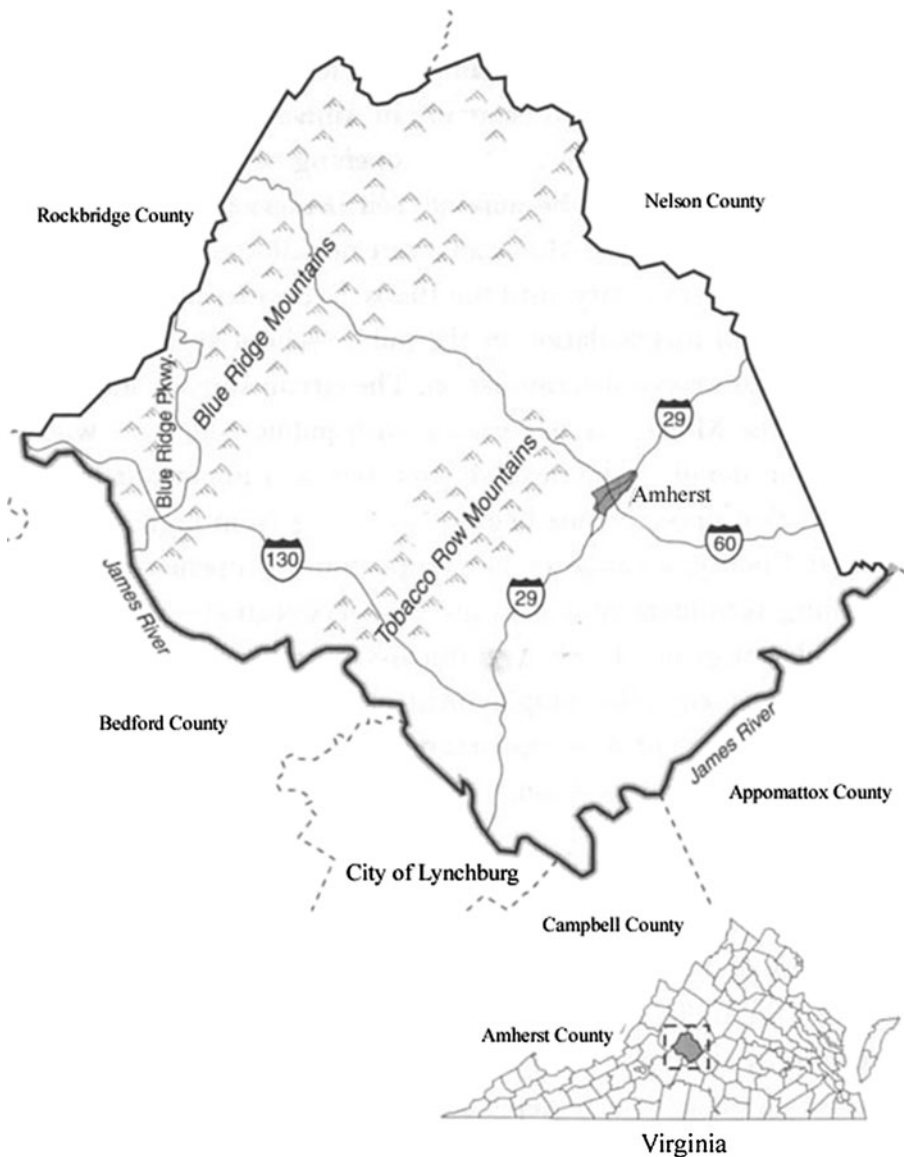
Fig. 2 Amherst County, Virginia

Mountain Creek (Fig. 3). He interviewed Hughes when he was 83 years old and the oral history provided site-specific information and local insight that was tested via archaeological and historical research. A phase-one survey was conducted throughout the mountain hollow locating six sites (Barnes and Robbins 2006). A metal detector survey and systematic excavations were conducted at three of those sites. Only a small number of artifacts were recovered from archaeological contexts. The limited number of diagnostic artifacts provides an interpretive challenge, but also insight about post-emancipation life. By examining U.S. Census records, maps, deeds, and the material traces on the landscape, I consider the ways in which the

Fig. 3 The research area (adapted from the 1864 Gilmer Map, No. 9)

acquisition of land afforded one freedman a key role in the creation of an African American mountain community.
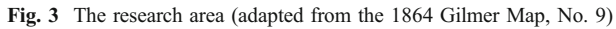
The Archaeology of the Recent African American Past: Defining Race and Community

Historical archaeologists have only recently addressed the ways people responded to emancipation, as archaeology has begun to shift "away from enslavement to freedom" (Leone et al. 2005, p. 577). With the variable dates of emancipation in the United States, archaeologists in the northeastern United States have conducted extensive investigations on African American sites that date to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as the African Meeting House in Boston (Bower and Rushing 1980), the African Baptist Meeting House on Nantucket (Beaudry and Berkland 2007), Black Lucy's Garden (Baker 1980; Bullen and Bullen 1945), the Parting Ways settlement (Deetz 1996), Skunk Hollow (Geismar 1982), and the W. E. B. Du Bois homesite (Muller 1994; Paynter et al. 1996). Yet, generally plantations and slavery have been the defining diasporic experiences (e.g., Agorsah 1996; Babson 1990; Farnsworth 2000; Orser 1998; Singleton 1985, 1995, 1999). Archaeological research on the African diaspora has focused on the material identification of African identity (e.g., Farnsworth 2001; Fennell 2000, 2003, 2007; Ferguson 1980, 1992; Franklin 2001; McCarthy 1997; Orser 2001), the archaeology of freedom at Maroon sites (e.g., Agorsah 1994; Orser and Funari 2001; Weik 1997), and the archaeology of

race and racism (e.g., Epperson 2004; Garman 1994; Mullins 1999; Orser 1999, 2001, 2004). The study of the diaspora has become more global in scope (e.g., Franklin and McKee 2004; Haviser and MacDonald 2006; Ogundiran and Falola 2007), yet most post-proclamation emancipation studies have tended to focus on tenancy (e.g., Brown 1994; Orser 1988; Wilkie 2000). Increasingly, archaeologists are conducting research on the archaeology of the more recent African diasporic past (e.g., Barnes 2008a, b, 2011; Cox 2007; Hicks 2006, 2007; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001, 2008) and are moving away from historical narratives that privilege the period of enslavement while enforcing silences about post-emancipation life (Wilkie and Farnsworth 2011).

The archaeology of post-emancipation life or the more recent African American past, provides a platform for understanding the evolution of race and racism since the concept of race became an increasingly important way of categorizing people and cultures during Reconstruction and Jim Crow. Race is usually conceptualized as a social construct used to define an "other" often through physical characteristics but also through knowledge of lineage and kinship (Harrison 2002; Leone et al. 2005, p. 580). Historical archaeologists with their use of independent, complementary sources of evidence—specifically historical documents, the archaeological record, and oral history—are able to explore the origins and evolutions of power structures, and to point out that some, such as race and racism, have historical and social origins and are not simply part of the natural world (Epperson 1990; Gadsby and Barnes 2010; Wilkie 2000, p. xix).

Before the introduction of critical race theory into archaeology, to say that one was interested in race meant an interest "in any racial imagery other than that of white people" (Dyer 2003, p. 301), especially that of African Americans (Paynter 2001, p. 125). Yet increasingly archaeologists have examined the ways whiteness was created and maintained as a social identity (e.g., Bell 2005; Epperson 2004). Whiteness is a classed racial identity and the American norm; and as such, it is often asserted as natural and not the product of social relations (e.g., Frankenberg 1994, 1997; Hartigan 1999; Roediger 1999; Thandeka 1999). Critical race theory (e.g., Crenshaw et al. 1995; Roediger 1999; see also, Frankenberg 1994, 1997; McIntosh 1988) provides a way to understand how whiteness and blackness were made and unmade over time. Bell (2005) argues that in the colonial Chesapeake whiteness was created through internal and external differentiation. By internal differentiation, she refers to the ways people created a sense of cohesion or "whiteness" by externally differentiating themselves, or creating a belief in difference from others (Bell 2005, p. 447; see also Jenkins 1997), particularly Native Americans and enslaved Africans. I borrow from critical race theory to understand race in Appalachia, but more specifically how former enslaved laborers created a sense of "blackness" through internal and external differentiation from their white neighbors, but also by internally and externally differentiating themselves from each other as they built a community within particular structural and historical conditions.

Defining race as a social construct does not mean that the ramifications of racialization do not exist (Leone et al. 2005, p. 580; Omi and Winant 1994). Racism and inequality have historical and structural dimensions. People make and remake structures even as the structures shape their actions (Thompson 1968). Archaeologists have increasingly been concerned with racism as a means of creating and upholding the social inequalities that characterize American society (e.g., Orser 1999). W.E.B. DuBois (1990) recognized in 1903 that the meaning of race, and the practice of

racism, was tightly intertwined with labor systems and ideas about family and community life, since the place of African Americans in society was inseparable from their place in the economy (cf., Garman 1994; Grossman 2005, p. 67; Mullins 1999, 2003). Here by examining structural racism, or the system of social structures that produce race-based inequalities, I seek to understand how historical legacies, institutions, structures, and individuals work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantage and disadvantage along racial lines and the role these advantages and disadvantages played in community building between 1865 and 1920.

To understand how communities are built and maintained in a specific historical moment, I borrow from literature from archaeology, anthropology and sociology (e.g., Amit 2002; Anderson 1991; Brown 1994; Canuto and Yaeger 2000; Cusick 1995; Kolb and Snead 1997; McDowell 1999; Rawick 1973). Community, like the concept of "place," tends to be a taken for granted term (Rodman 1992, p. 640). It is usually, although not always, used to designate a small-scale and spatially bounded area inhabited by a population, or part of it, that has certain characteristics in common that tie it together (McDowell 1999, p. 100). Aside from a few studies (e.g., Cusick 1995; Deagan 1983; Geismar 1982), in historical archaeology the term is under-theorized (e.g., Brown 1994; Brown and Cooper 1990; Milne 2002; Thomas 1998; Wall et al. 2008). Archaeologists have contributed to our understanding of households (e.g., Barile and Brandon 2004); yet community studies have tended to focus on the functions that a community serves within a social structure (e.g., Brown and Cooper 1990; Kolb and Snead 1997). From this perspective, "the community is a co-residential collection of individuals or households characterized by day-to-day interaction, shared experiences, and common cultures" (Murdock 1949, as cited in Yaeger and Canuto 2000, p. 2). This definition depicts community as natural and synonymous with the site or the settlement system, since common culture is often considered a shared architecture or artifact assemblage. Communities, places of lived experience, are depicted as consisting of a list of traits—of values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like—rather than "precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion" (Appadurai 2001, p. 7). Communities do not just exist; the co-residential collection of individuals and households are created through day-to-day interaction and shared experiences that are differentiated by class and other social experiences (DuBois 1995, p. 235; Yaeger and Canuto 2000).

Knowing that former enslaved laborers occupied the research area, I wondered if it was problematic to refer to it as an "African American community." The term "African American community" itself has come under scrutiny as scholars have recognized that social differences within African American populations have significant consequences for inter-racial relations, the progression of political movements, and the everyday lives of past families (Wall et al. 2008). When the Civil War brought freedom to previously enslaved peoples, the task of organizing communities was only one element of the larger need to create new lives—to reunite families, to find jobs, to establish churches, to gain education, and to figure out what it would mean to live in the United States as citizens. Often for African Americans, "community" is generally defined as a diversified set of interrelated structures and aggregates of people held together by the heritage of slavery and the forces of racism (Blackwell 1975). Yet "African American communities" are not homogeneous. W.E.B. DuBois (1995) noted that an examination of community life demonstrates

the differentiation of class even in small communities. For archaeologists researching race, the multiplicity of ways that race was lived and racism shaped peoples lives is an interpretive challenge, yet it is important to consider difference within communities. People hold multiple roles and identities that they access at different times for different purposes; therefore, one cannot assume that because we can see evidence of supra-household activities that everyone's interactions were directed towards social integration. And race was not the only basis for discrimination in American life or the only way Americans defined themselves (e.g., Crenshaw 1991; Delle et al. 2000; Hill Collins 2000; Scott 1994); gender, along with religion, ethnicity, and age, also shaped ideas, lives, and communities. Here I examine the diversity of racial and classed experiences while recognizing that the community was established and maintained within a larger system of spatialized power shaped by racism and inequality that limited economic and social opportunities.

To understand the dialectical relationship between individual practice and social structure, I borrow from Joan Geismar (1982) who builds upon a sociological model of community disintegration to study the material lives of a free black community in New Jersey. She suggests a "correlation between the community's population rise and the status of ascendancy of a community member, and its decline with his loss in status" (Geismar 1982, p. 197). Here, rather than to investigate community disintegration (Geismar 1982), I examine the role of individuals, particularly Moses Richeson and his neighbors, and the material conditions and social practices that serve to *create and recreate* community. To understand everyday interaction, I take a practice theory approach (e.g., Canuto and Yaeger 2000) that emphasizes "individual practice as the locus of the patterned process that create and recreate society" (Yaeger and Canuto 2000, p. 3). The historical archaeology of community provides a lens in which to observe how social networks and racism influenced the ways in which individuals and households made choices in shaping the natural and built environments and in developing social relationships and economic strategies in Appalachia over time.

Post-Emancipation Life in Appalachia

Following scholars such as Campbell (1969), Dunaway (2003a, b) and Cook (2000), I place the research area in Appalachia. Geographically, Appalachia is defined as the region upon and alongside the Appalachian Mountain range that extends from Quebec to the southernmost foothills in Alabama and Mississippi (Edwards et al. 2006, p. xiv; Sullivan and Prezzano 2001). Yet the *concept* of Appalachia "is a fluid social construction that emerged with the expansion of America—a formidable testing ground for "otherness"—that is defined according to the agendas of policymakers, media representatives, activists," and scholars (Batteau 1990; Cook 2000, p. 3). Amherst County, with its location between the Appalachian Plateau and the Blue Ridge Mountains is a part of the Appalachian region due to its cultural, geological and geographical location (Dunaway 2003a, b). As a microcosm of Appalachia, the Brown Mountain Creek community is shaped by the region's historical legacies of colonialism and slavery.

Significant settlement west of the Blue Ridge began in 1730 and increasingly after 1750 droves of settlers came to the area currently known as Amherst County.

(The land that comprises Amherst County was part of the original shire of Henrico, which became Goochland County in 1724 and Albemarle County in 1744. Around 1774, Albemarle County was partitioned to form the county of Amherst [Houck 1984, p. 31].) This early land ownership was shaped by the state as land was mapped, territorialized as farmland and granted to settlers. As far as these new settlers were concerned, the land was previously unoccupied. To help facilitate the disenfranchisement and removal of Native Americans, whiteness, which was considered not Indian, was associated with the ideals of European labor, discipline, and social order (Beaver and Lewis 1998, p. 55; Roediger 1999). Early settlers in Amherst County displaced many American Indians, settled the mountain land and began defining themselves against the native other.

The earliest settlers established themselves in the mountain hollows where tributary streams, such as Brown Mountain or Swapping Camp Creeks joined the Pedlar River valley. Later with population growth and the division of land among large families, people settled farther from the Pedlar River along the tributary streams. These settlers brought an entrepreneurial desire to join the ranks of the plantation South, or at least compete within the agrarian economy. Thus the primary resource sought was the land itself. By 1790, Amherst County's population had reached 13,703 of which 5,296 were slaves (Cook 2000, p. 54). This ratio did not change significantly until the institution of slavery was terminated after the Civil War (Cook 2000; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1864, p. 155) with Amherst County, Virginia near the Southern average in slaveholding numbers in 1860 (Dunaway 2003a, p. 266n). The fact that nearly half the population consisted of slaves makes obvious the predominance of plantation agriculture in the county.

Many scholars of Appalachia have focused on the farm household that practiced a subsistence-oriented system of production, based predominately on family labor. The successful farm household could provide for its basic necessities but was usually cash poor (Straw 2006; Williams 2002). The emphasis on the farm household overlooks the plantations—large and small—that cultivated crops in response to distant market prices (Dunaway 2003a). Enslaved laborers have remained a *people without history* because too many researchers have claimed that "the peculiar institution" never influenced mountain culture and society (Dunaway 2003b, p. 5; Wolf 1982). Yet the plantation economy shaped the mountain landscape as wealthy white planters blended crop cultivation and livestock raising with the manufacture of agricultural commodities and commercial enterprises with the labor of enslaved Africans and poor white and Native American tenants.

The slave trade brought peoples of diverse African cultures from various geographic locations on the West African coast to the Americas. African peoples brought agricultural practices, architectural forms, cuisine, music, art and technology with them. Yet upon the arrival in the Americas what the slaves shared was enslavement; and slave communities developed out of patterns of interactions among and between slaves and between slaves and slaveholders (Mintz and Price 1992, p. 10). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, slavery increasingly became a significant form of labor in Appalachia. The vast majority of white Appalachians did not own slaves, yet slavery expanded in Appalachia as it did in the Old South throughout the antebellum period (Drake 2001a, pp. 17, 20, b). In 1860, nearly one-third of the region's farm owners held slaves. This varied among Appalachian states, with over 50% of Appalachian

Virginia's landowners owning slaves (Dunaway, n.d.; Table 1). In addition to plantations, industrial slavery was utilized in the tanning works, salt mines, iron foundries, and brick mills (Inscoe 2001; Straw 2006, p. 7; Turner and Cabbell 1985).

Appalachia's surplus producers concentrated their land and labor resources on the generation of wheat, corn, and the production of livestock. Although the rocky mountain land in Amherst County was not the most arable, it was more than adequate to produce valuable cash crops such as corn, oats, wheat and especially tobacco (Cook 2000, p. 53). In addition, cattle, sheep and swine were raised and played a major role in the local economy throughout the nineteenth century (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1841, pp. 155–156, 1895, p. 311).

Land provided the economic basis for the structuring of polarized local economies in which slaveholders amassed a majority of the acreage of land while more than half the white households remained landless (Dunaway 2003a). In Appalachia, the control of land, and other resources, led to greater economic marginalization among Appalachia's white population, since the landowners and mercantile elite had economic, social and political power influencing the allocation of land, jobs, and money. As slavery expanded, poor whites could, and did, define and accept their class positions by fashioning identities as "not slaves" and as "not Blacks" (Roediger 1999, p. 13; see also DuBois 1964). Scholars have drawn connections between the 'white race' concept and labor problems within plantation society (e.g., Allen 1994; Wilson 2001). European indentured and wage laborers were beginning to bond with African slaves and Native Americans into a rebellious, working class that opposed impressments and oppression of workers, and inequities of income and power (Beaver and Lewis 1998, p. 55; Linebaugh and Rediker 1990). In response, the ruling class proclaimed that all white men were superior to people of color. As enslaved laborers and poor whites were pitted against each other, African-American enslaved laborers are believed to have coined the term "white trash" as a contemptuous label to signify the relative lack of authority or status of white indentured laborers and the lower servant classes (Wray and Newitz 1997, p. 2). "White trash" became a way for African enslaved laborers and elite whites to differentiate themselves from poor whites. The term is used to explain the economic condition of these landless laborers (Hartigan 1992, p. 8). In the mountain south, slavery, tenancy and indenture created differing class positions in which the benefits of being white were related to the costs of being nonwhite.

In the 1850s, as the United States became increasingly polarized over slavery, the North and the South became suspicious of each other's political power. Slavery was tied to the fight over states' rights—the doctrine that all rights not reserved to the federal government by the U.S. Constitution are granted to the states. Disputes between the supporters of slavery and the proponents of free labor were responsible for many of the

Table 1 Percentage of enslaved laborers, 1810–60	Location	1810	1820	1850	1860
	Appalachia	17.2	15.3	15.3	13.9
	Appalachian VA	26.4	19.1	27.6	24.6
	United States	16.5	15.9	14.6	12.6
Based on Dunaway (n.d.) Table1.1	Southern US	33.5	34.1	40.7	36.8

political, economic, cultural and ideological differences that divided the country during the war (Frankel 2000, p. 227). During the secession crisis that followed the election of Abraham Lincoln, the majority of mountaineers resisted a move to create a separate southern nation. This sentiment was strongest in East Tennessee, northwestern Virginia, western Maryland, and southeastern Kentucky (McKinney 2004, p. 46). Yet the unionist debate of the Civil War divided Appalachian counties and families. Mountain society was ripped apart as community was pitted against community, county against county, and family against family (Straw 2006, p. 7).

By the end of the Civil War, the situation in the mountains, as in many areas of the south, was desperate (Noe and Wilson 1997). The Union and Confederate armies, both active in various parts of Appalachia throughout the war, followed a policy of living off the land. Crops and livestock were destroyed, homes robbed and burned, and civilians killed. Those who survived were confronted with shortages of food. The Civil War disrupted the stability of Appalachian life, as it did that of American history generally. The violence and impoverishment that occurred during and after the war exacerbated the decline of the farm-and-forest economy as population growth came up against a relatively fixed array of environmental resources. Its wartime experience led the region to be regarded as somehow different from the rest of the South, while at the same time it was visited with many of the same punishments dispensed to the losing side (Williams 2002, pp. 16–17).

By the spring of 1865, Appalachian society appeared to be on the verge of disintegration from the powerful assaults of the war (McKinney 2004, p. 52). Emancipation, disruption of the established social and economic structure, three successive years of crop failure, as well as a depression during the 1870s affected the livelihoods of Appalachian people (Barnes and Robbins 2006, p. 9; Schweninger 1990; Stuckert 1987). Poor blacks and whites were both affected by Appalachia's transition from self-sufficiency to economic dependency (Salstrom 1994; Steinberg 2002), but it was especially ruinous for African Americans who had been promised freedom after years of bondage. In many places in Appalachia, African Americans preferred to leave the mountains rather than face the hostility of their European American neighbors. Many planters expected the former slaves to remain on their plantations as tenants or sharecroppers. Former enslaved laborers with a limited number of options had to make decisions about what to do and where to go. Dunaway (2003a, b) examined slave narratives in Appalachia to understand where Appalachian slaves went after emancipation (Table 2). She found that 85% of former enslaved laborers stayed in their home county, with 80% staying with their former owner for a year or longer and only 15% migrating by 1870 (Dunaway, n.d., Table 14.12).

According to McKinney (2004, p. 53), many European Americans were hostile to African Americans and resisted the extension of political and civil rights to the recently freed people. In addition, the former political and economic elite sought to regain their accustomed positions in mountain life. In most cases, the planter class who controlled the land maintained their positions of power and privilege, although their land was often broken up and rented to tenant farmers or sold. According to Frankel (2000), African Americans learned through their dealings with southern whites that freedom could not be easily attained but would involve struggle. On plantations freed people joined together to demand better wages and working conditions. Within their communities, they established their own churches and schools. With the passage of the

Table 2 Where did Appalachian slaves go after emancipation?

	Action by slave family	Percentage of cases reported in narratives
Stayed with former owner		80.8
	1 year or less	11.5
	2–4 years	38.6
	5–9 years	19.2
	10 years or longer	11.5
Left owner immediately		19.2
Stayed in home county		85
Migrated by 1870		15

Based on Dunaway (n.d.), Table 14.2

14th Amendment to the Constitution, African American men marched to polling places. There the men cast their votes for Republican candidates to help ensure civil rights for themselves and their communities (Frankel 2000, p. 243; Smith 2002, p. 20). There was the appearance of amiability, but members of the ruling conservative party passed a series of laws that chipped away at black political rights while warning of the danger of black domination (Smith 2002, p. 20).

With emancipation, the number of farms in Amherst County more than doubled (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1883, p. 94). An increasing number of African Americans secured tenancy arrangements, but the majority of freed enslaved laborers were not landowners in 1870, and the goal of the government to provide emancipated slaves with a small tract of land for their families or "40 acres and a mule" failed (Oubre 1978, p. xv). A small number of African Americans became landowners with small family farms, but those who became landowners were the exception (Frankel 2000, p. 254). Both poor whites and blacks tended to be dependent upon the planter class for their livelihoods as tenants and sharecroppers at the very time when their positions as farm laborers were diminishing in the face of gradual industrialization (Wilson 2001, p. 202). The demography and social structure of Amherst County was transformed as former enslaved laborers sought new social and economic opportunities. Racial tensions increased significantly among lower class whites who perceived more clearly than ever the impact of large-scale black competition for low-status jobs, as both poor whites and blacks were dependent upon the landowning class for their livelihoods as tenants and sharecroppers. The story of the Brown Mountain Creek community takes place within this context.

Brown Mountain Creek: A Brief Land Tenure History

The first land grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia along Brown Mountain Creek began in 1780. Early land grants varied considerably in size ranging from 80 to 500 ac (32–202 ha). Settlers on these tracts built houses and mills on the flattest, most fertile lands along the Pedlar River as well as on Brown Mountain and Swapping Camp Creeks. Starting in 1812, Jesse Richeson, white but by no means poor, consolidated a number of early land grants and amassed much of the fertile, productive land along the Pedlar River and its tributary branch Brown Mountain Creek (Amherst County Land Records 1812, p. 141, 1815, p. 144). He continued his

land acquisition acquiring approximately 2,088 ac (845 ha) of land (Amherst County Land Records 1823, p. 268, 1828, p. 321, 1839a, p. 185, 1847, p. 63).

In 1832, Jesse Richeson either gave or sold two tracts of land, totaling 518 ac (210 ha), along Brown Mountain Creek to his son, Varland (Amherst County Land Records 1832, p. 321; Tolley 1995). Varland used this land as collateral on debts he owed to several businessmen in nearby Lynchburg. He left the country without paying the debts. When the businessmen tried to collect via a chancery suit, or a case to address the division of an estate, to force the sale of the land, Jesse claimed he had sold the land to his son and that he had never been paid for it. The businessmen's lawyers discovered Jesse had actually given his son the land and then post dated the bill of sale to make it appear that his son had taken advantage of him on a land deal. The judge found in favor of the businessmen and the land was sold to Zacharia Drummond in 1839 (Amherst County Land Records 1839b, 151). Drummond gave this land, along with some additional holdings, to his son in 1849. Around 1850, Thomas Staton bought 675 ac (273 ha), including the 517 ac (209 ha) Varland Richeson had gotten from his father, from Edward Drummond.

Thomas Staton and his family farmed the land until Thomas Staton died in 1862. After his death, his widow, Parthenia, and some of their children remained living on and cultivating the 843 ac (341 ha) of land until the remaining children grew tired of this situation and filed a chancery suit against their mother and siblings asking for the estate to be settled in an equitable manner (Tolley 1995, p. 3). The judge found in favor of the children and a commission was established to divide the estate among nine heirs. This was accomplished through the division of the estate into nine lots, with each of the heirs gaining possession of one lot (Table 3, Fig. 4). This division of land became an opportunity for Moses Richeson, a former enslaved laborer, to purchase land and it became the foundation of an Appalachian African American community.

Community Connections Along Brown Mountain Creek

The landscape of a rural community includes the topography, vegetation and surface water features as well as households and individual farm layouts, such as the area around the buildings, the woodlot, the fence lines, the retaining walls and the roads

Table 3 Division of the Staton Estate (from various deeds in the Amherst County archives)

Lot #	Heir	Acreage
Dower lot	Widow Parthenia Staton	143
Lot 1	Heirs of Lunsford Staton	100
Lot 2	Marshall T. Staton	50
Lot 3	Indiana and John Henson	119
Lot 4	Ann E. (Parthenia) and John Lawhorn	68.5
Lot 5	William M. Staton	64
Lot 6	Edgar N. Staton	60
Lot 7	A.M. Staton Heirs	99
Lot 8	Edward P. Davis	135
	Total acreage	838.5
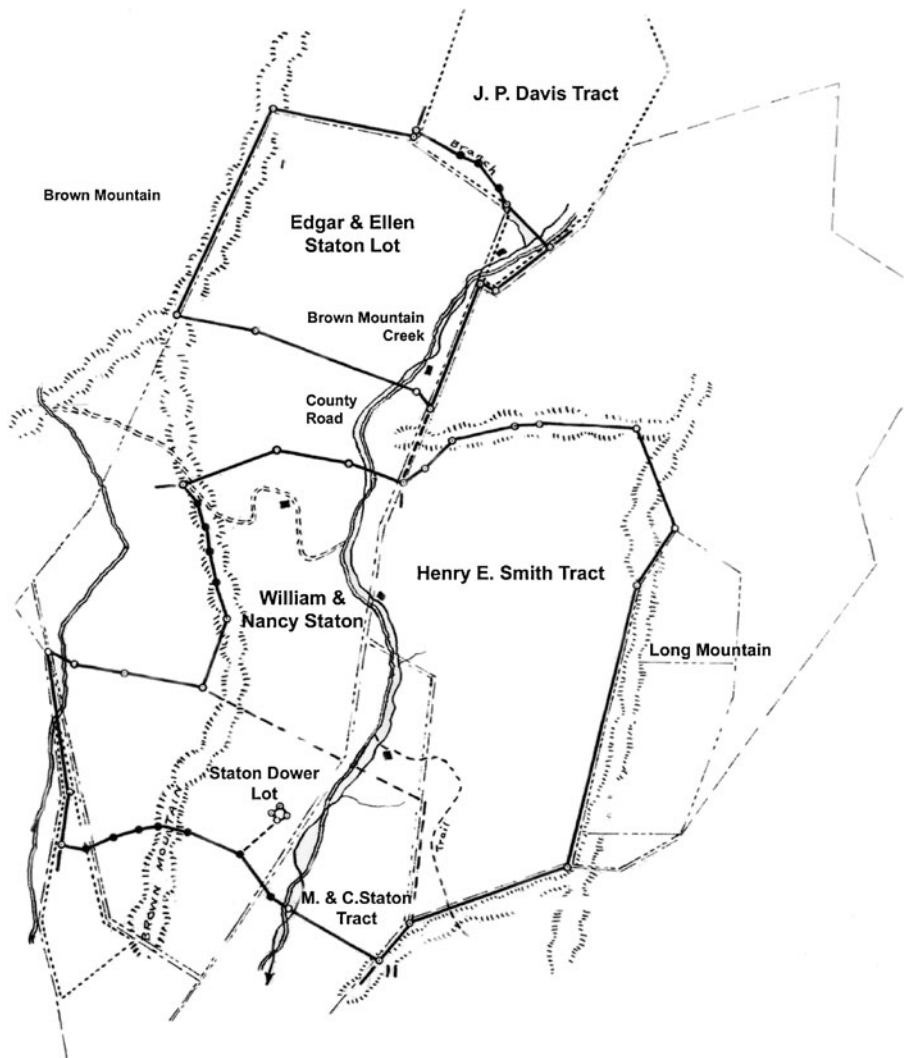
Fig. 4 The Staton Estate showing Moses Richeson's land acquisition (adapted from U.S. Forest Service 1918–19 Land Acquisition Map)

(Adams 1990). It also includes churches, schools, general stores, mills and post offices. Roadbeds and waterways connected household to household as well as households to mills, post offices, general merchants and larger markets. Roads were critical for the transportation of crops and materials, people and ideas into and out of the area. Roads also helped to sustain avenues for exchange, reinforce communications between neighbors and structure social relations between neighbors since roads demonstrate an investment in labor and time.

Along Brown Mountain Creek, the "country road" connects six house foundations with collapsed chimneys (see Fig. 5). Archaeological, historical, and oral records suggest that the house foundations supported log superstructures topped by framed rafters and shingled roofs (Barnes and Robbins 2006; Benavitch 1992;
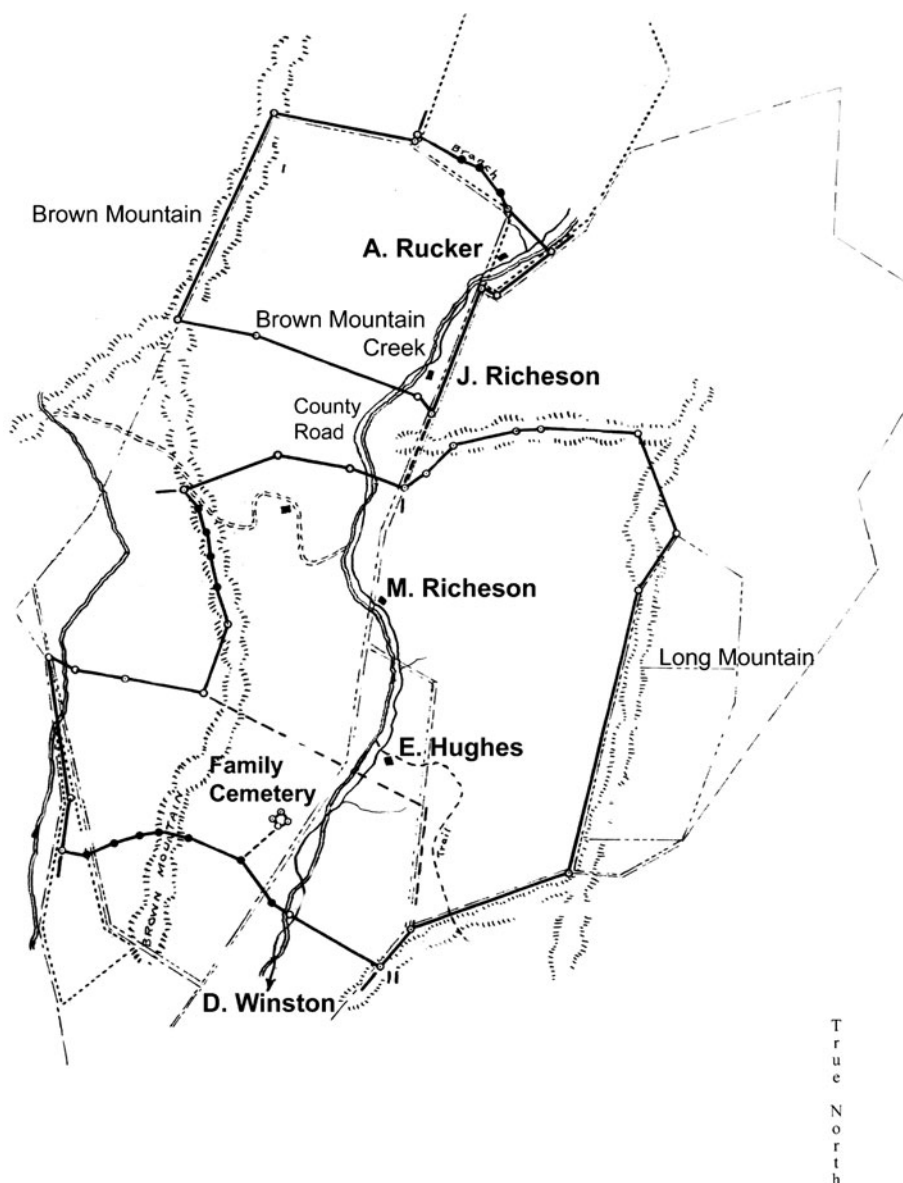
Fig. 5 The Brown Mountain Creek community

Digital Library of Appalachia, n.d.). Although the original houses were most likely built in the traditional Appalachian log building style, there is significant variation in the size and floor plan of each of the structures. The inhabitants of this area inhabited tightly contained areas that were relatively flat and near water. The location of the houses facilitated communication and also made it possible to utilize all remaining land for cultivation and animal husbandry.

This archaeology of community life starts on Jesse Richeson's small Appalachian plantation (see Fig. 3). In 1850, Jesse Richeson operated a grist mill and owned over

2,000 ac (809 ha) of land and 39 slaves. After Jesse's death in 1855 his assets were sold and the enslaved families were separated. Jesse's will, which includes the names of slaves, their occupations, and who purchased them, provides information about the multiplicity of racial identities and kin networks that played a role in the creation of a postbellum community (Table 4). Three that are key for this article are Moses, Benjamin and Daniel Winston.

The Richeson Family: Land, Labor, Kinship and Community

Prior to the Civil War, Moses Richeson, a mixed race enslaved laborer, worked as a miller on Jesse Richeson's plantation in Amherst County, Virginia (Richeson 1855). Moses Richeson, the son of Jesse Richeson and an enslaved woman, was one of 39 slaves who lived and labored on the small Appalachian plantation that combined tobacco and wheat cultivation, livestock raising and the manufacture of agricultural commodities (Dunaway 2003a; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1850). After emancipation, Moses Richeson may have continued as the miller or he may have profited from the Appalachian timber boom hauling timber by wagon to the nearby cities of Buena Vista or Lynchburg (Philip Davis, pers. comm.). Whatever his post-emancipation occupation was, by June of 1868, Moses Richeson had earned enough money to purchase 220 ac (89 ha) of mountain land (Amherst County Land Records 1868, p. 232). Moses Richeson's purchase of this parcel of land, which included Staton Lot #3, became the foundation of a community.

After his first land purchase in 1868, Moses Richeson continued his land acquisition, becoming one of the largest landowners in the area at that time (see Table 5, Fig. 5). For former enslaved laborers, landownership was a tangible assurance of freedom (WWP and WPA 1994, p. 242). Landownership allowed families to make decisions about the allocation of time and energy into domestic and agricultural labor. The Richeson family could allot time to domestic labor that was geared toward production for subsistence and family life or to agricultural labor, which was directed toward the production of commodities for exchange (Mann 1989, p. 778). Richeson was also able to rent parcels of land to other former enslaved laborers, such as the Hughes family.

Moses and his wife Mary (Molly), who was also a former enslaved laborer, raised three children. Josephus and James, born in 1857 and 1858 respectively from a previous relationship, and Clara Ann born in 1864 (Fig. 6). In 1870, the Richeson's had a number of kin or "fictive kin" residing with them. Enslaved laborers often supplemented "blood ties" with "fictive kin" or patterns of mutual obligations among enslaved laborers (Jones 1986, p. 31). Since I could not find direct evidence of kin relations, I assumed that these relationships were "fictive kin" and that the relationships continued after emancipation, since Ann Richardson, age 20 and "Black," and Petticas Richardson, age one and "Black," lived with the Richeson family during the 1870 census enumeration (Table 6). In addition, Daniel Winston, a 22-year-old, "mulatto", lived with Moses Richeson and his family. Daniel Winston was enslaved on the same plantations as Moses (both were born on Jesse Richeson's plantation and were sold to Samuel Richeson upon Jesse's death). The Richeson's

Table 4 Sale of enslaved laborers transcribed from Jesse Richeson's 1855 will

Name	Purchased by	Amount
Branton, a man	Samuel Richeson	$1,210
John, a boy	Caudill Minor	$800
Henry, a blacksmith	Samuel Richeson	$1,215
John, a man	James M. Millner	$1,000
Elie, a boy	P.Sain	$700
Peter, a boy	D. S. L. Richeson	$925
Tesmian, a man	Samuel L. Richeson	$730
McDowell, a boy	Delaware Walls	$885
Winston, a boy	James M. Millner	$690
Rueben, a boy	ditto	$475
John, a boy	Henry B. Walls	$305
Benjamin, a man	D. P. L. Richeson	$305
Tobbist, a man	ditto	$975
Charles Alfred, a boy	Charles H. Rucker	$310
Daniel Winston	Samuel Richeson	$400
Clary Margartt, a girl	Edwin Watts	$230
Mariah, a child	D. P. L. Richeson	$481
Mary, a woman	William Hunter	$820
Maliala, a child	John Ruff	$1,100
Emily, a woman	James B. Davis	$800
Fanny, a woman	James P. Richeson	$850
Matilada, a girl	H. D. Morrison	$560
George, a boy	D. P. L. Richeson	$250
Aron, a boy	ditto	$211
Harriet, a child	James P. Richeson	$825
Louisa, a woman	D. P. L. Richeson	$825
Lucy, a woman	Thomas M. Millinson	$400
Elizabeth, a woman	James M. Milliner	$570
Mildred Jane, a girl	ditto	$500
Rhoda, a woman (old)	T. J. Goul	$83
Moses, the Miller	Samuel Richeson	$1,200
Sam, a man (old)	Preston Tomlinson	$21
Silva and children	Willaim Millner	$350
Susan, a woman	Samuel Richeson	$150
Pecia, a woman (old)	D. P. L. Richeson	$75
Betty, a woman	James W. Martin	$110
Harry, waggoneer	Charles Rucker	$925

kin network is an important part of the community that formed along Brown Mountain Creek.

Moses Richeson and his family lived in a small house on the eastern side of Brown Mountain Creek at the base of Long Mountain (see Figs. 5, 7 and 8). The log house was two stories and approximately 8×5 m. There were two rooms downstairs and two

Table 5 Moses Richeson's land acquisition based on various deeds in the Amherst County archives

Purchased from	Date	Acreage and Location	Amt Pd
Henry E. Smith	1868	220 acres, including the Staton Lot #3 purchased in 1863	$300
Edgar N. & Ellen Staton	1870	Partial interest in the Dower lot	$18
Edward & Isabelle Davis	1872	20 acres, Staton Lot #8	$20
Marshall & Caroline Staton	1872	50 acres, Staton Estate Lot #2	$375
William M. & Nancy Staton	1878	64 acres, Staton Estate Lot #5	$275
Total acreage, 354			$988

upstairs (Hughes in Fener 1992). The house had an uncut stone foundation with unrefined log walls. It had a front gable, with the chimney fall located to the north of the house, and a porch along the front. The small size and the construction of Moses Richeson's house could indicate that owning land to pass down to future generations was more important than demonstrating wealth through the architecture of the family home.

Excavations inside the house as well as excavations and a metal detector survey in the yard resulted in a limited number of diagnostic artifacts. The most predominant artifacts recovered were cut and wire nails. From within the house, two Flow Blue whiteware sherds, fragments of an opaque white canning jar lid liner, a bone toothbrush head, a Hammersmiths- Galveston- Houston buttonhook, a buckle, a blue bead, a fragment of a comb and a
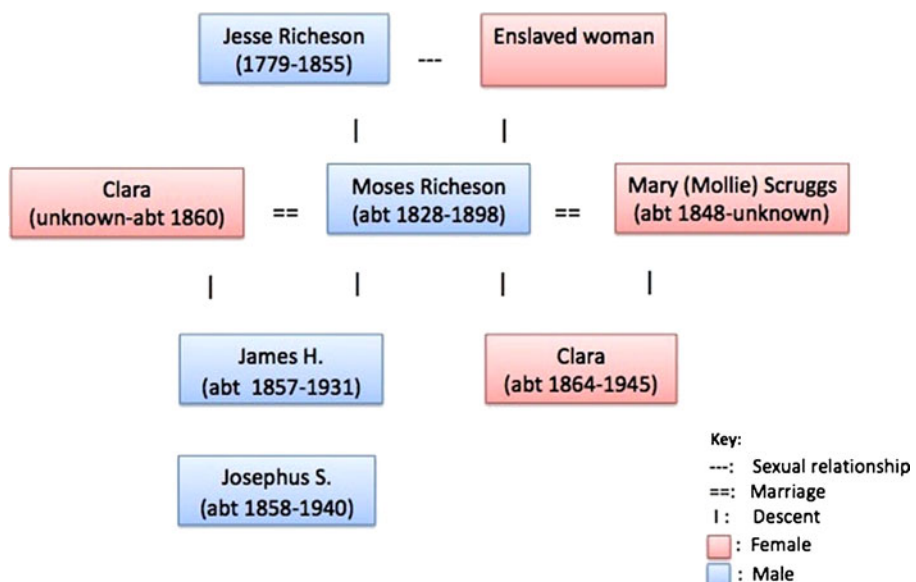

Fig. 6 Kinship chart

Table 6 Transcribed from the 1880 U. S. Census, Amherst County, Virginia

Name	Color	Sex	Age	Relationship	Single	Married	Profession
Winston, Daniel	B	M	27			1	Farmer
- Sarah	B	F	26	Wife		1	Keeping house
- William	B	M	1	Son	1		
Nash, Marie	B	F	16	Servant	1		Cook
Hicks, Charles	B	M	33			1	Farm laborer
- Ann	B	F	26	Wife		1	Keeping house
- James	B	M	5	Son	1		
- Marie	B	F	3	Daughter	1		

number of white, four-hole buttons were also recovered. Although the number of artifacts recovered was low, I argue that this indicates an economic strategy that favors the acquisition of land over the purchase of material objects. I will expand on these data, but here I want to note that the family grew tobacco, wheat and corn and kept a garden to supplement the families' diet. The land in which the Richesons built their home became "the place of happenings: births, deaths, labor, friendships, disputes, and goings and comings of the generations" (Gundaker 1998, p. 15). It was a node in the community that consisted of families, homes, a church, and market networks.
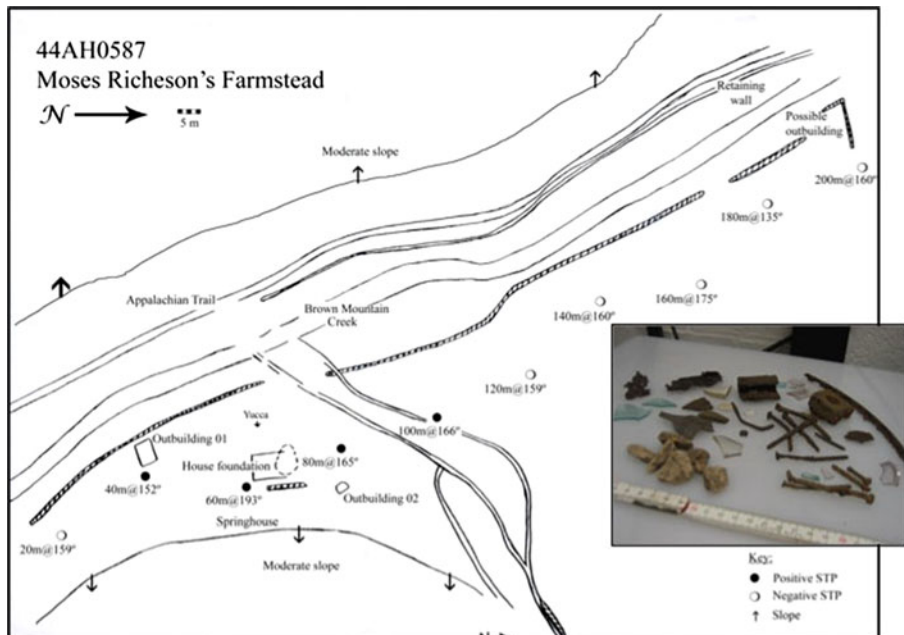
Fig. 7 Moses Richeson's farmstead

**Fig. 8** Moses Richeson's house foundation

The Hughes Family: Tenancy and Self-Sufficiency

Eli Hughes and his family were tenants on Moses Richeson's land. Eli Hughes was born into slavery on James Richeson's plantation. Eli Hughes was mixed-race. His mother was the daughter of James Richeson, the plantation owner, and an enslaved woman (Hughes in Benavitch 1992). James Richeson was the son of Jesse Richeson, who owned the plantation in which Moses Richeson was enslaved. Eli and Lucy Hughes rented a small two-story, side gabled, log house at the base of Long Mountain just south of Moses Richeson's farmstead (see Figs. 5, 9 and 10).

The uncut stone house foundation is approximately 7×5 m with a chimney fall on the north end of the structure. The house had two rooms upstairs, in which the family

Fig. 9 Excavations within the Hughes house foundation
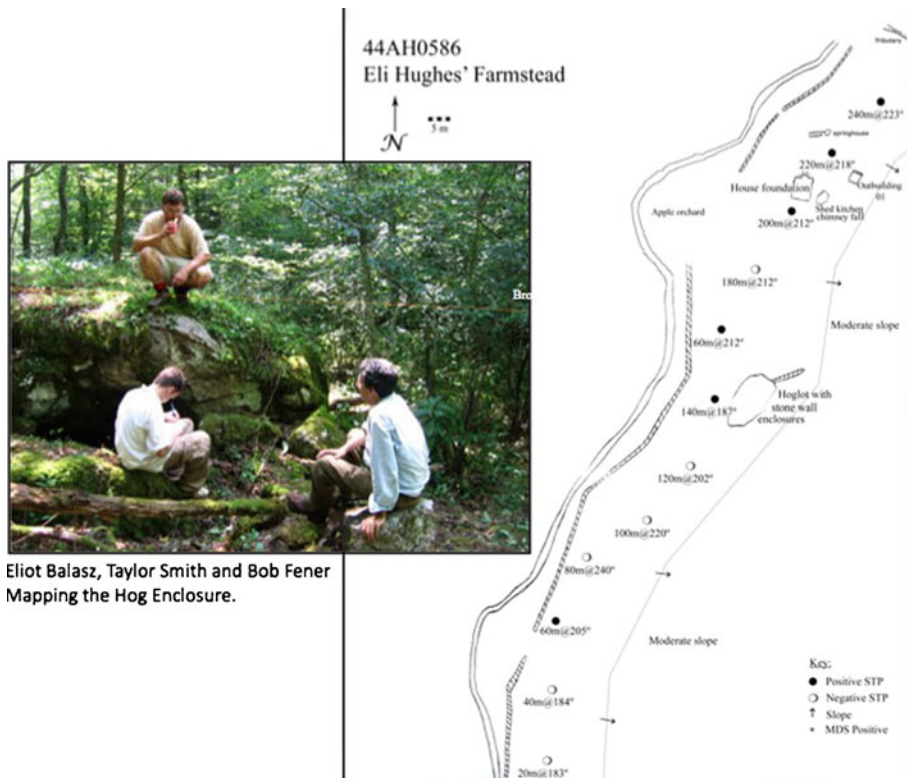
Fig. 10 The Hughes farmstead

slept, and two rooms downstairs, which functioned as living space (Benavitch 1992). Excavations inside the house (Unit 05) resulted in a limited number of diagnostic artifacts, including nails, a number of blue beads, white four-hole outer embossed buttons, French style translucent golden yellow hairpins and a 1919 buffalo nickel.

Surrounding the house, there were a number of outbuildings including a springhouse, smokehouse, shed kitchen, tobacco barn, stable, and hoglot. On the western side of the stonewall, there was a small apple orchard bordered by Brown Mountain Creek (Hughes in Fener 1992). The barns housed the horses and mules Eli Hughes raised and possibly sold to people engaged in timbering or mining (Barfield 1996, p. 317). The family had a small garden in which they grew potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, molasses, and sugar beets (Hughes in Fener 1992). In addition, the family grew tobacco, corn, oats, and wheat on the land they rented from Moses Richeson.

Taft Hughes, one of Eli's sons, described their tenant arrangement as: "My dad [Eli] paid a fourth of his crop. If you owned your team [of horses], you only paid a fourth, but if you didn't own your team and the landlord had to furnish the team, you had to give half of what you made" (Benavitch 1992). Eli Hughes secured a share tenancy arrangement, which differs from sharecropping. Sharecroppers were less independent than share tenants who paid a fourth of their crop and from cash tenants who only paid a flat rental sum for the use of a plot of land and house (Conrad 1965). As a landless household, the Hughes family was alienated from the means of production. Moses Richeson, and later his sons, controlled the decision-making in regards to agricultural production and the land they

worked. This arrangement structured social relations between the Richeson and the Hughes families.

The Hughes family was partly self-sufficient, had purchasing power, and social networks within the area and beyond. These networks are evidenced in the hoglot and barns that housed the swine, horses and mules Eli Hughes raised and sold to people in the surrounding area. Also excavations in the shed kitchen (Fig. 11) resulted in the expected kitchen utensils, white ware sherds, and canning lids, but also a number of buttons, including an N & W Union Made button and a Virginia Military Institute Cadet. The canning jars indicate that the Hughes family was fairly self-sufficient since they could store seasonal garden products and butchered meat for months, permitting a varied and nutritious diet through the winter (Stewart-Abernathy 1992, p. 114).

The buttons excavated in the kitchen indicate that the household may have been supplementing their income by taking in laundry. Within the shed kitchen, 23 buttons and button fragments were recovered. This is almost double the number of buttons recovered from units excavated within the house foundations. At the Richeson and the Hughes's houses the number recovered was very similar, 13 buttons and fragments from the Richeson's house and 11 from the Hughes household. The number of buttons found within the Hughes' kitchen suggests that the space may have functioned as a place to wash laundry (Jordan 2005). Most of the time, laundry was done outside, but in the winter women would wash their clothes in the kitchen (Wigginton 1973, p. 265). The Hughes family may have taken in laundry to earn extra money. According to Wilkie (2003, p. 83) "Laundress positions offered some advantage over working for a single house. A laundress could work for several families at a time, but because she would most typically do her work at her home, she needed to interact with them only when picking up or dropping off clothing." By taking in laundry, the Hughes family could supplement their income as well as broaden their community networks.

In addition, Eli Hughes raised hogs and horses and could sell them for a profit. Although Taft Hughes said that the landowner did not want the tenant farmers "to have too much because the landlord wanted to stay ahead," by taking in laundry and raising swine, horses and mules, the Hughes family was able to supplement their income as well as broaden their community networks. The Hughes family made decisions about how to supplement their income, controlled their domestic and agricultural labor as well as their leisure, owned their

Fig. 11 Unit 05 excavated within the shed kitchen on the Hughes farmstead

own work animals, and was self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency, especially self-provisioning, served a practical purpose (survival), but was also an avenue for asserting and maintaining a sense of dignity in a broader society hostile to African Americans (Palmer 2011). The Hughes family may not have owned legal title to the property in which they lived and worked, but they worked the Appalachian landscape, made a home, and were part of a mountain community through their everyday interactions.

The Winston Family: Kin Networks

As the country road along Brown Mountain Creek continued south, it passed Daniel Winston's place. Prior to emancipation, Daniel Winston was enslaved on Jesse Richeson's plantation, the same plantation in which Moses Richeson was enslaved (Richeson 1855; Stanley Dawson, pers. comm., 2009). In 1870, Daniel Winston lived with Moses Richeson and worked as a farm hand. By 1875, Winston was able to save enough money to purchase land of his own (see Figs. 5 and 12). He purchased 90 ac (36 ha) of the former Staton farmstead along the east side of the Pedlar River and on both sides of Brown Mountain Creek (Amherst County Land Records 1875, p. 9). Shovel testing revealed the extent of the house foundation and trash pits, but excavations have not been conducted at this time. The main house is situated on a hill on the west side of Brown Mountain Creek. The house foundation is largely intact with a partial chimney and a dug out cellar creating an L-shape. Documentary research provides insight into the Winston families' roles in the Brown Mountain Creek community.

The purchase of property connected to the Richeson farmstead indicates the movement of the families between each other's household, everyday interaction and

Fig. 12 The house foundation and chimney fall at the Winston farmstead

strong bonds maintained from slavery. Daniel Winston's parents and siblings were also enslaved laborers on Jesse Richeson's plantation. When Jesse Richeson died the family was separated. Daniel's father Benjamin was sold to another son, Petticus Richeson. Daniel, who was 6 years old, was separated from his parents and sold for $450 to Samuel Richeson along with Moses Richeson (Richeson 1855). Around 1860, Daniel was sold in Richmond, Virginia. Daniel Winston ran away twice and on the second and final escape in 1865–66, he went back to Amherst County and moved in and lived with Moses Richeson and his family (Stanley Dawson, pers. comm.). According to Dawson (pers. comm.), Daniel Winston's great, great grandson, "Moses helped teach Daniel about growing up, manhood and how to survive as a mulatto/colored/Negro/black man in central Virginia during that time."

The strong connection between Daniel Winston and Moses Richeson continued, as the Brown Mountain Creek community became a place to reunify more of the family. In 1872, Daniel Winston's sister Ann married Pompey Hicks. The wedding was held at Moses Richeson's house (Amherst County Circuit Court 1872). Although the location of their house is unknown, the 1880 census indicates that Ann and Charles Hicks resided in the community as they are listed below Daniel Winston in a separate household.

According to the 1880 census, neither Daniel Winston nor his wife, Sarah, could read or write. The family employed a servant, Marie Nash, who could. Prior to 1919, there were seven schools in Amherst County, but no schools for African Americans. Nash's literacy was a valuable asset to the Winston family and others in the community. Therefore, the mountain land became a place to re-unify and build families and to enact plans to improve their lives.

Josephus Richeson: The Church

Following the road north leads to Josephus and Annie Richeson's house. Josephus Richeson was Moses Richeson's son. He established a household outside of his father's house around 1880. The house was located on a narrow floodplain between the country road and Brown Mountain Creek (see Fig. 5). The small stone foundation has been heavily disturbed.

Josephus Richeson was a preacher at Piney Hill Baptist Church. As a preacher, Richeson played an important role in creating community along Brown Mountain Creek. As W.E.B. DuBois (1995, p. 232) points out, the church was more than a religious organization; it was a chief organ of social and intellectual intercourse. The weekly Sunday service served as a meeting and greeting place for working people who found little time for visiting during the week.

Ann Rucker: A Mid-Wife

Ann Rucker, a midwife, occupied the next house north along the country road (Hughes in Benavitch 1992). Ann Rucker lived on 20 ac (8 ha) of land owned by Moses Richeson. Moses Richeson purchased this land from Edward P. Davis (also part of the Staton farmstead; see Figs. 5 and 13).

Fig. 13 Lisa Holly Robbins holding a piece of a cast iron kettle from Ann Rucker's house

Ann Rucker lived in a small house on the east side of Brown Mountain Creek. The house foundation is approximately 7×5 m with a chimney fall to the north of the structure. A retaining wall or fence line is located about a meter from the house extending along the east side. There is an outbuilding and a springhouse within the vicinity of the house. Excavations within and outside of the house resulted in a number of artifacts including several pieces of leather, tin cans, lantern glass, mortar and plaster, nails, and a cast iron kettle.

Taft Hughes recalled that Ann Rucker was a midwife, "We called her Grandma Ann because she was a granny at that time. She grannied me probably. We didn't have a doctor in them days. She was a midwife; she would help the women in the area deliver" (Hughes in Benavitch 1992). As Wilkie (2003, p. 80) notes: "Motherhood was the business of the entire black community, not just individual households. For freed black women, then, motherhood and its associated domestic sphere were things to be done correctly—not just for the sake of children, but also for the good of the race." And, "When doctors were scarce, it was essential that a midwife be near" (Wigginton 1973, p. 274). Along Brown Mountain Creek, Ann Rucker played an important role in community formation since she was intimately involved in the reproduction of community members.

Community Life: Similarities and Differences

A community is more than an aggregation of households. Along Brown Mountain Creek, community is an ever-emergent social institution that generates and is generated by suprahousehold interactions (Yaeger and Canuto 2000, p. 5). These interactions are structured and synchronized by a set of places, such as households, churches, stores, cemeteries, and post offices within a specific period of time, 1865 to 1920. The

community is constructed "through sets of intersecting social relationships that operate at a variety of levels and which are affected by beliefs and attitudes, images and symbols that are increasingly variable and complex" (McDowell 1999, p. 30). Here I turn the discussion to difference within the community as well as the ways individuals worked within and resisted the historic circumstances in which they lived.

By 1875, all but one of the houses along Brown Mountain Creek was occupied by people of African descent. Yet this community was not homogeneous. Although I refer to the community as African American, I try not to collapse the variety of pasts that formed and reformed this mountain community. As Gatewood (2000 in Wilkie 2003, p. 87) points out, "Literacy, education, and fair skin were defining aspects of the most elite African-American families in the South. Connections to white families provided some people of mixed race opportunities not available to other African Americans." Moses Richeson and other members of Brown Mountain Creek were of mixed-race. His position as a mixed-race miller during slavery may have shaped his opportunities as a freedman. As archaeologists researching race, the multiplicity of ways that race was lived and racism shaped peoples lives is an interpretive challenge. For instance, the social identities of mixed race individuals changed over time depending upon the social conditions. In the 1870 census, Moses Richeson is listed as "Mulatto" and his wife and children are listed as "Black." In 1880, Moses Richeson and his entire family are considered "Mulatto". After 1880 the letter "M" was supplanted with the letter "B" in Amherst County and the distinction of "Mulatto" was no longer found in county records (Rice 1991, p. 18; Cook 2000, p. 59). In all of the following census records the family was considered Black, since anyone of mixed race was identified as "Black." The documentary changes reflect the desire of planters to forget the lineages and kinship lines of slavery. It also indicates the fears of white elites and state officials concerning their own perceived loss of power if people of color were treated as equals (Cook 2000, p. 68). This follows a trend, at the turn of the twentieth century, in which the diversity of racial experiences in the U.S. was replaced with a monolithic Black subject (e.g., Mullins 1999). Yet these official changes did not erase the heterogeneity of this mountain community.

"People hold multiple roles and identities they access at different times for different purposes" (Preucel 2000, p. 60); therefore, one cannot assume that because there is evidence of supra-household activities that everyone's interactions were directed towards social integration. As the landowner, Moses Richeson held a position of power controlling what crops the tenants produced. As the preacher, Josephus Richeson had the potential to shape ideas in the community. In addition, activities, such as crop harvestings, hog butcherings, corn shuckings, house raisings, and log rollings, required that all participants acknowledge the social ties that bound them. The similar racial position and the spatial and practical activities that followed from blackness amid the powerful white world unified the African American families. But the same activities also made clear class differences between those who could call upon a significant amount of extra-household labor and those who could not. The landowners or persons with a particular amount of wealth or status could call upon the most extra-household labor and the tenants were more likely the ones to be called upon. Both the Richeson and the Hughes families shared mixed race ancestry, but landownership and the ability to call upon extra-household labor structured class differences among the African American families along Brown Mountain Creek.

At the same time, people of African descent have, and still do, practiced collapsing those differences, privileging black racial identity and a shared heritage, as a means of collectively mobilizing against structural racism (Franklin 2010). The Brown Mountain Creek community emerged as the outcome of individuals negotiating their interests against preexisting historically constituted social structures (Preucel 2000, p. 60). The families living along Brown Mountain Creek were a part of a larger system of spatialized power shaped by Jim Crow racism and Black Codes that limited economic opportunities. Black Codes were enacted to limit the freedom of former enslaved laborers, determining where African Americans could attend school or church.

In his 1898 study of black communities, DuBois (1995, p. 231) noted that African Americans lived "largely in neighborhoods with one another, they have their own churches and organization and their own social life…and their group life touches that of the white people only in economic matters." The cemetery and the church were places of internal and external differentiation. Prior to 1929, African Americans were buried in family cemeteries on mountain land. The Hughes family buried a daughter in a small, unmarked cemetery on Brown Mountain. At this cemetery, the graves are marked with stones or in a few cases with carved stones (Fig. 14). After 1929, the Hughes and the Richeson families were buried at Piney Hill Baptist Church cemetery in which Joseph Richeson, Moses Richeson's son, was the preacher. The church provided space for internal definition as church member created a sense of "blackness" as a place to worship and a place to socialize with friends and neighbors. At the same time, the church was also a space for people to externally differentiate themselves, by generating a belief in difference from their neighbors—through their dress and appearance. As seen in Table 7, personal items and clothing have one of the highest frequencies among recovered artifacts (after architecture).

The Richeson and Hughes families follow trends noted by DeCunzo (2004) in which African Americans discarded toothbrushes and items of personal adornment such as paste jewelry, that displayed their status through dress and appearance rather than other consumer items or architecture. Although I indicate that a large number of the buttons from the Hughes artifact assemblage were possibly from the family

Fig. 14 A grave marker from the family cemetery within the Brown Mountain Creek community and Richeson family markers in the Piney Hill Baptist Church cemetery

Table 7 Percentage of total artifact counts in functional groups

	Foodways	Personal	Household	Arms	Architecture	Activities	Other
Moses Richeson	5.75	17.97	3.78	0.45	66.4	4.84	0.78
Elie Hughes	4.82	27.65	3.53	1.12	48.95	5.29	9.63

taking in laundry to supplement their income, the frequency of personal items is still higher than the other artifacts recovered suggesting that appearance and land were more important than the purchase of consumer household goods.

As individuals, the people living along Brown Mountain Creek made decisions to resist the social discriminations, legal codes and economic boundaries that shaped their lives. Archaeology shows that these decisions differed from urban areas, where archaeologists have documented that African Americans increasingly purchased mass-produced goods from catalogs rather than shopping at local merchants (e.g., Mullins 1999). Only small quantities of mass-produced goods were recovered along Brown Mountain Creek, although Taft Hughes remembers his mother ordering things (Benavitch 1992). If artifact patterns are considered (Table 8), the artifact assemblage recovered from Moses Richeson's farmstead, particularly the architectural and kitchen functional categories, resembled the pattern for a nineteenth-century slave or a twentieth-century tenant farmer rather than a landowner who owned 350 ac (142 ha) of land and was listed in the Chantaigne's business directory as a prominent farmer (Chataigne 1893–94, p. 204). The ability to own land would signify a higher class

**Table 8** Comparison of artifact patterns by functional group (percentages)

Artifact Patterns	Clothing	Personal	Foodways	Household	Arms	Architectural	Activities	Pipes	Other
18th-Cent. Carolina (South 1977)	2.95	0.29	59.51	0.35	0.19	27.58	1.35	7.80	0.00
18th-Cent. Slave (Wheaton et al. 1983)	0.49	0.05	77.39	0.07	0.17	17.81	0.51	3.53	0.00
19th-Cent. Slave (Resnick 1984; Drucker et al. 1984)	1.00	0.10	24.30	0.00	0.00	70.80	0.30	0.00	0.00
19th-Century SC Piedmont Tenant (Trinkley and Caballero 1983)	1.50	0.30	72.30	0.00	0.00	22.10	3.80	0.00	0.00
19th-Cent. Piedmont Yeoman (Drucker et al. 1984)	1.80	0.40	45.10	0.40	0.00	50.00	1.80	0.00	0.00
19th/20th-Cent. Piedmont Yeoman (Resnick 1984)	1.00	0.50	60.70	0.00	0.00	36.70	1.00	0.00	0.00
20th-Cent. Tenant (Stine et al. 1987)	3.08	0.00	40.07	0.69	0.69	54.11	3.77	0.00	0.00
19th/20th-Cent. Piedmont Yeoman (Wheaton and Reed 1987)	26.05	0.00	32.77	0.00	0.63	34.24	5.88	4.00	0.00
Hughes Total Artifacts	2.73	4.82	23.92	3.53	1.12	48.95	5.29	0.00	9.63
Richeson Total Artifacts	1.21	0.75	13.76	3.78	0.45	71.40	4.84	0.00	3.78

positioning than a share tenancy arrangement, yet the material differences between the Richeson and the Hughes farmsteads are minimal. Eli Hughes' house is similar to Moses Richeson's in size and construction—small, two-story, log houses—with a similar number of outbuildings. Yet the artifacts recovered at the Hughes farmstead indicate a level of self-sufficiency and that the Hughes family purchased more items from local markets and mail order catalogs than the Richesons. The artifact patterns also show more similarity than differences from their white neighbors. As a social and economic strategy, Moses Richeson made choices in which to minimalize class differences; rather than purchase material items, Moses Richeson purchased land, hence appearing more like his white and black neighbors.

Here I want to return to the DuBois quote about community. He noted that African Americans only interacted with whites in economic matters (DuBois 1995, p. 231), yet this notion undermines the reality of the preexisting, historically constituted social structures in which the families were negotiating their interests. Taft Hughes recounts a story, saying,

> [A]fter she had lunch, [my mother] fixed a lunch up and sent it up by my dad to Jim Richardson. (No Jim Richardson is listed in Amherst County in the 1860 slave or population schedules. This is undoubtedly James Richeson. The spelling of the name Richeson varies from year to year for both the African American and the European American families. It is spelled Richeson or Richardson on varying documents.) He lived down near the Pedlar… My dad said that when he got there with the lunch, he was sitting there grating him some corn. My dad said that here was some lunch that Lucy sent you. He said that he dropped his head and commenced crying. Tears run down in his corn. He just laid his grater aside (Benavitch 1992).

Benavitch asked Taft why he thought Jim Richeson was crying. Taft responded, "I reckon it was his conscience. He had been their marsa. They was his slaves, and here they was doing that for him." The legacies of slavery were evidenced in the community's mixed raced ancestries as well as the day-to-day interactions. In addition, aside from the fact that many white landowners were willing to sell land to Moses Richeson, it is difficult to know how white families living in the area surrounding Brown Mountain Creek may have related with Richeson and the other African American families in the area (Fig. 15). An examination of business directories (Chataigne 1893–94; Lynchburg Directory, 1885–86) shows fifty general merchants in Amherst County and the surrounding area. An analysis of the U.S. Census records shows that a majority (if not all) of the merchants found in the census were identified as "white." Within a five-mile radius of Brown Mountain Creek, there were four general merchants and two post offices; each of these were owned and operated by white merchants (Table 9). The Davis family, a white family, operated the local mill. Local farmers took corn to the mill to be ground or purchased ground corn (Hughes in Benavitch 1992). Purchasing coffee and other necessities, going to the post office, taking corn to the mill, getting married, participating in the census, and buying (and using) mass-produced goods are just a few of the actions community members undertook regularly that were situated in "white" culture and necessitated familiarity and a willingness to participate in it.
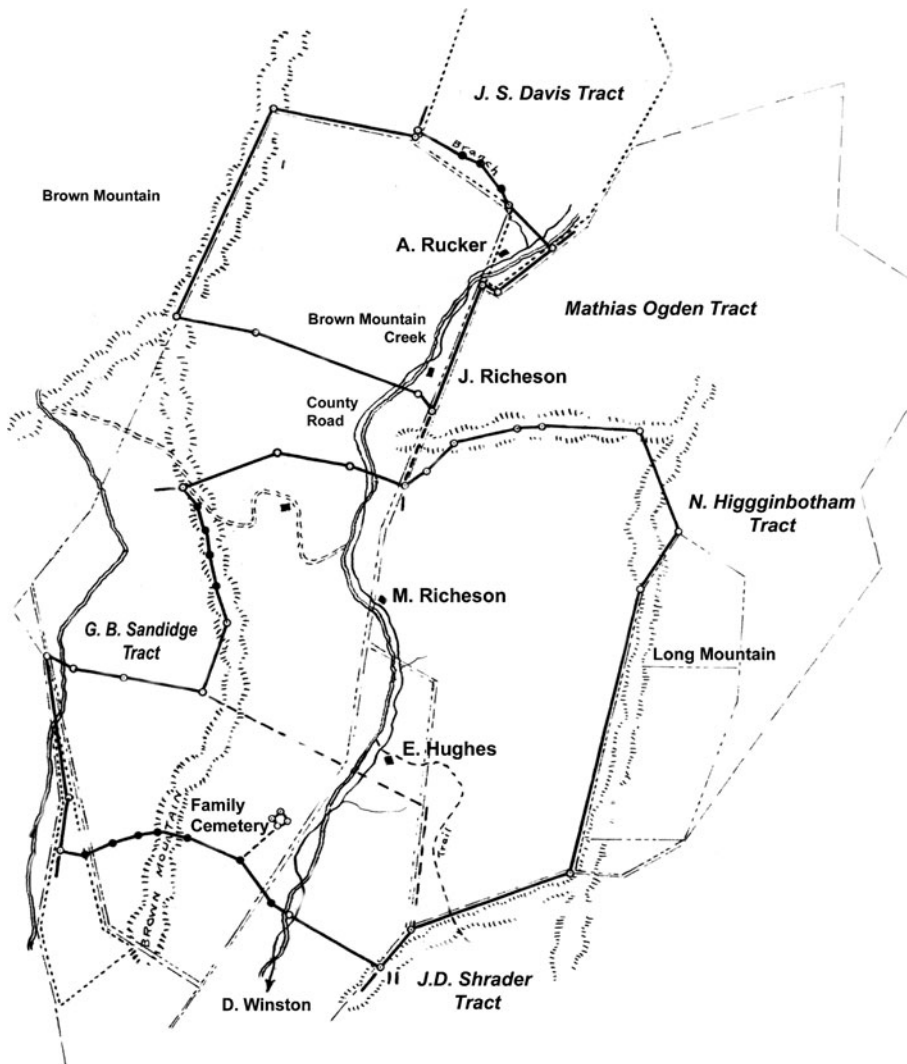
Fig. 15 The location of white landowners surrounding the African American Brown Mountain Creek community

As a community, the people living on the mountain land shaped and modified the landscape to provide housing, accommodate the systems of production and reproduction, facilitate communication and transportation, mark social inequalities and express aesthetics. The families, enacting freedom by making a living on the land, and the land itself were constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and the landscape were tied up with each other (Gosden and Marshall 1999, p. 169). Moses Richeson played a key role in the creation of a postbellum community through the purchase of land, the control of his own domestic and agricultural labor, the care of his family and fictive kin networks, and by providing opportunities to tenants. All of these actions helped shape community life along Brown Mountain Creek, but it was the daily actions and interactions of everyone living in the area that shaped the landscape and created

Table 9 General merchants and post offices near the brown mountain creek community

Name	Occupation	Location	Race
H. R. Crist	General merchant	Oronoco	White
	Post office	"	"
F. H. Higginbotham	General merchant	Long Mountain	White
J. H. Fall	General merchant	Allwood	White
J. H. Parr	General merchant	Allwood	White
George Cunningham	Post Office	Way	White

and recreated community life in the area. For the families who lived along Brown Mountain Creek, the Appalachian land was an instrument of labor and an object of self-improvement. As African Americans negotiated the mountain landscape, race may not have played an important role in the procurement, use and reuse of material items, yet the history of struggles over land and labor shaped classed relations, the social construction of race, and community life in the area.

Placing Community and Race in Context: Appalachia

By 1900, Appalachia's economy had shifted from farming to industry, including timber, mining and the railroad, and many farm families who had made a living from the land found it more difficult to support themselves. At the same time, in Amherst County, the farm and forest economy was changing as a result of industrialization. The land that Moses Richeson and members of the Brown Mountain Creek community had plowed, planted and harvested in the Blue Ridge Mountains gained value as part of a plan to protect the city of Lynchburg's water supply. As more manufacturing plants were built above the City's intake on the James River, the dumping of industrial waste eventually caused the James to become unfit for use domestically (Wingfield 1974, p. 3). The land owned by Moses Richeson and Daniel Winston was re-valued as the city of Lynchburg looked toward the Blue Ridge Mountains as a source of water and recreation.

This followed a trend in Appalachia in which city and federal governments purchased land to conserve water and build forests and parks. The construction of national parks and forests required the displacement of families who relied upon the land for food and livelihood. Several scholars, who have studied the displacement of people in the building of national parks and forests in Appalachia (e.g., Horning 2000a, b, 2001; Powell 2002; Spence 2000; Walker 1998), have noted that the narratives used to justify displacement were often based on stereotypes. For example, Semple (1910, p. 561) wrote:

> In one of the most progressive and productive countries in the world, and in that section of the country which has had its civilization and wealth longest, we find an area where the people are still living the frontier life of the backwoods, where the civilization is that of the eighteenth century…where the large majority of the inhabitants have never seen a steamboat or a railroad, where

money is as scarce as in Colonial days, and all trade is barter. These conditions are to be found throughout the broad belt of the Southern Appalachians. The emphasis on poverty ignored the multiple levels of self-sufficiency, wealth, and education of the population as a whole. Some mountain residents lived in poverty, but as recent research shows, many of them had only recently become destitute because of the 1890s depression (Powell 2002, p. 4).

The city of Lynchburg started purchasing land in the area around 1906 and was aided by the passage of the Weeks Act in 1911 (Barnes 2008b). In 1918, Daniel Winston sold his 101 ac (41 ha) to the U.S. Forest Service and in 1919 Moses Richeson's sons sold the land their father had worked hard to attain. The re-valuing of the mountain land disrupted the African American community built upon the desire for freedom, kin networks and everyday interactions. As the federal and local governments moved in to manage natural resources, the people who had depended on such lands for food and livelihood found their interests disregarded. The clearance of the Appalachian landscape ruptured the sense of belonging, home, identity, and meaning (Smith 2008, p. 23) the African American families had built. The transition from farms to forests changed the lives of people who once lived along Brown Mountain Creek. As in other parts of Appalachia, people living in the mountains migrated to cities for jobs. The children of these families tended to move to nearby cities, such as Buena Vista or Lynchburg or even further away to Baltimore or Philadelphia.

At the same time, in Virginia, the passage of a series of Jim Crow laws that pertained to railroads, streetcars, residential areas and prisons (Sherman 1988, p. 70; Wynes 1967, pp. 416–418) shaped the racial landscape. Miscegenation and the fear that people of mixed race were passing as white was a growing concern of many whites (Sherman 1988, p. 70). The growing concern over establishing a person's racial identity was intertwined with the emergence of scientific racism, especially that associated with the eugenics movement (Sherman 1988). The one-drop rule, or the law of hypodescent, denies black/white interracial persons a legitimate claim to whiteness and assigns them to a lower rung of the heritage hierarchy (Pabst 2003, p. 178). During this time of segregation, the white families of Amherst County were firming up the "race" lines marking people of color as "not white" and delineating the spatial boundaries of whiteness. The racialization that occurred as white elites and state officials attempted to fortify the color line and distance Whites from Blacks and European immigrants and evade the immense class tensions within the U.S replaced the diversity of racial and classed experiences with a monolithic Black subject (Mullins 1996, p. 538). Class rarely figured in popular discourses after the Civil War. Instead, those discourses fixated on race and recast pervasive class turmoil as the inevitable product of various non-white racial groups, especially blacks (Mullins 1999, p. 24).

Ironically, as people of color were being classified as monolithic Black subjects, Appalachia was being represented as the region of white poverty. With the purchase of the land by the federal government, Brown Mountain Creek became part of the supra-regional systems that governed most of Appalachia. Seen as obstacles to progress, the people of Appalachia were stereotyped as "white trash" and "hillbillies" to justify the economic and environmental exploitation that occurred as control of land and labor moved out of the region. With the focus on poor whites,

the African American residents of Appalachia became invisible. The history of the African American families who built a mountain community was forgotten. Historical archaeology provides a lens in which to see past these racial stereotypes to understand the ways in which the lived experience of race is created through internal and external differentiation that cannot be separated from the historically constituted social structures in which the families lived.

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