Past as Prologue: Sea Island Cotton as Heuristic Metaphor for the Port Royal Experiment

Robin Throne¹

What would happen if no cotton was furnished for three years?

England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her.

No, you dare not make war on cotton!

No power on earth dares make war upon it.

Cotton is King.

—U.S. Senator James Henry Hammond of South Carolina, 1858

Background

On November 7, 1861, the U.S. Union Army occupied the Sea Islands following an invasion of the Port Royal Sound that left some 10,000 former slaves to be cared for and 80,000 confiscated acres of Sea Island plantation property to be cultivated (Hazzard, 2012; Ochiai, 2001; Rose, 1964; Rowland, Moore, & Rogers, 1996). A historical, economic, and cultural view of the Sea Islands and low country, a culturally and ecologically unique 250-mile stretch along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Rowland et al., 1996), is not complete without consideration of the Sea Island's cotton economy (Ochiai, 2001; Porcher & Wick, 2005; Sink, 2010) and the particular strain of Sea Island cotton, the lucrative “silky staple” that sold for a premium at US$2 per pound, and was meticulously refined by seed selection, fertilization (saltmarsh mulch and oyster shells), cultivation, and gin techniques (Porcher & Wick, 2005; Sink, 2010). However, the harvest of the 90,000 pounds of this zenith and lucrative 1861 cotton crop, seized by the Union Army in the Port Royal occupation was difficult, if not impossible, without the free labor acquired via the experiment in the first year of the war (Hazzard, 2012; Ochiai, 2001; Porcher & Wick, 2005; Rose, 1964), which resulted in a US$500,000 profit for the U.S. treasury (Ochiai, 2001).

The U.S. treasury department, led by Secretary Salmon P. Chase, an influential anti-slavery advocate within the President’s cabinet (Breitbord, 2011; Ochiai, 2001; Rose, 1964), was quite interested in the profits of the 1861 Sea Island cotton crop (Ochiai, 2001) coupled with the human capital that had built the great cotton kingdom with an 1860 valuation of “four million people worth at least $3 billion” (W. Johnson, 2013). Combined, the abandoned property became a unique socioeconomic opportunity for Chase to launch the Port Royal Experiment (Breitbord, 2011; Ochiai, 2001; Rose, 1964; hereafter, “the Experiment”), and Chase dispatched 53 abolitionists, teachers, doctors, missionaries, and clergy to the Sea Islands as a first test case of slavery-to-freedom (Ochiai, 2001). These efforts were fueled by altruistic motivations of some emancipators to arm the newly emancipated “with the educational and social tools to build independent, productive, free lives” (Breitbord, 2011) while others continued to view the status of the emancipated as problematic (Brabec & Richardson, 2007).

The Experiment headquarters became the Department of the South throughout the duration of the war, which led to a preponderance of written first-person narratives by emancipators who visited, managed, and lived within this first test of preemption and emancipation (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Ochiai, 2001), and many quoted or chronicled the experiences of the emancipated. This qualitative study focused on these archival personal narratives and other first-person oral and written accounts of the emancipated and emancipators in the first 24 months of the Experiment (November 1861-November 1863) as interpretations of the record of first-person accounts has been limited (Cross, 2012; Pollitzer, 1999). The study offered an “experience-near” retrospective (Geertz, 1983; Pratt, 1986) before The Freedmen’s Bureau was established and before many of the Experiment provisions were reversed under the Johnson administration that followed Lincoln’s death (Abbott, 1967; Hazzard, 2012; Ochiai, 2001; Pease, 1957; Rose, 1964). Current researchers including Guthrie and Peevelly (2010) have paralleled the historical impact of the pre-emancipation cotton economy and its impact on contemporary educational outcomes and chronic poverty. The authors posited that

¹Northcentral University, San Diego, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Robin Throne, Northcentral University, Historic Decatur Rd., Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92106, USA.
Email: rthrone@ncu.edu
given the historical links between cotton, southern political institutions, and intergenerational poverty . . . a critical consideration for the overall health and economic development of the Black belt . . . If the educational outcomes of the Black Belt were improved, it would be so significant as to improve the international educational standing of the United States. (p. 14)

Therefore, this study has a contemporary relevance for current Sea Island heirs’ property challenges, the erosion of their land culture, and the apparent, yet often, overlooked linkages between the historical record and Sea Island property retention among emancipated descendants that remains an ongoing contest (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation, 2013; Dyer & Bailey, 2008; Dyer, Bailey, & Van Tran, 2009; Hazzard, 2012; Jones-Jackson, 2011; Rivers, 2007).

**Heuristic Metaphor**

Sea Island cotton was a genus of *Gossypium* that represented an epoch of enslaved African toil to clothe English and French royalty and aristocracy, culminating in the wealth of South Carolina Sea Island planters whom many have purported to have achieved an economic pinnacle from sales of the finest quality cotton fiber ever grown (Porcher & Wick, 2005). As a heuristic metaphor, Sea Island cotton (specifically *Gossypium barbadense* L., ca. 1753) offered an interactive metaphor (M. Johnson, 1981) and depictive image (Stambovsky, 1988a, b) by which to explore a complex cultural context of the Sea Island emancipated as their lives were intertwined and invested within Sea Island cotton (Moustakas, 1990; Porcher & Wick, 2005). As a transdisciplinary research metaphor (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; McGregor, 2004), Sea Island cotton illustrated the complexities and transdisciplinarity of the lived experiences of those first emancipated in the Experiment that led to eventual abolition of U.S. slavery. The objective for use of the heuristic metaphor was to seek objective over reflexive insights into a primary subject to explore a secondary subject as retrospective (Hirsh & Olson, 1995; Kleining & Witt, 2000, 2001). This use paralleled Ruaune et al.’s (2007) definition of the use of a heuristic metaphor as a semiotic and creative inference has been used across disciplines including the hard sciences where the creative inference of metaphor can be tempered by rigorous research method selection and design (Kretzenbacher, 2003). While ITM has had its critics (Ayoob, 2007), and even Black (1954) noted the dangers of oversimplification or opacity in the use of an interactive metaphor unique to time and setting of the primary subject, the metaphor was a relevant framework to explore the previously unknown lived experience of the study phenomena (Ellis, 1997; McGregor, 2004; Moustakas, 1990; Wu, 2001) and an experience-near retrospective (Geertz, 1983; Pratt, 1986). Thus, this qualitative heuristic study was founded on Black’s (1954, 1958, 1962, 1979) ITM for metaphoric interaction between a focal word or phrase (Sea Island cotton) predicated by the primary subject (the Emancipated) within a specific frame and setting (the Experiment; Black, 1962, 1979; Stambovsky, 1988b). The use of a conceptual metaphor as a semiotic and creative inference has been used across disciplines including the hard sciences where the creative inference of metaphor can be tempered by rigorous research method selection and design (Kretzenbacher, 2003). While ITM has had its critics (Ayoob, 2007), and even Black (1954) noted the dangers of oversimplification or opacity in the use of an interactive metaphor unique to time and setting of the primary subject, the metaphor was a relevant framework to explore the previously unknown lived experience of the study phenomena (Ellis, 1997; McGregor, 2004; Moustakas, 1990; Wu, 2001) and an experience-near retrospective (Geertz, 1983; Pratt, 1986). Thus, Black’s (1954, 1979) ITM allowed for exploration of a heuristic metaphor with no intention for literal meaning, but a desire to gain new insight into a lived phenomenon (McGregor, 2004; Moustakas, 1990; Wu, 2001) paralleled with an actual life experience (Brandt & Brandt, 2005).

**Conceptual Framework**

The interaction theory of metaphor (ITM) is not a simple comparison of the primary subject with the secondary subject (Ayoob, 2007; Black, 1979), but a dynamic analysis of the interaction of the focus and the frame (see Figure 1). This systematic theoretical lens was used to explore and discover unknown experiences ascertained from first-person accounts of the Experiment using archival personal narratives and primary accounts and reports of the lived experience for experience-near perspectives (Geertz, 1983; Moustakas, 1990; Pratt, 1986).

![Image](Figure 1. Metaphoric interaction: Frame and focus. Metaphoric focus and frame interaction results in new meaning. Source. Adapted from Ayoob (2007).)

**Method**

A qualitative heuristic study was used for a naturalistic inquiry to explore Sea Island cotton as heuristic metaphor for...
the experiences of the emancipated in the Experiment (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Lieblick, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Moustakas, 1990) using archival first-person narrative accounts as qualitative data for the lived experience of the emancipated and emancipators (Hiles, 2002; Lieblick et al., 1998). The study design objective was to seek “narrative truth . . . to keep the past alive in the present” as meaning and interpretations of the past can be incomplete (Ellis, 1997; Hirsh & Olson, 1995) and as a form of open-ended heuristic narrative inquiry. The study was guided by one research question:

**Research Question 1:** What were the perceptions and lived experiences of the newly emancipated in the Port Royal Experiment as depicted by the metaphor of Sea Island cotton through archival personal narratives and other first-person reports of the emancipated and emancipators?

The research question was central to the inquiry as it guided the analysis of the phenomenon to explore the lived experience of non-living subjects whose own heuristic introspection was no longer possible, but worthy of exploration (Hiles, 2002; Moustakas, 1990; Pratt, 1986).

The use of 25 archival personal narratives and related first-person accounts and reports as qualitative data offered a heuristic opportunity to explore narratives of the phenomenon written contemporaneously within the metaphoric focus and frame for an external “other/observer” perspective for necessary discernment (Hiles, 2002; Kleining & Witt, 2000, 2001; Pratt, 1986). Purposeful sampling allowed for the selection of relevant archival first-person narratives, reports, and other primary documents pertinent to the study frame; the heuristic research design; and met the data collection criteria. These included primary sources from nine emancipated and 16 emancipators comprised of two school principals, two missionaries, two Union generals, one Union colonel, one Union soldier, one Union military aide, and seven abolitionists. Data collection was conducted over 1 week in July 2013, at the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill Louis Wilson Library to gather the archival data. Additional digitized data sources included pertinent slave narratives gathered from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1938 and other digitized documents from the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, and other publicly available digital collections.

Data were reviewed for proximity and relevance to the study frame and excluded if criteria were not sufficiently met. Kleining and Witt’s (2000) four rules to optimize discovery were followed throughout data collection and analysis for an observational/reflective account, and while Spindel (1996) and others have noted the reliability and validity issues with slave narratives, these data were relevant to the study objective and met the data collection criteria; yet, data saturation for the emancipated perspective alone was unlikely and restricted (Pratt, 1986). Full-text transcripts were imported into the Dedoose software application for data analysis that used Hiles’s (2002) heuristic indwelling analysis, a modified procedure of the Douglass and Moustakas’ (1985) heuristic indwelling analysis cycle: (a) choose, (b) engage, (c) indwell, (d) sift through, (e) reflect (iterative phase), (f) formulate, and (g) share. The data analysis method allowed for emergent narrative patterns and themes from archival primary texts (Hiles, 2002; Moustakas, 1990; Polanyi, 1966) viewed through a theoretical lens of Black’s (1979) ITM to identify experience-near perspectives (Geertz, 1983; Pratt, 1986) within a metaphoric focus and frame (see Figure 1).

### Findings

Twenty-five primary narrative data transcripts that met the data collection criteria were imported into Dedoose for the heuristic indwelling analysis (Hiles, 2002). Five major themes emerged from the indwelling data analysis (see Table 1), and three of the themes were found to be concomitant (see Table 2). Nine transcripts were from the Experiment emancipated and 16 were from emancipators (an umbrella term for all abolitionists, military, educators, and missionaries who assisted in the test of emancipation) comprising a final sample of 25.

Limitations of the first-person accounts of the emancipated were evident not only due to the disparity in the sheer number of lines of narrative, but also in the lack of contemporaneous accounts of the experience from the emancipated perspective. The noted limitations of first-person accounts for the emancipated and lack of contemporaneous narratives within the period of the study led to a continued view of the emancipated from the emancipator viewpoint, which comprised the majority of coded emancipator viewpoint (97%). Slave narratives were recorded years after emancipation and the challenges of age and memory reduced these experiences (Spindel, 1996) especially when compared with emancipators who recorded their perspectives concurrently within the

| Category                  | Frequency | %   |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Contraband                | 114       | 37.0|
| Experiment labor          | 69        | 22.4|
| Military recruitment      | 42        | 13.6|
| Economic independence     | 40        | 13.0|

Table 1. Emergent Themes (N = 25).

| Experiment labor | Contraband | Economic independence |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Category         | Frequency  | %                     |
| Contraband       | 114        | 37.0                  |
| Experiment labor | 69         | 22.4                  |
| Military recruitment | 42   | 13.6                  |
| Economic independence | 40  | 13.0                  |

Note. 308 coded excerpts.

| Concomitant Themes | N = 25 |
|--------------------|--------|

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| Contraband | 114       | 37.0|
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Note. 308 coded excerpts.
Experiment. Many emancipators also held a significant semantic advantage, and thus, served to dominate the characterizations of the Experiment experience from an outsider perspective as reported by some emancipators (Breitbord, 2011; Spindel, 1996) and worthy of mention as a limitation of results.

**Contraband**

The emancipated did not self-reference as contraband, but did present allusions to self as property or chattel (46.2%). All three of these terms (contraband, chattel, and property) were used widely and often by emancipators to describe the estimated 10,000 emancipated that eventually converged on the Sea Islands within the first 2 years of the war (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Rose, 1964) and less-often referred to as refugees by emancipators. As a term of war, contraband illustrated the coexistent realities of the continued and synchronous economic value of the newly freed labor and cotton as a singular asset as economic gain from one could not be attained without the other (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Rose, 1964). This fact was due to not only the tremendous physical labor necessary for this work, but also the foundational knowledge held by the emancipated in the planters’ absencia. The value of this knowledge and enjoinder of cotton and the emancipated labor was reflected on by Emancipator 14 who said,

> If you can induce some old man who is a good judge, I would let him pick select cotton all through the season for seed. . . . This is the way the most intelligent planters got up their famous varieties of seed, and we ought to be able to use as much brains as they did.

Other emancipators focused more on the humanitarian aspects of the oversight for the newly emancipated as contraband now the Union’s responsibility, and the resulting realities for their care. Emancipator 5 illustrated the distinction in views between those who viewed the contraband as a resource windfall versus those with a more collective socioeconomic perspective whereby “cotton agents think their interests, and their personal use of negroes, horses, and houses” were priority whereas “the military, are all prejudiced, especially the subordinates; the lower you go the worse the feeling.” Emancipator 16 noted the realities of care driven by those seeking refuge:

> What we shall do for the thousands now coming and destined to follow, I know not. My heart sickens at the prospect of want. But the people welcome any amount of suffering, so they gain their liberty. . . . The people see not our soldiers; so much as they see God. Their faith unwaveringly claims freedom despite appearance, and to all human appearance God wills their freedom.

However, as noted, recollection of the emancipated as contraband were less specific because they were gathered years after the Experiment as Emancipated 9 said, “But I know sump’en ‘bout de Civil War. I been young lad when de big gun shoot and de Yankee pile down from de north.” Instead, illustrations of the emancipated perspective and experience were reported by emancipators such as Emancipator 6 who said,

> They have many vices and petty weaknesses of character, but they are all of the kind you would naturally expect to find among a people brought up under the system of slavery. These vices are, of course, serious obstacles in the way of their elevation, and try seriously the patience and faith of those who work among them.

**Experiment Labor**

Emancipators depended on the Experiment’s freed labor to assist in the harvest of the seized 1861 Sea Island cotton crop and to fulfill the altruistic motivations fueled by the abolitionists to prepare the emancipated for a self-sufficient life of autonomy and freedom from slavery (Ochiai, 2001; Rose, 1964). This use of free labor under the Experiment was initiated and described by Emancipator 7:

> We were so entirely cut off from the mainland that there was little or no danger of raids from the enemy, and thus a measure of security, one of the most important conditions of regular and faithful labor among an ignorant class of people, was obtained.

Military leaders and abolitionists alike saw the economic benefit of the Experiment labor force as noted by Emancipator 14, who said,

> Negro labor has got to be employed, if at all, because it is profitable, and it has got to come into the market like everything else, subject to the supply and demand which may arise from all kinds of enterprises in which it chances to be employed. It is not likely that it can be protected on a large scale by the amount of disinterested philanthropy which happens to be present on the Sea Islands, but if it can be open to private enterprise, by an occupation of lands free from unnecessary restrictions and under a proper sense of the security of property . . . We want first to prove that it is profitable, and then it will take care of itself.

Emancipator 14 also explained this disparity between the northern acquisitions of the cotton economic enterprise with free labor versus contraband:

> I don’t agree with you about avoiding publicity for our enterprise . . . If we succeed financially, it will prove that free labor is self-sustaining, and that the Blacks are capable of becoming a useful laboring class immediately after leaving their masters’ hands, and this fact is of vast importance.

**Military Recruitment**

Military leadership perceived an immediate value in the sheer numbers of emancipated men in the Experiment and
desired to gain a military advantage through military recruitment as well as a demonstration of autonomy (Ochiai, 2001; Rose, 1964). Emancipator 7 said,

When Port Royal fell into our hands, about ten thousand Negroes and only one White man were found there. And just here let me say, that one reason of the great success of the free labor experiment in that department is found in the fact that none of the old masters were left behind to interfere with the plans adopted for the elevation of the freedmen.

Others, such as abolitionists who stayed on the Sea Islands saw many deserters who had no desire for military service. Emancipator 10 said,

It will be very bad now, if they do not take him, to live on here an outlaw, working his wife’s cotton but not able to resume his plow or his old position in any way—yet if he is taken again he will never make a good soldier. The whole thing is wrong from the foundation, and should be given up, and all those who did not volunteer sent to their homes—if any are then left in the regiments.

Other emancipators argued for military recruitment as a multi-purpose solution to the Union’s diverse perceptions and value of the emancipated. Emancipator 4 noted that the sensibilities of the emancipated could be inspired to support democracy and said,

The spiritual or religious sentiment also strongly characterizes the African race; developed in somewhat rude phase, it is true, among Southern slaves, especially rude in the cotton States, but powerful, if appealed to by leaders who share it, as an element of enthusiasm. If the officers of colored regiments themselves feel, and impart, as they readily may, to their men the feelings that they are fighting in the cause of God and liberty, there will be no portion of the Army, the Commission believe, more to be relied on than Negro regiments.

Likewise, Emancipator 1 noted the conflicting objectives that resulted from the military recruitment and described the motivations of the emancipated:

They say they will get in the cotton here that had to be abandoned when the Black regiment was formed. They are quiet and good, anxious to do all they can for the people who are protecting them. They have not the least desire, apparently, to welcome back their old masters, nor to cling to the soil. They want only what Yankees can give them.

Emancipator 14 concluded that the Experiment objective, “politically, upon the solution of the great social, political problem which we have got to solve . . . the worthiness and capacity of the Negro for immediate and unconditional emancipation” needed to be upheld in spite of conflicting priorities and realities of the war.

**Economic Independence**

Emancipator observations and perspectives on the attainment of the emancipated economic independence varied greatly and appeared to differ based on the perspectives of military/government, religious or secular views on abolition, and/or education.

Emancipator 8 noted the emancipated looked to the Experiment for livelihood, and were “constantly comparing the time when they used to obtain shoes, dresses, coats, flannels, food, etc., from their masters, with the present when little or nothing is given them.” Others felt they knew what was best for the emancipated especially as land proffering from the abandoned plantations was considered, such as Emancipator 4, who said, “The chief object of ambition among the refugees is to own property, especially to possess land, if it be only a few acres, in their own State.” Thus, Experiment employment of the emancipated as paid labor or recipients of land proffering remained tumultuous and divisive among emancipators as a pathway to economic independence. Emancipator 8 posited,

I think it would be most unwise and injurious to give them lands, Negro allotments; they should be made to buy before they can feel themselves possessors of a rod. There are some who are now able to buy their houses and two or three acres of land, by the end of the year their number will probably be greatly increased. These will be the more intelligent, the more industrious and persistent. However, give them land, and a house, and the ease of gaining as a good livelihood as they have been accustomed to would keep many contented with the smallest exertion. I pity some of them very much, for I see that nothing will rouse and maintain their energy but suffering.

Others, such as Emancipator 9, suggested the solution was a labor system reconstructed from the system on the plantation, first, by turning off all the hands not wanted; second, by adopting a new system in regard to the privileges and compensation of the people. The privileges are free houses, free land for provision crops, free use of wood, and, with certain restrictions, of the animals and implements. I should do away with these privileges, making them pay house-rent and land-rent, making them pay for their wood, if of certain qualities, and for the use of tools and implements—for their own work. Then I should increase their wages, with fixed prices for the various kinds of work. I should wish to be able to discharge any one whose work did not suit me, and remove him from the plantation. These reforms cannot possibly be instituted now, and can never be, probably, on this island. In the meantime, if the people were only honest and truthful, other matters would be of comparatively little account, but they are the most provoking set, in this respect, that you can easily conceive. They are almost incorrigible.

However, views of the emancipated were not always parallel to those held by the emancipators. Emancipated 6
Conversely, Emancipator 9 reported frustration with unmet expectations, as described by Emancipator 1 who noted, “The satisfaction derived from the faithfulness and honesty of perhaps thirty is hardly sufficient to atone for the anxiety and distrust with which one regards the remaining ninety, who lie by habit and steal on the least provocation, who take infinite pains to be lazy and shirk, who tell tales of others, of which themselves are the true subjects . . . In the meantime, if the people were only honest and truthful, other matters would be of comparatively little account, but they are the most provoking set, in this respect, that you can easily conceive. They are almost incorrigible.

Emancipator 8 described a different perspective of the attitude and enthusiasm of a free laborer, who noted he went out to help his “old woman” pick cotton, and walked by my side talking of the fine crop, and that next year there would not be land enough for the people . . . he was as bright and jolly as you ever saw any honest farmer when his crops were in fine condition.

Finally, the recognition of the conjoined value of Experiment labor as contraband leading to economic independence was summarized by Emancipator 7:

At the sale of land which took place at the opening of the season of 1863, four plantations were bought by the freedmen living on them, and worked by them for their own benefit. One of these places produced a crop of cotton worth four thousand dollars; another a crop worth fifteen hundred dollars; another a crop worth one thousand dollars, and the other a crop worth between three and four thousand dollars.

Discussion and Conclusion

Many past researchers and analysts have noted the tragedy that the chronicle of the Experiment and resulting journey of the emancipated from slavery to freedom to land ownership to self-sufficiency may always remain incomplete due to the paucity of contemporary first-person accounts of the experience, metaphorically or literal, and due to the limitations and misinterpretation of language to record such first-person accounts, concurrently or in retrospect (Cross, 2012; Pollitzer, 1999). While the temporal and etymological hindrances have remained a reality for recounts of the Experiment, social justice efforts have continued to protect the cultural heritage of the emancipated and their heirs that continue to reside within the Sea Islands (Hazzard, 2012; Jarrett, 2004; Rivers, 2007), and current research that has included more diverse perspectives and better cultural understanding of the emancipated, their descendants, and their land-based culture has also continued since the Experiment manumission and emancipation (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Breitbord, 2011; Guthrie & Peevely, 2010; Hazzard, 2012; Moore, 1980; Ochiai, 2001; Pease, 1957; Rivers, 2007; Rose, 1964).

As a heuristic metaphor and with a lens of ITM, Sea Island cotton may continue to serve as a cultural metaphor and socioeconomic symbol for the emancipated through reconstruction in spite of the effusive other descriptions to explain historical, retrospective, and ongoing experiences, behaviors, and perspectives (Brabec & Richardson, 2007;
Pease, 1957; Rose, 1964; Twining & Baird, 1980a, 1980b). Likewise, as Campbell (as cited in Jones-Jackson, 2011), Dyer and Bailey (2008), Dyer et al. (2009), Jarrett (2003, 2004, 2006, 2008), Hazzard (2012), and Ochiah (2001) have all noted, the emancipated and their heirs were members of a land culture that continues to be at risk today as land proffered and purchased under the Experiment remains a pertinent contemporary legal, economic, and cultural issue within the Sea Islands. Future research should continue to examine these themes from a transdisciplinary and longitudinal perspective to seek authentic truth (Hiles, 2002; McGregor, 2004) for the intersecting cultural, educational, and socioeconomic aspects as shown in Theme 4, economic independence, and the concomitant themes, to “confront shortages of resources and human and community capital that has the potential to create a perpetual cycle of poverty” (Guthrie & Peevely, 2010, p. 14) from past and current perspectives to inform contemporary realities. The current study findings further illustrated the complex and conjoined aspects of contradistinct, economic independence, and Experiment labor that remain worthy of continued inquiry especially within recent cultural and socioeconomic contexts of economic disparity, Sea Island heirs’ property challenges, and the linkages to the ignoble historical record for the emancipated land proffering, rescinding, and reacquisition, as past researchers have noted the challenges with Sea Island property retention remains of vital concern today (Brabec & Richardson, 2007; Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation, 2013; Dyer & Bailey, 2008; Dyer et al., 2009; Hazzard, 2012; Jones-Jackson, 2011; Rivers, 2007).

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Author Biography

Robin Throne, PhD, is core faculty and a doctoral dissertation chair for Northcentral University and her heuristic research of the Port Royal Experiment and Gullah property rights has continued since 2009. She is the author of Practitioner Research in Doctoral Education (Kendall Hunt, 2012) and serves on the editorial review board for the International Journal of Doctoral Studies (IJD).