

Gaining the Attention of Youth in Heritage Research and Preservation - Integrating Anthropology, Education, and Technology

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Abstract

This poster explores the possibilities that new technologies have for engaging youth in heritage research and preservation. Examples from several heritage preservation projects serve as a context. A central theme is an interdisciplinary approach that includes community stakeholders, anthropologists, educators, technology specialists, and the National Park Service. Technologies such as podcasts, iTunes, and other digital media were used to engage youth elders and other community members to create, share and disseminate historical information about their communities. The potential benefits of this highly participatory process will be discussed.

Objectives

- Partner with the Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center in Tampa, Florida and the National Park Service in Nicodemus, Kansas.
- Work with descendent families and other stakeholder groups
- Engage youth and elders in collaborative discussion
- Train, mentor, and incorporate student researchers and participants
- Engage community participation in cultural heritage preservation efforts for public presentation, interpretation and access
- Explore the use of multimedia tools and technology as a means of documenting history and/or preserving heritage.
- Share artifacts that have historical meaning and value about the community for participants
- Acquire relevant artifact/materials for inclusion in museum

Methodology

- Sulphur Springs, Tampa FL – Graduate student mentor for Heritage Research USF Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Summer 2010
- Nicodemus, Kansas - Research conducted as part of a National Park Service grant under the direction of Dr. Antoinette Jackson to support the community of Nicodemus in collecting and preserving its history and heritage (Summer 2011).
- Participant Observation
- Oral History interviews
- Photo elicitation

Results

- Historical "Silences" (Trouillot 1995)
- Database of oral history interviews (audio, video and transcribed hardcopy)
- Photo archive
- Podcasts
- Reports documenting findings
- Public presentation of findings/output to community and professional organizations

Conclusions

- Podcasts on iPod, MP3 players, cel phones foster great possibilities for flexible learning for youth and adults
- Podcasting and iTunes U provides multiple pathways to create, disseminate and access grassroots content
- Adding their own memories and thoughts to photos and video exhibited online prompted community members to use new technologies
- Portable, affordable technologies are tools to bridge gaps between youth and history, providing avenues for youth to assess the past, self-reflect and create "new stories" and raise the volume on the narratives of people who have been silenced due to issues of representation, access, identity, race, gender, and socio-economic disparities.



Figure 1. Nicodemus descendant Joetta Nivens at family Homestead.



Figure 2. Nicodemus descendants Florence Howard and Bertha Moore Carter at remains of family Homestead.



Figure 4. Nicodemus descendants, youth and community members participate in podcasting workshop at local library.



Figure 3. Margaret Allsopp assisting Nicodemus descendants create a podcast.



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- University of South Florida (Department of Anthropology Heritage Research Lab; College of Education; Office of Undergraduate Research; Office of Sponsored Research)
- Antoinette Jackson, Ph.D., Director, USF Heritage Research Lab



Figure 5. Sulphur Springs elders Willie Streeter and Earl Glymph sharing memories of community at the Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center.

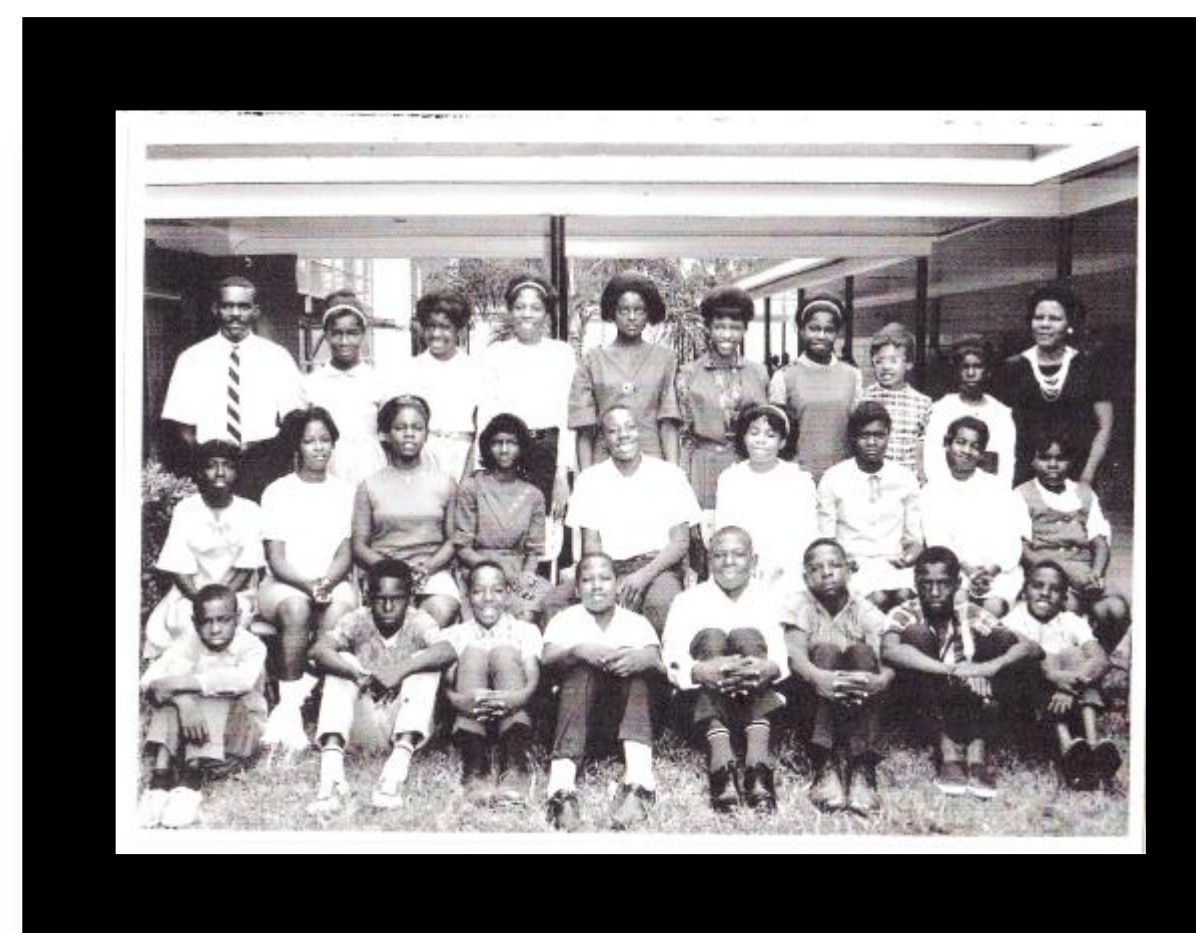


Figure 6. Dillard Elementary School, Spring Hill, FL. Photo courtesy: Mr. Willie Streeter



Figure 7. Spring Hill home torn down by interstate and urban renewal. Photo courtesy: Mr. Willie Streeter.



Figure 8. Mr. Streeter shares personal artifacts with teen from Sulphur Springs.

So that this generation won't be lost. So that someone will be able to hold it together because everybody is not making the right decisions. So that some people can grab a hold of some kind of hope, some kind of understanding. If it's not me, than who else. Somebody has to leave a good legacy of the community for the youth because a lot of our youth are not following the right path. Who's going to leave a good legacy. Who's going to leave a good report about what's going on. Growing up in Sulphur Springs, when I first moved here, a lot of people would say 'Oh, nothing good ever comes out of Sulphur Springs.' I used to always hear that. And I'm like I'm not really good at school, I'm not really good at much. But I used to go to the park and the recreation center and I used to get involved in sports and all these different things and I would always hear negative like nothing good can come out of this community. And it's like, I live in this community! That means they're talking about me too...but I'm doing something positive.

Figure 9. Female youth explains why she chose to participate in sharing sessions with elders.

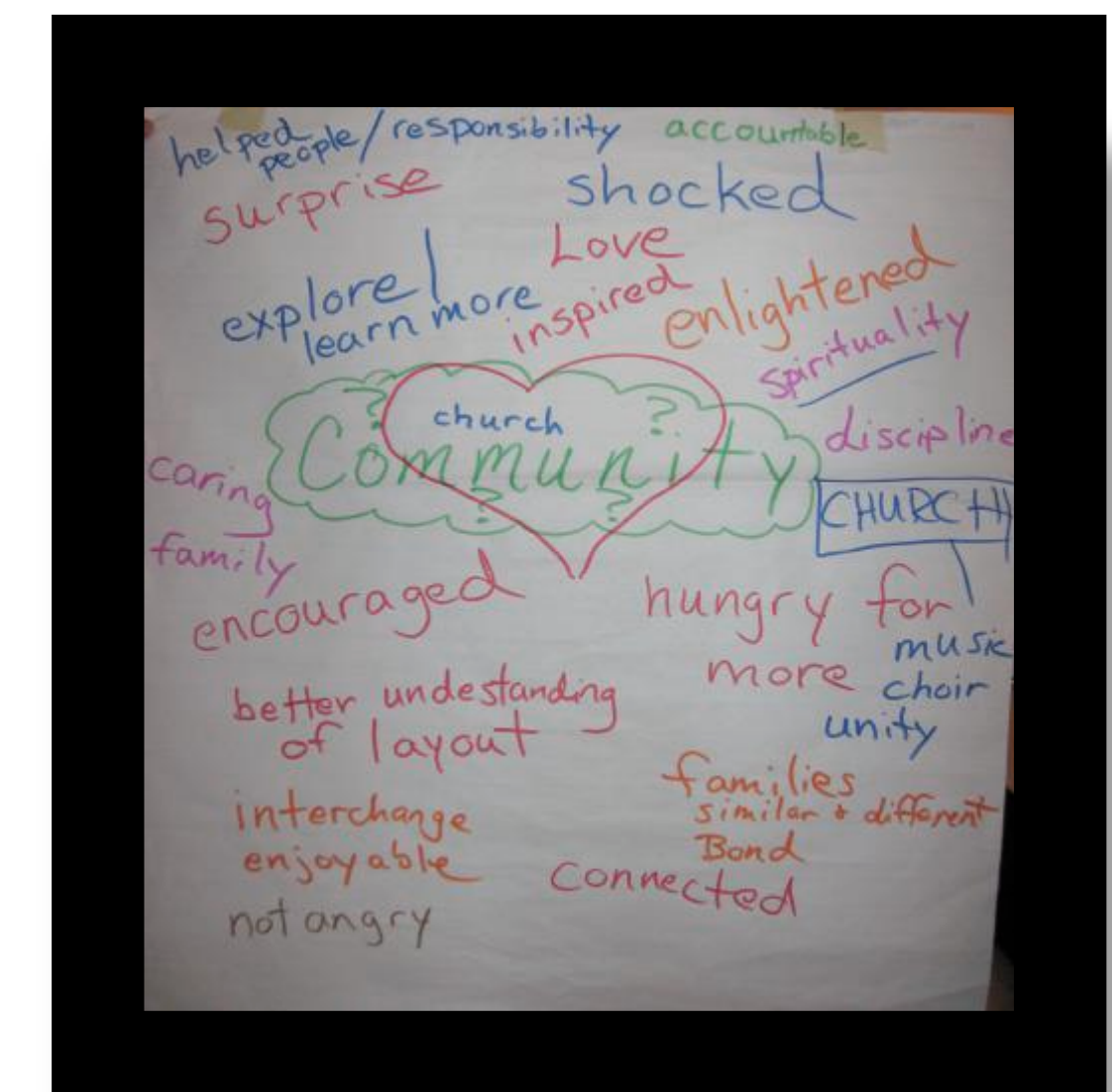


Figure 11. Youth participants wrote emotions, thoughts, themes about dialogue with elders.



Figure 10. Youth participants.



Figure 12. Photo taken by male teen of grandmother's garden, after elders described that most people had gardens in the "olden" days and it was primary food source.