within a context of budget constraints, relentless schedules, shifting workloads, technological constraints, and available resource. Other than an implicit recognition in some essays that the past is a commodity, this collection provides little guidance on how to navigate those murky professional waters. It is first and foremost an academic text projected at an imagined classroom, and in that it succeeds admirably. But at its best, the collection also echoes conversations that take place in the work place as well as in the classroom, and it may help shape how public historians think about their work.

As a discipline, history is much about ways of viewing the past, and an education in history involves a progressive loss of innocence. After reading this collection, students should see history differently. They should also perceive the presentation of the past differently. It may not get them a career, but it could leave them with a vocation.

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Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites by Antoinette T. Jackson. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2012. 178 pp.; images, maps, notes, references, index; clothbound, $94.00; paperbound, $32.95; e-Book, $32.95.

“Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter...” Antoinette T. Jackson’s new book, Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites, is a twist on this proverb. Although she is not advocating for the reassignment of the historian, she is calling on public historians to use methodologies that will “glorify” all of the individuals who contributed to the success of antebellum and postbellum plantation sites. To do this, the voices of the Africans and African Americans who labored on these sites must be heard, and the best way to hear them is through the voices of their descendants.

Jackson, an associate professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, describes herself as an “academically trained and employed cultural anthropologist” (14) with a professional and personal interest in how plantation museums are preserved and presented. Professionally, her interest lies with the multifaceted roles of cultural resource experts and how they overcome the politics of the profession to fulfill the goals and objectives of heritage preservation, interpretation, and tourism. Personally, as a woman of African descent, she wants to better understand her own heritage.

Plantation culture represented a major piece of southern history and the economic history of the United States in general. It was on these large farms that much of the raw materials used by northern industrialists to produce merchandise sold all over the world was grown. It was here that Europeans and Africans came together in a forced and unnatural relationship that left an unpleasant and ugly legacy that some present-day storytellers want to hide.
Indeed, the desire to suppress the full history of the South has brought about
the subjugation of historical reality. Today, tourists visit restored mansions
sometimes featuring docents clad in period dress guiding them through beau-
tifully furnished rooms and telling them stories about the origins of the pieces,
the favorite writing desk, and the glamorous balls. The visitors see portraits of
the master and mistress and imagine them eating at the perfectly set dining
table. The tour might end in the kitchen with the food of the day on display
and pots hanging over a fire, but missing will be the story of the people who
made this romantic life possible. There might be the passing mention of
a servant but not a slave. This picture allows families, school children, and
senior citizens to leave the site feeling good about the experience and full of
stories to share about life on a southern plantation. Unfortunately, the visitors
have not been forced to confront the reality of plantation life from the view-
point of the enslaved or the slaveholder. Jackson wants to turn this scene on its
head. She wants the heritage workers to tell the full story, and she wants them
to do so by embracing descendant voices.

Jackson presents four case studies, all present-day museums—three in
South Carolina, and one near Jacksonville, Florida—in support of her argu-
ment. Friendfield, a former rice plantation, was the home of First Lady
Michelle Obama’s enslaved ancestors and this connection has opened a long
overdue discussion in the public domain. Although Africans snatched from
their homes traversed the Middle Passage without material belongings, they
brought with them the knowledge and skills learned in their homeland and
these abilities greatly benefitted slaveholders. Jehossee, also a former rice plan-
tation, offers a clear example of the exploitation of Africans’ engineering and
cultivation skills to establish intergenerational wealth. Snee Farm highlights the
need to avoid lumping descendants into one category. The farm’s publications
speak of the descendants as sharecroppers, but today they are basket weavers,
cooks, and nannies. They are also landowners and wage workers. Listening to
these descendant-interpreters and learning about their chosen occupations
sheds light on their ancestors. Finally, the story of the Kingsley Plantation offers
the chance to think and talk about the long taboo subject of mixed-race relation-
ships and the vulnerability of enslaved women on southern plantations.

Focusing on these four plantation sites, Jackson promises to address
“a multidisciplinary population of scholars and students as well as anyone
interested in critically engaging the politics of identity and representation”
(17) and she keeps her promise. Looking through the lenses of archaeology,
anthropology, and using the ethnographic method, she challenges scholars
and students to consider the impact of the past on the present. How does the
history of slavery and Jim Crow come into play when choosing what stories to
tell and how to tell them? Jackson argues, and rightly so, that ignoring the
truth of these sites stifles the open and honest dialogue that could lead to real
breakthroughs in cross-cultural understanding.

Confining the case studies to South Carolina and Florida plantations and
the use of discipline specific terminology may limit the book’s audience. This
said, the information gleaned from the four plantations is transferrable. The fact that this book is geared toward professionals and academics provides the opportunity for one directed at a general audience.  

*Speaking for the Enslaved* is a well-researched and documented multidisciplinary resource for public historians looking to interpret or reinterpret plantation sites. The book is full of illustrations and tables that can be used as models and applied to sites anywhere. It will also be a useful tool for professional development training at sites, meetings, conferences, or wherever public historians gather. Finally, Jackson situates her study within the context of other scholars’ work, and this will engender lively discussions between academics and their students.

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Done well, digital humanities projects afford a myriad of benefits, chief among them, the democratization of research. Technology holds the potential to give curators at small museums, high school students, freelance historians, dissertation writers, and genealogists the same access to manuscript sources as the best-funded professors at research universities. In the digital age, historians of every vocation can “visit” archives and use documents that once required extended travel and sometimes even formal letters of introduction. Fulfilling that promise, however, is no easy feat: it requires imagination, collaboration, hard work, new skills, and a lot of money. Successful projects not only broaden access but, as a consequence, expand how historians undertake their craft and change what they think about the past. Early Americanists recognize the University of Virginia Press’s Rotunda “American Founding Era Collection” as a model of digital scholarship. Now, joining that stellar enterprise is Constance Schulz’s *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry*, which is, in short, a wonder.

The Pinckney-Horry project is “born digital”: it exists only in its online form with no print corollary. The collection of transcribed writings was conceived as a companion to Holly C. Shulman’s “The Dolley Madison Digital Edition,” also on Rotunda; both projects aimed to integrate women’s history and female subjects into the “American Founding Era Collection” while also producing women’s sources independently. As a result, the writings of Eliza Lucas Pinckney (1722-1793) and her daughter Harriott Pinckney Horry (1748-1830) constitute their own collection but operate on the same platform and are inter-operable with the George Washington, James Madison, and other digital editions on Rotunda. Like the other Rotunda projects at their