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Chapter 3 Documentary Background

Robert Paynter
*University of Massachusetts*, rpaynter@anthro.umass.edu

Kerry Lynch
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*, kjl@anthro.umass.edu

Elizabeth Norris
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*, enorris@anthro.umass.edu

Quentin Lewis
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*, quentin@anthro.umass.edu

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Chapter 3 Documentary Background
CHAPTER 3

DRAFT
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Introduction

As befits someone of Du Bois’s stature, there is a large amount of primary and secondary material by and about him. A great deal of this concerns Du Bois’s formidable contributions to the history of Africa and the African Diaspora, his life shaping national and international human rights organizations, his political and educational philosophies, and his contributions to literature. Our work at the Homesite certainly benefits from an understanding of these aspects of his biography; however we concentrated our attention on primary and secondary information about his life in Great Barrington, the lives of his family and neighbors and the place of Great Barrington within the Massachusetts political economy.

With these ends in mind a crucial source is Du Bois’s papers, mostly archived in the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers at the W.E.B. Du Bois University of Massachusetts Amherst Library. These contain a series of letters pertaining to his remodeling of the house, photographs of the house, and sketches and blueprints drawn up by J. McA. Vance. We have also consulted the Federal Manuscript Census for Great Barrington for the years 1790-1920, at the W.E.B. Du Bois University of Massachusetts Amherst Library. Great Barrington City Directories (Anonymous 1894; Anonymous 1907; Anonymous 1909; Anonymous 1913; Anonymous 1916; Anonymous 1920; Anonymous 1923; Anonymous 1929; Anonymous 1932; Anonymous 1940; Anonymous 1944; Anonymous 1947; Anonymous 1950) and four historic maps of Great Barrington (Anonymous 1904; Beers 1876; Walling 1858; Woodford 1854) were consulted. Tax records and deeds for Great Barrington were made available in the Great Barrington Town Hall.

Du Bois wrote three autobiographies that have sections discussing life in Great Barrington in the 1800s (Du Bois 1920; Du Bois 1968; Du Bois 1984). There are no lengthy descriptions of the Homesite or the House, though there are observations about Great Barrington and his family that have proven useful in putting the site in a broader context. These are woven into especially the summary discussions below. Du Bois did write an essay in The Crisis (1928), entitled “The House of the Black Burghardts” which discusses the Homesite and the House in some detail and he commented on the property in the Oral History (Ingersoll 1960), presented below.

Of the many biographies about Du Bois (e.g., Broderick 1955; Lester 1971; Rampersad 1976), the most prominent and the most helpful for understanding Du Bois’s life is the two-volume Pulitzer Prize winning biography by David Levering Lewis (Lewis 1993; Lewis 2000). Again, there is no detailed discussion of the Homesite or the House, yet Lewis’s insights create a strong sense of the social context of Great Barrington and the details of Du Bois’s life when he owned the Homesite.

Nancy Muller’s work (Muller 1994; Muller 2001; Muller-Milligan 1985) is crucial for our understanding of the Homesite. Her dissertation (2001) is a careful
reading of primary documents from the Papers and other public depositories on the deeds
of the Homesite and nearby properties, and the genealogy of the Burghardt family.
Without this fundamental work we would not have been able to move through additional
records that directly relate to the site. Additionally, she did work that has only
tangentially been discussed in print, which she has graciously shared with us. This
includes compiling deeds and wills on members of the Burghardt family and results of
her reading the local newspaper, *The Berkshire Courier*, for references to and/or by
members of the family.

Though the 19th century historian of Great Barrington omits any mention of Du
Bois or his family (Taylor 1882) an even more comprehensive 20th century history of
Great Barrington by Bernard Drew (1999) makes considerable note of Du Bois and his
relations. More recent work by Drew on the African American history of Berkshire
County (e.g., Drew 2002; Drew 2003) is building a more complete picture of the
communities and their relations to the White community. Bernard Drew graciously
shared his knowledge about Du Bois and expedited search expeditions for documents in
Great Barrington and in his personal collection.

Finally, the MHC file developed by James Parrish, along with his continuing
support and advice over the years, has been instrumental in our research design and
interpretation of the field results. He has been most gracious with his time, knowledge,
and resources.

In addition to these people, we have had the benefit of any number of people who
shared information on Du Bois in Great Barrington. James Parrish’s mother, Mrs. Lila
Parrish, has obliged our questions. Mr. William Wood and Mr. Theodore Hitchcock of
Great Barrington have shared their memories about more recent developments at the
Homesite. David Levinson, anthropologist and historian of the Clinton A.M.E. Zion
Church in Great Barrington has always pointed out important documents, especially in
the letters to the *Berkshire Courier*. Rachel Fletcher helped locate documents in Great
Barrington in out of the way places and had inspiring interpretations of the site and its
significance. Elaine Gunn of Great Barrington has generously shared her memories of
the dedication ceremonies with the Field School. We have also consulted at great length
with Du Bois’s son, David Graham Du Bois, a professor at the University of
Massachusetts Amherst, about his parents’ use of the property, about Du Bois’s life in
general, and about plans for the future use of the site to commemorate Du Bois’s legacy.

Some of this material has been used to guide the 1983 and 1984 field work and
was used in developing the 1994 hypothetical landscapes. Even more material has come
forth since then. Muller’s dissertation brought forth extraordinary information on the
Burghardt genealogy and the deed chain. Work for and since the 2003 field school has
uncovered additional information on residents at the site and Du Bois’s remodeling
efforts.

Before beginning a review of this material, it is helpful to introduce the Homesite
through Du Bois’s eyes, as captured in especially “The House of the Black Burghardts”
(Du Bois 1928), the *Oral History* (Ingersoll 1960), the *Autobiography* (Du Bois 1968),
and in *Dusk of Dawn* (1984). On the occasion of his 60th birthday, Du Bois was given the
property that became known as the House of the Black Burghardts and the Boyhood
Homesite. About this place he writes:

It is the first home that I remember. There my mother was born and all her nine
brothers and sisters. There perhaps my grandfather was born, although that I do
not know….Up and to the east of a hill of rocks was Uncle Ira; down and to the South was Uncle Harlow….And here right in the center of the world was Uncle Tallow, as Grandfather Othello was called.

It was a delectable place – simple, square and low, with the great room of the fireplace, the flagged kitchen, half a step below, and the lower woodshed beyond. Steep, strong stairs led up to Sleep, while without was a brook, a well and a mighty elm….

I left the home as a child to live in town again and go to school…. [After a lifetime away from Great Barrington]….riding near on a chance journey I suddenly was homesick for that house. I came to the spot. There it stood, old, lonesome, empty….It seemed to have shrunk timidly into itself. It had lost color and fence and grass and up to the left and down to the right its sister homes were gone….

Then of a sudden somebody whose many names and places I do not know sent secret emissaries to me on a birthday which I had firmly resolved not to celebrate…And they said by telegram – “The House of the black Burghardts is come home again – it is yours!”

Whereat in great joy I celebrated another birthday and drew plans. And from its long, hiding place I brought out an old black pair of tongs. Once my grandfather, and mayhap his, used them in the great fireplace of the House. Long years I have carried them tenderly over all the earth….But when the old fireplace rises again from the dead on Egremont Plain, its dead eyes shall see not only the ghosts of old Tom and his son Jack and his grandson Othello and his great grandson, me – but also the real presence of these iron tongs resting again in fire worship in the House of the Black Burghardts.

The archaeologist learns some prosaic things from this moving passage. The Homesite was his first home, the home of his maternal grandfather, Othello Burghardt, and possibly of earlier members of his maternal line; it’s use by the Burghardts predates Du Bois’s youth in the late 1860s and early 1870s. It was located between two other homesteads lived in by his great Uncles, Ira and Harlow. The House was painted some unknown color, had two floors, with three rooms on the ground floor (a parlor with a fireplace, a kitchen with flagstones, and a woodshed at a slightly lower level) and bedroom(s) on the second floor. The Homesite had a brook, a well, a fence, and an elm. By 1928 the fence and color of the House were gone and the nearby homesteads had vanished. Despite this, Du Bois felt deeply attached to the place, so much so that he had carried iron fire tongs with him over the previous 40 years. He had in 1928 a passionate intent to restore the House to habitable condition.

The Autobiography (Du Bois 1968: 63) provides a similar picture of the neighborhood of the Homesite but a more depressing sense of the House:

The last piece of their land was bought from a cousin of mine and given to me in 1930 by a group of friends….I planned eventually to make it my country home, but the old home was dilapidated; the boundaries of the land had been encroached upon by neighbors, and the cost of restoration was beyond my means. I sold it in
1955\(^1\). Here in the late 18\(^{th}\) and early 19\(^{th}\) centuries the black Burghardts lived. I remember three of those houses and a small pond. These were the homes of Harlow and Ira; and of my own grandfather, Othello, which he had inherited from his sister Lucinda.... Here as farmers they long earned a comfortable living, consorting usually with each other, but also with some of their white neighbors.

The House is described a bit further on (64; see also 1984:12):

My mother’s ancestral home on Egremont Plain, the house of my grandfather, Othello, one of three farming brothers, was sturdy, small and old-fashioned. There was a great fire-place, whose wrought-iron tongs stand now before my fire-place as I write.

In addition to the information from 1928 we learn that his family were agriculturalists. Root Pond, across Route 23 from the Homesite must be the small pond to which he refers. And that the plans for restoring the House that were so optimistically presented in 1928 were not realized by the mid-1950s.

The Oral History (Ingersoll 1960) contained some additional details and raises expectations for the archaeology of the Homesite and the House. For instance, Du Bois recalled: “a very large kitchen, with a large fireplace, and a living-room, and upstairs two bedrooms” (2). “Some of my uncles had even larger homes” (2). He [Grandfather Othello] had one of the smaller farms” (5). Taken together with the previous information, the House had 5 spaces: two bedrooms, a living-room, kitchen, and woodshed. The House is also smaller than those of some of the surrounding Burghardt homesteads.

The House may not have been the most magnificent of those of the Egremont Plain Burghardts but its residents were knit into the web of kinship with other family members in the neighborhood (2): “But they lived cheaply on what they raised on their own land, and worked for each other cooperatively, and cooperated with the white farmers too.”

Of Grandfather Othello Du Bois recalls he “was crippled when I knew him” (5). In Dusk of Dawn Du Bois specifically identifies Othello’s ailment as an injured hip (1984: 11). Othello’s condition raises a number of questions, such as its cause, if he was in pain, and if so, how did he treat it. Self-medication, with the large number of patent medicines available on the market would have been one solution (Paynter and others 1994). And, as is well known, alcohol was a predominant ingredient in these medicines. Alcohol use figures forcefully in Du Bois’s recollections of Great Barrington (Ingersoll 1960: 10-12): “the only amusement of that town for colored and white was to get drunk. They didn’t get boisterously drunk or anything of that sort, but, there wasn’t anything else to do” (10). His mother insisted that he not have anything to do with alcohol (10), but his grandmother (Othello’s wife, Sally Lampen) “used to have a whiskey sling at times, but that was always medicine” (10). Whiskey bottles from the mid-19\(^{th}\) century as well as patent medicines might provide detail on this use.

More generally regarding consumption practices, Du Bois noted the general poverty of the family:

It was a problem in the family as to just how they would earn a living. But of course, it didn’t cost very much to live. A good many vegetables were given away, and milk was very cheap. They raised buckwheat and some wheat. So the

\(^{1}\) As will be clear below, the deeds indicate the sale was in 1954.
living wasn’t high. They could get enough to get by. But nothing for anything like luxuries [7].

Class position should lead to sparse middens.

Consumption is but one moment in the class structure of Great Barrington. In terms of production, Du Bois recalls in the Autobiography (1968:75) that “in my family, I remember farmers, barbers, waiters, cooks, housemaids and laborers.” Exchange certainly involved some cash. And within this family, reciprocity was an important aspect of economic life: “If I needed a pair of shoes or a coat or something, they helped with it; if there was anything I needed they helped” (19). An unbalanced reciprocity operated across the color-line:

Then there was a good deal of more or less veiled charity. I remember I used to have a lovely walk every morning to Mr. Taylor, who wrote the town history, one of the old white families. Mr. Taylor had a beautiful white house upon top of the hill, and a large herd of cows, and the Taylors told my mother, ‘any time you want some milk, send Willie up, you can have all you want.’ So every morning, or every other morning, I went up and got about two quarts of skim milk, and it was good milk [19].

These economic and racial lines were clearly, though subtly, drawn between the African American community, the White Protestant community, and the Irish immigrants of mid 19th century Great Barrington. Du Bois’s memories of the forms of discrimination that enforced these color lines are complex (e.g., Lester 1971: 4-7; Lewis 1993:34-36). But clearly by the end of his life, he saw the color lines embedded within and forming the class structure of Great Barrington and the basis of the family’s economic condition. For instance in the Autobiography (1968) he recalls

I had, as a child, almost no experience of segregation or color discrimination [75]…..I knew nevertheless that I was exceptional in appearance and that this riveted attention upon me. Less clearly, I early realized that most of the colored persons I saw, including my own folk, were poorer than the well-to-do whites; lived in humbler houses, and did not own stores. None of the colored folk I knew were so poor, drunken and sloven as some of the lower class Americans and Irish. I did not then associate poverty or ignorance with color, but rather with lack of opportunity; or more often with lack of thrift, which was in strict accord with the philosophy of New England and of the 19th century….On the other hand, much of my philosophy of the color line must have come from my family group and their friends’ experience….Most of these had been small farmers, artisans, laborers and servants….These talked of their work and experiences, of hindrances which colored people especially encountered, of better chances in other towns and cities. In this way I must have gotten indirectly a pretty clear outline of color bars which I myself did not experience [75].

Du Bois explained some of his sensibility to his own unconscious desire to not encounter the structured White discrimination of the town. “I presume I was saved evidences of a good deal of actual discrimination by my own keen sensitiveness” (1984:14).

African Americans were limited to a tight domain of economic life, day labor, farming, house-service (1984: 15; see also Lewis 1993: 17). A major source of employment for members of the working class was barred for them, work in the mills. This was considered work for the Irish. And this created a mental as well as a physical segregation for Du Bois.
You see, the submerged class of that town was the Irish. The Irish had been brought in to work in the mills, and they lived in some awful slums. I had the idea that “Irish” and “slums” belonged together and that the Irish lived in the slums because they preferred them. I just grew up with that idea. I didn’t play with the Irish boys because they were dirty and rude and foul-mouthed and so forth, and my mother would have fits [Ingersoll 1960: 18-19; see also Du Bois 1968: 82].

Most of the stores were owned by White Protestants (1968: 78-79). The more influential professions, lawyer or minister of a predominantly White congregation or holder of significant political office, were also closed to them. Du Bois speculates in the Oral History (1960: 29):

I think I couldn’t have been a lawyer, because that meant being taken in to a law office. There were only two law offices there, and they should have known that it would have been a handicap to them if they took in a Negro. ….I probably could have been a bookkeeper.

As he cast this in Dusk of Dawn “Great Barrington was not able to conceive of me in such local position. It was not so much that they were opposed to it, but it did not occur to them as a possibility” (1984: 23). The crafts African Americans engaged in were those that did not require high capitalization, barber, waiter, whitewasher. As will be noted below, men are most often listed in the census in working class occupations as farmers, laborers, or servants. Most of the women were servants (Paynter and others 1994).

There was also a bar on interracial marriage, a taken-for-granted in the Autobiography and discussed in the Oral History in terms of how few people were available to marry:

Q: This must have been a problem for your family – where could they turn, to marry, except to other members of the family?” DuBois: I don’t think they thought of turning elsewhere, because you see, in their bringing up, they came up with the family – they were working with the family, living with the family, and so forth. Their contacts with the whites were in stores, or perhaps in employment. I came up with the whites because I was in school with them [16].

He does note in Dusk of Dawn (Anonymous 1913; Du Bois 1984: 10) the distinctive reaction of his family to a cousin who broke this ban by bringing home a White wife; the issues were the husband’s ability to support a wife and the history of the wife’s family, rather than race. The deeply structured segregation also manifested itself socially (30-31):

Q: How did you come to suspect there were parties to which you were not invited? DuBois: I don’t know. As I say, I don’t think I was ever conscious of that until I went where I did have full freedom and was invited to everything. ….I knew that for a long time I was a leader of my group, and then as I got older, I wasn’t a leader. The group had activities of which I wasn’t a part. I began to realize this, although – at the time, I couldn’t put my hand on anything.

Du Bois excelled where he could, especially in school work (1968: 76): Gradually I became conscious that in most of the school work my natural gifts and regular attendance made me rank among the best, so that my promotions were regular and expected.” This too was experienced within the context of the color-line (Ingersoll 1960:14):

I found myself, after a time, in school, making it a sort of point of honor to excel white students every time I could in anything. It came chiefly from just working
harder. I began to recognize that in some way, for some reason – I wasn’t clear at all about it – I sort of had to justify myself.

And this gave him a sense of life mission (Ingersoll 1960: 22-23):

As I say, I very early got the idea that what I was going to do was to prove to the world that Negroes were just like other people. I don’t know how I got to it, because – well, in the first place I was very much annoyed because nothing was ever said about Negroes in the textbooks, while on the other hand, I, as a Negro in this school, seemed to be looked upon as unusual by everybody. Now, if I was unusual in this school, and a sort of curiosity, then the Negroes must be so in the world. And if I could easily keep up with and beat these students in the high school, why didn’t the Negroes do it in the world? And if they did do it and had done it, why wasn’t anything said about it? I never saw a picture of anybody who was colored or black who had done anything in the world. Always well-dressed white men.

This life mission, at least early on, was shaped by his sense of what caused the social inequalities, not race but hard work (Du Bois 1968:80):

I grew up in the midst of definite ideas as to wealth and poverty, work and charity. Wealth was the result of work and saving and the rich rightly inherited the earth. The poor, on the whole, were themselves to be blamed. They were unfortunate and if so their fortunes could easily be mended with care. But chiefly, they were ‘shiftless,’ and ‘shiftlessness’ was unforgivable.

Growing up in Great Barrington seems to have given him the sense that his efforts had been, in some small ways, rewarded by Whites. Others known as Negroes had not been duly recognized. Ignorance on the part of Whites could be reversed and their undeserved conditions improved. His intellectual challenge, in many ways, was about bringing to the world’s consciousness not only the truths of unrecognized African accomplishments (gifts as he would refer to them in a one of his books (Du Bois 1924)), but also the truths he only began to sense in Great Barrington, about the social forces of White supremacy and class exploitation that were to be affected only by a joint campaign of scientific persuasion and the creation of mass social movements (Du Bois 1984: 5-7; Rampersad 1990: 5-12).

These readings provides us with insight into life in Great Barrington and at the Homesite in the third quarter of the 19th century as seen through the lens of the life of a young African descent man and his family. As such they are suggestive of potential connections to studies by other archaeologists on the history of the African American past (Singleton and Bograd 1995). For instance, the Massachusetts Burghardts were free agriculturalists for at least four generations by Du Bois’s time, building lives around small freeholding and agricultural production. (e.g., Askins 1988; Baker 1980; Baker 1978; Bower 1991; Bower and Rushing 1980; Schuyler 1980) a condition quite the different from the captives held on plantations and in urban places the late-18th and early 19th centuries (e.g., Armstrong 1990; Blakey 1998; Delle 1998; e.g., Epperson 2001; Farnsworth 2000; Ferguson 1992; Kelso 1984; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Matthews 2001; Otto 1984; Singleton 1995; Singleton 1999; Yentsch 1994) or bound by economic forms in the late 19th into the 20th centuries (e.g., Brown and Cooper 1990; Delle 2001; Orser 1988a; Orser 1988b; Orser 1990a; Orser 1990b; Orser 1991; Orser 1999; Wilkie 2000; Wilkie 2001). Service, too, was key to the lives of the Burghardts (e.g., Mullins 1999b; Mullins 1999c; Wilkie 2001). Their participation in the burgeoning consumer
revolution was apparently severely limited by their racially imposed segregation in a cash-poor sector of the economy (e.g., Leone 1999; Mullins 1999a; Mullins 1999b). They were enmeshed in a set of local exchange relations that gave a clear sense of community (e.g., Geismar 1982; Willkie 2000; Willkie 2001) as disclosed in these writings as well as in Du Bois’s social notes to African American newspapers in New York (Lester 1971: 154-169). A subject that occupies a good deal of archaeological study is virtually invisible in Du Bois’s memories, the material ways in which African Americans marked their identities as different from Euro Americans (e.g., Deetz 1977; Fennell 2003; Ferguson 1980; Ferguson 1991; Ferguson 1992; Leone and Fry 1999; Leone, et al. 2001). Is this because categorizing/surveying people to place them into fixed categories was of less interest to Du Bois, or because, as some histories would have it, because northern Africans had assimilated to White culture, and thereby diluting northern African American culture? We prefer to think it is the former.

Other lenses can be used to see Great Barrington in the mid to late 19th century. For instance, Drew’s (1999: 227-235, 423-438,443-460, 535-538) history tells of a city making the transition from a central market and governmental place in the midst of the region’s agricultural production to an industrial city and summer refuge reaching to the more distant world. Woolen and cotton cloth, and paper were important products of the mills in the village of Great Barrington as well as in the villages of Housatonic and Risingdale; tenements were built to house their work force. Large estates of the urban (and especially New York connected) elite were built in town (Kellogg Terrace/Searles Castle) with others scattered in more rural settings. William Stanley, who devised and tested in Great Barrington in the late 1880s (just after Du Bois left town for Fisk) the alternating current system used in our electrical grid today, and who invented and produced the Stanley Insulated bottle in town was Great Barrington’s most influential inventor. Town histories through the lenses of mill owners and the Irish and Central European immigrants who worked in the mills, through the lenses of the moneyed gentry and their multiethnic servants, all deserve to be written. And these would have rhythms that entwine with those of the Burghards. For instance, Du Bois’s relatives worked as servants and Du Bois himself worked on a construction job for one of massive architectural fantasies (Kellogg Terrace/Searles Castle). We emphasize Du Bois’s understanding of the town, foremost because he is describing the lives of some of the people responsible for the material assemblages at the site, and secondly because for purposes of interpreting the material culture of an African American family it seems important that it be based on an African American perspective.

Additional documents in the Du Bois Papers provide information on another moment, the years at the beginning of the Great Depression when Du Bois sought to transform the Homesite and the House of his maternal ancestors. To this project Du Bois brought a sense of commemoration that is interestingly parallel to the work of an archaeologist, plumbing the history of a place to keep a memory alive in the present. Taken together these additional documents work with the archaeological record to create a more complete sense of life at the Homesite, before and during Du Bois’s tenure.

Specifically, the Homesite was home to and its archaeological assemblages the result of other Burghards in addition to Du Bois. Who were they? How did they use and effect changes on the Homesite and to the House? And finally, what was Du Bois’s

2 Taylor (1882:442) gives the population of Great Barrington as 3,264 in 1850, 3,920 in 1865, 4,320 in 1870 and 4,685 in 1880.
understanding of this property so that he kept it for so long? In what follows we review the documentary information to address these questions:

1) Who lived at the Homesite?
2) What were the physical characteristics of the Homesite and the House, and what changes occurred over time?
3) What did the Homesite mean to Du Bois?
Knowing some of the answers to these helps guide archaeological research and aid in interpreting the results.

Who lived at the W.E.B. Du Bois Homesite?

By the time Paynter and others (1994) were developing a preliminary synthesis of the archeology of the Homesite, but before Muller (2001) had completed her dissertation, we developed a hypothetical list of site occupants, based on preliminary genealogical, map, deed, and census research (Paynter and others 1994: 298). Research since then requires modifications to this published list, especially with regards to the possible earliest date of occupation and to the identity of the occupants in the 4th quarter of the 19th century. Though what follows is still hypothetical and needs further research, we are much more confident about the accuracy of the list of occupants and therefore about the association of archaeological assemblages with specific households.

Deed Chain and Genealogy

Nancy Muller’s (2001) dissertation is a key document for addressing the problem of who resided at the Homesite. Muller was a member of the 1984 Field School who became devoted to the problem of better understanding Du Bois’s family in Great Barrington as a means to better understand African Americans in the North. She followed Du Bois’s lead in developing a genealogy of the Black Burghardts and conducting an extensive title search for the Homesite and properties transferred by members of the Burghardt family. The deed chain is in Table 1. The genealogy is too extensive to reproduce here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grantor</th>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/1/1795</td>
<td>Grove Loomis</td>
<td>Jackson Burghardt</td>
<td>Conveyance. (For £15).</td>
<td>Muller (2001:175-184) suggests that this is an early transfer of a series of transfers that involve, sequentially Burghardt to Root (6/29/1802 40/7), Knight to Burghardt (6/3/1807 43/687,688), Burghardt to Hudson (4/17/1807 45/231), Burghardt to Loomis (4/3/1810 48/241), and Burghardt to Knight (3/19/1810 48/4). All these properties are poorly described, and are for the most part larger than the 1820 parcel. The connection to the 1820 parcel is seen through the intervention of Horace Church who is simultaneously paying Jackson Burghardt’s debt for $12 and selling to his son-in-law a small parcel of land for $10. Is this small parcel discussed in the next link in the chain a piece of land previously owned by Jackson Burghardt and in a manner undocumented conveyed to Church as part of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Muller leaves this as an open question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Buyer</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/27/1820</td>
<td>Horace Church</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Conveyance. (For $10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the earliest clear deed involving the Boyhood Homestead. There is no mention of buildings. James mortgages this land:

- to John Sanford (2/22/1828, redeemed 2/3/1830) for $71.36
- to Henry Dewey with buildings (5/28/1831, 68/17 and redeemed 3/16/1833) for $31.00
- to Maria Burghardt with buildings (11/13/1831, 68/55 and redeemed 4/15/1836) for $250.

On 7/15/1833 (70/131) James buys a second parcel with buildings from Edward Younglove for $55 which he immediately mortgages (70/265) to Younglove for $33 (suggesting Freeman only had $22 for the purchase) and meets the mortgage in 1835.

By 1836 James and Lucinda own free and clear two parcels with buildings on Egremont Plain, probably separated for at least a time by Younglove property.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Lucinda Burghardt Freeman inherits No documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/6/1861</td>
<td>Lucinda Burghardt Freeman</td>
<td>Othello and Ira Burghardt, and then to Harlow, Albert, and William Burghardt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Probate 8/421)</td>
<td>Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/22/1873</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>William Piper quitclaim of partial rights from Lucinda Burghardt Freeman. (For $50).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(145/23)</td>
<td>Harlow is likely father or possibly brother of William Piper’s wife, Martha.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They sell these lots in a loan type agreement with Mary and Sarah Kellogg (2/1/1855, 106/259) for $100. One is their homelot. On 11/18/1857 Mary and Sara sell to Harlow’s children, Lucinda M. and Albert Burghardt, for $90 the non-homelot piece. Albert and Lucinda M. sell this to Charles Crippen for $100 (2/13/1860, 112/581) for $100. This is probably the land and buildings James received in 1833 from Younglove. It is unclear how Lucinda Burghardt Freeman regained the homelot to pass to her brothers in her will of 1861.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name 1</th>
<th>Name 2</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/2/1876</td>
<td>William Burghardt</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Quitclaim of partial rights from Lucinda Burghardt Freeman. (For $50). William is brother or cousin (Muller 2001:167 contradicts genealogy) of William Piper’s wife, Martha.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/1878</td>
<td>Albert Burghardt</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Quitclaim of partial rights inherited from Lucinda Burghardt Freeman. (For $65). Albert is the brother of William Piper’s wife, Martha.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/19/1909</td>
<td>Martha Piper</td>
<td>Lena Wooster</td>
<td>Quitclaim of partial rights so Lena can assemble the property. (For $1). Martha and Louise are giving up “all our right in and title to…” land assembled and that they inherited from Martha’s husband and Louise’s father, William (c. 1891). They are living in Philadelphia, Pa. For $1.00.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/16/1909</td>
<td>George Taylor</td>
<td>Lena Wooster</td>
<td>Quitclaim of partial rights so Lena can assemble the property. (For $1). Taylor conveys his 1/3 interest in land assembled by William Piper that he had somehow received from Junius Adams who had received it from John H. Piper (12/11/1901, 189/9) who inherited his 1/3 interest from his father, William (1842-c. 1891).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28/1928</td>
<td>Warren Davis</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois</td>
<td>Warranty Covenant (for consideration paid) Davis is holding for the Committee who buys the property.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Owner(s)</td>
<td>Grantor(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/1957</td>
<td>J.G. Bowen, E.S. Bowen</td>
<td>Bois</td>
<td>Parcel 1 purchased from Du Bois in 1954; Parcel 2 is $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in a parcel. J.G. Bowen received interest in Parcel 2 in a transaction with J.G. Bowen and E.S. Bowen that clarified lingering interests of Day, Day, and Andrews (1953), heirs of Sara Day. The Bowens had inherited from David Bowen (date uncertain) who bought from Sara Day (1917) who inherited from William Day (date uncertain) who bought from Joyner (Guardian) 1880. Parcel 2 has no Burghardt ownership history so its complex history is not followed out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30/1987</td>
<td>DuBois Memorial Foundation, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</td>
<td>Bois</td>
<td>The two Parcels that make up the present site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table is based substantially on Muller (2001). She notes the difficulties associated with creating this deed chain: the need to distinguish White from Black Burghardts, imprecise property designations from the mid-19th until the mid-20th centuries, the nature of informal loan agreements in the 19th century (Muller 2001: 152-155). The meaning of some of these transfers only became clear as Muller developed a better understanding of the genealogical relations among the transferees.

She drew one conclusion, important for our study that also draws the attention of Du Bois scholars. Du Bois, in his presentation of his genealogy in Dusk of Dawn (Du Bois 1984), links his family to an African man known as Tom, who was stolen out of Africa in the 1730s. A major problem for Du Bois scholars is that there is precious little documentation to support Du Bois’s argument about Tom; only a single Revolutionary War document simply identifying Tom as a person of color from the Berkshire County area. Muller worked with Du Bois’s correspondence with family members about the Burghardt history in the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, which contains a split opinion about Tom, with some family members recalling him and some not. She decided to side with Uncle James’s recollections that Jackson Burghardt was the earliest ancestor. Muller concluded that Jackson is Du Bois’s Tom, the person taken captive in Africa, whose wife or mother sang an enigmatic West African song (Lewis 1993: 14), who was enslaved and brought to Great Barrington by Conrado Burghardt, who served in the American Revolution (possibly given the name Tom by an ignorant White record keeper), and who was the first of the Burghardts to live on the Egremont Plain (75-94).

The significance of this argument for our study concerns the first inhabitation of the site by the Burghardts. In her investigations of the deeds for the Boyhood Homesite, Muller, like others, traced the property to an 1820 transaction when Horace Church sells land to James Freeman. Given that Freeman’s wife, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman, was Jackson’s daughter, Muller then seeks to connect Horace Church to previous land transactions made by Jackson Burghardt beginning in the late 18th century. If her speculations are correct, then a Burghardt occupation of the Homesite might have begun with the 1795 transaction with Grove Loomis (Muller 2001: 175-184). Muller admits that connecting the Homesite to the 18th century Jackson Burghardt transactions is a stretch. A close reading and plotting of the deeds has some of these early properties as larger than the homesite with a configuration that does not look like the Homesite. However, it is also possible that the Homesite was carved out of one of these larger parcels. In that case, a scenario of loans and possible benevolence suggested by Muller might be true. Mapping all the neighboring deeds, a monumental task, might resolve this matter. Tax records are not available until 1841 (see below). The date of the House’s construction seems a question about which material evidence might play a role. As a result, we include Muller’s hypothesis extending the Burghardin residency at the site back to Jackson’s transaction in 1795 in the deed chain to alert researchers to this possibility.

Du Bois’s Description of the Site and the Neighborhood

Ownership and residency are not necessarily one in the same. We used a number of sources to develop residency of the Homesite. A key entry point was Du Bois’s “House of the Black Burghardts” (Du Bois 1928: 360) discussed above, which contains important clues about the residents in a neighborhood of Burghardts on the Egremont Plain. In it he describes the neighborhood of the House of the Black Burghardts: “up and to the east of a hill of rocks was Uncle Ira; down and to the south was Uncle Harlow….And here right in the center of the world was Uncle Tallow, as Grandfather
Othello was called….Almost was I born there but that Alfred Du Bois and Mary Burghardt honeymooned a year in town and then brought me as a baby back to Egremont Plain. I left the home as a child to live in town again and go to school.” Here Du Bois remembers that when he was a year old he and Grandfather Othello both resided at the site. And at around this same time they lived in between the homesteads of Othello’s two brothers, Ira and Harlow. With these clues we were able to make informed inquiries of other primary documents.

Historical Maps

Four historical maps of Great Barrington were useful for fixing this community of Burghardts on the ground, the 1854 Woodford Map (Woodford 1854), the 1856 Walling Map (Walling 1856), the 1876 Beers Atlas (Beers 1876), and the 1904 Atlas of Berkshire County (Anonymous 1904) (Appendix J). On the earliest, the 1854 Woodford Map, James Freeman is located roughly where the Homesite is today, just north of the highway to South Egremont in the neighborhood of Root Pond. Harlo [sic] Burghardt appears on this map “down and to the south.” Ira, surprisingly, does not appear on the map. James dies in 1856 and so the next map, the 1858 Walling Map (Walling 1858), shows “Mrs. Freeman” at the Homesite location and “H. Burghardt” in roughly the same location as in 1854. Lucinda dies in 1860 and her heirs sell their rights to William Piper, married to one of Harlow’s daughters, Martha Burghardt Piper. The next map, the 1876 Beers Atlas (Beers 1876), shows “W. Piper” at the Homesite and “H. Burghardt” in his familiar position. A note of concern about this map is that Harlow dies in 1874, two years before the publication date for the map. This discrepancy might be due to the time lag between data collection and map production. Alternatively in 1876 the property was still owned by the Estate of Harlow Burghardt, an estate that because of outstanding debts is not finally resolved until 1886, when his daughter, Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster buys the property at an estate auction (Berkshire County Probate Book 128/536 in the Great Barrington Registry of Deeds). The 1904 Atlas of Berkshire County (Anonymous 1904) shows “N. Piper”4 at the Homesite. Interestingly, Harlow Burghardt’s house appears to have no name next to it. Presumably his daughter who bought his homestead is the “Mrs. Wooster” who appears on the map, but living further down the street. And interestingly and inexplicably, across from her is her sister, “Mrs. Piper”, the widow of William Piper.

The maps also have differing degrees of physical detail. The mapping convention for all but the earliest, the 1854 Woodford Map, simply associates a name with mostly squarish markings. These are not taken as trustworthy representations of anything but the locations of structures and associated names. The Woodford Map took care to detail wings and els, as well as outbuildings and seems to present a more trustworthy record of buildings and shapes. In particular, James Freeman’s house has a larger block to the east and a smaller wing to the west, a plan that matches well with the 1928 and 1933 photographs and archaealogical plans. There are no outbuildings associated with the house. Harlow’s property has two and possibly three structures that are all rectangular in shape.

These maps seem to confirm the correlation of ownership and residence at the Homesite. James and Lucinda Freeman appear on the 1854 Woodford Map and the 1858 Walling Map in the last years of their ownership. No map was produced during Othello

4 The edition of this map in the Registry of Deeds is quite wrinkled and not surprisingly Parrish’s (1981) report indicates W. Piper. The edition at the Mason Library in Great Barrington is in slightly better shape and corroborates Bernard Drew’s report to me of N. Piper.
Burghardt’s tenancy in the 1860s until his death in 1872. William Piper was buying Lucinda’s heirs’ rights during the period of the production of the 1876 Beers Atlas and appears this map. The 1904 Atlas points to the discrepancy between ownership and residency, because N. Piper appears at the Homesite, but does not appear in the deed chain. Following William Piper on the deed chain is Lena Wooster, whose ownership of the Homesite post-dates the 1904 Atlas.

Du Bois’s sense of a community on the Egremont Plain is partially born out by these maps. Harlow Burghardt consistently appears “down and to the south” from the Homesite in the 1856-1876 maps. Members of the Burghardt family, Harlow’s daughters’ families of Martha and William Piper and Lucinda and Edward C. Wooster are also on the 1876 and 1904 maps. Ira, present in Du Bois’s memory, is missing from these maps.

Some additional geographic sources were also consulted. One is a map that shows a portion of Rt. 23 in 1922 (Anonymous 1922). Bernie, do you have a fuller citation for this map? It details the present highway right of way, the utilities, and possibly the previous roadbed. Property lines, names of owners and schematics of house frontages appear on the map. The Homesite is associated with Lena B. Worcester [sic]; David Bowen is the neighbor to the east, Ida Hale to the west. The House is situated very near the road, much nearer than any of the other houses. It is also situated quite near the eastern property line. And finally, there is only one frontage of Wooster’s land on Rt. 23, with no frontage for Lena Worcester to the east of David Bowen’s property, an observation that calls into question the antiquity of the present size of the Homesite. We haven’t reproduced this large map in this report.

This raises the matter of the history of Rt. 23. A September 1785 petition to the Berkshire County Court of Sessions (Berkshire County Court of Sessions Dockets, Book “A” 1761-1795, page 426) asks that a road be laid from Great Barrington to Egremont. A follow-up report in 1791 (page 620) consists of bearing and distance information on this road. This may describe, in part, the passage in front of the Homesite of what today is Rt. 23 from the corner of Rt. 23 and Rt. 77 to the intersection of Rt. 23 and Seekonk Cross Road, though fitting these directions to the ground is a challenge. If this interpretation is correct, then the road precedes the 1820 purchase of the Homesite by James Freeman, and even the earlier potential purchase in 1795 by Jackson Burghardt. Regardless, it raises the question of where people, previous to the completion of Rt. 23, forded the small stream to the west of the Homesite. Bernie, do I have this right?

Federal Census

The Federal Manuscript Census is an important source of information on who actually resides in a town, not just who owns property in the town. Some of the censuses can even be used for a sense of where people resided. The key to determining residency is the order in which they appear on the census. To the extent that the manuscript census can be seen as an itinerary, a tour of the town taken by the census enumerator, it can be related to the historical maps (de Certeau 1984: 118-122). This is far from a foolproof method, but with other information, can help address issues of residency and ownership. We accessed microfilms of the Federal Manuscript Census in the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Muller’s (2001: 109-120) dissertation records key information on members of the Burghardt family for the 1790-1880 censuses.
The 1790 and 1800 censuses are not particularly useful to this task since the census-taker was only instructed to honestly enumerate household heads and members without necessarily visiting them (Wright 1900:14). The order of names may represent proximity, or family relationships, or some other unknown social process. Though there is undoubtedly a spatial aspect to these lists, the earliest censuses are evidence of spatial relations. Between 1810 and 1840 the census-takers were ordered to make their enumeration “by an actual inquiry at every dwelling house, or of the head of every family within each district, and not otherwise” (Wright 1900:20). These lists are more likely to reflect the path a census-taker took as they were making their “actual inquiry.” Still, that inquiry may have happened at some remove from where people resided. It is in 1850 that the census takes on a strong spatial character. The census-takers were instructed to enumerate people “by a personal visit to each dwelling house, and to each family” (Wright 1900: 42). The manuscript lists include a household and a family number that reflects the order in which they were visited. It seems safe to assume that census-takers were generally working along sections of streets, rather than randomly skipping throughout their district. However, the order on the list cannot be read as a literal map. A census-takers may have worked their way down a street using any number of paths (one side down and the other back or the next house on the street, or a mixture of the two, etc.) skipping people who were not at home and including them later on the list, or doing parts of streets on different days. Uncertainty about precise paths means that the order and the numbers on the census suggest proximity, if not precise adjacency. The 1900 and 1910 censuses have street names that make seeing the spatial relations all the clearer. There is no 1890 manuscript census.

Du Bois’s memory of living at Othello’s house and the pattern of Othello being in between the houses of his brothers provides a useful pattern for investigating the Manuscript Censuses. Consistent with his memory, the 2 year-old Du Bois appears on the 1870 Federal Manuscript Census in Othello’s household (Household #779). The 1870 Manuscript Census has Othello’s brother-in-law, Abraham Jackson, and Othello’s granddaughter, Laura Burghardt Sumea’s family, living one household visit away in Household # 778. The census-taker visited Harlow Burghardt in the opposite direction (Household #790) not far but at some remove from Othello’s household. Contrary to Du Bois’s memory, in 1870 Ira Burghardt’s family is apparently some distance away in Household # 376.

Moving back in time from this fixed reference point, the 1860 Census describes a series of Burghardt families consistent with Du Bois’s memory. This time the census-taker visited in the opposite direction with Harlow’s family as Household #289, Othello’s as #291, and Ira’s as #293. On June 1, 1860, the enumeration date for this census, the owner of the Homesite, Lucinda Burghardt, is enumerated as blind and living with a relative near the Kellogg sisters (Muller 2001: 102). Lucinda will die on November 25th 1860. It seems most likely that the household of Othello Burghardt is living on the site in 1860. (One is tempted to suppose that Ira and family are living on the property that supports the Jackson-Sumea household in the 1870 Census). In 1850, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman and James Freeman, owners of the Homesite, are living in #322; in one direction is Harlow Burghardt and family (#325) and in the other is Abraham Jackson and his wife, Jane Burghardt Jackson (Othello’s daughter). Given the map information from the 1850s, it is reasonable to suppose that the census-taker visited James and Lucinda at the Homesite. Interestingly the two maps from the 1850s do not identify the Jacksons or Ira Burghardt in the neighborhood.
Considering the less spatially reliable censuses, 1840 finds James Freeman separated from Harlow Burghardt by 6 other household heads, with Abram Jackson living beyond Harlow; the order of the Homesite being in the middle has been disturbed. This may be due to the fact that actual visits were not required in 1840. In 1830 Ira and Othello are enumerated next to one another’s household, with Harlo (sic) 12 household heads away but James Freeman is at some distance from all these names, near Jos. Jackson and Wm. Eaton. The 1820 shows a great separation of the Burghardt family names. Some of this is due to the facts of enumeration. In 1820, the enumeration was to reflect residency on the first Monday in August (Wright 1900: 134); James Freeman did not purchase of the Homesite until September 27th of that year and so he should not be enumerated on Egremont Plain. This doesn’t explain Othello Burghardt also being at some distance from the Homesite; he is listed some 22 households entries from Horace Church, the owner of the Homesite on the enumeration date.

All this suggests 1830 (rather than 1820) as the earliest census when a Burghardt neighborhood on Egremont Plain first emerged. The 1840 census also suggests such a pattern. The 1850 census clearly has the Burghardt clan, if not exactly the same people, arranged along the road to just as Du Bois recalls from 20 some years later.

Moving towards the present from the 1870 touchstone census should have been easier because the deeds are better described. According to the deeds, William Piper, married to one of Harlow’s daughters, was buying the partial interests in the Homesite of James and Lucinda Burghardt Freeman between 1873 and 1878. William’s heirs sold their interest to Lena Wooster, married to one of Harlow’s grandsons, in 1909. However, William Piper does not appear on the 1880 or 1900 censuses living on Egremont Plain in Great Barrington (instead he is enumerated in 1880 in Sheffield, one town to the south). His residency at the Homesite he owned was apparently very brief, captured in the mid 1870s on the 1876 Beers Atlas. Moreover, despite the fact that the 1904 Atlas does identify N. Piper as resident at the Homesite no Piper is listed in the 1880, 1900 or 1910 Census as living on Egremont Plain. Burghardts who do appear on the 1880, 1900, and 1910 censuses on the Egremont Plain are, first, the family of Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster and Edward C. Wooster in 1880 and 1900 (listed on the 1900 census as renters), and then the family of their son, Edward M. Wooster and his wife, Lena Wooster. (Lena Wooster is the person in the deed chain who sells the Homesite to Warren Davis and then to Du Bois in 1928.)

When Paynter and others (1994) were working on the Homesite residents we used the fact that a Wooster sold the Homesite to Du Bois and associated this with the fact that Woosters appeared on the census on the Egremont Plain to assume that it was the Woosters who resided at the Homesite in the 4th quarter of the 19th century. We explained the fact that William Piper appears as the resident of the Homesite on the 1876 Beers Atlas with the following little scenario among Harlow’s daughters. We assumed that in the 1870s one sister (Martha Burghardt Piper) had gotten her husband (William Piper) to buy the Homesite of her uncle (Othello) so that her sister’s family (Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster, Edward C. Wooster and children) would have a place to live. Thus,

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5 Nelson Piper does appear on the 1900 Great Barrington Census, but not on the Egremont Plain. He is identified as a 38 year old Black man, employed as a farm laborer, living with his 45 year old wife, Francis J. Piper. Francis had 3 children, none of whom were alive. This two family household is living in a rented house. No street address is given. That he is not living on Egremont Plain is apparent because his household number is 7 in comparison to Edward C. Wooster’s family household number of 404.
residents at the Homesite between Othello’s death in 1872 and the Davis/Du Bois purchases in 1928 were assumed to be two generations of the Wooster family. (We didn’t know at the time of the 1904 map with N. Piper at the Homesite, but would have explained it away as another instance of ownership by one branch of the family supporting residence by another.) This basic argument was repeated in Muller’s (2001) thesis. And this was the reigning understanding of ownership and residency at the Homesite until developments in association with the 2003 Field School, related below.

Consulting the censuses gave us a set of residents for the site that showed consistency as well as discontinuity between residence and ownership. From 1820 until the late 1850s James Freeman and Lucinda Burghardt Freeman owned and resided on the Homesite. There is a brief moment of discontinuity between ownership and residency in the late 1850s and 1860 when Lucinda Burghardt Freeman takes ill and moves in with a relative; the Homesite comes into the possession of her brother Othello and his household. Ownership and residency become one and the same during the 1860s until Othello’s death in 1872 after Othello inherits a portion of the title to the Homesite upon his sister’s death in 1860. In 1860 Othello is positioned in the census on Egremont Plain, just as Du Bois recalled, between his two brothers, Ira and Harlow. In 1870, Othello’s household is in between Harlow and Othello’s daughter’s family. With Othello’s death commences another, more extensive period of discontinuity between ownership and residency. William Piper comes to own the Homesite in the mid-1870s until 1909. We thought the residents at the site were his maternal relatives, the Woosters. This understanding of the last quarter of the 19th century has been substantially altered because of work on additional primary documents.
Tax Records

In August of 2003 Bernard Drew and Robert Paynter surveyed the Tax Records in the Great Barrington Town Hall. In September of 2004 they were joined in a follow-up visit by Rachel Fletcher. The goal was to find tax records associated with key people at the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite. In particular we looked for information on potential and known owners and residents of the Homesite and nearby Burghardts: Jackson Burghardt, Grove Loomis, James Freeman and Lucinda Burghardt Freeman, Othello and Ira Burghardt, Harlow and Albert D. and Henry William Burghardt, William Piper, Lena and Edward Wooster, Warren Davis, David Bowen, and W.E.B. Du Bois. We also looked for information on Harlow Burghardt for his property down towards South Egremont, and for the Jacksons, Summes and Ira Burghardt for any property that might be towards town.

Table 2 presents the results of this survey for the Homesite, Table 3 for Harlow’s Homestead, and Table 4 for Other People of Interest. Some general notes about these Tax Records are in order. The records are organized by year, with 1841 being the earliest year that we have found. Within each year they are generally organized with an alphabetized list of town Residents, an alphabetized list of Non-residents, and a list of Abatements. The evaluations include an indication of Poll tax, a listing and valuation of Real property, a listing and valuation of Personal property and for some years the tax rate on each kind of property and the total valuation. Every male listed without any real property was assessed a poll tax. The few instances when personal property is noted are included in the Description of Property. People of color were listed separately, from 1841 into the 1860s. People of color are listed among the Town Residents in 1863, but identified by “race.” A separate listing for “Colored” returns in 1864. After 1865 (for the years we sampled) the tax list did not differentiate the town’s taxpayers, either by a separate list or a racial indicator, except in at least one instance to clarify a Black and a White Burghardt with similar first names (of course the Black Burghardt is the marked category). The sample of years presented are in part the result of our looking for key years with limited time and in part due to incomplete tax records. A complete transcription of these records awaits future work.

Table 2 Tax Valuations on Owners of the Boyhood Homesite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Taxpayer</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Description of Property</th>
<th>Real Estate Valuation</th>
<th>Tax</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 House 1 Other 1 acre 1</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2 Houses</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2 Houses</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2 Houses</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2 Houses</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 2 lots $300</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 1 lot</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>James Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and 1 lot</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Lucinda Freeman</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>“small and house and lot”</td>
<td>$150 (exempt)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1875 | William Piper | Y        | 1 House $100                        | $150    | William Henry Burghardt (GB resident) receives a tax valuation for real property of a house for $50 and a .5 acre lot for $50 (personal property of $500 for a Housatonic RR bond). He is one of Lucinda Burghardt Freeman’s heirs for the Homesite. This may be a tax bill for this property or for other property. Who is resident is problematic, since Othello died in 1872 and Du Bois has presumably moved back to town with his mother.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
<th>Value 3</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House, Lot</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the Resident List but a note indicates “A Gone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>House and Lot</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Note indicates “1892 Dead […]Widow Exempt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Edward M. Wooster and Lena Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Lena B. Wooster</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>House on Egremont Rd</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>David Bowen</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>125 fowls, House, Lot</td>
<td>$1700</td>
<td></td>
<td>$47.50</td>
<td>This is the neighbor’s land that will become part of the Boyhood Homesite.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 Valuation of the Owners of Harlow Burghardt's Homesite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Taxpayer</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Description of Property</th>
<th>Real Estate Valuation</th>
<th>Tax</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 House 5 acres</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Cow $16 Horse and Swine $23 House and 5 acres $200</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Horse $15 Swine $6 House 7 acres land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Cow $17 House, Barn 7 acres land $250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Cow $17 Yearling $8 House, Barn 7 acres land $250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Cow $17 1 Horse $10 Swine $4 House, Barn 7 acres land $250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 House 1 Barn 7 acres</td>
<td>[did not get this]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse $15 1 Cow $25 House and Barn $300 7 acres $300</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse $25 House and Barn $300 Land 7 acres</td>
<td>$500 $2.14 RE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse 1 Cow House and Barn 7 acres</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse 1 Cow House and Barn 7 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse 1 Cow House and Barn 7 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse 1 Cow 2 Swine House and Barn Farm 7.5 acres Pasture 4 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse $50 1 Cow $50 1 Swine $10 House and Barn $300 Farm 7.5 acres Pasture 4 acres</td>
<td>$575</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Harlow Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse $25 House and Barn $300 11.5 acres $300</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 Horse $20 1 Cow $25 House and Barn $200 11 acres $175</td>
<td>$375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and Barn $200 11 acres $175</td>
<td>$375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>House and Barn $200</td>
<td>$375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Taxpayer</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Description of Property</td>
<td>Real Estate Valuation</td>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Ira Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 House 1 Cow</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Ira Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1 House and Barn and lot (.75 acres) $350</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Ira Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>.75 acre land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Ira Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Ira Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Othello Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>William Henry Burghardt</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Housatonic RR Bond $500 House $50 Lot .5 acre $50</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>George Sumea</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>George Sumea</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>George Sumea</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>George Sumea</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Tax Valuations of Other People of Interest
The tax records are a largely untapped resource for information on African American residents of Great Barrington; our study only begins to do them justice. Even at this stage, a few observations are worth making. For the most part, people of color did not own real estate or taxable personal property. James Freeman, Harlow Burghardt, and both Edward Woosters, all landowners and all related to the Burghardts, are prominent exceptions to this generalization. Another exceptional family member, William Henry Burghardt, in 1874 has a $500 Housatonic Railroad bond and a $50 house and .5 acre valued at $50.

Our more limited use of these records was to try and better identify who was residing at the Homesite. The tax records are completely consistent with the deed chain from 1841 until 1859. James Freeman is taxed on 2 houses and 1 acre in 1841, and on 2 houses from 1842 through 1845, valued at $300. From 1847 through 1852 he is taxed on a house and 2 lots, valued at $300. In 1853 and 1854 it is a house and 1 lot at $300. His widow, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman is exempt from tax on “small and house and lot” in 1859.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Taxable</th>
<th>Abatement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Abram Jackson</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Abram Jackson</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Abram Jackson</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Abram Jackson</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Abatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Abram Jackson</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>William Piper</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Cow $30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Edward Wooster</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is consistent with the deeds that James would be taxed on 2 houses. In 1833 James Freeman bought a lot and buildings in addition to the Homesite from Edward Younglove (obtaining a mortgage from Younglove for the purchase which was discharged in 1835). In 1855, just before James’s death, he and his wife, Lucinda, mortgage both of their properties to the Kellogg sisters. The non-homestite property is purchased by Harlow’s children, Lucinda and Albert D. Burghardt, in 1857. It is unclear to us how Lucinda redeemed the Homesite from the Kellogg sisters (we can find no deed to this effect and there is no mention of the property in any of the Kellogg sisters’ wills), but apparently she did for the Homesite is included in her 1861 will. The evaluation switching to 1 house and 2 lots may indicate the decrepit condition of the house on the non-homelot by 1847, a structure that has disappeared by the 1850s as no buildings are explicitly described in the deeds involving the Kelloggs. It is interesting that the total valuation remains the same over the 14 years, possibly indicating the decreasing value of the non-homelot and the increasing value of the Homesite. We cannot explain why the tax assessor switched to just a house and 1 lot in 1853, two years before a deed records the transfer of the property to the Kelloggs. Possibly this indicates the thoroughly unimproved condition of the non-homelot property. Both properties were purchased by the Kelloggs for $100; the non-homelot was bought back by Harlow’s children for $90 (and they sell to Crippen in 1860 for $100).

It is curious that we found no tax record for Othello Burghardt while he was living at the site from 1860 through at least 1870. It may be that one of the other heirs, especially William H. Burghardt, received the only bill for the site, as contained in his 1874 tax valuation noted above for a house and lot valued at $50. The tax records should be revisited with this question in mind. Regardless of who is receiving the tax bill and who is paying it, the censuses and Du Bois’s memory make it clear that Othello’s household is resident on the property in the 1860s into the 1870s.

After Othello’s death in 1872 the tax record for the Homesite becomes clearer. William Piper is a resident of Great Barrington in 1875 and is taxed on a house and .5 acre valued at $150, the same value for the land when Lucinda Burghardt Freeman’s Homesite was assessed. Piper had been a resident of Great Barrington paying only a poll tax in at least 1866, 1868, 1870, and 1872. He continues to be a resident and to be assessed $150 for a house and .5 acres in 1875 and 1876. The valuation for 1877 is again for a house and .5 acres at $150 but now Piper is identified as a non-resident. This is consistent with his appearance on the 1880 Manuscript Census in the town of Sheffield, immediately to the south. In 1881 his Great Barrington property again valued at $150 for a house and half an acre. In 1886 and 1888 the same valuation is put on a house and .25 acre. In 1891, after his death, his widow, Martha A. Burghardt Piper, is exempt from a $150 valuation on the same property. In 1903 Martha Piper is again exempted, except this time it is for .5 acre. Lena Wooster buys the Homesite in 1909 and in 1911 Lena and Edward M. Wooster are evaluated for a house and 1 acre for $400, a 3-fold increase for the house and a doubling of the land (in its size and total value). By 1919 Lena Wooster is assessed again for a house and 1 acre for $400, but by now she is a resident of Springfield, Massachusetts. Du Bois is assessed for a house in need of considerable repair in 1930 valued at $200 and an acre of land (at $300).

This trail of valuations in the last quarter of the 19th century raises some questions. For one, the size of the property shifts between .25 acre and 1 acre. As there are no deeds associated with these changes we take them to be the acceptable variation in estimating values, perhaps because of different evaluators. Why did the value of the
property change so dramatically after Lena Wooster owns the property? Possibly the Woosters engaged in a significant improvement to the house in 1909-1911. The archaeological remains may speak to this matter.

And finally, who was living on the Homesite while William Piper was paying taxes on it from 1875 until Lena and Edward Wooster buy the Homesite in 1909? The reigning hypothesis has been Edward C. and Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster, and then Edward M. and Lena Wooster. Looking at the tax records for Harlow Burghardt thoroughly contradicts this idea.

Harlow Burghardt’s homestead, “down the road to the south” from the Homesite, is assessed in 1841 for a house and 5 acres of land valued at $200. He is continually in the tax records through the 1850s, 1860s and at least until 1870. He has a house and 5 acres, adds a barn in 1852, and adds 4 (or 4.5) acres of pasture in 1867. After his death in 1874 the estate is in debt. An auction to clear this debt in 1886 has his daughter, Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster, purchasing Harlow’s homestead. Her husband, Edward C. Wooster, appears to have been paying the estate taxes since he has been assessed on a house, a barn and 11 acres of land valued at about ½ of what it was valued when Harlow was alive since at least 1881. This valuation continues through the 1880s and 1890s until Edward C.’s death in 1901. His widow is exempt from taxes in 1903 on a house, a barn and 11 acres of land. She sells this property in 1907 to Edward Moore of New York City for $1. The Woosters are not being assessed for any other property.

This is very strong evidence that the Woosters, who are the only Burghardts to appear on the 1880 and 1900 census on Egremont Plain, are living in Harlow’s house rather than in Otello’s house, the Homesite. William Piper is paying taxes on the Homesite as a non-resident. The only documentary clue is the 1904 Atlas that places N. Piper at the Homesite. Nelson E. Piper appears on the 1900 census married to Francis J. Piper, but they are clearly not living on Egremont Plain. As will be seen below, Nelson Piper’s residency is further confused because by 1907 the City Directories have him living on Stockbridge Road with Minnie E. Piper. Who, if anyone lived with him at the Homesite after the 1900 census enumeration and before the roughly 1906 collection of information for the 1907 City Directory is not clear. His does appear to have been a very short residency at the Homesite.

At this time we know very little about the Pipers. We know William’s birth and death dates (1842-1891)\(^6\), that he married Martha Burghardt (1840-?), and their children described in the 1880 census\(^7\). The only other information we have at this time is from Orlando Bidwell’s letter to Warren Davis in the Du Bois Papers that states “persons who knew William Piper say that he was a man who did not run any bills. He was employed by the Barnard Family in Sheffield and had the reputation of always paying his bills promptly” (Bidwell to Davis 4/17/1928). We know even less about Nelson Piper. None of William and Martha Piper’s children that we know of is named Nelson so that though his name and his residence at the Homesite suggest a family relation, it nature still eludes us. Clearly more research on the Piper family would prove useful.

The tax records support the deeds and the census that Edward M. and Lena Wooster are the residents of the Homesite beginning in at least 1909 when Lena purchased the Homesite. They may have occupied it earlier. Their first child was born in

---

\(^6\) William Piper died May 3, 1891 according to a stone in the Mahawie Cemetery in Great Barrington.

\(^7\) William and Martha Piper appear on the 1880 census in Sheffield with a family of three children, Ella L. (17), Anna L. (12), and John H. (9). John H. appears on the Great Barrington 1920 census (not at the Homesite) working as a chef, with 16 and 13 year old sons and a 7 year old daughter.
1902, with another in 1903, 1905, 1906, 1908, and 1909 (Muller 2001:65). This young family clearly needed a house. In 1900, Edward M. was living with his parents at Harlow’s homestead. His father died in 1901. Possibly Edward M. and Lena were living at the Harlow homestead after his father’s death. A problem seems to have arisen at the Harlow homestead by 1903 since the 1904 Atlas has his mother living down the street from the Harlow homestead closer to South Egremont and the Harlow homestead is vacant. Where were Edward C. and Lena? They were not at the Homesite, because Nelson E. Piper appears in the 1904 Atlas at the Homesite. But, as we will see, Nelson is gone by 1907. Possibly the Woosters moved into the Homesite, owned by Edward C.’s aunt Martha, as soon as Nelson moved out. By the 1910 census Lena and Edward Wooster are the only African American family listed on the Egremont Plain; they are undoubtedly living in the Homesite.

We consulted one additional source of evidence to clarify these early 20th century residents.

City Directories

One final source, city directories from the 1890s through the 1950s, were consulted to resolve the 20th century residency issues. Until 1916 the directories listed residents by head of household, including occupation and address. Beginning in 1916 the directories list heads of household and also produce a table of residents along a street that included South Egremont Road8. We surveyed City Directories available in the Mason Library in Great Barrington and in the Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (Anonymous 1894; Anonymous 1907; Anonymous 1909; Anonymous 1913; Anonymous 1916; Anonymous 1920; Anonymous 1923; Anonymous 1929; Anonymous 1932; Anonymous 1940; Anonymous 1944; Anonymous 1947; Anonymous 1950) particularly looked for Edward C. and Lucinda M. Wooster, Edward M. and Lena Wooster, and Nelson Piper. Table 5 reports on all the Woosters, Pipers and Du Boises found in the 1894-1929 Directories.

Table 5 Information on Great Barrington Residents from the City Directories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name(s)</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Wooster, Edward C.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[No Pipers]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Wooster, Edward M.</td>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Lena B.)</td>
<td>C. Reed’s⁹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooster, Lucinda M.</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widow of Edward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Nelson E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Stockbridge Rd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

8. “Every house in the district has been personally visited by canvassers and the information should be as accurate as could be expected in a work of such scope” (Anonymous 1916: 46).

9. Charles Reed (and wife Jessie) are listed in this Directory as residing in New York and being summer residents on S. Egremont Rd.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Wooster, Arthur</td>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>Boards</td>
<td>Monument Valley Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooster, Edward M.</td>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Lena B.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooster, Lucinda M.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widow of Edward, died</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov, 1908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Nelson E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Stockbridge Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Minnie E.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Wooster, Arthur</td>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>Removed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to Alford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooster, Edward M.</td>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Lena B.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, John E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>22 River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Emily A.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Nelson E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>27 Rosseter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Minnie E.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Wooster, Edward M.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>S. Egremont Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Lena B.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rfd 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, John H.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>27 Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Emma A.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Nelson E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>27 Rosseter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Minnie E.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, William B.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>boards</td>
<td>27 Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Searles High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>[No Woosters]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, John H.</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Nelson E.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>6 Cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Minnie E.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>[No Woosters]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Not sure about Pipers]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>[No Woosters]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[No Du Bois]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piper, Ellen</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>24 Van Deusenville</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the 1894 Directory only Edward C. Wooster is listed on Egremont Road. By all other accounts Edward C. Wooster was living in Harlow’s homestead. There are no Pipers in the 1894 Great Barrington directory. Since this directory does not have a street table it is not possible to identify who, if anyone, might be living at the Homesite.

The 1907 Directory shows that the family of Lena B. and Edward M. Wooster living on S. Egremont Rd., on what according to other documents is the Homesite, two years before Lena obtained the property in 1811. Nelson E. and Minnie E. Piper\(^{10}\) (Nelson was on the 1904 Atlas at the Homesite) are in the directory, but living on Stockbridge Rd. Lucinda Wooster is also in the 1907 Directory on S. Egremont Rd. The 1904 Atlas had her living not at the Harlow homestead, which was vacant, but further down S. Egremont Rd. The 1909 Directory again has the family of Edward M. and Lena Wooster on S. Egremont Rd. the only living Burghardts on the Egremont Plain since Lucinda had died in November of 1908. By the 1913 Directory also puts Edward M. and Lena B. Wooster at the Homesite on S. Egremont Rd. Any other Woosters and Pipers are living elsewhere in town.

The situation on Egremont Rd. becomes clearer with the inclusion of a street list in 1916. The family of Edward M. and Lena B. Wooster are the only Burghardt relatives living on S. Egremont Rd. The street list for 1916 describes South Egremont Rd., as: Calkins, a vacant property, Kellogg, Clark, Edward M. Wooster, and Collins. The 1920 directory has no Woosters in Great Barrington and the street list for South Egremont Rd. shows the Homesite as vacant: Calkins, vacant [not Homesite], Kellogg, David Bowen, vacant [Homesite], and Collins. The Homesite is also vacant in the 1923 street list. Especially given the condition of the Homesite when Du Bois became the owner in 1928, it seems most unlikely that anyone resided at the Homesite after a late 1910s departure of Lena Wooster (and presumably her children).

Consulting the Directories confirms that Lena and Edward M. Wooster moved onto the property at least 2 years before Lena bought it. Quite possibly they moved onto the Homesite as soon as Nelson E. Piper vacated it. This may have been as early as 1903 when the family would have included one and possibly two infants. The Directories also make clear that the Woosters left the Homesite sometime between 1915 and 1919. So, this young and growing family inhabited the Homesite for between 8 and 16 years. The condition of the House in 1928 when Du Bois obtained it, and the lack of any mention of occupants in the 1920s Directories strongly suggests that the family of Edward M. and Lena B. Wooster were the last to reside at the Homesite.

Interestingly, Du Bois never appears in any of the directories that we consulted (1929, 1932, 1940, 1944, 1947, 1950) during the period that he owned the Homesite. A

\(^{10}\) We do not understand why Nelson is listed with Minnie E. in the 1907 directory and with Francis J. in the 1900 census. Nelson’s is a spatially, and possibly a socially, dynamic household.
vacant property on South Egremont Road in the right order to be the Homesite appears until 1940. Throughout the 1940s there is no vacant property adjacent to the known next door neighbor, Barbara E. Bowen, the family of the neighbors who buy the Homesite in 1954. This suggests that either the House was in such an uninhabitable state of disrepair by 1940 that it wasn’t even considered vacant. All this is well supported in the following sections on Du Bois’s alterations to the House and its persistent meaning to him. The City Directories, read in light of the taxes, the censuses, the maps, the deed chain, and Du Bois’s writings, establish that the Lena B. and Edward M. Wooster family were the last residents of the Homesite.

Conclusions

Based on the new research presented above we would amend the table of residents in Paynter and others (1994) and Muller (2001) to be as appears in Table 6. This table is a series of reconstructed households for the Homesite, based on coordinating information from the census, from Muller’s genealogical research and from the above noted deed, tax, and city directory information.

The fundamental starting point for developing this reconstruction of households for the Homesite is the Federal Manuscript Census. Starting with the 1850 census, the census takers are recording at least the names, ages, “race”, and occupation of all household residents. For 1850-1910 this is taken to be the composition of the household for that year. Earlier censuses list numbers of people in various age and gender categories, but do not identify specific individuals by name. The composition of earlier households is first approximated by linking heads of households to genealogical information on the Black Burghardts compiled by Muller (2001: Fig. 3). This linkage allows for reasonable speculations about spouses and offspring who might expectably be in the household. Muller (2001: Table 2) lists the information on the Federal Census for each member of the Burghardt family found in the Great Barrington manuscript census for the years 1790-1880. Information on the 1900 and 1910 censuses are taken from Paynter and others (1994).

One of the major drawbacks to using the census is that it provides a snapshot of household membership, accurate for only the day that the census is taken. We were able to fill in some of the years between census dates by relying on Muller’s (2001:151-191) biographical information on key residents derived from Du Bois’s recollections, family papers, and town histories (e.g., Drew 1999; Du Bois 1968; Du Bois 1984). There are also other public documents that helped round out a sense of household composition in the intervening years. As these various families become better known, an even more complete picture of reconstructed households residing at the Homesite will be developed.

As noted above, we begin this table with the 1795 Jackson Burghardt transaction as a way to stimulate further research into Muller’s hypothesis that Jackson and Violet Burghardt were the site’s first residents.

In presenting this information, the non-bracketed information is from the Federal Manuscript Census. Information in brackets is based on extrapolating from other sources of information, such as city directories, genealogical information, and arguments in Muller (2001). The footnotes provide additional information on people, such as birth and death dates, and significant kin relations, taken from Muller’s (2001:61-65) construction of the genealogy of the Black Burghardts.
Table 6 Reconstructed Households for the Boyhood Homesite (from Muller 2001: 61-65, 109-111, 156, Table 2, Table 3, and Figure 3; Paynter and others 1994:299-300, Table 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>[Jacob Burghardt(^{11})] 2 people listed on 1790 Census Likely to be Jackson and Violet(^{12}) Thomas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Jack Burghardt(^{13}) Head of Household [HOH] Person 1 [Jack Person 2 [Violet Person 3 [Thomas Person 4 [Othello Person 5 [Lucinda Person 6 [Maria Person 7 Person 8 Person 9 Person 10 Person 11 Person 12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Jack Burghardt(^{14}) HOH Person 1 [Jack Person 2 [Violet Person 3 [Thomas Person 4 [Othello Person 5 [Lucinda Person 6 [Maria Person 7 [Ira Person 8 [Harlow Person 9 Person 10 Person 11 Person 12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>[James Freeman(^{15})] [Lucinda Freeman(^{16})]</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) Jack, Jackson, Tom, (c. 1766-c.1832) hus of Violet. Based on deed from Grove Loomis and 1790 Census. Muller hypothesis.
\(^{12}\) Violet Burghardt (no dates) hus of Jackson.
\(^{13}\) Jack, Jackson, Tom, (c. 1766-c.1832) hus of Violet. Based on 1800 Census. Muller hypothesis.
\(^{14}\) Jack, Jackson, Tom, (c. 1766-c.1832) hus of Violet. Based on 1810 Census. Muller hypothesis.
\(^{15}\) James Freeman (1786-1856) hus of Lucinda Burghardt. Based on Church to Freeman deed of 1820.
\(^{16}\) Lucinda Burghardt (1797-1860) dau of Jackson and Violet. Wife of James.
1830  James Freeman\textsuperscript{17} [HOH]  
   n.a.  
   1 male [James]  36-55  
   1 female [Lucinda]\textsuperscript{18}  36-55

1840  James Freeman\textsuperscript{19} (HOH)  
   1 person in agriculture  
   1 male [James]  36-55  
   1 female [Lucinda]\textsuperscript{20}  36-55

1850  Lucinda Freeman\textsuperscript{21}  55  n.a.  
   James Freeman\textsuperscript{22}  65

1860  Othello Burghardt\textsuperscript{23}  70  Laborer  
   Sally Burghardt\textsuperscript{24}  68  Housewife  
   Francis Jackson\textsuperscript{25}  15  
   Ines Burghardt\textsuperscript{26}  6  
   James F. Burghardt\textsuperscript{27}  31  Barber  
   Charles Jackson\textsuperscript{28}  9

1870  Othello Burghardt\textsuperscript{29}  80  
   Sally Burghardt\textsuperscript{30}  78  Keeping House  
   Inez R. Burghardt\textsuperscript{31}  16  At Home  
   Adelbert Burghardt\textsuperscript{32}  8  At Home  
   William E. Burghardt\textsuperscript{33}  2  At Home  
   Isiah Buckley  57  Farm Laborer  
   Elizabeth Buckley  56  Keeping House  
   Lucinda Buckley  30

\textsuperscript{17} James Freeman (1786-1856) hus of Lucinda Burghardt. Based on 1830 Census.  
\textsuperscript{18} Lucinda Burghardt (1797-1860) dau of Jackson and Violet. Wife of James Freeman.  
\textsuperscript{19} James Freeman (1786-1856) hus of Lucinda Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{20} Lucinda Burghardt (1797-1860) dau of Jackson and Violet. Wife of James Freeman.  
\textsuperscript{21} Lucinda Burghardt (1797-1860) dau of Jackson and Violet. Wife of James Freeman.  
\textsuperscript{22} James Freeman (1786-1856) hus of Lucinda Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{23} Othello Burghardt (1791-1872) son of Jackson and Violet. Brother of Lucinda. Hus of Sally Lampan Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{24} Sally Lampan Burghardt (1793-1879) Hus of Othello Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{25} Francis Jackson Is this Frank Jackson (1844-) son of Lucinda Burghardt (1818-1891) and Jacob Jackson. Grandson of Othello and Sally.  
\textsuperscript{26} Inez Burghardt (1853-) dau of James Burghardt (1828-) and Mary Freeman (1835-). Granddaughter of Othello and Sally. Marries Walter Freeman and first born born 1875.  
\textsuperscript{27} Likely James T. Burghardt (1828-) son of Othello and Sally.  
\textsuperscript{28} Not on Muller’s Genealogy…child of either Jane Burghardt or Lucinda Burghardt and grandson of Othello and Sally?  
\textsuperscript{29} Othello Burghardt (1791-1872) son of Jackson and Violet. Brother of Lucinda. Hus of Sally Lampan Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{30} Sally Lampan Burghardt (1793-1879) Hus of Othello Burghardt.  
\textsuperscript{31} Inez Burghardt (1853-) dau of James Burghardt (1828-) and Mary Freeman (1835-). Granddaughter of Othello and Sally. Marries Walter Freeman and first born born 1875.  
\textsuperscript{32} Idlebert M. Burghardt (1861-) Not Alfred’s son…..Mary’s son. Grandson of Othello and Sally.  
\textsuperscript{33} W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) son of Alfred Du Bois and Mary Burghardt. Grandson of Othello and Sally.
Matilda Buckley 4 At Home
1875 [William Piper\(^{34}\) 33-35 to Martha Piper\(^{35}\) 35-37
1877 Ella L. Piper 12-14
Anna L. Piper 7-9
John H. Piper 4-6]

1880-1903? Not clear who is residing at the Homesite

1903?-1907? [Nelson Piper\(^{36}\) 42-46
Francis J. Piper\(^{37}\) 53-57
Or Minnie E. Piper ?-?]

1907-1915? Edward Wooster\(^{38}\) 26-34 Farm Laborer who is Working Out and rents a house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lena Wooster(^{39})</th>
<th>21-29</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Wooster(^{40})</td>
<td>5-13</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessie Wooster(^{41})</td>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Wooster(^{42})</td>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta Wooster(^{43})</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence Wooster(^{44})</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena Wooster(^{45})</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1915?-1928 Probably a vacant property

\(^{34}\) William Piper (1842-1891) marries Martha Burghardt, daughter of Harlow and Althea. Piper’s death date is based on tax records.
\(^{35}\) Martha A.L. Burghardt Piper (1840-?) daughter of Harlow and Althea.
\(^{36}\) Nelson E. Piper (November, 1861-?) according to 1900 Federal Census.
\(^{37}\) Francis J. Piper (August, 1855-?) according to 1900 Federal Census.
\(^{38}\) Edward M. Wooster (1875-?) son of Lucinda M.Burghardt Wooster and Edward C. Wooster, grandson of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{40}\) Kenneth Wooster (1902-), son of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-grandson of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{41}\) Bessie Wooster (1903-), dau of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-granddaughter of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{42}\) Olive Wooster (1905-), dau of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-granddaughter of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{43}\) Marietta Wooster (1906-), dau of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-granddaughter of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{44}\) Florence Wooster (1908-), dau of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-granddaughter of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
\(^{45}\) Lena Wooster (1909-), dau of Edward and Lena Wooster, great-granddaughter of Harlow and Althea Burghardt.
A few points to note about this table. First, there is the matter that Jackson and Violet had a son, Thomas, born in 1786 who died c. 1860. However no individual is identified in the appropriate category on the 1790 census for Jack Burghardt’s family. We have assumed this was an error by the census-taker and have included Thomas as part of the 1795 household. Second, Jack Burghardt’s household in 1800 and 1810 contains a number of people who cannot be identified as either offspring or as his spouse, Violet. There are three children that appear on Du Bois’s handwritten genealogy notes without birth and death dates (Muller 2001: 95, 205, note they do not appear in Table 3 p. 61) who may explain some of these extra people. At this date we have no further idea if these other people are kin or boarders. Third, James Freeman does not appear on the 1820 census because the enumeration date (August 1) is before the date (September 27) when he buys the property. We place James and Lucinda on the Homesite based on the deed from Grove Loomis in 1820. Note that there are two Edward Woosters, Edward C. who is the father of Edward M., and two Lucinda Burghardts, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman and her niece Lucinda Burghardt (Porter) Wooster.

There are a number of holes in the documentary trail that it would be helpful to fill. A major one would be to resolve the location of Jackson Burghardt’s 18th century landholdings. More documentary research on abutters may one day clarify this matter. Another involves the Pipers. William and his family owned the Homesite during the last quarter of the 19th century into the early 20th century, but except for 3 years in the 1870s did not reside at the Homesite. In the early 20th century, again for a brief time, Nelson E. and possibly Francis J. Piper or Minnie E. Piper resided at the Homesite. We do not know the relationship of William to Nelson E. or Francis and Minnie. Nor do we know anything about the lives of these people. Finally, it would be good to know more about Lena and Edward Wooster and their family. To date, neither has been extensively investigated. Muller (2001:165) points to difficulties in the relationship and speculates that Harlow’s daughters, Lucinda and Martha, judged their daughter-in-law and niece-in-law (respectively) to be the more stable of the pair and sold the Homesite to her in 1909, rather than to their son/nephew, Edward. It is well within reason that their grandchildren, if they had any, would still be alive today. Their memories of their grandparents would be most interesting.

Finally, ownership at the Homesite was fully developed in Muller (2001) from 1820 to the present. She also advanced the hypothesis extending Burghardt ownership back to 1795. Certainly her work substantiates that members of the Burghardt family owned property in Great Barrington since the 18th century. And moreover they continuously owned the Homesite from at least 1820 through 1954, a remarkable 134 years. After 1954 they followed a 13-year hiatus when the Homeite was owned by neighbors who did not foster the connection of W.E.B. Du Bois and his family to this property. People and institutions interested in the Du Bois legacy have owned a larger version of the Homesite since 1967.

Residency at the Homesite is most certain beginning in 1820, again holding out the possibility that Burghardts resided at the Homesite since 1795. The documents support a clear sense of the residents from 1820 through 1877 – James and Lucinda Freeman, Othello and Sally Burghardt, William and Martha Piper -- and from at least 1903 through at least 1915— Nelson E. Piper, Lena and Edward M. Piper. Again, all but
one of these residents are members of the Burghardt family. The gap between 1877 and at most 1907 requires further attention, though its use through this period by members and relations of the Burghardt family is a distinct possibility. The last residents at the Homesite were Lena and Edward Wooster and their children, leaving the Homesite sometime between 1915 and 1919. Though no one has resided at the Homesite since then, it has been far from abandoned, a topic that becomes clear in the next section.
Figure 1 Material Features from Documentary Sources
What were the physical characteristics of the Homesite and the House, and what changes occurred over time?

The House of the Black Burghardts and the Du Bois Oral History

Again a key document for interpreting the Homesite and the House is Du Bois’s description of the property published in 1928, “The House of the Black Burghardts” (Du Bois 1928). This, along with less detailed information from his autobiographies and from the Oral History have been presented above. To briefly summarize, the House is described as a two-story house with a living-room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a woodshed. The Homesite has a fence, a well, an elm⁴⁶, and a brook (see Figure 1). There is no mention of agricultural outbuildings or other features, barns, sheds, fields, gardens, outhouses, etc. This basic perception of the House and the Homesite was in our minds as we surveyed other sources of information from the Public Documentary Record and contemporary Oral sources on physical characteristics of the Homesite and the House.

Public Documentary Records and Other Oral Sources

The 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ century documentary record has only a few clues about the physical characteristics of the Homesite and the condition of the House of the Black Burghardts. This record of taxes, deeds, and historical maps has been discussed in greater detail above concerning the matter of ownership and residency. What follows is a discussion of what these records disclose about the physical nature of the Homesite and the House.

As can be seen in Table 7, the real property records show a range of variation in the size of the Homesite, from .25 acre to 1 acre. There are no deeds that coincide with these changes in property size. Moreover, there are discrepancies between the sizes of lots as noted in the deeds and sizes in the tax valuations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>30 perchers (.2 acre)</td>
<td>Church to Freeman 9/27/1820 56/327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>30 perchers (.2 acre)</td>
<td>Freeman to Sanford 2/22/1828 ?/267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>30 perchers (.2 acre)</td>
<td>Freeman to Dewey 5/28/1831 68/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>c. .5 acre</td>
<td>Estimated from Freeman Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>.375 acre</td>
<td>Freeman to Kelloggs 2/24/1855 106/259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>.5 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>.5 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>.5 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>.5 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>.25 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>.25 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>.25 acre</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴⁶ The New York Times May 16, 1969 has a picture of a “Dubois Oak.” It is not clear to us if the oak and the elm are the same tree or are two separate trees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>William Piper Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edward M. and Lena Wooster Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lena Wooster Tax Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Calculation Wilson and Gordon to DuBois Memorial Foundation 9/16/1969 368/23,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Calculation DuBois Memorial Foundation to UMass 10/30/1967 676/232,233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1820 deed for the Homesite (Church to Freeman 9/27/1820 56/327), and associated 19th century mortgages, describes a property of about .2 of an acre. The earliest tax record is in 1841 for James Freeman. He is evaluated for 1 house, 1 other, and 1 acre. In 1841 James and Lucinda own two pieces of land on the Egremont Plain, both with buildings (Younglove to Freeman 7/15/1833 70/131), hence the 1 house and 1 other. By implication each lot is evaluated at about .5 acre. The size decreases .375 acres in a mortgage deed with the Kellogg sisters in 1855 (106/259). The .5 acre size for the Homesite reoccurs in Piper’s tax valuations from 1875-1881, then unexplainably decreases to .25 acres through at least 1891 and increases to .5 acres in 1903. For Edward M. and Lena Wooster, the property was judged to be 1 acre. Though it would be worth noting if the assessors changed in these key years (something that could be learned from the tax records), there doesn’t seem to be a similar change in land size estimates through the 1870s for Harlow’s property (see Table 3 above). Lacking any documentary explanation at this time, we are assuming that these variations are an acceptable range of estimation for the assessors and owners.

The change in 1967 to 5.15 acres is a significant, and until recently, underappreciated change in the Homesite. On May 15, 1967 Walter Wilson and Edmund Gordon, seeking to commemorate Du Bois, purchased first a roughly 2.5 acre parcel (Parcel 1) from Elsie Bowen that contains the House’s cellar hole, retaining a right of first refusal on an additional parcel of c. 2.5 acres to the east. They purchased this additional property (Parcel 2) on October 23, 1967, thereby giving the Boyhood Homesite its present size and U-shaped configuration (followed through in the deeds to the DuBois Memorial Foundation and then to UMass).

Physical descriptions of the bounds of the Homesite derived from the deeds are today quite detailed. However, between 1831 and 1967 the deeds only make reference to neighbors and previous transactions but do not provide detailed physical descriptions of the boundary or size of the property. The deeds between 1820 and 1831 do provide bearings and distances and an estimate of the area. Appendix J contains maps of the site taken from these three groups of deeds plotted using Autocad. The earliest set of deeds presented a problem during previous stages of the research. The research until 2003 assumed that the present Homesite was close to the bounds of the original property. A plot of the 1820 deed is roughly the right shape and orientation to the Highway (Rt. 23) for the present Homesite, if one assumes that the U-shape of today resulted from cutting out the present Hitchcock property. However, the earliest deeds have a small area, of 30

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47 The size of 5.15 acres is not on the deeds but was developed from a plot of the bounds of the parcels described on these deeds on Autocad and then the application of the Area function (see Appendix J).
perchers or about .2 acre. We had no paper trail between 1967 and the 1830s. Two tenths of an acre seemed much too small to support an agriculturally based family. So, we treated the small size of the 1820 deed to be a function of our misreading (misunderstanding a surveying convention from the early 1800s or difficulty with transliteration).

Obtaining access to the Tax Records and plotting the deeds on Autocad in 2003 led us to change our understanding. Once we plotted the 1820 deed it looked suspiciously like an enigmatic map Muller had found in the Du Bois Papers. We came to understand that this map was probably drawn by a surveyor, F. Mortimer Lane, at Du Bois’s behest (Du Bois to Davis 6/18/1928 in the Du Bois Papers), most likely in 1928. When the 1928 map was laid out on the ground during the Field School, its boundaries lined up with a number of archaeological features (discussed below). We do not know if Lane was simply plotting the early 19th century deed information, as we had done, or if he had access to additional information. Regardless, the correlation of the boundaries of this map with archaeological features, the similarity between the modern map and the plot of the 1820 deed, and the consistent size estimates in early 19th century documents between .2 and 1 acre, have led us to believe that the ancestral Homesite is much smaller than the present Boyhood Homesite. The hesitancy in simply stating that the boundary of the 1820 deed, a site of .2 acres, was the bounds of the site, rather than an estimate, is two-fold. Two-tenths of an acre is a very small parcel of land, especially for an agriculturally based family. Secondly, Du Bois explicitly mentions that the land he receives in 1928 is smaller than he remembered as a child. Looking mostly at the documents has led us to change our target image for the ancestral homelot from a 5 acre rectangle with its southern boundary parallel to Rt 23 to a .2-1 acre rectangle with its southern boundary parallel to Rt. 23.

Regarding the House, the tax records (Table 2) indicate a few major changes in the valuation of the property that might be linked to alterations to the House. Between 1845 and 1847, James Freeman’s description of real property changes from 2 houses to 1 house and 2 lots while the valuation remains constant at $300. Between 1852 and 1853 the description changes from 1 house and 2 lots to 1 house and 1 lot with the valuation remaining constant. These changes may be due to errors by the evaluator that get mechanically carried over from one tax list to the next. But, if they are real assessments, either or both indicate that the value of the Homesite increased between 1845 and 1847, and again between 1852 and 1853.

Given the ages of James and Lucinda Freeman, the one most likely to be a real change in the condition of the house is the 1845-1847 change when James is around 50 and Lucinda is in her 40s. The 1852-1853 change seems more likely to be an error. James and Lucinda will both die within the next 7 years, Lucinda being blind before her death. This doesn’t seem to be a time of life to take on major renovations.

The valuation of the House triples ($100 to $300) between the late 1800s and 1911 when Lena and Edward Wooster become the owners. This might be due to inflation. It might also be due to improvements to the property once the Wooster family moves in. Du Bois’s tax in 1930 sees the value of the House rise again, to $400, after he implements the renovations discussed below.

The next major transformation of the site is that documented in Parrish (1981) where he describes that in 1954 “the house was collapsing and was demolished and burned by the next owner after Dubois sold it….” It was no doubt in sad shape for some time. For instance, in 1944 Warren Davis (discussed more fully below) wrote to Du Bois
asking “if you ever intend to do anything with that old house of yours, that is falling down, and to be frank with you, if you do not intend to do anything with it, I think the people in that neighborhood would be glad to tear it down and clean up the grounds” (Du Bois Papers 2/4/1944). Du Bois testily responded on February 28 of 1944, “may I say that my house on the South Egremont Road is not for sale and that I want to warn the neighbors or anyone else from interfering with it in any way.” Mr. William Wood stopped by the Homesite on August 8, 2003 and shared with us his memories of growing up in the area. He lived just west of the Homesite from the early 1940s until 1955 when he left to attend college at the University of Pennsylvania. He recalls that around 1948 he would play all through the woods in this neighborhood. When we showed him a picture of the House he didn’t recall anything of that size; he possibly recalled something more on the size of a small shed (Paynter 106-107).

Walter Wilson and Edmund Gordon purchased the Homesite and additional acreage from the Bowens in 1967 with the intention of commemorating Du Bois at the Homesite. Wilson and Gordon along with members of the Great Barrington community, including Ruth Jones, Fritz Wyatt Lord, and Jeanne Noble, formed the DuBois Memorial Foundation (which received the property in 1969) for purposes of commemorating Du Bois at the Homesite. They planned and conducted a dedication ceremony at the site in 1969 that was the source of considerable difficulties in the town (Paynter and others 1994). For the 1969 ceremony a ten-ton boulder for a dedicatory plaque was moved to the site 48. A “work bee” was held at the site on June 12, 1976 (Berkshire Courier, June 17, 1976). In 1979, a second dedication ceremony was held at Tanglewood, this time to recognize that the Homesite had received National Historic Landmark status in 1976. Between 1967 and 1983 two black on white wooden signs identifying the site as the Du Bois National Historic-Site and as the W.E.B. Du Bois U.S. Historic-Site were erected (the second is now in the possession of David Du Bois), trees were planted along the north line of Hitchcock’s property, some depressions in and near the cellar hole were dug for purposes of a perc test, and a fence was constructed on the eastern portion of the property where it faces Rt. 23. In association with the 1979 dedication, a National Park Service plaque identifying the property as a National Historic Landmark was erected on the eastern portion of the site just off Rt. 23 49.

Today the Homesite has seen the effects of Old Field Forest Succession so that the western portion (Parcel 1) of the site is covered by moderate sized trees, some saplings, brush, and poison ivy. A large pine tree at about E43N55 blew over in 2002 (Hitchcock personal communication 2003). Its stump had 63 rings in 2003, suggesting that it began to grow in this area in the early 1940s (Garber 11; Paynter 106). Mr. Hitchcock noted that today’s tall hemlocks on the north edge of the property had been planted, presumably by the DuBois Foundation or Wilson and Gordon, to demarcate a property boundary (personal communication 2004). The more easterly portion of the Homesite (Parcel 2) has seen a very dense stand of white pine grow up since the 1984 Field season. Mr. Hitchcock noted (personal communication 2004) that the pine had grown up after Mr. George Beebe stopped mowing the land.

These 19th and 20th century documentary sources and more recent oral testimony describe the Homesite as a relatively small, rectangular-shaped property (between .2 and

48 Plans for the boulder at the 1969 ceremony are reported in Berkshire Courier, October 16, 1969. The Berkshire Eagle on August 18, 1972 includes a picture of the boulder with Ruth Jones (Mrs Donald B. Jones) standing next to it.

49 The National Historic Landmark plaque was erected on July 12, 1980 (Berkshire Courier, July 17, 1980).
1 acre) with a modest House on the property. The size of the Homesite went through a major change in 1967 with the purchase of the two parcels of land, turning it into a 5.15 acre parcel. The taxes may record changes in the House in the mid 1840s, in the early 1900s, and one under Du Bois’s tenure. The House went into steady decline throughout the 1930s and 1940s, vanishing from the City Directory after 1940. It was reportedly demolished and pushed to the rear of the lot after Du Bois sold the property in 1954. Since at least the 1940s the Homesite, both the ancestral property and the larger commemorative Homesite, have been going through the stages of New England Old Field Succession, a process that thoroughly obscures the National Park Service plaque. Today the Homesite and the cellar-hole for the House both appear as New England woodlands in a rural part of Great Barrington.\(^{50}\)

Beginning with Du Bois’s receipt of the House in 1928 we have detailed information on what Du Bois planned for the site and a documentary record of how some of these plans were implemented. Most of this information came from the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers held by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Additional insight can be gleaned from especially David Levering Lewis’s (Lewis 1993; Lewis 2000) biography of Du Bois. It is to these sources that we next turn to understand changes to the House itself.

**W.E.B. Du Bois Papers and Du Bois’s Plans for the House and the Homesite**

We searched the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers held in the Special Collections and Archives of the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for letters and other documents related to the House and the Homesite. So far we have identified over 115 documents. They include correspondence between Du Bois and the architect, J. McA. Vance, tax bills from Great Barrington, communications with a local innkeeper about impending visits, and directions to tradesmen about work to be performed at the house.

The Papers are primarily Du Bois’s correspondence, though they also include other useful material, such as maps, blueprints, Du Bois’s handwritten notes, and so on. The index to the Du Bois Papers is selective with an eye towards Du Bois’s published writings and his correspondence with major figures involved in national and global liberation struggles. They do not include references to the house or to most of the people who worked on the house. Moreover the Papers are organized chronologically, and within each year, alphabetically by correspondent. Making use of the papers has awaited our accumulating enough names involved in work on the House to be able to find relevant correspondence in the Papers. As more names become linked to this work, the Papers will need to be searched for additional relevant information.

Two key links were Vance and Davis. Blueprints of the remodeled house were brought to our attention in the 1980s by Linda Seidman, then in charge of the Papers. That gave us the architect’s name, J. McA. Vance. Bernard Drew and Rachel Fletcher found the Vance-Du Bois communications, all of which took place in the spring and summer of 1928 and resulted in the design of a comfortable vacation cottage. Muller’s dissertation (Muller 2001) identified Warren H. Davis as the individual who received the house from Lucinda Wooster with money from the Testimonial Committee who presented Du Bois the house on his 60th birthday. It was in the Summer of 2003 that

\(^{50}\) There are light trails and filled-in depressions near the cellar-hole, the result of the archaeological field work.
Drew informed us that Davis was a business man of African American descent who operated a lumber yard in Great Barrington. Searching the Papers for Davis proved to be a crucial key for finding others involved with the renovation of the house.

Davis acted in many ways like a general contractor and real estate agent for Du Bois, contacting a surveyor and a mason, doing tree work, and seeking to purchase land on his behalf. From Davis we learned of the involvement of Bidwell as a lawyer who in 1928 did a title search of the property, Lane who was contracted to do a survey, and Frank Vigezzi who was the mason and excavator. Du Bois’s communications with Davis also led us to Du Bois’s communications with Arthur B. Spingarn (attorney and brother of Joel Spingarn) about a lawsuit for payment for roofing materials purchased from Thomas and Palmer of Great Barrington. Another key Davis letter led us to J.W. Wilson, an African American carpenter from 267 W 143rd St New York, New York who came up from the city to work on the house in the summer of 1928. Davis also led us to communications with a high school classmate and by 1931 Great Barrington attorney, Joseph Frein, about purchasing land.

We also found it useful to survey letters between Nina and W.E.B. to get a sense of each other’s desire to be in Great Barrington as well communications with Edgar Willoughby about staying at his Sunset Inn on Rosseter St. in Great Barrington.

The specific names and the years that were surveyed appear in the beginning of Appendix B51. A number of themes emerged from our reading of these papers that bear on our archaeological research questions, and most directly on changes in the physical character of the House and the Homesite. In particular they speak to the issues of Interest in the Property, Funding the Purchase and Renovations, Plans for the Site and their Implementation, and Dates When Du Bois was in Great Barrington. In the following section we discuss what they add to our sense of the Meaning of the Property for Du Bois.

Interest in the Property

Du Bois may have renewed his interest in the property in Great Barrington during his July 10th 1925 visit when he addressed the Alumni Association of Great Barrington and Searles High School (Sweet to Du Bois 6/1/1925, Sweet to Du Bois 1925, Du Bois to Sweet 7/7/1925, Du Bois to Sweet 7/16/1925). Later in July of 1925 Du Bois writes to the Clerk of the Registry of Deeds in Great Barrington (Du Bois to Recorder of Deeds 7/17/1925, Le Blanc to Du Bois 7/21/1925, Du Bois to Le Blanc 7/24/1925) asking about property owned by Othello, John Piper, and the Woosters. This vague and inaccurate request resulted in being directed to Edward Moore who bought Harlow’s homestead, rather than Othello’s Homesite. All this initial confusion was sorted out when Du Bois received the wherewithal to actually purchase the Homesite.

Funding the Purchase and Renovation of the House

Funds

Du Bois was presented the site in honor of his 60th birthday in 1928. The Du Bois Testimonial Committee included: Clarence Darrow, Lillian A. Alexander, Arthur B. Spingarn (treasurer), Mary McLeod Bethune, M.V. Boutte, James A. Cobb, John Hurst,

51 We reference the Papers with the names of the correspondents and the date on the letter. Since the correspondence is organized on the microfilm reels chronologically and within years alphabetically, this system makes for relatively easy identification of the document. On the microfilms of the Papers the frame number is not always clearly visible making a reel and frame reference system less practical.
and John E. Nail. They raised $3,038.41 from 57 donors including some of the most notable social reformers of the day. The house and lot cost $933.17 leaving $2,105.24 for Du Bois to use to restore the property (Du Bois 6/12/1929).

Du Bois worked on the renovations with a number of people. In the spring of 1928 he contacted the architect, J. McA. Vance of Pittsfield, MA, to help plan the remodeling of the house. Vance was the preeminent architect of Berkshire County, the designer of numerous public buildings and gracious vacation homes (Drew 1999: 39). Du Bois learned of Vance from James Weldon Johnson, after Vance had done work on Johnson’s cottage in Great Barrington (Du Bois to Vance 4/17/1928). Du Bois planned to spend $3,000, $1,000 in each successive year 1928, 1929, and 1930, to bring the house into “reasonably livable condition” (Du Bois to Vance 5/17/1928). Vance was encouraging but realistic: “it will be higher than the $3000 you suggest, although that will go a great ways in carrying out the work” (Vance to Du Bois 6/7/1928).

According to the Papers, Du Bois never invested $3,000 in the Great Barrington property. The Papers record that the surveyor (Lane) was paid an undisclosed amount (Du Bois to Davis 8/15/1928), the carpenter (Wilson) was also paid for time and materials, and the mason (Vigezzi) was paid $298.30 (Davis to Du Bois 7/20/1928, Du Bois to Davis 8/15/1928, Du Bois to Vigezzi 10/31/1929, Du Bois to Vigezzi 4/28/1933). A building supplies firm in Great Barrington (Thomas and Palmer) presented a bill for $60.13 (Thomas and Palmer to Du Bois 3/28/1929). Presumably the architect (Vance) and the lawyer who did the title search (Bidwell) also presented bills though no mention is made of the amounts. Arthur Spingarn, a family friend, handled a minor legal problem about materials, possibly pro bono since no record of payment exists. Davis (the general contractor) received $100, some of which went to pay taxes, some of which may have gone for purchasing building supplies, and some of which may have gone for the purchase of land; he too must have received some sort of commission that goes undocumented.

The total accounted for in the papers is $458.43. If we assume that the carpenter received the mason’s rate of $12/day he was due at least $48 for labor bringing the total to $506.43. We have no reasonable basis to guess at amounts for Lane, Vance, Bidwell and Davis, but they must be far short of $2,500.

The times make it quite understandable that Du Bois had little money available for the house in Great Barrington. By the spring of 1929 the NAACP and The Crisis in particular were in severe financial extremis (Lewis 2000: 274-283). Du Bois went for some period without a salary from The Crisis (Lewis 2000: 288). In a particularly moving letter to Nina, Du Bois comments on the desperate straits visited especially on the African American community by the Depression.

I do not think you realize how little we have suffered from the depression, and how much most people have….It would not have made much difference as to how I had tried to save money in the last five or six years. If I had invested in stocks, I should in all probability have lost all or most I had put into them. Any investment in real estate during these years would have been a losing proposition. …We have been unusually fortunate. Without Spingarn’s help, I might have been forced into bankruptcy, lost my automobile, and the place in Great Barrington, not to mention the public disgrace….It is impossible to live a life and be uniformly successful and prosperous. Just look around us and see the suffering [Du Bois to Nina Du Bois 3/6/1935].
Major Renovation Plans

Vance suggested beginning with repairs to the roof and the foundations to protect the house (Vance to Du Bois 6/7/1928). Vance included two photographs of the House. We believe that one of these photographs (Appendix L.1) was published in the New York Times (May 16, 1969: 49) with the caption “‘House of the Black Burghardts,’ Great Barrington, in the 1930’s. It has since fallen.” The photograph is difficult to read because it is a reproduction of a newspaper pixilated print of a photograph. The view is oblique from the southwest of a two-story gable roofed main block with a one-story gable roofed wing to the west. The main block has an asymmetrical façade, with two windows to the right of the front door (to the east) and one to the left (to the west). The second story façade windows have the same plan. A small window appears in the western second floor gable. The chimney is somewhat centrally located. An overhang appears over the front door. The wing apparently has two bays; the easternmost seems closed with horizontal sheathing and a window and a door abutting the main block. The western wing bay appears open; there might be a window in the rear wall that can be seen through this opening. The wing’s western gable wall has a small window near the front façade and a small window in the gable of the half-attic, again set asymmetrically towards the front. A small shed juts off the rear of the northwest corner of the wing, with a door on the western gable side (it might be a privy). The horizontal clapboards on the main block are narrower than those on the wing’s west gable. The eaves of the main block are deeper than those on the gable. Both roofs appear to have lost shingles; the center of the wing roof appears to have developed at least one sizeable hole. Three trees surround the house, one just outside the front door, one in roughly the same location (though possibly a bit further east) and a large one to the southeast of the wing. The trees have not yet leafed out. There may be a bush near the southeast corner of the main block, but otherwise the surrounding lot seems very open.

Du Bois, anxious to begin work, agreed to repair the roof and suggested taking down interior plaster to expose the beams (Du Bois to Vance 6/12/1928, Du Bois to Vance 6/18/1928). They met on April 25th 1928 in Great Barrington, and from this Vance went to work on plans for the remodeled House (Du Bois to Vance 4/23/1928). Du Bois may have also discussed matters in late July 1928 (Vance to Du Bois 7/20/1928). Vance sent along sketches for the house in early June and by August, in his last collected communication with Du Bois, he sent the completed blueprints (Du Bois to Vance 8/10/1928).

The Du Bois Papers have 5 sketches that Vance made of the existing house and one set of first and second floor blueprints for the remodeled house (Appendix L.3). Though unlabelled, these sketches represent interior measurements for the first floor (App. L.3A) interior measurements for the second floor (App. L.3B 1), exterior measurements for the entire house (App. L.3B 2), exterior measurements for 1st floor south face of the main house block (App. L.3C 1), and interior measurements for the second floor that are apparently incorrect (App. L.3C 2). Four of the five plans are consistent in their dimensions with App. L.3C 2 being problematic, the details of which are discussed in Appendix L.

The blueprint Vance prepared (Appendix L.4) is a plan for a vacation retreat rather than for a working farmhouse. Recall that Du Bois described his Grandfather Othello’s house as having a living-room, a large kitchen, and a woodshed on the first floor, and two bedrooms on the second floor. Vance’s plans call for taking out a partition
between two easterly rooms on the first floor to the right of the front door and creating one large Library and Music room. Presumably this is converting what was Othello’s living room to a space with special use. A new Porch is to be added behind this new room, the second floor of which will provide for a Bath. A Dining Room is immediately to the left of the front entry and small Kitchen behind it. This suggests that Othello’s large kitchen has been subdivided into two spaces, one for dining and one for food preparation. A new Living Room and fireplace are further to the west in what would have been part of the woodshed Du Bois describes for Othello’s house. The service wing also contains plans for a Garage with Wood and Coal storage space to the rear. The front door opens immediately onto the stairs to the second floor where the two bedrooms of Othello’s house are planned to become four Chambers, a Bath, and two built-in Closets. In this planned transformation from a working farmhouse into a place of retreat and entertainment, the workspaces of the kitchen and the west wing have been encroached upon by space for entertaining and dining. Additional living space on the first floor has been opened up for cultural entertainment.

Implementation

The extent to which Du Bois was able to realize these plans was a driving question of the 2003 field research. We were able to consult the Papers after we had completed the fieldwork, and they gave additional insight on this question. Two workmen, J. W. Wilson a “colored carpenter” who lived at 267 W 143rd St in New York, advised Du Bois about renovations and did some of the work (Du Bois to Davis 6/13/1928, Du Bois to Wilson 6/14/1928), and Frank Vigezzi, a mason, whose business was on Van Deusenville Rd. in Great Barrington, worked on the chimney and the cellar. Wilson and Du Bois inspected the property over the weekend the 16th and 17th of June, 1928. Wilson was of the opinion that the “small wing of the house will have to come down entirely; that it cannot be repaired, but should be built anew” (Du Bois to Vance 6/16/1928). By Monday June 18th Du Bois is writing Wilson for an estimate for renovations of the main part of the house. Du Bois breaks the request into two parts, that to be done in July of 1928 and that to be done later as money permits. The first is for “first-class wooden shingles on the main part of the house” and for tearing out all the plaster and lath and taking up the floors in the main part of the house. The second estimate is more involved. He asks about repairing all the framing, adding additional support where needed, and taking out a first floor partition. He also asks for estimates for the architect-planned windows and doors and for laying new floors on both the first and second floors. Key for our archaeological observations are Du Bois’s requests for “Restoring the foundation of the main part of the house, including the entrance to the cellar, doors and steps” and “Excavating the cellar further so that it will extend westward under the stairs and allow stairs to go down from the closet under the main stairs to the

52 The partition noted on the plans is a puzzle. There is no mention of such in Du Bois’s “House of the Black Burghardts,” and Du Bois would likely have seen the interior of the House in 1928 before he wrote the article. The partition would certainly have made a much smaller space than the living room Du Bois mentions in “House of the Black Burghardts.” Is this something put in by one of the subsequent residents, the Pipers or the Woosters, to accommodate a larger household? Is Du Bois, in taking it out, seeking to restore the House to its condition when Othello owned it?
53 Du Bois gives Wilson directions for traveling to Great Barrington on Saturday, June 16th (Du Bois to Wilson 6/14/1928).
54 This is the clearest indication of the plans for renovations (Du Bois to Wilson 6/18/1928).
cellar.” Finally, he inquires about “Building chimney [sic] at the east end of the house” as called for in the architects plans.

Wilson is at work in Great Barrington by July of 1928 (Du Bois to Davis 7/18/1928). Du Bois tells Vance on July 13, 1928 “I have had a shingled roof put on the main part of my cottage….” Thomas and Palmer, a building supplies firm in Great Barrington, billed Du Bois for shingles, pine board and galvanized 3.5 d and 8d nails purchased in July 11th and 13th of 1928 (Thomas and Palmer to Du Bois 3/28/1929). And a photograph of the House from the summer of 1933 shows a new roof on the main part of the house (Appendix L.2). It is impossible to tell from the Papers if Wilson completed the rest of the first part of the estimate and also took down the plaster and took up the floors, though an imprecise reference in a letter to Davis in April 6th, 1931 refers to Davis using part of $100 to pay “for the lumber, but that had already been paid you by the contractor, Mr. Wilson” suggests that the work was completed55.

Du Bois turned to Davis for assistance in finding someone to build the chimney and excavate the cellar (Du Bois to Davis 6/18/1928). The easterly chimney was built by mid-July 1928 (Du Bois to Vance 7/13/1928, Du Bois to Davis 7/18/1928). Davis sends Du Bois a bill for work on the chimney by Frank Vigezzi for work done on July 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17, 1928. The materials include 2 loads of sand, 6 iron bars, 3 sheets of tin, 18 13x13 flue lining, 24 8.5x13 flue lining, 2 7x9 cleanout doors, 100 fire bricks, 1 barrel of lime, 19 bags of cement, 2000 bricks, and 1 damper. The chimney cost $298.3056.

Davis also lets Du Bois know that Vigezzi “recommends that the walls be fixed and both the cellar and the hatch way dug a little deeper so that a person can get in the cellar without bumping his head. In fact the cellar must be deeper in order that a person can enter the cellar” (Davis to Du Bois 7/20/1928). It will be cheaper for Vigezzi to proceed now that his equipment is at the site rather than charge to bring it back again and Davis advises that “I think myself that it will be just as cheap to have Mr. Vigezzi go ahead and do the work by the day rather than by the contract as long as you know and he knows what to do” (Davis to Du Bois 7/20/1928). Vigezzi apparently estimated $700 “to further excavate the cellar, fix the walls and put a foundation under the hall of the main part of the house” (Du Bois to Davis 8/2/1928). Du Bois finds this “a good deal more than I had anticipated and I think I shall have to wait until spring…” (Du Bois to Davis


56 Du Bois sends Davis a check for Vigezzi for $150 on 8/15/1928 which is the beginning of a protracted series of exchanges with Vigezzi for the rest of the bill (10/31/1929, 11/4/1931, 4/28/1933). Du Bois settled the balance in May 19th 1933. In Du Bois’s letters he tries to explain why he is late. He constantly anticipates returning to the work and therefore imagines that the rest of the work will be part of the bill owed to Vigezzi. In October 31, 1929 he explains his inability to pay because “my wife was going to France and had to spend six months there” (Du Bois to Vigezzi 10/31/1929). How this sounded to Vigezzi can only be imagined; for Du Bois it was part of the expense of Yolande’s divorce (Lewis 2000:266). In November of 1931 Du Bois states “I had hoped to do more work on my Great Barrington house last summer but the depression scared me” (Du Bois to Vigezzi 11/4/1931). In April of 1933 Du Bois wrote about wanting to “begin completion of the house at Great Barrington last years and wanted to give you a part of the contract….but my plans have been spoiled by the general condition of the country” (Du Bois to Vigezzi 4/28/1933).
8/2/1928) and asks Davis’s opinion. Davis thought it too high (Davis to Du Bois 8/16/1928) and could be done more cheaply with a good superintendent.

The Papers seem quite clear that a new foundation was not put under the main portion of the house. In November of 1931 Du Bois is asking Vigezzi for yet another estimate for the foundations (Du Bois to Vigezzi 11/4/1931). Whether the cellar was dug deeper is unclear from the papers. In this same letter Du Bois asks for an estimate for a well: “In that cellar I want a well sunk deep enough so as to get pure water. I’m going to use a pump with the well.” Did Davis oversee digging out a deeper cellar? Or is such excavation superceded by the use of a pump in the deeper well? It is noteworthy that in this and a following request for a bill from Vigezzi the amount never exceeds that for the work done on the chimney in 1928. If Vigezzi did the work then the Papers do not contain a record of this work. It seems unlikely that Vigezzi did the work.

Du Bois was also concerned about water and heating the house. In the June 12th letter to Vance Du Bois asks about the availability of city water, something that must not have been possible. Later in 1928 Du Bois received advice from Vigezzi, via Davis, about work that needed to be done on the existing exterior well (Davis to Du Bois 7/20/1928). In 1931 Du Bois asks Vigezzi for an estimate to sink a deep well in the cellar (Du Bois to Vigezzi 11/4/1931). The remnants of the exterior well were noted in the 1983 and 1984 surveys, though they could not be confirmed in 2003.

Heat, for the house and/or for hot water, was also a matter for discussion. On June 16th 1928 Du Bois asks Vance’s opinion about “having the cellar excavated a little further, so as to have inside stairs and be able to install a pipeless heater.” Vance thinks it “wise to excavate for a cellar to contain the heating plant” (Vance to Du Bois 7/20/1928). Given the cellar installation of pipeless heaters it is not surprising that an excavation would be required.

A photograph found in the Du Bois Papers among the 1933 papers (Reel 41 Frame 735 and Appendix L.2) confirms some of this work. It is an oblique shot from the southwest, just as in the 1928 photograph. The framing of the shot is a bit tighter, giving less of the landscape. Since this is a photograph detail is much sharper than the 1928 picture. In this the main block has been recently shingled. There is no longer evidence of a centrally located chimney; now the chimney is on the east gable end, in line with the peak of the roof. The fenestration described for the 1928 picture is much clearer here, complete with the small roof over the front door. Vance’s plans call for “new windows” on either side of the front door. The new windows in the plan are twice the width of the “old windows” also identified in the plan. The windows on either side of the front door are the same width as the “old windows,” suggesting that new windows were not installed. The spacing between the door and the windows is much wider than what is planned, further evidence that Wilson did not install new windows. The west wing is now in a state of near collapse; the roof of the western bay has completely fallen in and the western bay is about to slump to the west. The front pitch of the eastern roof is still in place but apparently without the support of a rear pitch. The wing roof has not been reshingled. The same trees can be seen. The tree nearest the front door has no leaves, whereas the tree to the southwest and the rear tree have both leafed-out. The season is more likely summer or early fall. There are shrubs in the front yard, possibly indicating

57 “A pipeless furnace is installed in a basement and delivers heated air through a large register in the floor of the room or hallway immediately above.” From:
http://www.furnacecompare.com/faq/definitions/furnace_types.html
less care than in the 1928 picture, or possibly the later time in the season that the picture was taken. We do not have a specific date for this photograph, though given its placement in the 1933 section of the papers, and given an argument more fully developed in Appendix L, it is possible that this picture was taken in the end of August of 1933 when Nina and a woman friend were apparently staying at Willoughby’s Sunset Inn on Rosseter St. in Great Barrington (Du Bois to Willoughby 8/8/1933).

In summary, the Papers are quite clear that Mr. Wilson reshingled the roof of the main block of the House. If he did this, which was part of the “Estimate Number One” in their June 18, 1928 correspondence, it also seems likely that he tore out the plaster and the lath and took up the floors, other items in this first estimate. But, of the work for a carpenter in “Estimate Number Two” Wilson did not install new windows, and it seems unlikely that he restored the framing or laid new floors. The “Estimate Number Two” also planned foundation work, excavation of the cellar, and constructing a chimney and fireplaces at the east end of the house, work that was taken up by the mason, Frank Vigezzi, in July of 1928. Mr. Vigezzi clearly built a new chimney on the east wall of the House. It is questionable at best that he dug a deeper cellar or a deeper hatchway, or attended to needed foundation work. What happened to the well is unclear, as Du Bois was still discussing it in 1931, but there is no documentary evidence that this work was done.

**Exterior Work and Land Purchases**

Du Bois and his advisors also had ideas about the exterior of the Homesite. In June of 1928 Du Bois consulted Davis about landscaping. He wanted the trees and bushes attended to (something Davis gets done in August (Davis to Du Bois 8/16/1928)) and requests a surveyor (Lane) be contacted to “survey the property next door so as to settle the question of the boundaries of my land” (Du Bois to Davis 6/18/1928). Du Bois is clearly concerned about the small size of the property he has been given and in August asks Davis again “about additional land. What I need is to have the line extended 15 feet from the house east, and north so as to make the north line parallel with the house. If you can get this additional land for $100 or even $150, I should be glad to have it” (Du Bois to Davis 8/2/1928). Du Bois’ desire for more land is thoroughly understandable. Though undated, the map of the property (Appendix J) on F. Mortimer Lane’s stationary, but on the 1934 reel, is most likely the survey completed by Lane in 1928 (Reel 43, Frame 565). It describes a four-sided polygon lacking right angles and parallel sides. The area is approximately .2 of an acre. During the Summer of 2003, not yet having this paper trail, we roughly laid these lines out on the property. The northerly line at its easterly extent comes virtually to the back wall of the house (following in part a surface feature discussed below as the “Hump”). No wonder Du Bois wanted more land to the north and the east. But even the additional 15’ Du Bois wanted would not have created a northern boundary parallel to Rt 23.

In the fall of 1928 Du Bois inquires again about the land (Du Bois to Davis 9/7/1928) and Davis replies that he has negotiated obtaining it from the neighbors (who would have been the Bowens) for $100. Du Bois sends $100 for “the extra 10 feet of land” on October 19th 1928. He asks Davis if the land has been secured on December 21, 1928 and January 26, 1929. In a letter to Davis in April 6, 1931, it becomes clear that the $100 was not used to buy this land, but rather used to pay a tax bill and for lumber (Du Bois to Davis 4/6/1931). On March 30, 1931 Du Bois contacts his childhood friend and now attorney in Great Barrington, Joseph Frein, asking for assistance in purchasing the
land. Du Bois allows Frein to know that he disagrees with the plot made by the surveyors. “By such surveying as I have been able to get the house stands on the extreme corner of the lot. Of course, I am certain the surveyors [sic] are wrong but any attempt to change it would be costly” (Du Bois to Frein 3/30/1931). Frein lets Du Bois know that he cannot make any headway with the neighbors, but that Davis thinks that he can (Frien to Du Bois 4/15/1931, 6/4/1931). There are no responses to his inquiries of Davis throughout the summer and fall of 1931 (5/21/1931, 6/17/1931, 9/9/1931), though the last of these (11/10/1931) makes reference to the land having been purchased. There is nothing in the deed chain that suggests that that such a purchase was confirmed in the Registry of Deeds and the Papers have no more information on the purchase of this piece of land.

**Dates When Du Bois was in Great Barrington**

Du Bois never makes mention of staying at the cottage in Great Barrington, further indication of the tough shape it was in when he received it. Instead Du Bois seems to have regularly stayed at the Sunset Inn, operated by Edgar Willoughby, located on Rosseter St. in Great Barrington. Communications with Willoughby supplied one source of information on Du Bois’s comings and goings in the town. Another were letters to the various contractors. Of course, Du Bois may not have kept the correspondence relevant for all his visits to the town.

Using these sources it seems that Du Bois was in Great Barrington in 1928 on April 25th and 26th to meet with Vance (Du Bois to Vance 4/23/1928), possibly May 28th and 29th (Du Bois to Willoughby 5/22/1928), certainly June 15th and 16th to show Wilson the house and consult with Davis (Du Bois to Willoughby 6/13/1928, Du Bois to Davis 6/13/1928, and Du Bois to Wilson 6/14/1928), and possibly around August 2nd 1928 to talk with Vigezzi (Du Bois to Davis 8/2/1928). On October 10, 1929 he informs Willoughby that “five of us are thinking of spending Sunday and Sunday night in Great Barrington at your hotel” and asks for accommodations. He addressed the Annual Meeting of the Alumni of Searles High School on July 21, 1930. And on August 8, 1933 he writes Willoughby about accommodations for Nina and a woman friend for two weeks.

It is interesting that only this latter visit by Nina was for any extended period of time; most of Du Bois’s documented visits were overnight. Also remarkable is the access to Great Barrington by train from New York City. For instance, in providing Wilson with details for the trip, Du Bois tells him to take the 12:56 PM train from 125th St station that arrives only three and a half hours later in Great Barrington at 4:30 PM.

Du Bois’s visits to Great Barrington certainly cluster around his receiving the property in 1928 and fall off after that. This is not surprising. The spring and summer of 1929 saw *The Crisis* and the NAACP facing financial ruin coupled with the decline in the economy in the summer of 1929 and the stock market crash on October 29 (Anonymous 1913; Lewis 2000:266, 274-301). Du Bois’s friend and ally, James Weldon Johnson, retired from the post of Secretary of the NAACP in December of 1930 to be replaced by Walter White, with whom Du Bois had very difficult relations. Du Bois’s real estate investment, an apartment building on St. Nicholas Avenue in Harlem was in deep financial trouble as were his overdue debts for Yolande’s wedding (288). Nina and Yolande had returned from Paris and had taken up residence at 1301 Madison Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland, another real estate responsibility (289). During 1931 Du Bois also picked up the bill for Yolande’s second husband’s college tuition (289). Nineteen-thirty
one also saw Du Bois embroiled in the Scotsboro case, in which the NAACP looked bad next to the Communists as defenders of African American rights and freedom (256-265) and ongoing feuds with Walter White of the organization and direction of the NAACP (289-295). In 1932 Du Bois was engaged in a prolonged speaking tour and writing hard-hitting commentaries about the depredations of the Depression and the compounded injustice visited on African Americans by Jim Crow (295-301). In late 1932 John Hope, president of Atlanta University, offered a visiting professorship for the spring semester of 1933 to Du Bois (301) and thus began Du Bois’s return to Atlanta as his institutional base into the 1940s, solidified with his controversial resignation from the NAACP in 1934 (341-348). That he had any time to think about Great Barrington, let alone visit it, is remarkable.

Du Bois might have been in Great Barrington at other times than those documented in the Papers. Regardless, these correspondences identify some of the times and forces that drew him to Great Barrington.

**What was the Meaning of the Site for W.E.B. Du Bois?**

This is much too deep a question to be satisfactorily answered in an archaeology report: Lewis’s magnificent biography (1993, 2000) serves as a guide and a warning about delving into the psychological complexities of this genius. Du Bois lived as full and influential a life after 60 as the most ambitious could aspire to in a full lifetime. He was for the rest of his life one of the most cosmopolitan people on the planet, informed about racial and economic relations around the world, a busy traveler in the States and abroad, a person with the stature and the insight to have an impact in any number of arenas. He also, as Lewis relates, had a very complex personal life and difficult personal financial situations. All this is to say that fully grasping how his personal history, his sense of family and place all crystallized out as his interest in the House of the Black Burghardts is something beyond this slim report. It is fully understandable, even tragically so, how his drive and his situation took him away from Great Barrington. It is equally clear that the drive and abilities that led to such a full remaining 35 years could also have led to restoration of the House, which of course it didn’t. What we have to offer here are observations from the Papers that indicate that just because he didn’t succeed in restoring the House doesn’t mean that it ever stopped being a deeply central desire for him.

Muller (1994) offers important insights into the meaning of the property for Du Bois. She notes (84) the centrality of land in Du Bois’s self-understanding, by citing his response to an interviewer’s question about his sense of family pride by noting he was most impressed that they were born free and owned land. Owning land resonates with a special significance from a man so steeped in the experience of African Americans across the U.S.; it is a point of pride for the race as well as for his family. And the House was one of these pieces of the earth over which he and his ancestors had such possession. Maintaining this tie to the land is something he dreamed of to near his end.

In his address to the Alumni of Searles High School on July 21, 1930, Du Bois discussed the contradictions of urban life and the potential for respite to be found in the country. Tellingly about Great Barrington he wrote (Du Bois 1930):

> I left New York this morning and rode up into this valley with the same feeling that I always bring – that here is a more ordered and satisfying solution to the problem of living than in the hot and crowded and dirty city.
Despite the appeal of Great Barrington, Du Bois used the occasion to point out the despoliation of the Housatonic River, and the many other rivers of the world, and the need for the town, and industrial civilization, to confront the growing problem of environmental pollution.

This broader perspective on life in the country helps frame his filial attachment to the property on Egremont Plain. His “House of the Black Burghardts,” (1928) quoted in the beginning of this chapter, communicates his sense of desire for the property and his sense of the way that his ancestors had helped to build a piece of the New England landscape. The papers provide additional insights, ones that speak to the tenacity of Du Bois’s vision of a place that would celebrate his families past.

On May 21, 1931 Du Bois responds with a single sentence to an inquiry from C.E. Brooks of 530 Main Street in Great Barrington that “My property on Égremont Road is not for sale” (Du Bois to Brooks May 21, 1931).

Du Bois requests an abatement from his taxes on Oct 12, 1934. In this request he notes:

A number of my friends gave me this house because it was long the dwelling place of my family….I planned immediately to restore it and make it habitable for a residence in summer and on vacations. The depression has made it impossible for me to do this work of restoration, and in the meantime, the house has partly fallen down. As a dwelling, it has only sentimental value, and nothing is really worth assessment expect the half-acre of ground. As soon as I can, I shall restore it and be glad to pay a corresponding tax [Reel 42, Frame 336].

We do not know what decision was made by the town, but the need for an abatement is manifest in Lewis’s (2000:378-380) account of how Du Bois’s personal finances were battered by the Depression, including a losing and complicated real estate investment at St. Nicholas Avenue in New York City, deferred NAACP salary payment of $1,000, and a tricky involvement in the Dunbar coop housing where his wife, daughter, infant granddaughter were all resident.

Ten years later in 1944, at a point when the House is in such a state as to not even be listed in the City Directory as vacant, Warren Davis writes to Du Bois to let him know I have had several people ask me if you ever intend to do anything with that old house of yours, that is falling down, and to be frank with you, if you do not intend to do anything with it, I think the people in that neighborhood would be glad to tear it down and clean up the grounds [Davis to Du Bois Feb. 4, 1944].

In short order Du Bois testily responds “my house on the South Egremont Road is not for sale and….I want to warn the neighbors or anyone else from interfering with it in any way” (Du Bois to Davis Feb. 28, 1944).

In 1949 with Du Bois in the midst of trying to find a path towards peace in the beginning of the Cold War Davis again asks if he might want to sell the House, and even offers to come to New York to talk about it (Davis to Du Bois Oct. 17, 1949). Du Bois’s response shows that he is still committed to the property, though in a way that looks forward rather than towards the past:

I have no intention of selling my lot on Egremont Road. On the other hand, I would like to have it put into sightly condition and perhaps have some of the original beams tarred and buried so that I could use them, when I or some of my descendants might want to rebuild. The present structure, of course, there is no chance of saving, and perhaps even the chimney ought to be torn down [Du Bois to Davis 10/28/1949].
His novel proposal to “mothball” the beams is a touching recognition that he may not accomplish the task he set for himself some twenty years before.

The House is his second consideration, after attending to funeral expenses, in a 1951 draft of his will

I give, bequeath and devise to my wife, SHIRLEY GRAHAM DU BOIS, for and during her life the land and building thereon owned by me and located on South Egremont in the City of Great Barrington, Mass.....Upon the death of my wife....I give, bequeath and devise the said property located on South Egremont in the City of Great Barrington, Mass. to my granddaughter, DUBOIS WILLIAMS, absolutely in fee simple.

Of course, by his death Du Bois has sold this property to the Bowens. A check for $10.50 made out to the Town of Great Barrington and signed by Shirley Graham Du was drawn on June 18, 1953, the year before Du Bois sold the property. And though Du Bois apparently realized little of his cottage dreams, he continually sought to retain the Homesite and preserve it within the family line for generations to come.

CONCLUSIONS

After having surveyed the documents on the ownership, residency, and modifications to the Homesite we have endeavored to pull them together by constructing a narrative of the Homesite. It is based on earlier such models developed by Paynter and others (1994). There are some substantial alterations in this previous model, especially concerning our sense of the residents during the 4th quarter of the 19th century.

1795-1819 Under Muller’s model, Jackson Burghardt (c. 1766-c.1832) and Violet would be the builders and first resident/owners of the House of the Black Burghardts. By all indications, the Freemans made their living practicing agriculture. Jackson and Violet had a family of at least six long-lived children (4 boys, 2 girls), one of whom died at 63 and the remaining 5 died in their 70s. The first is born in 1786 and the last in 1803. Lucinda, the oldest daughter and Du Bois’s grandmother, is born in 1797 and dies in 1860. Assuming Muller’s model, by the mid-1790s there is a household with at least two parents and 2 children living at the site. When the last child is born in 1803 the oldest would have been 17 and approaching an age to move on. The maximum family might have been all 6 children and two parents in 1803, declining in size until 1820 when the youngest (Harlow) would have been 17 and ready to move on. It is important to note that once these children have been allocated to the categories of the Federal census, there are still unidentified people living in the household (5 in 1800 and 4 in 1810). These may be boarders or they may be relatives, as was the practice at the Homesite in later years. Precise characteristics of the location and configuration of this homesite and nature of features of buildings or other improvements are not clear.

1820-1859 James Freeman (1786-1856) and his wife, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman (1797-1860) daughter of Jackson and Violet, are the owner/residents of the site from 1820-late 1850s. Neither appears on the 1820 census; the enumeration date was August 1, before the September 27th date when James bought the property of Horace Church. Alternatively, Muller (2001: 108) notes that the 1820 census lists an Asabel Freeman, age between 26 and 45, and a woman aged between 26 and 45, in the household just before Othello and Sally’s household, and these may be the missing James and Lucinda
Burghardt Freeman. These age categories are just a bit old for James Freeman (24) and Lucinda Burghardt (23), but not unreasonably so. Muller wonders if this might be the beginning of the Burghardt’s multi-household residence of the Egremont Plain.

Under Muller’s model, the eldest daughter of Jackson and Violet Burghardt, Lucinda and her husband, James Freeman, have benefited from some actions on the part of Horace Church to sort out Jackson Burghardt’s debts, thereby enabling part of the family to stay on Jackson’s property. An alternative interpretation marks the 1820 deed from Church to Freeman as the first residence by the Burghardts of the Homesite and the construction date for the House. It seems likely that the Homesite is very small in size, somewhere between .2 and 1 acre in size. It is also possible that the original House was smaller than the one photographed and sketched in 1928 by Vance. The taxes suggest that James and Lucinda made improvements in the House in the mid-1840s, though it is not clear from the documents what exactly these were. By the time their House is recorded on the 1856 Woodford Map its footprint is similar to the footprints of the 1928 photograph and sketches.

James Freeman appears on the Census in 1830 with a female of the right age to be Lucinda Burghardt Freeman. In 1833 James buys an additional small plot of land with buildings that was not their homelot. This two person household appears again on the 1840 and the 1850 Census. The genealogical information indicates that Lucinda and James Freeman have no children, though handwritten notes by Du Bois suggest that they had two sons, John and George (Muller 2001:122, 205). All indications are that they followed an agricultural way of life. How they did this on such a small plot of land is unclear. What seems most likely is that James and Lucinda pooled their labor with that of Lucinda’s brother’s family, Harlow, who lived on 7-11 acres of land across the street and towards South Egremont.

The Homesite was home to the two-person family of James and Lucinda for nearly 40 years. James died in 1856. Lucinda developed blindness and lived out the last period of her life until 1860 living with her niece, Mary K. Van Ness Jones, in the household next to the Burghardt’s White employers, the Kelloggs (Muller 2001:102-105)). Lucinda’s brother, Othello, and his family likely moved to the Homesite just prior to her death, and were registered on the 1860 census as the occupants of the Homesite.

1860-1873 The 70-year old second son of Jackson and Violet, Othello Burghardt (1791-1879) appears on the 1860 Census with his 68-year old wife, Sally Lampan Burghardt (1793-1879). Othello, along with his brother Ira, had inherited the House of the Black Burghardts in 1861 from their sister, Lucinda Burghardt Freeman, per the orders in her will. The social axis moves from Lucinda and James to Othello and Sally and their family. Du Bois (1968: 64) recalls that Othello suffered from a problem with his hip; his grandmother Sally was the more vivacious of the pair. As a younger man, Othello had been listed on the census as a whitewasher.

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58 Muller (2001:128) notes that Lucinda S. Burghardt Jackson and her husband, Jacob Jackson (m. 1850), and Jane Burghardt Jackson and her husband, Abraham Jackson, are listed next to each other and just before Lucinda and James Freeman in the 1850 census. From this she speculates that one or both of these families are living on the homelot, and possibly within a partitioned portion of the House of the Black Burghardts. We read the fact that the Jackson household has its own household number to mean that they are living in their own house near that of James and Lucinda.
Othello and Sally had at least 10 children in all, 3 sons and 7 daughters. Their youngest daughter, Mary, was born when Sally was about 38. Mary is Du Bois’s mother. By 1860 Othello and Sally’s children are adults, many living in households of their own. On Egremont Plain living with them are 4 other people, their 31-year-old son James T. Burghardt (a Barber on the 1860 census), James’s daughter, 7-year old Inez (1853-), and probably their 15-year old grandson, Frank Jackson (son of their daughter Lucinda and Jacob Jackson). There is one other person, a 9-year old Charles Jackson; he does not appear on Muller’s genealogy, but might be a relation, another son of Lucinda and Jacob Jackson or of another of Othello and Sally’s daughters, Jane and her husband Abraham Jackson. James’s work as a barber may have been a source of income. It is also possible that some of the family pooled their labor with Harlow’s family on the larger holding. The mix of a 15, a 31, and a 70-year old man, 2 children, and no parental-aged woman would have made a busy household for 68 year-old Sally to manage.

Ten years later in 1870 the now decidedly elderly Othello and Sally are living in a large household. James’s now 16 year-old daughter, Inez is still with them, but James is elsewhere. Two of their daughter Mary’s young children, Idlebert Burghardt and 2-year old William (W.E.B.) Du Bois are also living at the Homesite. Mary is not listed on the 1870 census (Muller 2001: 135); it seems likely that she was also living in this household but wasn’t tallied by the census-taker. A three-generation White family, the Buckleys, are also boarding at the Homesite. The census tells us that Buckley was a farm laborer, some small source of income. It is harder to understand how the enumerated Burghardt family made ends meet. Possibly Mary was engaged in service, and so was not at home to be enumerated in the census. In addition, how the housework was distributed in this interracial household would be interesting to better understand. Also, how a space that accommodated 2 people for so many years was used in Othello and Sally’s much larger households (6 in 1860 and 9 in 1870).

Othello dies in 1872 and Sally in 1879. Du Bois (1968:73) recalls moving back into town at about the age of 5, a date that coincides with Othello’s death. Since Sally dies before the next census, we have no sense of where she lived. Maybe she moved down the street to her nieces home on the old Harlow homestead. But what is clear is that after 12 years, the use of the Homesite is changing, from one centered around Othello and Sally to one more in the orbit of Harlow’s daughters, Martha and Lucinda. The constant feature is that it remains in the Burghardt family.

1874-c. 1907 In the 1870s the fiscally responsible William Piper (1842-1891), husband of Harlow and Althea’s daughter Martha, is purchasing the inheritance rights to the Homesite. Tax records show him as a resident of Great Barrington and paying taxes on the Homesite in 1875-1877. That his family is residing at the site is supported by the 1876 Beers Atlas with his name next to the Homesite. The 1880 census has the Pipers living in Sheffield. Based on this 1880 entry we would expect at the Homesite in 1875 at least a family of 5 Pipers with 2 girls (12 and 7) and a boy (4). By 1880 and possibly in the mid-1870s after Harlow’s death in 1874, Martha’s sister’s family, Edward C. and Lucinda M. Burghardt Wooster, are living down the street in their parent’s homestead (Muller 2001: 145).

59 Du Bois (Lester 1971: 154) does note that 17 and 15 year old Louise and Anna Piper were “of Sheffield,” a point that further argues that their parents, William and Martha Piper, were living in Sheffield.

60 According to Lucinda’s will, Othello and Ira get the use of the property and upon their death it goes to her brother Harlow, his son Albert D. and Ira’s son, Henry W.-William Burghardt. Ira died in 1871 and
From 1877 until 1907 residency at the Homesite is undetermined. William Piper or his widow are being assessed for the Homesite up to at least 1903. The Woosters are living in Harlow and Althea’s homestead down the road rather than at the Homesite. There is no 1890 census. And there are no maps between 1876 and 1904. For residents of the Homesite this leaves the possibilities that a younger member of the Piper or the Burghardt family is residing at the Homesite, that the Homesite is being rented to a non-relative, and the possibility that the Homesite is vacant. This latter possibility is somewhat abrogated by the fact that there is no decline in the valuation of the property over this period, something one might expect if the House were abandoned.

The next documentary indication of residency at the Homesite is the 1904 Atlas that puts N. Piper on the Homesite. His residency appears to have been very brief, as he does not appear on Egremont Plain on the 1900 census and by 1906 he is in a distant part of town.

**1907-late 1910s** William Piper’s heirs sell the Homesite to Lena Wooster, married to William Piper’s nephew Edward M. Wooster, in 1909. They and their very young family may have moved onto the Homesite as early as 1904 and certainly by 1906. We do not know the date of their marriage but based on the ages of the children listed on the 1910 census it was likely in the early 1900s. Is this an instance of Edward’s aunt Martha, owner of the Homesite, doing a favor for her sister Lucinda’s son and daughter-in-law? Regardless, the 1910 census does put a very young family, two parents and 6 children under 9, on the Homesite. Edward is listed in the Directories as working for a gentleman farmer from New York who owned property nearby on Egremont Road. Lena had to have had her hands full with childcare and homemaking. It is possible that they altered the House to meet their needs, as the assessed value increased during their tenure.

Something rather calamitous happened to this household in the late 1910s. The 1919 tax assessment indicates that Lena Wooster is resident in Springfield, Massachusetts. The fact that Aunt Martha sold the Homesite to Lena rather than to her nephew, Edward, is part of the reason that Muller suggests that Lena was the more stable of the couple. We have not tried to find Lena and likely her children in the Springfield census. Moreover, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, it seems that when the Woosters left the Homsite, they left many of their belongings in the House, to be found today scattered in the middens. Did they intend to come back or were they walking out on a bad situation? Regardless, the House was vacant in the 1920s, falling into disrepair, and sold to Davis for Du Bois by Lena Wooster for $933.17.

Othello died in 1872. In 1873 William Piper buys out Harlow’s share (the year before Harlow’s death and two before Althea’s death in 1875). He buys out William Burghardt in 1876, and buys out Albert Burghardt in 1878. Where is Sally living after 1870 up to her death in 1879? Possibly with the Pipers who have moved into the House of the Black Burghardts (according to tax records between at least 1875 through sometime in 1877) and are taking care of their aunt. We believe from Du Bois’s memory that 2 of the 1870 residents of the House of the Black Burghardts, Idlebert and William (and possibly Mary), have moved back into town by about 1873 (Du Bois 1968: 73). The Woosters move into Harlow’s house by the 1880 Census and Ludinca M. Wooster buys Harlow’s estate at auction on July 10, 1886 for $40 and sells the buildings and 6 acres more or less for $1 on November 29, 1907 to Edward E. Moore of New York City.
Late 1910s-1928 The lack of any Woosters on the 1920 census and the decrepit condition of the house at the Homesite when Du Bois received the property in 1928 support it standing abandoned for around 10 years.

1928-1954 Du Bois receives the property (purchased by a committee of admirers using Warren Davis as a temporary holder) in 1928. Du Bois, as noted above, began the implementation of an ambitious restoration plan. How much was completed was one of the questions that drove the 2003 Field School research. Suffice it to say that we do not believe that the House was ever significantly restored for the 60-year old plus Du Bois to spend a night at the Homesite. By sometime after 1940 the House was in increasingly decrepit condition, having vanished from the City Directories of the 1940s and even from the memory of young Mr. Wood who played in the area. Not only the House, but the nearby fields are also beginning to change. One of the pines on what today is part of the Homesite took root in the 1940s.

The size of the Homesite is itself a problem. Various documents up to Wilson and Gordon’s 1967 purchase describe the Homeiste ranging between .2 of an acre and 1 acre. Du Bois clearly thought what was surveyed as his property by Lane in 1928 was smaller than what he remembered from his childhood. He asks his agents in Great Barrington to purchase a mere 10-15’ and seems to consider this a compromise. We have found no records that this purchase happened. As we relate below, the deeds from the early 19th century and the map provided by Lane from 1928 describe a northern property boundary that lines up remarkably well with an odd surface feature, thus arguing in support of a very small plot for the Homesite. However, Du Bois also seems to have a case, since this line would fall only a few feet north of the house foundation. Also in Du Bois’s favor is that fact that he was taxed on 1 acre of land, a parcel considerably larger than what would be laid out following the deeds and Lane’s map. And also in Du Bois’s favor is the observation that people of color in other parts of New England saw their land encroached upon by White without compensation (e.g., McBride 1990: 106). It may be that archaeological work will provide some insight into what was used by the Burghardts at various times, regardless of who owned what and was taxed for whatever amount.

1954-1967 In 1954, Du Bois sells the Homesite to his neighbors, the family of David Bowen. This was clearly amounted to giving up on a dream, for Du Bois. No doubt continuing financial considerations and his ongoing life of political struggle made this 86 year old realize some limits with regards to the property in Great Barrington. He had travels around the globe to plan and the task of working on the Encyclopedia Africana in his sights. Parrish (1981) reports “the house was collapsing and was demolished and burned by the next owner after Dubois sold it in 1954.” The house was pushed to the rear of the property in the area of the middens as part of the demolition. Photos of Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois (Du Bois 1978: 93), possibly dated to 1959 (Drew 2003 personal communication relating that he had a conversation with Edmund Gordon in 2002 at the Dedication of the Du Bois River Garden in which Gordon dated the photographs to a 1959 visit by Shirley and W.E.B. to Great Barrington), shows them at the site of a demolished house.

1967-1987 Walter Wilson and Edmund Gordon purchased 2 parcels of property from Elsie Bowen that are the 5+ acres of today’s Boyhood Homesite. Together these two
parcels surround on three sides what was the Bowen (and today is the Hitchcock) property. Prior to this there is no documentary indication that the Homesite was anything near to the size of today’s roughly 5-acre property. The DuBois Memorial Foundation, spearheaded by Wilson, moved a boulder onto the site, planted trees, erected two signs identifying the site as associated with Du Bois, and built a fence. The site was dedicated in 1969 during a disputatious ceremony. In 1976 the property became a National Historic Landmark, the W.E.B. Du Bois Boyhood Homesite, and in 1979 a plaque placed on the site indicating such as part of a second dedicatory ceremony.

1987-present The University of Massachusetts Amherst received the site as a gift from the DuBois Foundation. Archaeological survey has been conducted on the Homesite in the summers of 1983, 1984, and 2003. The neighbor, Mr. Theodore Hitchcock, reported that in the summer of 2002 some large pines on the Homesite were knocked onto his property during a storm; the University paid to have the tree debris cleared by a local arborist. Mr. Hitchcock also reported that white pines have sprung up in the eastern portion of the Homesite with the cessation of mowing in the 1980s. The western portion of the site is thus some five or 6 decades more advanced in New England Old Field Succession than the eastern part. But in both, the dominance of this ecological process obscures the more than 150 years in the 10th and 20th century when this was the Homesite for a members of Du Bois’s maternal family, the Black Burghardts.

This documentary narrative is more complete than the model for the Homesite we had when we began field investigations in 2003. In fact, it was the 2003 investigations that raised nagging problems of interpretation that posed new questions of the documents, some answers to which were forthcoming during the field season, and some have only been addressed as part of the follow-up analysis. It is to the problems that drove the archaeological component the 2003 Summer Field School and their results that we next turn.


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