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SEGREGATION, GENTRIFICATION AND HERITAGE IN FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

A preservation perspective

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Introduction

Equidistant from Washington, DC, and Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, Fredericksburg, Virginia, is a Southern US city with a long history of racial segregation circumscribed through both formal and informal means. In the first half of the twentieth century, Fredericksburg had Jim Crow laws that enforced racial segregation in public institutions such as schools and restaurants, but also had a system of customs and social rules that led to segregated churches and neighbourhoods that lasted much longer. It is also a city with a thriving heritage tourism industry, where thousands of visitors come to see both high-style and vernacular antebellum buildings that house modern amenities such as shopping and eateries while retaining their historic fabric. Surrounding the historic city centre are Civil War battlefields, a major driver of the city's modern tourism economy yet also tangible reminders of the ongoing racial divisions in the South. Much of the historical interpretation in Fredericksburg focuses on wealthy white residents from all eras of history, with only glancing mention of the black residents who were integral to the fabric of society, and thus tourists hear a story that reinforces racial segregation by downplaying the interdependence of residents of all racial backgrounds.

The story of Fredericksburg's divided landscape begins with the inception of the colonial town, but its legacy is evident today. Throughout the colonial and early years of the republic, black and white people in Fredericksburg often shared the same workspaces and even living spaces, albeit within socially proscribed spheres. Following the Civil War and Emancipation, Fredericksburg remained spatially, if not socially, integrated for the rest of the nineteenth century. As the city adopted legal segregation, separate racial spheres developed socially and spatially. The geography of the city enabled these divisions, with the African American neighbourhood bounded on one side by the railraod tracks, a clear physical demarkation

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in space that did not allow people to freely move from one side to the other, and bounded on the other side by a hill that was more easily traversed. During the civil rights era in the mid-twentieth century, schools and other public spaces were successfully racially integrated, but housing remained separated, a pattern still visible in the landscape, as shown in Figure 9.1.

While the economy of Fredericksburg was slow to recover from the destruction of the Civil War, a great deal of the historic fabric survived, particularly in the core of downtown in what is now the historic district (see Figure 9.1). As the US road system was improved and automobile travel became more accessible in the early twentieth century, Fredericksburg began to capitalise on its long history and encourage visitors to stop and view historic sites that spanned the city's history. However, for most of the twentieth century, museums and other heritage sites in the city emphasised the white elite ruling class of the colonial era and the experiences of white soldiers who fought in the Civil War rather than a more nuanced interpretation of the social and cultural interdependence of white and African-American residents, thus leading in the twenty-first century to tension in the interpreted historic landscape. The scarcity of stories shared that explore black history in Fredericksburg has resulted in a feeling of exclusion, as evidenced by fewer African Americans participating in tours, visiting historic sites or even working in the restaurants and shops in the core of the historic district.

Recent scholarship, such as Max van Balgooy's 2014 edited volume of best practices, *Interpreting African American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*, provides insight into how Fredericksburg could include a nuanced understanding of racial divisions and African-American agency in historic sites. As an example, the Mary Washington House, a museum that highlights the later life of George Washington's mother, Mary, currently focuses interpretation on her use of the interior spaces of the main structure, with discussion of the African Americans who served her food, created her clothing and constructed the house, provided to visitors mostly away from the main house in the detatched kitchen and living quarters. This spatially divided story leads many visitors to the misunderstanding that the lives of eighteenth-century black and white residents were not intimately entwined within slaveholding households. However, reinterpretation of the Mary Washington House could explore the social and cultural connections between white and black residents, thus contributing to a more complex interpretation of the entire historic core, both an interpreted heritage tourism landscape and a modern-day city.

Contemporary Fredericksburg is experiencing significant population growth and gentrification, particularly in the walkable areas of the historic core (see Figure 9.1), in part because of the thriving heritage tourism economy. In this context, the traditional African-American neighbourhood south of the train tracks is now very desirable for new residents both for its historic building stock and proximity to transportation and cultural amenities. Yet all boats are not equally lifted by the rising economic tide of heritage tourism in Fredericksburg. Working-class African Americans are being displaced from their neighbourhoods by rising costs caused by increased demand, breaking long-standing ties to the community, while

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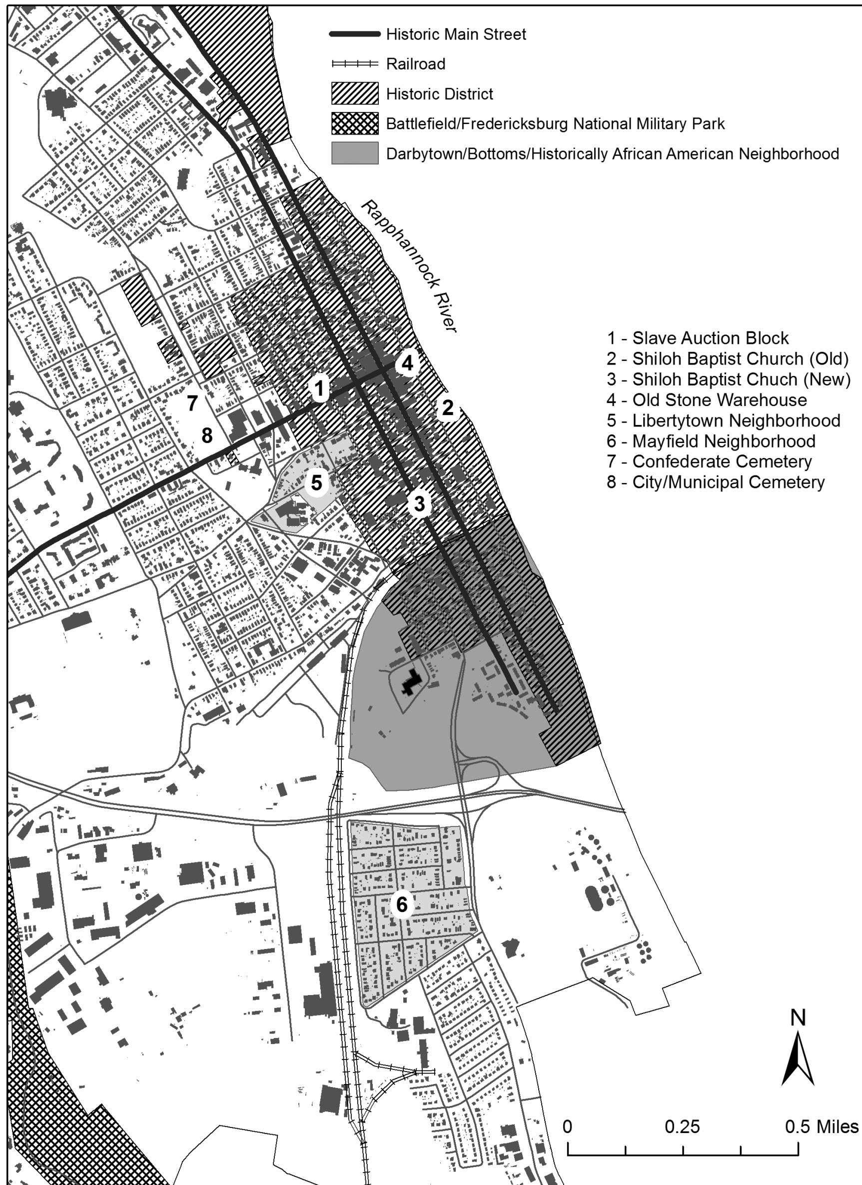

FIGURE 9.1 Map of Fredericksburg, Virginia, indicating select landmarks and neighbourhoods
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simultaneously there are efforts to preserve and interpret sites significant to that segment of the community such as the formerly segregated high school building. This chapter explores the divided heritage of the city of Fredericksburg, and the potential for the heritage economy to both increase the social divides as well as heal some of these wounds through a more inclusive process that highlights the intertwined lives of residents throughout the landscape. Currently the interpretation of heritage in Fredericksburg reinforces racial segregation through the emphasis on histories of wealthy white residents; however, some recent changes have been made to share more inclusive stories throughout the city.

The historic pattern of injustice in Fredericksburg

The origins of Fredericksburg

Founded in 1728, Fredericksburg is very old by American standards, and despite its evolution into a modern city, it has retained a unique collection of historic buildings and sites that reflect nearly three centuries of development. The earliest plan was a simple grid of three north-south streets intersected by four east-west streets platted on the shoreline of the Rappahannock River. This location provided a port with access to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean beyond, as well as water power for industries ranging from mills to power plants, which contributed to Fredericksburg's economic and industrial success.

Though Europeans founded the city, African Americans have been integral to the labour force of Fredericksburg beginning in the days of chattel slavery. One tangible reminder of this history, seen in Figure 9.2, sits at the intersection of William and Charles Streets near the commercial centre of town: a relatively innocuous block of stone nearly two feet tall bearing a plaque documenting its brutal use as an auction block for enslaved people. This is a poignant reminder to visitors and residents alike that the town was built on a foundation of slave labour. But even this small stone reflects continuing racial divisions in the city. Beginning in 1924 (Goolrick 1924), white residents argued in the local editorial pages of newspapers that the block was not used for slave auctions but instead as a stepping stone for carriages, denying the connection of the city to slavery and effectively contesting this tangible piece of history.

More recently, in 2010, on the popular blog Fredericksburg Remembered, written by public historians at the Fredericksburg National Military Park, the local National Park Service site that maintains the Civil War battlefields, citizens publicly challenged this interpretation of the stone (Hennessey 2010) despite the well-documented oral history of a man who was sold on this block just prior to the Civil War and advertisements that ran in the *Fredericksburg News* prior to the war for slave auctions in front of the Planter's Hotel, which was at the corner of William and Charles Streets (*Fredericksburg News* 1857). The block was again at the centre of public debate in the late summer of 2017, in the wake of violence at the Unite the Right rally in nearby Charlottesville where monuments to Confederate soldiers in the public landscape were the focus. While the slave block was not a monument

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FIGURE 9.2 Remains of slave auction block in downtown Fredericksburg
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constructed as part of the Lost Cause narrative but instead an artefact of a shameful past, it was for some in the community a painful reminder of the history of enslavement. A candlelight vigil at the stone block was led by local religious leaders in September, and in response, the city council held a series of public fora, both in person and online, for gathering public comment about the fate of the block. Two primary options were considered, keeping the block in place with more robust interpretation and protection, or removing the block and housing it in a nearby museum. Surprisingly, opinion did not necessarily fall along expected racial lines, with some African Americans viewing the stone as symbolic of progress and the strength of their ancestors, and some European Americans seeing the stone as a physical manifestation of racial divides. Ultimately, the stone was left in place with plans for reinterpretation. As part of the ongoing process, in March 2018, the city hired the International Sites of Conscience as consultants to convene community dialogue that will shape historic reinterpretation throughout the city, including signage, programmes and the visitors centre website (Jett 2018). Regardless of controversy, the slave block remains a stop on many walking tours of downtown Fredericksburg, giving visitors a glimpse of the divided landscape. Rather than an isolated example, the slave block is emblematic of a continuing struggle between black and white residents over who owns the stories of heritage in Fredericksburg, and thus how those stories are interpreted.

The landscape of slavery in Fredericksburg: Integrated injustice

According to the first US Census records for 1790, Fredericksburg's population was 1,485 persons, 38 per cent of whom were enslaved Africans (census.gov 1793). Hence, enslaved African Americans were a common sight not just throughout town but among the white residents. Geographic separation did not make practical sense at that time, and so was eschewed. Rigid social roles were enforced in other ways. For instance, African Americans were not allowed in the white burial grounds, either those associated with the churches or in the municipal cemetery established in 1844. The urban environment in Fredericksburg meant that African American and white citizens lived in close proximity, often in the same building or in structures only separated by a few feet. One surviving example of this physical integration is the Mary Washington House museum, mentioned previously, which is preserved to tell the story of the mother of George Washington, who lived in the structure in her later years. The main house is a rambling two-storey wood-frame structure with several additions. Separated by only ten feet in the garden directly to the west of the main house is a one-room kitchen structure with a bedroom in a loft above the cooking stove to accommodate the enslaved people who attended to Mrs Washington. This structure does survive and is interpreted for the public, but is rarely appreciated by the mostly white audiences as evidence of a system of racial division that structured the city for over two centuries.

Another example of how the landscape of slavery has been contested in Fredericksburg is evident at the National Historic Landmark Site, Kenmore, also maintained as a museum and an integral part of the heritage tourism economy. This Georgian-style plantation house was the manor house of Fielding and Betty Lewis (sister of George Washington). The flanking service buildings, a laundry and a kitchen, would have been both worksite and living quarters for the indentured servants and enslaved workers for the plantation. In the formal rooms of the main house, what appear to be paired closet doors flank the fireplace, but one door actually hides the passageways intended for servants and slaves to perform their job nearly sight unseen. Thus the spaces at Kenmore were racially coded and their use strictly proscribed, as black and white people lived and worked side by side, yet in separate worlds. This eighteenth-century site reveals the interdependent nature of people in Fredericksburg's early history, where racial segregation was seen within structures, whereas contemporary segregation is manifest at the neighbourhood scale.

In contemporary Fredericksburg, interpretation of heritage involves both of these modes of segregation. With the emphasis on wealthy white people from all eras of the history in historic site interpretation, visitors often get the mistaken impression that there was not a lot of interaction between white and black residents, and thus within these structures the history is divided. By excluding black history from much of the public narrative, there are few African-American residents who participate in the heritage economy, either as business owners in the historic core or as interpreters of historic sites, and thus the historic district is largely a white space, reinforcing neighbourhood segregation patterns within the economy.

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A final example of the divided landscape is the residential area at the intersection of Pitt and Charles Streets, part of the current downtown historic district. This small but significant area was home to a population of freemen before the Civil War, many of whom moved there to work alongside enslaved workers on the Rappahannock Canal in the 1840s (Fitzgerald 1979). The neighbourhood remained largely African American well into the twentieth century, but there is little mention of the African-American residents or their connection to the remains of the canal on current interpretive panels along the popular walking trail connecting the city and the riverfront.

Thus, all over the city of Fredericksburg twentieth- and twenty-first-century historic interpretation frequently elides mention of the African-American story. This is often justified by citing a lack of evidence: The historical record leans towards the wealthy and powerful, and we have fuller accounts and thus richer interpretation of the upper-class white residents who dominate the interpretation. Nevertheless, by leaving out the stories of African Americans, challenging questions about historic and contemporary racial segregation and injustice are avoided as well. The ongoing steps being taken to reinterpret the slave auction block indicate that the local community is less accepting of history that highlights divisive stories.

Fredericksburg after the Civil War: Invisible divisions

The US Civil War ended in 1865, but the effects of the war have shaped the city of Fredericksburg, as well as the whole American South, ever since. The Civil War is never far from the collective memory of visitors and residents in Fredericksburg. Indeed, it is hard to forget, with murals depicting Civil War soldiers, antique stores selling bullets and other relics, and even a diner called the Battlefield Restaurant that is immediately adjacent to the Fredericksburg National Military Park, all created to appeal to heritage tourists visiting 'America's most historic city', which is Fredericksburg's city motto. The city was the site of a particularly devastating battle in December of 1862, when the Union Army, headquartered on the east side of the Rappahannock River directly across from Fredericksburg, targeted the warehouses along the river in a sustained shelling that left only one warehouse, locally known as the Old Stone Warehouse, on the corner of Amelia and William Street, standing.

There was then extensive fighting throughout the downtown area, leaving many buildings scarred or badly damaged. Though the Union did not win this offensive, the destruction of the warehouses had long-term effects on the city's ability to rebuild its economic base after the war. This point is still recounted in the contemporary trolley tour script when the driver mentions the astonishingly low bill of $5,000 presented to the US Congress for restoration, which was not paid until well into the twentieth century. While this story is played for comic effect, alluding to the slow wheels of government as something that can still be related to, it is also evidence of the scars of the Civil War on the city, which continue to shape the landscape.

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Two of the six cemeteries in the core of the city reflect this divide physically, the Fredericksburg National Cemetery and the Confederate Cemetery. Many burial practices in the United States changed during the Civil War for practical reasons: The sheer number of dead due to the conflict and the distance many of the soldiers died from their home necessitated that the US War Department order the commanding officers of Union soldiers to bury them quickly near the fields of battle (Merrifield undated) rather than inter soldiers in burial places in their hometowns. In 1865, months after the fighting ended, Congress authorised the Fredericksburg National Cemetery to formally rebury and honour the Union dead on Marye's Hill, a high point in the otherwise low-lying landscape southwest of the historic city and, significantly, the strategic vantage point the Confederate Army used to defeat the Union at Fredericksburg (National Park Service 2017). The cemetery is steeply terraced, with a commanding view of the river and the city below, and has a healthy visitation rate throughout the year. The Confederate soldiers killed in battle were not reburied until 1867 when a group of private citizens, the Ladies Memorial Association of Fredericksburg, purchased land from the City Cemetery, established in 1844 (National Park Service 2017). Located on William Street and Washington Avenue west of the city core, the two sections of the burial ground – the city graveyard and the Confederate Cemetery – are surrounded by a single wall but have separate gated entrances and are divided by a swath of grass. While the names of all the soldiers on both sides of the conflict are maintained in a database at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, the grounds are still maintained separately. The National Cemetery, as its name implies, is stewarded by the US government, and is the site of a popular event during Memorial Day weekend when luminaria are lit for each of the 15,300 graves (National Park Service 2017). By contrast, the Confederate Cemetery is maintained by the Ladies Association (National Park Service 2017), reflecting in perpetuity both local and national divides wrought in the Civil War.

The time period directly following the Civil War, 1865–77, is commonly referred to as the Era of Reconstruction, when the United States government imposed conditions on Southern states such as Virginia, for full re-entry into the Union. The policies were complex and far-reaching, including three Amendments to the Constitution that included the formal abolition of slavery, the giving of citizenship and equal protection of the law to freemen and the prohibiting of discrimination in voting based on race, colour or previous status of servitude. These laws however did not mandate racial integration of social or cultural spaces.

One tangible example of this contentious time is an area of town known as Libertytown. Originally created in 1820 as a suburb to the west of the original city grid to house tradesmen, Libertytown was eventually annexed into the city in 1851. Though local lore states that even before the Civil War it was a neighbourhood populated by African-American freemen, census records and land records support a later date. The area suffered incredible physical damage from fighting during the war, and rebuilding was slow. When annexed in 1851, there were only 26 structures, but by 1900 there were 43 structures, many of which were low-cost housing built

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for African Americans by Henry Deane, a successful livery owner and real estate developer (Gatza 1994). Few of these structures remain today, but there is a thriving arts centre named Libertytown, in honour of the history, located in a former plumbing warehouse built in the twentieth century in this neighbourhood.

The arts centre plays an active role in the city's efforts to cultivate an arts community with activities such as a monthly city-wide gallery open house, which is integral to the heritage tourism industry. The city markets these nights widely, encouraging people to walk around downtown and not only view the art but also contribute to the local coffers by having dinner or shopping at the businesses in the historic city core. The heritage aspect of the buildings and streets is often treated as merely a backdrop, instead of integral to the contemporary community that has nurtured the art, regardless of the content of the new cultural products. Because of Libertytown's location on the edge of the historic district yet central to the historic African-American enclave, highlighting its history could act as a bridge between the separate stories of Fredericksburg's racial heritage.

Fredericksburg during Jim Crow

The term 'Jim Crow law' is used to describe a network of legal statutes across the former Confederate states, including Virginia, beginning in 1877 with the end of Reconstruction. Though the laws varied in specifics by state, their essence was to limit the civil liberties and rights of African-American citizens as much as possible. Beginning with the creation of separate school systems for African-American and white children, the laws were extended to public transportation such as railroads and eventually buses, and to public services such as restrooms, libraries and pools. In retrospect, these laws were aimed at recreating antebellum laws called slave codes, repressive restrictions which limited African Americans from walking streets without passes and, most infamously, limited the number of enslaved people who could gather in one place without a white person present. Lawmakers justified many of these laws at the time by invoking fear of slave uprisings and revolts.

There is a church, currently called the Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) on Sophia Street on the banks of the Rappahannock River that is a tangible reflection of the trajectory of oppression of African Americans and their resistance to such efforts. Its heritage is a divided one, reflecting the evolution of racial segregation in Fredericksburg. The location of the Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) began as the meeting house for the Fredericksburg Baptist Church in 1815. The church services at the site were technically racially integrated in the first half of the nineteenth century, as slaveholders and enslaved people attended services in the same structure. However, congregants were hardly treated as equals. The building not only had separate entrances for white and black people (both enslaved and freemen), but seating was proscribed such that the enslaved sat in an upstairs gallery, freemen sat in the back gallery and white congregants sat in pews on the main floor. While an 1831 report states that the congregation of 800 people was two-thirds black, it is unlikely

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that this characterised a regularly Sunday gathering, as enslaved people were limited in their ability to attend services by the slaveholders (Davies et al. 2015).

The location of the church on the riverbank is significant for two reasons. First, the church used the waters for baptisms of the faithful, with individuals wading into the waters of the Rappahannock as a symbol of their spiritual cleansing and rebirth into the Christian faith. But the name of the river, Rappahannock, comes from the local native American Algonquian word for 'fast rising waters', and the river floods on a regular basis. By 1854, the white Baptists wanted to build a new structure on higher ground a couple of blocks to the west. When their grander building was complete, they gratefully sold the old building to the black congregants, who renamed it the African Baptist Church, and allowed open seating to all who attended the meetings. Churches such as this were one of the few places where large numbers of African Americans were allowed to gather, and were also not spaces of work but of faith and joy. As such, the white slaveholders wanted to retain control and required that a white minister be present at all services even though the congregation was led by a black preacher (Fitzgerald 1979).

As was the case with most large-scale structures, the church was used as a makeshift hospital during the Civil War, but was quickly put back to religious purposes thereafter. Shortly after the enactment of the first Jim Crow laws in 1886, the building collapsed from accumulated flood damage over many years. This disaster rent the congregation in two, those who wanted to rebuild on the same site because of its proximity to the river waters and the connection to the history on the site, and those who wanted to move to higher ground. Eventually, in 1890, two congregations were formed with both a new church named Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) on Princess Anne Street four blocks from the rebuilt Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) on Sophia Street (Fitzgerald et al. 1998). Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) was also just south of Libertytown, which had already evolved into a black neighbourhood with developments by Henry Deane discussed earlier, and just north of the expanding working-class neighbourhood known as the Bottoms, located in a flood-prone area south of the train tracks. Thus the site of the Baptist meeting house has had many iterations that reflect the changing face of law that restricted African Americans in the South; the buildings and their location are physical manifestations of the intangible heritage of racial segregation of space.

While the Rappahannock River was crucial to the establishment of Fredericksburg (as well as the establishment of several Baptist congregations) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the city's location along the nascent national road system allowed it to flourish in the second half of the twentieth century. Established in 1925, US Route 1, the longest road in the country linking major population centres along the East Coast, was originally routed through the centre of Fredericksburg. This fact, coupled with the city's location equidistant from Washington, DC, the nation's capital, and Richmond, Virginia, the contemporary state capital that also served historically as the capital of the Confederacy, was significant when domestic car-based tourism took shape in the 1920s and accelerated exponentially after the late 1940s, after World War II. Fredericksburg's

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historic sites, especially the battlefields and cemeteries related to the Civil War, became major draws for car-based tourists because of their easy accessibility to these major population centres and a growing national interest in heritage sites of all kinds as venues for recreation as well as education. In response to these new tourists, the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park was created by Congress in 1927 (Happel 1955). The National Park Service was charged with preserving and interpreting this series of historic Civil War battlefields. As the twentieth century came to a close, car-based tourism became a major economic engine in Fredericksburg, displacing industry.

Though this new economic engine was positive for the city, its effects on African-American residents was much more mitigated. Fredericksburg's location along Route 1 merited entries into the *Negro Motorist Green Book* edition of 1956. Compiled by Victor Green, the book, often referred to as simply 'The Green Book', was a listing of businesses that were either black owned or friendly to African Americans along America's burgeoning highway system. In an era when both custom and law could restrict the civil liberties of African Americans, it was a way for black Americans to feel a bit of the freedom of motor travel without the indignities of being refused basic services such as restrooms and food. Travel by car became the preferred method for African Americans in particular because of the legal restrictions on trains constraining where African Americans were allowed to sit. The two Fredericksburg hotels welcoming to African Americans during the Jim Crow era, unsurprisingly, were located on Route 1 only one block from the railroad and adjacent to two neighbourhoods with large black populations, Libertytown and the Bottoms. Thus the historic roadway Route 1 was a conduit to bring visitors to the historic city, and has a heritage that reflects twentieth-century racial segregation as well.

Fredericksburg, like other towns across America, enforced segregation through the rule of law. While African Americans had lived alongside whites through the era of slavery, the twentieth century saw a systematic residential separation of white and black Fredericksburgers. Libertytown, and particularly the Bottoms, south of the train tracks, inexorably became the only areas open to African-American residents. Other neighbourhoods were closed off though the rule of law. One important example is the Normandy Village subdivision, a residential development along the new Route 1 bypass built in the mid-1940s. The site of Normandy Village was already charged: At the northern end of Fredericksburg, though belonging to Spotsylvania County until its annexation into the city in 1951, this land was used as a fairground. In 1926, the fairground attracted 5,000 people for a Ku Klux Klan rally (Fitzgerald 1979). The new subdivision, eventually totalling close to 200 single-family homes, was meant to attract middle-class residents and returning GIs. When complete, it was the most extensive housing development in the city's history (*Free Lance-Star* 1955). The deeds on Normandy Village houses included racially restrictive covenants with language forbidding the properties or parts thereof from being 'sold, leased, used or occupied by any person of African descent' (Deed of Trust 1941: 87–9). Far from being an anomaly, this kind of deed restriction, along

with redlining (federally sanctioned policies that allowed banks to refuse loans to black residents because they resided in 'poor' areas), was used freely by localities justified in veiled language such as 'well-drawn deed restrictions aid in establishing the character of the neighbourhood' (Federal Housing Administration 1936). Thus Normandy Village exemplifies the social and legal separation that divided the Fredericksburg landscape.

Efforts to integrate the neighbourhood in the early 1960s were rebuffed, and discussion of race was then eschewed for less volatile code words: For instance, a plan to add apartments to the neighbourhood was met with fierce resistance as 'an apartment house, no matter how nice, would not be in keeping with the overall design of the area' (*Free Lance-Star* 1962). The resistance was successful: Zoning was subsequently changed to be more restrictive. The preponderance of deed restrictions, redlining and coded language across the city of Fredericksburg ensured that by the 1950s, African Americans were almost entirely limited to housing options south of the railroad, either in the Bottoms or Mayfield further south.

Healing a divided history

Fredericksburg's history is clear in every part of its built environment: It is a city built on centuries of injustice, trauma and separation. From its inception through the Civil War and Jim Crow, black Fredericksburgers have been systematically pushed to the less desirable and flood-prone southern edge of the city, and their contributions to the city's history have often been minimised or ignored. The city today, however, is a far cry from that of the 1950s. Fredericksburg is a vibrant and growing city, with a strong economy, largely based on heritage tourism. The question is: How are black Fredericksburgers faring in this revitalised city? The answer is complex and fluid. Some areas can be held as victories. Others, like housing, are more problematic. Finally, the role of heritage tourism itself is still fraught, as the economic development can bring with it displacement and the loss of intangible heritage such as traditional close-knit African-American neighbourhoods. Preserving the history of African-American neighbourhoods does not necessarily mean that contemporary residents need to be restricted by race, but instead as the neighbourhoods become racially diverse, a concerted effort to interpret the African-American heritage should become integral to the spaces, through signage interpreting the history as well as community events that connect contemporary and past residents around their shared spatial heritage.

The obdurate residential separation

Residential segregation has not meaningfully altered in Fredericksburg since the middle of the twentieth century. The reasons for this have been the subject of extensive study, as the pattern repeats in cities throughout the United States. Even fifty years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, housing segregation is still a current and intractable issue. One factor here is simply time: changes in property ownership

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happen slowly, sometimes over generations. Self-selection is also an insidious actor. While many people are happy to purchase property and live where there is a mix of residents, they are much less likely to choose to live where they will be in the distinct minority. Studies show that African Americans are open to living in diverse areas – or even areas where they are in the distinct minority – but are worried about 'white hostility' (Krysan and Farley 2002). Whites also self-segregate, though they tend to consider this not as a racially charged action but as simply 'normal' (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2006). While researchers have identified the sociological factors that encourage self-selection among both blacks and whites, reversing this trend to encourage residential mixing is all but impossible. This is because neighbourhoods with a balanced racial mix are non-existent; as a result, no one is willing to be the pioneering resident.

In a city like Fredericksburg that has an established pattern of segregation, there are virtually no mixed neighbourhoods. As shown in Figure 9.1, this means that housing segregation has barely budged since the era of Jim Crow. Black Fredericksburgers still overwhelmingly live south of the railroad, either in the Bottoms or Mayfield. Even more insidious, the economic development being experienced in the city is displacing lower-income African Americans. This trend is clearly visible in Darbytown – up the hill from the Bottoms but still south of the train tracks – which was once considered 'dangerous' and 'the wrong part of town'. Caroline Street, which borders the Rappahannock River, was always a desirable white area due to its river views. Princess Anne Street, one block west, was racially mixed, and after cresting the hill back down to the Bottoms, the neighbourhood was entirely black. Houses on Princess Anne Street have gained value due to their proximity to the railroad and downtown amenities, and this is now spreading down the hill to the Bottoms. Figures 9.3 and 9.4 contrast two sides of Charles Street: one with modest duplexes still inhabited by black families, and the other with new construction. The new houses, raised above the floodplain by a two-car garage, sell for more than $400,000, a price beyond the reach of most working-class families. Unsurprisingly, the buyers for such properties are elites with few if any connections to the blue-collar families from the Bottoms.

Fredericksburg today: Heritage tourism as economic engine

Due to its location and access to the railroad and the highway, Fredericksburg could have become nothing more than a bedroom community. Many residents do commute to Washington, DC, Quantico and other large employers in the region. However, the city's vibrant local economy is centred around heritage tourism. A recent initiative to move the tourism office from its current central location in a historic building on Caroline Street – the main commercial corridor through the centre of the city – to another building three blocks away, garnered enormous local response. A public meeting on the topic had standing room only, attesting to the local importance of tourism. According to the city, tourism-related taxable sales expenditures increased from $157,408,778 in 2012 to $171,396,180 in 2015. The

FIGURE 9.3 Modest historic duplex housing on the west side of the 200 block of Charles Street in the Darbytown neighbourhood
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central role of heritage tourism in the city's economy is front and centre in its 2036 vision statement, the tagline of which is 'Sharing Our Past, Embracing the Future'. While the stories told in Fredericksburg have moments of racial inclusivity, the debate about the slave block is a reminder that much of the population wants to ignore the long history of division.

The future: Renewed divisions or healing?

Navigating the contentious divides in the social and physical landscape of Fredericksburg has proved challenging over the decades. With the city moving full force toward a service economy based on the assets of three centuries of history, there is a need to be inclusive. One indication of the effort to cultivate racially diverse visitors is reflected in the recent update of the VisitFred website, which has substantially changed its marketing strategy in recent months. In early 2017, the main page of the site showed a white family planning their vacation with the tagline 'The Greatest Vacation in History' (visitfred.com April 2017). A scan of the website shows few images of people, but those published at that time were all white people, essentially erasing the shared heritage of Fredericksburg. The visitors' bureau updated the website for the 2017 summer tourist season, substantially

FIGURE 9.4 New construction on the east side of the 200 block of Charles Street in the Darbytown neighbourhood
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altering the number and content of images to include more racially diverse people throughout the site, and a tab specifically for African-American history has been added (visitfred.com July 2017). Though a small step, this redesign is certainly an acknowledgement of the interest in cultivating a more inclusive image and diverse visitorship, if not a recognition of inherent racial division in the heritage landscape. The ongoing collaboration with the International Sites of Conscience is currently evaluating all of these aspects of the city's marketing, and future changes will hopefully include a more nuanced and inclusive approach to history.

Paired with this positive redesign, however, are plans for future housing developments that will drive up property values, particularly in areas that have historically been home to working-class African Americans. In the Bottoms, a new 'loft-like' apartment building is planned with 17 units priced at $500,000–800,000, which is several hundred thousand dollars over the mean housing price for the area (city-data.com July 2017). A healthy and successful heritage tourism economy not only centres on its historic assets but also depends on living assets, the people who work at and share the interpretation of history. Without housing options that are affordable within the city, Fredericksburg could lose many of the living connections to the historic landscape as working-class people are pushed out of the city limits.

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The success of the historic core has attracted new investment, which means revenue for the city, but also could mean that living downtown becomes beyond the reach of many whose families traditionally called it home. Though many qualified people can interpret the historic assets, it would be a tragic loss to marginalise people with a direct connection to the intangible heritage of the city. When working-class African Americans are forced out of neighbourhoods, oral histories of the segregated schools as well as other aspects of the city history will be interpreted by professional historians. While this may lend a sense that the landscape has healed the historic divides discussed throughout this chapter, it may be a false sense of hope. Instead, the divisions of the past would likely be moved to beyond the city limits and become mere footnotes in the history that is shared but not fully interpreted. The city is at a crossroads, and swift action is needed to address the potential loss of human historic resources as less affluent citizens, both black and white, are being displaced.

Fredericksburg is only one small Southern city, but it is emblematic of systemic patterns of injustice throughout the American South. It is a city that has seen many successes in facing its history. While the process of reinterpretation of historic resources is ongoing, there is reason to believe that a thoughtful approach will ultimately lead to a more inclusive historic heritage for the future.

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