



# ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE GUSTE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

## AN EDUCATIONAL MODULE ON URBAN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY TEACHERS' GUIDE

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## **Archaeology at the Guste Housing Development: An Educational Module on Urban Historical Archaeology**

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### **Teacher's Guide**

This guide provides supporting materials and notes for the PowerPoint slideshow entitled "Archaeology at the Guste Housing Development: An Educational Module on Urban Historical Archaeology". These documents are meant to be appropriate for use at the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, as supplemental or enrichment materials. The Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies at the 7th grade level focus on US History 1763-1877. The material here, while largely focused on the period after 1877, may be appropriate for use in reference to Standard 6: Immigration and Cultural Diversity (7.6.1: Settlement patterns of racial and ethnic groups through 1877). While this guide addresses basic terms and definitions, it will be most useful for teachers who are secondary social studies certified, with some background in anthropology. For teachers with additional background in anthropology/archaeology, this module could also be integrated into 8<sup>th</sup> grade Louisiana History Standard 4- Culture (8.4) as well as units at the high school level, including American History (11th grade) Standard 1-Historical Thinking (US 1.1) and Standard 2- Western Expansion to Progressivism (US. 2.6).

The narrative below lists all slides sequentially, with notes where appropriate about specific subject matter and terminology in each slide. There are additional suggestions for learning activities related to the material covered in the slideshow appended at the conclusion of this document.

### **SLIDE 1**

#### **TITLE SLIDE**

### **SLIDE 2**

**TEXT:** During 2012 and 2013, archaeologists excavated the location of the William J. Guste Homes, a public housing development in the Central City neighborhood of New Orleans, prior to construction on the site.

**IMAGE:** Graphic displaying neighborhood boundaries from the City of New Orleans Open Data Portal on ArcGIS aerial basemap, 2020.

### SLIDE 3

**TEXT: Why did archaeologists dig here? What were they looking for, and what did they find? Why does it matter?**

**IMAGE: Archaeologists from Earth Search, Inc., with the William J. Guste Senior Homes and Union Bethel AME Church in background (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

The photograph here illustrates some of the challenges of urban archaeology in New Orleans, with archaeologists utilizing a gasoline-powered water pump to drain a flooded excavation trench. Archaeologists must contend with both occasional heavy rains and a high natural water table in projects in the city. Also shown at the upper right is the Union Bethel A.M.E. Church. The church building, constructed in 1921, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but it has served an important role in the social life of the neighborhood since its founding in 1862.

### SLIDE 4

**TEXT: PART I: DEFINING TERMS**

**IMAGE: Beginning of excavation unit at Guste Homes (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

The term 'excavation unit' refers to one of the gridded areas archaeologists designate for careful documentation and dig by hand. Each of the 5 parts of this teaching module are introduced by an image of the same archaeological excavation unit, photographed as it descends vertically through layers in the ground. Archaeologists placed the unit here to help understand the date and purpose of the brick foundation wall visible in the photograph. These excavation units are placed on the basis of smaller test excavations and of comparisons of those results with historical maps.

### SLIDE 5

**TEXT: What is Archaeology?**

- **Archaeology is a subfield of anthropology**
- **Archaeologists use material remains to study human cultures in the past**
- **Material remains include artifacts, buildings, landscapes, and the human body itself**

**IMAGE: Archaeologists excavating a unit and screening soil to recover artifacts. (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

Archaeology, at least in the US, is considered a subfield of anthropology, which is defined as the study of human culture. Anthropology is usually divided into 4 subfields, each with its own subject, its own source of data, and its own methods for gaining that data:

Sociocultural/cultural Anthropology [utilizes ethnography and participant observation to learn about a group of people by living, speaking, and working closely with them]

Linguistic Anthropology [studies the connection between language, culture, and social life]

Physical/Biological Anthropology [studies human evolution and the biological characteristics of humans]

Archaeology [studies culture and the human past through material remains]

Applied Anthropology, the use of all of these sources of data to address real world problems and issues, is sometimes considered a 5<sup>th</sup> subfield of anthropology.

While there are many definitions of culture in anthropology, culture is usually defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a group. It implies a shared system of signification, or of connecting signs with meanings, that is common to the group.

What makes archaeology distinct is its focus on material things. A common definition of archaeology is the study of human cultures through the recovery, documentation, and analysis of material remains of all kinds. Underlying this is the belief that shared values produce similar ways of behaving, which in turn affect the things that people make and leave behind, especially artifacts and architecture. Put simply, an artifact is any object that humans make or alter.

Most anywhere in New Orleans, you might find something old if you start digging: bits of pottery, glass bottles, buttons, pieces of animal bone, nails, old bricks, and so on.

Archaeologists look for things that are preserved in or near where they were originally discarded, and that can then be associated with specific people, events, or time periods in the past. Archaeologists look especially for things that might tell information that isn't recorded in history books and official documents, or that give new perspectives on the lives of those about whom we don't have detailed documentary accounts, especially those marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, or occupation.

Archaeology is a science insofar as it deals with the documentation of a set of observable phenomena, but there are many who work in American archaeology who also think of it as a part of the humanities. In its early years, archaeologists were mainly concerned with creating descriptive frameworks to understand culture change and variation over time and place. Later, in the 1960s, archaeologists began to think of culture as a system of adapting to the environment, with archaeological data comparable to variables within that system. The goals of archaeologists during this period were to create universal laws of human behavior. In recent decades, many archaeologists have shifted their focus to meaning, symbols, power, and ideology, and to how archaeological interpretations relate to contemporary politics.

**SLIDE 6**

**TEXT: What is urban historical archaeology?**

- **Historical archaeologists focus on the recent past**
- **Historical archaeologists use documents, maps, and oral history to understand sites**
- **Urban historical archaeologists study the growth and development of cities in the modern world**

**IMAGE: Archaeologists documenting a brick foundation at the Guste Homes (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

Historical archaeology as a discipline in North America is often considered the archaeology of the modern world, covering the period of European colonial expansion and the growth and spread of the capitalist economic system. There are many literate societies who produce documents, but the scope and availability of these documents has increased in the past 500 years. North American historical archaeologists study indigenous contacts with settlers and colonizers in the Americas; the capture and transport of enslaved Africans to new world colonies; transnational movements, immigration, and the growth of urban centers; and the rise of industrial capitalism and growth of a global system of trade. This global perspective can make the subject of historical archaeology immensely complex. Anthropology for many years relied on a fiction of there being isolated, bounded cultures, famously conceptualized as billiard balls, bouncing off of each other. This has never really been true, but, in the period since roughly 1500 it is even less so, as technological transformations enabled influences from one culture to another to span an ever wider area.

Any archaeology done within a city might be considered 'urban archaeology', even if it is to excavate a site that predates the city having been established. However, the term urban archaeology typically refers to archaeology being applied to the study of the growth and development of cities themselves. The management of large populations and infrastructures in cities typically means that there is a wealth of documentary sources that can be used to complement what is found archaeologically and aid in its interpretation. In American cities, there may be census records, directories, tax records, utility records, business records, newspapers, photographs, and maps, to name just a few sources. Families may also possess letters, photographs, and mementoes, or they may be willing to share personal stories (or oral histories) passed down in their families.

**SLIDE 7**

**TEXT: STRATIGRAPHY**

**Archaeologists use stratigraphy, or layers of soil in the ground, to understand sites. When you excavate, you go backwards in time. Each layer is older than the one above it.**

**IMAGE: Profiles of an excavation unit at Guste (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

In archaeology, as you dig downwards, you go back in time: the things that are on top are the newest and the ones that are more deeply buried are older. In this slide, there are clear layers visible from top to bottom. However, urban stratigraphy tends to be complicated, with different episodes of building, destruction, and filling creating sequences in layers that are constantly being partially 'erased' and replaced, leaving fragmentary traces of what once was there.

## **SLIDE 8**

### **TEXT: FEATURES**

**A Feature is a part of an archaeological site. The most common urban features are the remains of buildings, walkways, and patios. Other features are related to sanitation, like the brick foundation on the left. What do you think it is?**

**IMAGE: Image of semicircular brick foundation pad at Guste (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

**2<sup>nd</sup> CLICK, SAME SLIDE:**

**TEXT: A CIRCULAR BRICK FOUNDATION FOR A RAINWATER CISTERN**

**IMAGE: Description= New Orleans, 1905. Cisterns screened with cheesecloth, part of massive mosquito control program initiated after outbreak of Yellow Fever. Source= 'Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans 1905,' by Robert Boyce [from Wikimedia Commons]**

Aboveground cisterns (barrels or other containers used to collect rainwater) like this were an important source of water in places like New Orleans, as ground water/well water was typically too polluted to be useful for drinking or sanitary functions. This would be true until cities began installing water and sewerage systems in the first decades of the twentieth century, and these were slow getting into poor neighborhoods. In this case, the brick foundation 'pads' provide evidence for the presence of what was above the ground: they kept the heavy superstructure from sinking into the ground when filled with water.

## **SLIDE 9**

**TEXT: PRIVY SHAFTS**

**Before houses had indoor plumbing, toilets were usually outside, in a separate building (the outhouse or PRIVY), with the toilet emptying into a hole in the ground beneath it. These pits, lined with wood, brick, or nothing at all, are called privy shafts, and they are another important feature used by urban archaeologists.**

**IMAGE: Wood-lined privy shaft and brick-lined privy shaft (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

#### **SLIDE 10**

**TEXT: Archaeologists use artifacts to learn about the past. They study and classify them to learn about how they were made, used, marketed, and discarded.**

**COMPARE THESE BOTTLES. WHAT KINDS OF DIFFERENCES DO YOU SEE? WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY WERE USED FOR?**

**IMAGE: Pluto Water Bottle and wine bottle with seal from New Orleans distributor, Joseph H and I.N. Marks. [See notes for Learning Activity #1]**

Archaeologists often think of hand-made items as providing direct insight into the mind (and therefore the culture) of the person who made them. Historical archaeologists often deal with objects made in factories, far from where those items were eventually used or discarded. With factory-made goods, details of the manufacturing process may help to place items in a chronology based on manufacturing techniques. In this particular case, the bottles of “Pluto Water” at left are machine-made in a fully-automated process, and thus were made in the twentieth century, while the one at right was hand-blown into a mold in a manner typical of the second half of the nineteenth century. With bottles like these, markings for brand names and manufacturers can be linked to documents like advertisements to learn more about the products they contained.

#### **SLIDE 11**

**TEXT: Privy pits often filled rapidly with artifacts when no longer in use. As a result, their contents may serve as historical time capsules to study people in the past.**

**IMAGE: Glass assemblage from a privy filled around 1930. Courtesy UNO Department of Anthropology.**

Privies were periodically cleaned out while in regular use, as otherwise they tended to fill rapidly. Once they were no longer maintained, they became a convenient place to dump household trash. While they could be slowly filled in with construction material and other debris, urban archaeologists are especially interested in rapid fill episodes that may be linked to a single family.

## SLIDE 12

### TEXT: EXAMPLES OF ARTIFACTS

**These are some examples of artifacts recovered at the Guste Homes. What sort of items can you identify here?**

**IMAGES: Image of artifacts from ESI's Guste report (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

The bottle at the top is from a hair tonic, with the bottle identifiable based on its marking of "Guilmard Eau Sublime, New York". The bottom row shows an assortment of common artifacts from historical sites, including (from left to right) a metal utensil handle, a wooden clothes pin, a piece of a slate pencil, a porcelain doll limb, a ceramic marble, and a hair comb, probably made from vulcanized rubber. All are typical of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

## SLIDE 13

**TEXT: ARCHAEOLOGISTS TRY TO LINK ITEMS TO THE PEOPLE WHO USED THEM, AND TO THE OTHER ARTIFACTS RECOVERED WITH THEM, AS PART OF AN ASSEMBLAGE.**

**The large collection of bottles in the earlier slide were thrown away when a woman named Minnie Puckett owned 1222 LaSalle. Descendants of Puckett shared a family photograph of Minnie and recollections of the family's loss of the house on LaSalle.**

**IMAGE COLLAGE: Excerpt from 1930 U.S. Census; Photograph of Minnie Puckett; Judicial Advertisement of Auction of Puckett family home; Lady Liberty locket cover.**

One of the blocks investigated in the project at the Guste development was City Square 349, the block once bounded by S. Liberty, Erato, Clio, and Howard/LaSalle Streets. Excavations by Earth Search, Inc., identified brick foundations and artifacts from a number of different addresses across this particular block. The richest assemblage in terms of materials recovered came from a wood-lined privy shaft, apparently located along a property line between two homes at 1220 and 1222-1224 Howard/LaSalle Street. The feature was filled during the 1930s, presumably representing a cleaning episode linked to a family moving from the house or to a change in ownership. It was filled with glass bottles and containers, many of them complete, along with a smaller collection of ceramic tablewares, personal items, and butchered animal bone.

The 1930 U.S. Census recorded an African-American woman named Minnie Puckett as the owner of 1222 LaSalle. She was described as a 49-year-old widow, born in Mississippi, with parents born in Virginia, residing with her 13-year-old granddaughter. The home was valued at

\$4400. Thirty-year-old Lucille Puckett, already widowed herself, rented the other side of the double. She was Minnie's daughter, described as born in Mississippi (like her mother), living with her four daughters: Edna (10), Helen (8), Genieve (5), and Minnie (3), named for her grandmother. Minnie appears to have bought the home by 1927, and she resided there until her death, after which the property appears in an ad for a property seizure and auction by the Civil Sheriff, around Christmas of 1937. Lucille apparently lost the property, as it had changed hands by the time of the 1940 Census. The loss of the house by the Pucketts certainly seemed like the sort of life event typically associated with the filling of a feature like this.

#### SLIDE 14

##### Part 2: Why dig at the Guste Homes?

**IMAGE: Continuation of excavation unit at Guste Homes (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

#### SLIDE 15

**TEXT: THE SHORT ANSWER: It's required by law...**

- Urban archaeological sites are routinely destroyed by private development, as there are no local protections in Louisiana for archaeological sites on private property.
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies or projects receiving federal funding to take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties, including archaeological sites.
- In this case, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Department of Homeland Security) provided funding for the demolition of Guste, property operated by HANO with funding from HUD (the Housing Authority of New Orleans and Department of Housing and Urban Development, also federal agencies).
- Since the undertaking would affect anything beneath the ground, the archaeological remains require excavation first.

At a site like that of the Guste Homes, an archaeological excavation typically happens because federal law requires it. According to Section 106 of the U.S. National Historic Preservation Act, any time a federal agency does something that could affect historic resources, the agency must take into account the effects of those actions. In the case of archaeology, this means documenting sites and artifacts before they are disturbed or destroyed. At the Guste Homes site, the land itself was federal property, and funds for the redevelopment were provided from federal sources, so there were many ways in which federal agencies were involved. In this case, two different local archaeological firms, R.C. Goodwin and Associates and Earth Search, Inc.,

both tested to see what was preserved in the blocks where Guste had been built. They then targeted specific areas for excavation based on them having the possibility of telling us things we wouldn't know about the history of the neighborhood otherwise.

More information about Section 106 and the NHPA can be found on the webpage of the Louisiana Division of Archaeology (<https://crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/archaeology/CRM/section-106/index>) and at the website of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (<https://www.achp.gov/protecting-historic-properties/section-106-process/introduction-section-106>)

#### SLIDE 16

**TEXT: The long answer: there was good reason to expect significant archaeological remains at Guste**

**The Guste neighborhood was occupied before the Civil War. Even though it was a low-lying area, the nearby rail line and Canal encouraged development. The highlighted part of this 1863 map indicates the project area.**

**IMAGE: Excerpt from Abbot, Henry L., *Approaches to New Orleans*, prepared by order of Maj. Gen. N.P. Banks (by) Henry L. Abbot, Capt. and Chief Top Engrs., Feb. 14th, 1863. In *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Plate XC. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.**

- The NHPA provides a mechanism for documenting sites associated with groups who are not equally represented in documentary sources, or for whom representations may be biased or inaccurate.
- In an urban setting, this may include the urban poor and the working class, and people who were marginalized on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, or religion.
- The archaeological record provides insights into everyday life and culture that may not be recorded in historical accounts.
- There was a long record of urban development in the area before the Guste Homes were constructed, and thus there was a strong likelihood that archaeological features could be preserved.

Before the Guste development was completed in 1964, the neighborhood it replaced looked much like the rest of the Central City area, with densely packed houses and apartments, corner stores, and other small businesses. When those buildings were demolished to make way for

the Guste project buildings, much of what was below ground, like old building foundations and footings, was left behind. Most importantly for archaeologists, pits that had previously been dug into the ground, like wells and old outhouse pits, were covered over. Before regular trash pick-up, an abandoned hole in the ground provided a convenient place to get rid of household refuse, like broken dishes, bottles, food remains, and all sorts of small everyday items that were no longer useful. These holes become like time capsules, which, once excavated by archaeologists, potentially tell about the everyday lives of the people who once lived in the area.

The area eventually utilized for the Guste Homes was located in what was a low-lying backswamp zone at the rear of the Livaudais plantation tract in the Colonial era, straddling land that became the Faubourgs Annunciation and de la Course in the first half of the nineteenth century. While these tracts were first surveyed for subdivision in 1836, there seems to have been little development within them until after the completion of the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad in 1853, with its rail yard near the project area at Calliope between Magnolia and Claiborne. Areas along what was then the undeveloped edge of the city attracted working class immigrants and people who were socially marginalized, like Elizabeth Boyd, a free woman of color living on LaSalle Street in Square 358 in 1860-1861.

Archaeologists found no material evidence of the indigenous peoples who lived in southeast Louisiana prior to the advent of colonial settlement in the area. In urban settings, the density of later occupation typically obliterates such earlier deposits, even when archaeologists are able to specifically target where they might be. Some of the architectural remains documented likely date to the first nineteenth century structures built on urban lots, but otherwise little evidence remained archaeologically of this earlier era of historic-period antebellum development, as was the case at the address associated with Boyd.

#### **SLIDE 17**

**TEXT: After the Civil War, a multi-racial working class community gradually developed in the area, and homes and businesses filled the blocks.**

**IMAGE: Aerial photograph of Guste Homes (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> CLICK**

**IMAGE: Sanborn maps of Guste project area superimposed on aerial. Compiled from online Sanborn database, permission available from EDR.**

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> CLICK**

**TEXT: Race of Head of Household by 1910 U.S. Census; Green indicates “Black” and Yellow indicates “White”**

**IMAGE: Sanborn map sample with race of head of household coded by color.**

The Guste area became much more densely developed after the Civil War. After Emancipation, freedmen and women moved to the city to escape the violent exploitation of plantation life, joining poor immigrants on the urban fringe. In the period of Reconstruction (1867-1877) in Louisiana, federal occupation created new hopes for citizenship and political rights for the state’s Black residents. Eventually, this triggered a violent backlash from white supremacist forces, culminating in the so-called “Battle of Liberty Place”, which restored former Confederate elites to power.

By the early 1900s, the area that became Guste was a densely populated urban neighborhood, where many residents were employed in occupations related to shipping, particularly in the nearby rail yards. Broadly speaking, the area was home predominantly to working class immigrants of European descent in the period between Reconstruction and the end of the nineteenth century, with the neighborhood gradually becoming a predominantly African American neighborhood in the first decades of the twentieth century. The demographic changes in the neighborhood can be tracked in documentary records like the census and city directories, which provide information at the address level about residents’ race and ethnicity, household composition, occupations, and property ownership, where both large-scale patterns and complex microhistories emerge.

Larger-scale political events always loomed in the background of neighborhoods with such racially integrated patterns of residence. The period after Reconstruction was a particularly turbulent one, as the city’s Black residents found opportunities for social advancement subverted and blocked. Black voter registration in Louisiana had reached a high of 128,150 by 1888, but rights were attacked on all fronts. The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision essentially legalized segregation, and the new Louisiana Constitution of 1898 distinguished the right of citizenship from the “privilege” of the vote, using this language to disenfranchise African American voters. By the next year, Black voter registration had plummeted to just over 12,000; by 1930, there were just over 2,000 Black voters left in the entire state. Schools and public facilities were segregated, biracial labor organizations were attacked, and White supremacists used extralegal violence like lynching to reinforce state-sanctioned oppression.

In the period from 1900 to 1930, many of the jobs for African American men in the Guste neighborhood still revolved around the nearby rail yards, though there seems to be a general shift in this period away from higher paying skilled or union jobs and towards unskilled labor or service work. This was part of a concerted effort on the part of business and industry to marginalize Black workers and subvert biracial labor cooperation, a campaign that continued across the century. In working class neighborhoods like Guste, the importance of the labor of

women in the household's economy is visible both in historical records and in archaeological materials like those associated with the Puckett family. Women worked as dress makers, cooks, and laundresses, with such work becoming crucial to sustain households, especially in times of labor instability.

While the Guste neighborhood became increasingly "Black" in the years after 1900, it was still a frequent home for immigrants who found themselves at the margins of white society, especially those considered non-white in the two-tiered racial hierarchy of the segregated South, like Chinese immigrant Sue Wah, who operated a laundry at 1233 S. Liberty in the period from 1900-1908. The maps here illustrate how much open space at Guste was formerly occupied by dense housing stock (in the first overlay), and how demographic data may be attached to map addresses. This also demonstrates that the patterns of segregated housing mandated in so-called 'Jim Crow' laws and policies were slow to fully develop without state intervention.

#### SLIDE 18

**TEXT: By the time HANO planned the Guste Homes, housing in New Orleans had become very segregated, and the Guste area was a predominantly Black neighborhood.**

**IMAGE: Photograph from HANO Annual Report; Article from Times Picayune on beginning of demolition.**

After the 1920s and into the Civil Rights-era of the 1960s, racist policies at every level of government pushed Black residents of New Orleans into lower paying jobs and racially segregated neighborhoods, implemented through urban renewal, racial covenants, and red-lining. Such policies limited the possibilities for African American residents of the city to achieve independence, financial security, and opportunities for their families.

Black citizens worked to resist and counter the effects of structural racism in whatever ways they could. Historical sources also give glimpses of individual families who tried to use homeownership as a foothold on economic security in the neighborhood. Segregation in an urban setting also provided avenues for prosperity in the form of businesses that served African American customers who were otherwise excluded from white-owned businesses of the same function. For instance, Edward Shannon, first a renter at 1219-1221 Howard/LaSalle, owned the property by 1930 while working as a superintendent for a life insurance company. He later opened a furniture repair business at the same location. A series of railroad porters owned another home at 1216 Freret in the period from 1920-1940, while, in 1926, a Black family of Puerto Rican descent headed by a man named Jose Fuentes purchased a home at 2317 Erato and lived there through 1949.

**SLIDE 19**

**TEXT:** HANO promoted the Guste Homes, named for long-time HANO legal counsel William J. Guste, Sr., as a replacement for what was termed slum housing. Opened in 1964, the complex included a high-rise retirement facility, one of the first of its kind in the city.

**IMAGES:** Collage from HANO Annual Reports, 1961-1964 [Clockwise from upper left: Photograph of Guste Senior Center at time of opening; plan for Guste Homes complex; photograph of William J. Guste, Sr.; artist's rendition of life at Guste from HANO yearbook]

In 1964, the Urban League of Greater New Orleans published the results of "A Survey of the Recreational, Social, and Economic Conditions of the Negro Population of the William S. Guste, Sr., Homes and the Adjacent Areas". The recently opened Guste Homes already housed a population of 2,443 residents, not including the high-rise home for the elderly that was a part of it. City planners and affordable housing advocates saw it as an important first step in addressing the needs of low-income residents of New Orleans. However, the report recognized that housing was only one need for a neighborhood to be revitalized; of those 2,443, 1,731 were young people, and the report emphasizes that, for them, "Recreational and cultural opportunities in the area are woefully inadequate."

**SLIDE 20**

**TEXT:** Part 3: What were archaeologists looking for?

**IMAGE:** Excavation image (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

**SLIDE 21**

**TEXT:** Archaeologists used historical research to plan excavations at Guste. They then used a backhoe to look for areas where remains from the pre-1964 neighborhood were preserved.

**IMAGE:** Excavation image (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

Local cultural resource management companies developed expertise working on large-scale data recoveries at other HANO properties prior to redevelopments. At this point, there is usually a good sense of where intact remains will be concentrated, though there is also variation depending on the historical demolition and construction techniques used.

Use of a backhoe on large urban digs is standard practice. Archaeologists use backhoes to get through large quantities of overlying fill and construction debris, then switch to hand excavation when they encounter sensitive or intact deposits.

**SLIDE 22**

**TEXT:** Historians researched individual properties to provide context for archaeological remains. They identified residents and businesses associated with addresses at specific points in the past.

**IMAGE:** Excavation image (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

Archaeologists did not find anything clearly dating to the era before European arrival during testing, nor from the Colonial or Early Antebellum eras. Eventually, they focused excavation efforts on the remains of houses and small businesses, like corner stores and bakeries.

**SLIDE 23**

**TEXT:** Part 4: what did archaeologists find?

**IMAGE:** Excavation image (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

**SLIDE 24**

**TEXT:** Archaeologists excavated building foundations, cistern bases, privies, and middens (or deposits of household trash) spanning the period from 1870 to the 1960s.

**IMAGES:** Photos showing (clockwise from top left) archaeologist mapping units; brick-lined privy shaft; brick footings in gray clay subsoil; ca. 1930s water pipe along brick foundation; wood-lined privy shaft (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

**SLIDE 25**

**TEXT:** In the process, they recovered thousands of artifacts, including fragments of glass bottles, tableware, ceramic vessels, butchered animal bone, and small, everyday items, like buttons, marbles, and smoking pipes.

**IMAGES:** Top, collection of glass from Feature 42, a ca. 1890s privy; bottom, l to r: buttons, clay marbles, and white ball clay smoking pipes. Courtesy of UNO Department of Anthropology.

**SLIDE 26**

**TEXT: Some objects that were common in the past are unfamiliar today. This is a “chamber pot”. Often stored under the bed, they were used to avoid night-time trips to the outhouse. Indoor plumbing made them unnecessary.**

**IMAGE: Yellowware chamber pot. Courtesy of UNO Department of Anthropology.**

Chamber pots were typically kept in the bedroom beneath the bed to use as a toilet during the night and thus prevent the necessity of going to a separate outhouse. They were then emptied in the morning. When New Orleans homes were connected to city water and sewerage beginning in the early 1900s, they became unnecessary.

#### SLIDE 27

**TEXT: Sometimes items were incomplete but still identifiable, like this unusual vessel. Can you identify any clues as to what its function was? It also relates to sanitation.**

**IMAGE: Fragments of ‘Rockingham ware’ vessel. Courtesy of UNO Department of Anthropology.**

The names of ceramic wares used by historical archaeologists are classifications of historical pottery that may tell about period and place of manufacture, decoration, and function. For instance, American households most commonly used Rockingham ware, with its mottled brown decoration, between about 1830 and 1900, often for utilitarian vessels like mixing bowls, pitchers, spittoons, and the bedpan seen here. For more information on ceramic wares, see online resources in bibliography below.

#### SLIDE 28

**TEXT: Here is a complete example from a recent auction: it is a urinal/bed pan, probably from the 1870s or 1880s. Items like this also give clues as to whom might be associated with a given assemblage.**

**IMAGE: Reproduced from ebay auction of “Antique Bennington Pottery Bed Pan Urinal Rockingham Glaze Tobacco Spongeware”, photographer not known.**

Urinals/bedpans like this are unusual in archaeological assemblages, so its presence suggests someone in ill health in the household. The unusual pattern of curvature and rims/edges helped to identify the fragmentary archaeological example. They were an important innovation in the treatment of diseases, though the introduction of non-porous plastic and stainless steel made ceramic ones like this obsolete.

**SLIDE 29**

**TEXT:** Sometimes, artifacts could also be connected to specific households —and even to specific individuals— known from documentary sources.

This is a 'Quartee', a token with a 2 ½ cent value, found at 1300-1302 S. Robertson. Many lunch counters and saloons had '2 for a nickel' specials; when one item was purchased, the 'quartee' would be given as change. The initials on one side of the coin would identify the issuing business. The "H.M.N." on this one refers to Hillary M. Nugent, the one-time owner of the address.

**IMAGE:** Quartee (front and back), courtesy of UNO Department of Anthropology.

**SLIDE 30**

**TEXT:** This "Registered Driver" badge, with the license number D-130, almost certainly belonged to John O'Connor, a driver for his family's bakery at 1304-1306 Freret Street. The bakery was a long-running fixture in the neighborhood, operating from 1886 until around 1926.

**IMAGE:** Driver's badge, courtesy of UNO Department of Anthropology.

**SLIDE 31**

**TEXT:** Other times artifacts tell us information about people who don't show up in property records, or they may tell us things we don't know about them otherwise.

The remainder of this section will focus on the artifacts from a privy from before 1880, pictured at right during excavation.

**IMAGE:** Feature with half of fill excavated (Courtesy of ESI/HANO).

**SLIDE 32**

**TEXT:** Try to identify some of the items on the next four slides and consider what they might tell you about the residents at the address in the 1870s.

**IMAGE:** Assemblage of glass artifacts from feature.

**SLIDE 33**

**IMAGES (Clockwise from upper left): Figural smoking pipe bowls depicting soldier and Presidents Taylor and Grant; derringer [toy]; bottle from patent medicine “Radway’s Ready Relief”, trigger guard and ammunition from pistol.**

**SLIDE 34**

**IMAGES (Clockwise from upper left): Bone and ebony dominoes; brass jewelry box and key; plate with printed horse and rider motif; glass syringes and pewter mercury syringes; harmonica reed plates.**

**SLIDE 35**

**IMAGES: Top row and middle row left: Porcelain doll parts; Center: Tortoise shell hair combs; Center, right: bone utensil handles and knife handle; Bottom left: tin soldiers; Bottom right: bone toothbrush and hairbrush handles.**

Background information for Slides 32-35: During investigations in Square 350, archaeologists fully excavated a large, well-constructed brick-lined privy shaft, producing a rich assemblage of glass containers and ceramic vessels. They also recovered an abundance of personal items, including many items related to armaments that are not typical in urban assemblages, such as wooden gunstocks, a trigger guard and assembly, a saber hilt and blade, a second sword handle, and numerous pieces of lead ball shot and bullets. Further hinting at a special function for the assemblage was a series of figural smoking pipe bowls, including two of the U.S. Presidents Ulysses Grant and Zachary Taylor, and another of a soldier.

The accuracy of historic map overlays becomes more questionable as one moves farther back into the nineteenth century. Initially, the privy was thought to be associated with the 344 Erato/2314-2316 Erato address, where a series of police officers (named J.J. Bermingham, Henry Campbell, William H.C. Roust, and Robert Cheevers) are listed as resident in city directories in the early to mid-1870s. It is likely that all of these men served for the Metropolitan Police, the integrated police force responsible for security in the city during Reconstruction and aligned with the Republican government. This suggests a connection with both the armaments and the pipe depicting Grant, a Republican leader unpopular with the former Confederates who had attempted to regain political power in New Orleans.

However, as archaeologists located other features on the block, and the map further refined as a result, they determined the privy was more likely located at the rear property line of the 346/1307 S. Liberty address. Occupation of this property was much more stable in the period in question, with a widow named Mary Wilson owning and residing at the property for over 40 years. Sharing the house with her was a large extended family, typically including a number of

her own children, along with her married daughter, Elizabeth, son-in-law, Emile Legien, and eventually their children. The 1880 census, nearest in time to the assemblage recovered, listed Mary as a milliner and Emile as a plasterer. Many of Mary's sons also went on to work as carpenters, while her daughter, Kate, was a teacher. Many of the items recovered also suggest occupation by a large family, with a particularly rich array of items relating to toys and play, to hygiene and health, and to personal adornment in the assemblage.

See Learning Activity #2 for some additional ideas on how to integrate some of these artifacts into a classroom activity.

### SLIDE 36

**TEXT: Part 5: Why does it matter?**

**IMAGE: Same unit as in other transition slides, excavated to subsoil.**

### SLIDE 37

**TEXT:**

- **Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource**
- **They tell information about the lives of people that may not be recorded in books**
- **Archaeology also tells about the present: where we've been, what has changed, and how we got here**

**IMAGES: Clockwise, from upper left: image from HANO yearbook; lusterware dish with butterfly design; red-lining map of New Orleans with Central City area (reproduced from <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58>; must be attributed); pocket watch case from Puckett family privy.**

In the broadest sense, projects like the one at the Guste Homes are important because archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource. Each one is a unique piece of the human past. Simply put, archaeology tell us about people's culture: how they lived and worked, how they dressed, what they ate, what they thought was important, both materially and spiritually. Archaeological evidence from historic sites provides information about culture and daily life that supplements the written record, but it also may contest it. The things people throw away are a less biased record of everyday experiences, especially for those who didn't have the opportunity to write their own history.

For many contemporary archaeologists, archaeology is about more than just what happened in the past. When we interpret the past, we also put it in the context of present politics and present inequalities. Archaeology is a conversation between past and present, one that allows

us to better understand how things came to be the way they are, and how we might change them. At Guste, archaeological evidence helps to bring attention to the fact that neighborhoods are not just fixed backdrops. They change and develop, in response both to the desires and needs of individual residents and to policies on housing, immigration, sanitation, and many other factors. It shows how aspects of the social identities of individuals, like race, gender, class, and ethnicity, were expressed materially. Finally, taken together with historical evidence, it demonstrates how 'slums' are a product of segregation and structural inequality, and it shows how people resisted these things in their everyday lives.

All of the statements on the general importance of archaeology are consistent with the position of professional organizations in the field, including the Society for American Archaeology (e.g. <https://www.saa.org/quick-nav/saa-media-room/saa-news/2020/06/02/saa-joins-the-national-call-for-comprehensive-justice>) and the Society for Historical Archaeology (<https://sha.org/anti-racism/>).

#### SLIDE 41

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Archaeologists from Earth Search, Inc., carried out most large-scale excavations at the Guste site on behalf of HANO and HUD. ESI also prepared a report of investigations for submission to the Louisiana Division of Archaeology; photos and records from this were utilized in the creation of this educational module. R.C. Goodwin and Associates also undertook initial testing and construction monitoring on two blocks for HANO and HUD.**
- **Funding and support for this project was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and HANO.**

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

##### *Web-based resources*

The Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum and Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory has a good overview of artifact identification

<https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/diagnostic/>

For more detailed information about analyzing bottles, see

<https://sha.org/bottle/>

For more information about archaeological ceramic typologies, the Florida Museum of Natural History has a digital type collection with extensive illustrations:

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/ceramic-types/>

#### *Print resources*

More information about this project can be found in the *Melpomene Street Blues* book, available as a PDF from the Louisiana Division of Archaeology. The archaeological investigations at the Guste Homes and immediate vicinity are detailed in technical reports submitted to the Louisiana Division of Archaeology:

Lee, Aubra L., Gary DeMarcay, Ryan Hale, Dayna Bowker Lee, Justin W. McKnight, Dorion Ray, Rhonda L. Smith, Elizabeth V. Williams, Jill-Karen Yakubik, and Chris Young (2015). *Cultural Resources Investigations of City Squares 324 (16OR627), 349 (16OR628), 350 (16OR629), 357 (16OR630), 358 (16OR631), and 383 (16OR602) of the William J. Guste Housing Complex, New Orleans, Orleans Parish Louisiana*. 2 volumes. Report submitted to the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Coughlin, Sean, Nathanael Heller, Kelly Sellers Wittie, and William P. Athens (2016). *Archaeological Construction Monitoring of Site 16OR602 for the Guste II Project in New Orleans, Louisiana*. Report submitted to the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Ryan, Joanne, Michael Carpenter, Thurston H.G. Hahn III and Philip Jungeblut (2017). *Phase I and II Cultural Resources Investigations for the Union Bethel A.M.E. Church Four Freedoms Building Project, Orleans Parish, Louisiana*. Report submitted to the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

There are many good overviews of urban and historical archaeology, including:

Deetz, James (1977). *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey. [Note: later reprints have an expanded discussion of African American archaeology]

McGuire, Randall H., and Robert Paynter, eds. (1991). *The Archaeology of Inequality*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Orser, Charles E., Jr., and Brian M. Fagan (1995). *Historical Archaeology*. Harper Collins College Publishers, New York.

Rothschild, Nan and Diana diZerega Wall (2014). *The Archaeology of American Cities*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

### LEARNING ACTIVITY SUGGESTION #1

Archaeologists have many ideas about how to use and interpret the objects they find on archaeological sites. Any artifact has observable characteristics that potentially tell about when, where, and how it was made. These characteristics may also provide additional indications of both an object's primary function and of how it was used. In the modern era, many artifacts recovered on archaeological sites are also commodities, meaning that they are meant to be bought, sold, or otherwise exchanged. Likewise, as things that are valued, objects also often convey meanings and ideas to owners and users.

One way to illustrate this is by creating an object biography. Have students create an imaginative biography for an everyday object and present it either visually or verbally. Encourage students to be creative, and to do some outside research if appropriate. Some questions to help guide the activity include:

When and where was it made? Of what material is it made? Was it made in a factory or by hand?

How did it get from there to where it was sold? Would it have required special care to be transported or shipped?

Is it expensive or cheap? Common or rare? Who is most likely to use it? Is it advertised in any specific way?

How long does it last? Is it made to be used once and discarded, or does it have a longer period of use? Do people save it for long periods of time? Is it recycled or used for anything other than what was originally intended?

What happens to it after it is used? Why would it be thrown away? What happens to it after it is discarded? Does it decay naturally, or does it last a long time?

If someone dug the object up after a hundred years, what would be left? After a thousand?

What does this tell us about what becomes part of the archaeological record?

## LEARNING ACTIVITY SUGGESTION #2

The collection of artifacts shown in Slides 32-35 is meant to give a sense of what looking at an assemblage is like, but it is only a small fraction of the artifacts recovered from the feature in question. If available, 3-D models or printable files may allow students to create their own interpretation of the group of objects. Ask about what items can be identified, and what students think can be determined about the associated household from those items. Students can also be assigned selected items to research, with interactive links that will allow 3-D models of individual items to be examined virtually, to look for clues about function, age, and use.

Determining the answers of these questions can be difficult, even with fully realized models to use for illustration. Another method of illustrating how archaeologists use assemblages may be to have students keep track of their own household's (or of their classroom's) assemblage. Keep a log of everything discarded, either at an individual level, a household level, or a classroom level. Log characteristics like material, function, and quantity, and try to determine patterns or generalizations. What activities are most represented? What are least represented? Does this help to understand anything about how archaeological assemblages may be interpreted? The materials may be quantified into simple bar graphs or charts to illustrate data. The activity can be extended across multiple classrooms for comparison.