

ABSTRACT

In recent years historical archaeologists have employed the panoptic plantation approach to examine issues of surveillance and control at plantations. Despite new scholarship in the area of the panoptic plantation, few studies place the enslaved laborer at the center and the planter-elite on the periphery. Failure to broaden the scope of studies that focus on enslaved laborers minimizes the importance of the differences in perception, cognition, and landscape between the planter-elite and the enslaved laborers.

The aim of this study is to determine potential enslaved laborer mobility and how cognitive predictive models can aid in identifying potential locations for archaeological evidence of enslaved laborers' rituals and/or activities within a panoptic plantation landscape. To this end, two guiding research questions are as follows: (1) To what extent did the planter-elites at the plantations on the East Branch of the Cooper River create and maintain an elite ideology that structured perceptions of the plantation landscape? (2) To what extent and where did the enslaved laborers create potential pathways to avoid the perceived planter-elite panoptic plantation landscape on plantations at the East Branch of the Cooper River? In this context, this dissertation requires a multidisciplinary approach that

incorporate theories and methods from the disciplines of historical archaeology, history, cultural geography, and Geographic Information System.

Because of the multidisciplinary nature of this dissertation, the research questions are answered through a mixed methodology that involved the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first research question is addressed primarily through the collection of historical, archaeological, and geographical documentation. The second research question is addressed through the creation of several cognitive predictive models using ArcGIS 10.5.1. The Visibility Analysis models suggest that the plantations along the East Branch of the Cooper River exhibit a panoptic plantation landscape at the regional scale. The Least Cost Analysis models suggest that the enslaved laborers created potential pathways that avoided surveillance and control from the planter-elite.

On this basis, it is suggested that historical archaeologists should consider placing the enslaved laborers at the center of their studies of panoptic plantation landscapes. Further research could be to conduct comparative regional studies of other plantation communities to identify if a panoptic plantation exists and to identify where enslaved laborer may have created potential paths.