Heritage Matters

ENGAGING HERITAGE, ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

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Heritage Matters is a series of edited and single-authored volumes which addresses the whole range of issues that confront the cultural heritage sector as we face the global challenges of the twenty-first century. The series follows the ethos of the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (ICCHS) at Newcastle University, where these issues are seen as part of an integrated whole, including both cultural and natural agendas, and thus encompasses challenges faced by all types of museums, art galleries, heritage sites and the organisations and individuals that work with, and are affected by them.

Previously published titles are listed at the back of this book

Engaging Heritage, Engaging Communities

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Engaging Communities of De-industrialisation: The Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories Projects of Baltimore, USA

Michelle L. Stefano and Nicole King

In newspapers and on television, and in museums and at heritage sites, the story of de-industrialisation in the USA is often represented through a simplistic historical lens: broad brushstrokes are used to paint the patterns of boom and bust with little interrogation of local-level, personal and shared experiences of it. This broad historical lens is rarely grounded in specific places, while simultaneously being connected to others with similar patterns of development and decline. Respecting and attempting to understand the people, places and intangible cultural heritage of industry's rise and fall from the perspectives of those living these experiences is central.

In the media and scholarly analysis statistics are frequently used to illustrate this increasingly common cycle, and the stories, memories and experiences of those affected by countless closures of manufacturing plants, mills and factories are neglected in favour of numbers. Nonetheless, how can the socio-cultural effects of *bust* be better conceptualised, shared and connected? Moreover, how can the complexities and nuances of the relationships between people and places of de-industrialisation be better revealed? As such, how can the human experiences of industrial decline be made more visible?

This chapter combines different perspectives and corresponding methodological approaches through which the processes and impacts of de-industrialisation can be uncovered, examined and documented for the future. In particular, this article draws from the theories and toolkits of heritage studies and interdisciplinary place-based research to discuss two ongoing projects, each focused on the effects of industrial decline in the Baltimore, Maryland region: the Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories projects.

The Projects

Mapping Baybrook is an interdisciplinary exploration of place that virtually maps research on the history and culture of an industrial community in the southernmost tip of Baltimore, referred to as Baybrook, a merging of the names of the two remaining residential neighbourhoods in the area: Brooklyn and Curtis Bay. The community was a mix of diverse and yet connected neighbourhoods located along the southern coastline of the city during the rise of industrialisation in the USA. In addition to Brooklyn and Curtis Bay, the Greater Baybrook area once included the neighbourhoods of Fairfield, Hawkin's Point, Masonville and Wagner's Point (all now demolished and lost from the landscape).

The interactive Mapping Baybrook website (mappingbaybrook.org) highlights the importance of the spatial turn in digital humanities, which is partly a new way to look at the centrality of place in understanding culture. By mapping the stories (people and places) of neighbourhoods that have been lost as a result of both industrial development and its decline, such as the African American neighbourhoods of Fairfield and Hawkin's Point, in addition to the Polish and later Appalachian neighbourhood of Wagner's Point, and locating the stories of these places within the narrative of what remains (the residential neighbourhoods of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay), a more complex vision of the people, places and connections of industrial space are forged in the process.

Beginning in 2012, the Mill Stories project focuses on the history and living heritage of the Sparrows Point Steel Mill (in Dundalk, Baltimore County), which closed in 2012 after operating as one of the largest steel production plants in the world for a significant period of its 125-year life. While the project is less place-based than Mapping Baybrook, it defines the 'Sparrows Point community' as the hundreds of thousands of people who worked at the mill since the late nineteenth century, as well as those whose lives have been shaped by it through living in its vicinity, the Dundalk region. The aim of the project is three-fold: first, to examine the importance of the mill from the perspectives of former workers and local community members; second, to document the stories and memories of its community for the future; and third, to connect these distinctive experiences to the larger narrative of industrial boom and bust via the project's website (millstories.org), a longer documentary film, undergraduate student involvement and community discussion events. Before examining the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in these projects, it is first necessary to explore the historical links between Baybrook and Sparrows Point as the foundation upon which the projects are currently being connected.

A Common Foundation: Boom and Bust

It is argued that the theories and methods used within these two projects have helped to not only reveal the *human face* of industrial decline, such as exposing the unique relationships people have with industry, place and how they have shaped their lives, but also to create a collaborative space through which senses of ownership over the projects and pride in participating in them are strengthened. In this regard, the projects have sought to *amplify* the voices of those affected by de-industrialisation, to give greater context and weight to the statistical data and to promote stories, memories and experiences of it both online and through local community events (see also High 2010; 2011). Furthermore, this chapter argues that a focused combination of disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) methodologies can achieve an enhanced understanding of the commonly held experiences of industrial decline in the greater Baltimore region.

One of the most recent aims of these projects is to connect them to each other: to identify common themes that can help foster greater dialogue and understanding between the two communities, as well as beyond. As noted earlier, the projects seek to ground broader narratives of industrial boom and bust in the USA through the distinctive, and yet similar, community-held experiences, stories and memories of Baybrook and the Sparrows Point Steel Mill. Beginning at the regional, Baltimore level can help accomplish this larger goal; a significant counterpoint is given to these broader narratives, one that helps to illuminate the real sociocultural impacts of industrial decline.

The expansion of methodology and geographical focus increases the visibility of a project by offering new perspectives. Indeed, too narrow a focus and strict adherence to systematic and struc-

tural methods do not allow for the space to unearth the complexities of de-industrialisation. Here, the collaboration between Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories pushes the public (and scholars) to reckon with the ways similar but distinct theories and methods can work together to connect disparate stories and bridge different experiences of similar processes. A critical and reflexive analysis of research methods helps the overlooked and under-theorised become more visible.

The industrial communities of Baybrook and Sparrows Point share deep connections and stark distinctions. The Baybrook area is located on the southern border of the city, annexed into Baltimore City in 1919 with the rise of industrial development following World War I. The Sparrows Point Steel Mill is just across the city's harbour in Baltimore County. These two places became industrial areas because of their geographical location on rich land by deep waters. The once fertile soil in both communities reflects their shared agricultural roots before the rapid rise of industry in the late nineteenth century. The geographical qualities and timelines of industrial development are similar; however, the two communities developed under different industrial models that later converged during the peak period of industrial expansion during World War II.

Sparrows Point was always a steel mill from the 1890s until it closed in 2012 (Reutter 1988; Rudacille 2010). In contrast, Baybrook was a diverse amalgamation of ever-changing industrial enterprises: chrome works, chemical and fertiliser plants, refineries, canneries, car shops, ship building, gravel and sand companies, oil companies and salvage yards, among others (King 2014). While Baybrook followed trends, Sparrows Point was essentially a one-company town throughout its existence. The rise and fall of these many industries do not require different methods of analysis, but rather a more flexible lens to view the different ways industrialisation, de-industrialisation and its aftermath unfolded. When analysed together, these different models of industrial development provide a deeper and more nuanced picture of industrial boom and bust in a north-eastern port city.

Although the two communities differ in terms of the kinds of industries that flourished during World War II, they functioned as an integrated operation. The US government worked with the shipbuilding arm of Bethlehem Steel (the longstanding owner of Sparrows Point) and private industries in Baybrook once the country entered into the war. Sparrows Point, which had a shipbuilding facility on the harbour, and the area of Fairfield in Baybrook formed an integrated assembly-line operation producing the steel and building almost 500 jumbo cargo ships: the Liberty and Victory ships. During this period, the industrial peninsula of Baybrook became the home of the Bethlehem–Fairfield Shipyards, providing a strong link between the two communities (Reutter 1988, 317; Schulz 2013, 122–3).

In addition, this period provided the biggest boom in industrial development for both places, which changed the fabric of the communities in many ways. One way was providing access to work for women and African Americans (Reutter 1988, 360). However, after the war both places suffered, both from pollution and from the decrease in job opportunities. The hundreds of ships built during the war boom were brought back to the Fairfield industrial peninsula, where shipbuilding shifted to shipbreaking and the surrounding water was further polluted by oil and chemicals. The steel used to win the war was disassembled in Baybrook and sent back to Sparrows Point to be used for other products.

Before World War II people lived near to where they worked. With the rise of the post-war automobile culture, the company town model began to die and the development of superhighways cut through and isolated both communities (Olson 1980, 347–86). Masonville, a neighbourhood on the industrial peninsula of Baybrook, was destroyed with the expansion of

the railroad in the early 1950s. Twenty years later the company town within Sparrows Point was torn down for the expansion of the mill (Reutter 1988, 430). In another 20 years, the Baybrook communities of Fairfield and Wagner's Point were relocated because they were 'engulfed by industry' and neglected by the very government that integrated these places into the military–industrial complex of previous decades (Blom 2002).

These comprehensive changes in the structure of life and work in the USA, combined with the shift of manufacturing to the South, where labour prices were cheaper and unions rare, and later to overseas plants and mills, allowed the once-flourishing communities to wither and recede from view. With the new superhighways, such as Route 895 in the Baltimore area, drivers would never actually visit, or rarely see, these industrial communities and their iconic centrepieces, such as the massive L-furnace of Sparrows Point or the coal piers in Baybrook. The unique stories of Baybrook and Sparrows Point influence the different and yet complementary methods used in both the Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories projects, as discussed in the following section.

The Frameworks

In 2011 the last residents on the Fairfield industrial peninsula of Baybrook were relocated and, in 2012, the Sparrows Point Steel Mill was finally shuttered after a succession of several different owners since Bethlethem Steel's bankruptcy in 2001. As a result, it can be argued that a certain sense of place was lost. However, use of the terms 'lost', to denote the disappearance of industrial neighbourhoods, and 'post', to distinguish a period after industrialisation, fail to reflect and address these highly complicated transitions. In other words, they are not simple breaks with the past. Throughout the USA and beyond, historic industrial places are declining, disappearing or being turned into corporate shopping centres, casinos and/or condominium complexes that evoke the generic placelessness of the twenty-first century. As Dolores Hayden (1986, 184) highlights, 'despair about placelessness is as much a part of the American experience as pleasure in the sense of place'. Combining the Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories projects traces the long arc of American industrialisation from different places and perspectives while exposing patterns and themes, such as power and resistance and continuity and change, to better understand the pasts of industrial landscapes and to develop a more comprehensive vision for urban spaces of the future. The following sections introduce the theoretical frameworks of the heritage discourse and the practices of interdisciplinary place-based historical research, situated within American studies, that have guided both projects.

Mill Stories: The Heritage of De-industrialisation

In general, the discipline of heritage studies pulls from a wide array of scholarly fields and related methodologies to understand how 'heritage' is defined, interpreted, disseminated and best safeguarded for the future. Traditionally, 'heritage' has been understood as tangible, monumental and/or human-made, generally represented by material culture, natural specimens, artefacts, archaeological sites and historic places such as battlefields and notable homes (Smith 2006). In more recent years, heritage is increasingly recognised as existing beyond these traditional categories, encompassing cultural and natural landscapes as well as the *intangible* cultural practices, knowledge sets, values, beliefs, expressions and memories that are embodied by people –whether

on a communal or a more individualistic level (see UNESCO 2003). Moreover, a greater examination of 'intangible cultural heritage', or *living* heritage, can also bring to light the relationships people build between their cultural knowledge, expressions and memories and the places where they are transmitted and shared, and within which they develop. Here, it can be argued that at the core of 'heritage' are also the relationships people have to it, and the senses of place, belonging and pride that give it its significance.

Accordingly, the theories and practices of heritage studies overlap greatly with those of American studies, history, anthropology, folklore studies, tourism studies, environmental studies and human geography, to name only a few. For instance, the use of ethnographic methods, a staple of anthropological research, can help to elucidate how heritage is defined and used at community levels, and what relationships, as noted earlier, give it its lifeblood. Nonetheless, what can set 'heritage' apart is that it is neither strictly history nor only culture. Heritage can be argued to be a construction and most often a product of the present, echoing the theories put forward by David Lowenthal (1985), Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), Gary Edson (2004) and Laurajane Smith (2006), among others. As Lowenthal (1985, xvi–xvii) so aptly states:

> The past thus conjured up is, to be sure, largely an artifact of the present. However faithfully we preserve, however authentically we restore, however deeply we immerse ourselves in bygone times, life back then was based on ways that are incommensurable with our own. The past's difference is, indeed, one of its charms: no one would yearn for it if it merely replicated the present. But we cannot help but view and celebrate it through present-day lenses […] The past is a foreign country whose features are shaped by today's predilections, its strangeness domesticated by our own preservation of its vestiges.

Critical heritage studies, as promoted through the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), seeks to highlight that there exist 'authorised heritage discourses' through to today that depend on highly political selection processes around what is given the 'heritage' label and why (Smith 2006; ACHS 2012). Historically, it was those who were in control of museums, preservation projects and heritage sites who decided what is valorised and preserved for future generations. Most pertinent to this chapter is the notion that, with any selection process, there will always be *things* that do not make it onto the list, or into the heritage enterprise (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Hafstein 2009). Using the museum example, who decides what is collected and interpreted for visitors? Furthermore, what are the stories, memories and experiences – the intangible aspects of heritage – that are neglected in the process?

The Mill Stories project frames the stories, memories and experiences of the Sparrows Point Steel Mill and its closure, from the perspectives of former workers, as *living* heritage. As the complex of mill buildings, remnants of the once-thriving company town and other facilities are dismantled and removed from the urban industrial landscape, the project's overall aim is to uncover, in the clouds of settling dust, what remains. Indeed, much of what remains is intangible: not only stories and memories but also the ongoing relationships community members have to the mill site and its legacy. Aligned with the aims of critical heritage studies, the project also seeks to emphasise that the stories of the working class and of industry's boom and bust are seldom told. For instance, at the Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI), the story of Sparrows Point is missing.

According to its mission statement, BMI 'collects, preserves and interprets the industrial and technological heritage of the Baltimore region for the public by presenting educational programs and exhibitions that explore the stories of Maryland's industries and the people who created and worked in them' (BMI nd). Nonetheless, there is not one exhibit dedicated to one of the largest mills in the world, and one of the largest employers in the region for roughly a century.[1] While it would be educational for the public, and beneficial to the mill's community, to display mill relics with accompanying text, the museum space itself could also be used to explore the impacts of its closure in contemporary terms. As the project has unfolded it has become apparent that there is a need to talk about Sparrows Point and its rich history and significance, including the larger forces and effects of de-industrialisation.

At its core, the project is based on a series of filmed ethnographic interviews with former mill workers and Dundalk area community members. Currently, the project resides online (millstories.org), and as a fine-cut film, with intermittent manifestations as actual community-based events, such as a series of film screenings with discussion panels comprising mill community members. It is important to note that Mill Stories is not just an oral history project: what is found on its website are not only oral testimonies of how the mill once was but also contemporary reflections and expressions of how it is now and what the future ought to look like in light of industrial decline and its impacts.

The project frames its content as living heritage because there are selection processes involved; that is, the short 'digital stories' on millstories.org have been edited from longer raw footage of interviews by the project's leaders and undergraduate students in corresponding ethnography and videography courses at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) (Fig 10.1). However, one of the project's aims has been to make this a collaborative process so that the voices of informants, including their feedback at the various events, are given the highest priority. In this sense, the living heritage of Sparrows Point, as represented by Mill Stories, has been constructed through what community members want to share and through what they feel is most important to safeguard and promote. Reflecting on the project, Michael Lewis, former Sparrows Point worker, notes: 'It's up to the people at your university, and at all of the universities around this country, to be the difference makers. Because, right now I am not optimistic that if we continue shutting down factories and building fast food restaurants that we can sustain ourselves' (Lewis 2013, *pers comm*). The following discussion examines particular themes that have emerged from the research in terms of the mill's significance and its legacy through to today.

What was lost, and what remains?

The wound of Sparrows Point's closure is still open and raw within the community; a large number of former workers are currently fighting for compensation they never received, especially in terms of health care coverage and/or pensions. Unfortunately, a small number of former workers have also committed suicide. While bitterness does exist, it is pinned on the larger forces of global capitalism and free trade, the negligence of the US government and local politicians, the greediness of unions and/or certain people higher up in the chains of command of Bethlehem

[1] It should be noted, however, that the Mill Stories and Mapping Baybrook project teams are working more closely with BMI to plan promotional activities focused on these legacies, including community discussions on the impacts of industrial decline in the museum space.

Fig 10.1 UMBC students interviewing steelworker Randy Duncan at the Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society, Spring 2013. Photo by William Shewbridge

Steel, which ran the mill for roughly a century, and the series of companies that owned it during the past decade. Moreover, at recent community events some steelworkers have also expressed the view that they are also to blame since they 'never fought' for keeping the mill open.[2] Nevertheless, this bitterness, or anger in some cases, does not diminish the importance of the mill in the hearts and minds of those who knew it best. In fact, it serves to illuminate just how much love exists.

Chris MacLarion (2012), who began working in the plate mill of Sparrows Point in 1996 and eventually became Vice President of the United Steel Workers Local Union 9477, articulates well this 'love/hate' relationship in an excerpt from a poem, *Ode to Sparrows Point*, that he wrote after its closure:

> Sometimes saying I miss you just isn't enough. You were more than a woman, more than a friend, more than a companion through good times and bad. You were a creature of your own, a life of your own, with more passion inside of you than any man or woman could hope to understand […] I won't lie. I hated you nearly as much as I loved you. The problem is that I didn't know that I loved you until it was too late. Until you were taken out of my life, stolen from me, and given away to another I didn't realize the passion you created in me. You were loved more than you'll ever know. You provided to me, carried me, and made me the man I am today. You were my family and yet my enemy, the woman that moved me and the woman that inspired me.

In 2012 he posted the 1000-word poem to Facebook one night before going out to dinner. When he returned, he saw that it had 'gone viral', having been shared on Facebook, Twitter, blogs and in emails to friends-of-friends and steelworkers around the country. MacLarion's personification of the mill, and his definition of it as more than a place of employment, is a theme that has also emerged within the project's interviews.

Since early 2013 semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 community members have helped to uncover particular aspects of the mill's significance, as well as components of its enduring legacy. Ranging from 20 minutes to well over an hour, the interviews explored life histories, both personal and shared memories, and responses to its 2012 closure, the reasons why it is believed to have happened and thoughts on what the future of the Sparrows Point peninsula and surrounding areas should look like, to name a few key topics. Overwhelmingly, it has been found that the mill is an extremely significant place for those interviewed, as well as for those not interviewed, but who commented and shared memories at the project's series of community events.

Indeed, as MacLarion's poem illustrates, Sparrows Point was not simply a place of employment but a distinctive world that was thought of as a 'second home', as well as a 'battlefield' at times, by its community; a world that is now lost. The idea that Sparrows Point was a 'home' for those who worked there is mainly based on the fact that co-workers considered each other family, even if they did not get along. Darnell Hamlett, who worked at the mill for 39 years, emphasises the bond that was inevitably created on the job by saying: 'You with someone for 21 days out of a month, 8 hours a day – sometimes 16 hours a day – you form a bond; you become best friends and a lot of time it carries on beyond the job' (Hamlett 2013, *pers comm*). Noting the

2 Mill Stories screening at the Creative Alliance at the Patterson, Baltimore (10 April 2014).

dangerous conditions of the mill, where fatal accidents were commonplace, Darlene Redemann, who worked there for 33 years and is a Dundalk resident, states:

> You knew everybody's children, wives […] If you weren't family down there and stuck together, you are gonna get hurt. So you had to watch out for one another. The saddest part about leaving Bethlehem Steel was that I had to leave all my friends behind. But I said, 'oh, that's no problem, you know we'll all get together at Christmas parties', but now that's gone. How can you take a company that once had 39,000 people, the largest steel mill in the United States, and it's all gone?
>
> (Redemann 2013, *pers comm*)

Troy Pritt started down at the mill in 1997, working a range of jobs from crane operator to quality control. Troy saw his fellow co-workers more as soldiers: 'comrades in combat'. He recalls:

> We depended on one another; we supported one another. That was our battlefield. We marched in every day. And it wasn't about the money, it wasn't about the benefits, as much as it was who we were as a people […] we were steelworkers; we were a culture in our own. That's the way that I have always seen it.
>
> (Pritt 2013, *pers comm*)

Joe-Ed Lawrence, a former Sparrows Point worker for over four decades, also speaks of this camaraderie:

> It was the same as the military; they were always backing you. A friend of mine would come up to me and say that he just got a call: a friend of his just got hurt and they need some blood. 'Any of you guys O-negative?' And just like that, four or five guys would go give blood.
>
> (Lawrence 2013, *pers comm*)

Among numerous themes that have emerged from the project's research, this notion of 'family' brings to light the emotional relationships between people and place that were eventually severed. Moreover, it helps to paint a more nuanced picture of industry, one that is warmer, and also softer, than the more mainstream perceptions of steelmaking. Nevertheless, when the topic of Sparrows Point's legacy was raised (such as 'What do you want people to know about Sparrows Point?'), community members spoke in broader terms, drawing on lessons that they have been taught about US manufacturing and its all-too-hidden struggles by working there and experiencing them firsthand.

For Michael Lewis, the story of Sparrows Point is one that everyone should learn. The fight for workers' safety, greater compensation and equality all played out at the mill. He states:

> It made me realize that nothing was given freely; everything was born out of struggle. A lot of people today take for granted the fact that you get paid vacations – that was something born out of the labor movement. The fact that you get paid if you're off sick, that you have workers compensation laws, that you have employer-provided health insurance, that you have many safeguards in place, all that were met with resistance when lobbied for, that we have in

> place today … that a lot of people think are etched into the fabric, and today I see them being eroded – not with an awl, but with a chisel.
>
> (Lewis 2013, *pers comm*)

In addition, community members also spoke of the struggles for racial and gender equality, echoing the larger social movements that were unfolding outside the mill's gates. Addie Loretta Houston Smith, who started at the mill in the early 1970s, was one of the first women hired since the Rosie the Riveter generation of World War II. Fighting for gender equality, she was one of the co-founders of the Women of Steel organisation of the local union. She remembers: 'There was discrimination against women […] and we fellowshipped a lot in the bathrooms, through tears. I was not a quiet person about it, and it got me in a lot of trouble, lots of times, because I wanted something done' (Houston Smith 2013, *pers comm*). A younger-generation Sparrows Point worker, Lettice Sims, speaks of the road that Houston Smith and others paved for her:

> [The mill] was a male dominated thing and it was hard at first, but I adjusted and it became my family […] Loretta [Houston Smith] was a legend in her own right; she's just like Rosa Parks. She was that stronger person that stood for us to make it easier for us coming in the door because everything was already paved there; I had it easy, believe me […] There were around sixty crane operators and there were two Afro-American crane operators and I was one of them. I thank Loretta and Darlene [Redemann] because they made the path for women like me to come along because that was a hard road that they had to go through and I couldn't endure nothing like that.
>
> (Sims 2013, *pers comm*)

These examples provide insight into the seldom-told stories of the impacts of industry, how it shapes lives, and the living heritage of what remains when it disappears. These stories are made available, with the consent and feedback of each informant, on the project website, which serves as a virtual and ever-expanding 'museum' for community members, scholars and future publics.

Mapping Baybrook: Interdisciplinary Place-based Research and De-industrialisation

The field of American studies arose as one of the earliest interdisciplinary areas of study in the USA as (and partially because) it became an international power and the domestic economy flourished in the period following World War II. The early myth-symbol period of American studies examined, as it simultaneously created, the mythology of American exceptionalism through a search for the 'American mind' (Wise 1979). Blending the methods of literature and historical analysis, early American studies was an endeavour to not only study but also build a single narrative for a country that was a vast amalgamation of peoples and contradictions. Scholars came to recognise that history is indeed a 'foreign country' (Lowenthal 1985) and, in some ways, a fiction through which we filter our current perspectives and experiences (see Maddox 1999).

As with heritage studies, American studies experienced increased reflexivity as it developed. Following the social and political instability of the 1960s, American studies scholarship became more inclusive and sought to challenge the very project of myth-building with which it once engaged. Like other disciplines in the humanities, American studies incorporated the linguistic

Fig 10.2 Mapping memories, stories and current issues in the Baybrook region at a community event at Benjamin Franklin High School, Fall 2015. Photo by William Shewbridge

turn as post-structural, postmodern and postcolonial discourses complicated what and how the US is studied. American studies scholars now work to challenge the very metanarrative the field helped create during its rise in the 1950s (Lipsitz 2001; Castronovo and Gillman 2009).

For example, interdisciplinary place-based research helps to elucidate the connections between people, the built environment and nature. History and cultural studies scholars, such as Donna Haraway (1991), William Cronon (1991; 1996), Hal Rothman (2002; 2004), Julie Sze (2006a; 2006b) and Steven High (2007), have pushed the humanities to challenge traditional oppositions – including technology/industry and nature, machine and human, urban and environmental history and local and global, among others – as a means of exposing the complexities of place. Theories and methods in the field are so varied that a discussion of the type of interdisciplinary methodology used in the analysis of de-industrialisation in general and Baybrook in particular is required (see Fig 10.2). One of the strengths of American studies is its resistance to developing a singular, structural methodology in response to the flexibility necessary to pose big questions, modify the research process and challenge the way of investigating both scholarship and the world.

Andrew Ross has framed the work of American studies as 'scholarly reportage', by which he means a 'blend of ethnography and investigative journalism' (in Williams 2009, 40; see also Ross 1999; 2003; 2004; 2006; 2009). In a sense, he challenges scholars to ask the critical questions of our time and use whatever methods and tools available to find answers. For instance, the main methodology for exploring de-industrialisation in Baybrook is the connection of the histories and contemporary existences of particular geographic locations, such as homes, streets, businesses and bodies of water, among others, to the larger spaces and more abstract concepts of industrialisation, immigration, racism and environmental justice. Essentially, the project leaders and students start out small, by identifying and documenting the stories of particular people and places, and gradually expand out to uncover the broader narratives and forces with which these people and places interact.

Human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 3) describes the complex relationship between place and space in the following terms: 'Place is security, space is freedom; we are attached to one and long for the other'.[3] For Tuan, these are integrative relationships; the pause of place only derives meaning in relation to the movement of space. Tuan's (1974; 1977) work focuses mainly on general understandings of place and space. However, Mapping Baybrook seeks to ground these theories in specific landscapes of industrial development that are often framed by discourses of technology, capitalism and the rational science of the military–industrial complex, rather than humanities issues that deal with emotion, memory and resistance (Zukin 1991; Soja 1996; Soja 2010; Harvey 2000; 2010).

In this light it is necessary for scholars and students alike to learn to see the industrial landscape through a complex interdisciplinary approach that identifies evidence in the landscape itself, as well as to learn how an interrogation of place adds to the scholarly toolkit. Pierce Lewis (1982, 182) explains this process in 'Axioms for Reading the Landscape':

> One can, however, quite literally teach oneself how to see, and that is something that most

[3] Understanding senses of place also involves Tuan's (1974) concept of 'topophilia', the complex emotional bond between people and places.

> Americans have not done and should do. To be sure, neither looking by itself, nor reading by itself is likely to give us very satisfactory answers to the basic cultural questions that landscape poses. But the alternation of looking, and reading, and thinking, and then looking and reading again, can yield remarkable results, if only to raise questions we had not asked before. Indeed, that alternation may also teach us more than we had ever dreamed: that there is order in the landscape where we had seen only bedlam before. That may not be the road to salvation, but it may be the road to sanity.

Significantly, there is no one formula for place-based interdisciplinary research. The theories and methods must come from (and respect) the people, places and practices that are at the heart of such studies.

What remains in Baybrook?

The last residential home in Fairfield, one of the 'lost' neighbourhoods of the area, was located at 3306 Weedon Street. In 2011 the Baltimore Development Company relocated the final Fairfield residents, Jimmy Drake and Debbie Mitchell, and tore down the house. Through place-based archival research into this one building's past, complemented with oral history interviews, the senses of place in the neighbourhood over the past century have become visible.

The deed records for the residence show the early migration patterns of Irish and German immigrants into the industrial peninsula (and Baltimore in general). In 1899 Oswald William Fleisher deeded the land to Ferdinand Kahl, a widower who in 1910 built the house at 3306 Weedon Street. In 1922 Kahl sold the house to John Henry and Isadora Jeffries. The Jeffries were an African American family who migrated to Baltimore from North Carolina. John Jeffries II was born in Fairfield at 3306 Weedon in 1924, and lived in the neighbourhood until his family decided to move to West Baltimore in 1943, when industry began to encroach on the community. Jeffries explains:

> In fact, Fairfield was very well populated. It was built up. But the shipyard during the war came and took just about everything east of Weedon Street. And that's when my father and mother got the impression, nobody told us anything. It turned out that the people who lived there had to vacate. But when they came across the street from Weedon Street where we lived that's when my father and mother got in a hurry and decided before they put us out, we'll move out. That's why we left and went to the city.
>
> (Jeffries 2011, *pers comm*)

In the 1940s the Jeffries sold the house to another family of African American migrants from North Carolina, James and Delia Ann Drake.[4] In 1987, upon James Drake Sr's death, the house went to the Drake heirs, including Fairfield's final resident, Jimmy Drake. Drake Sr's grandson

[4] Jeffries remembers the family moving from Fairfield in 1943 during World War II; however, the deed shows that the Jeffries family sold the house in 1948. Since it was a tight-knit neighbourhood where residents were like family, it may be that the Jeffries and the Drakes worked out a rent-to-own option. The Jeffries and Drake families, like many of the African American migrants from the south to Baltimore who lived in Fairfield, were very close and still remain in touch today.

lived in the house until the condemnation of the property by Baltimore City in the twenty-first century. When asked about the origins of the integrated dynamics of Fairfield, Jeffries replied:

> I heard it said that, to start off Fairfield was established by Germans, Polish and Dutch. When we were youngsters we had quite a few white neighbors, but my father bought that house. This is around the time that Fairfield, when blacks began to move into Fairfield. But the details I can't help you 'cause I was too young to know about it.
>
> (Jeffries 2011, *pers comm*)

As a young boy, John Jeffries knew Reverend John Widgeon from attending his church. Jeffries explained that Fairfield residents referred to Widgeon as 'Pap'.[5] Widgeon moved to Fairfield in the early years of the twentieth century and built the First Baptist Church of Fairfield in 1908.

Reverend John Widgeon was born in 1850 to enslaved parents on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and at the age of 20 moved to Baltimore. He was hired as a custodian at the Maryland Academy of Sciences, the state's oldest scientific institution. Widgeon loved nature and became a valued scientific collector of various bones and fossils for the Academy. Widgeon resided downtown in the city, near the Academy, until he moved out to Fairfield and built the church in 1908. During his time in Fairfield Widgeon also wrote essays for the *Baltimore Sun* on the condition of civil rights in the guise of natural history, such as by using the raccoon (a play on the derogatory term 'coon' for African Americans) and the crow (a play on Jim Crow) as stand-ins for deeper commentary. Widgeon's wife, Lucy, was also the postmaster of Fairfield for many years. In 1921 the Academy awarded Widgeon an honorary Master of Science degree at a ceremony in Fairfield. The rural character and natural environment, as well as the freedom afforded African Americans in such an out-of-the-way and isolated place surrounded by industry, drew Widgeon to Fairfield.

The racial turnover in Fairfield was slow, and for much of the twentieth century the area functioned as a rare integrated neighbourhood, which was not without incident. Just down the street from 3306 Weedon Street the last lynching in the Baltimore area occurred following a contested billiards game in a Fairfield bar between King Johnson, an African American, and two white men on Christmas Eve in 1911. After an argument concerning the game Johnson shot one of the white men and was taken to the neighbouring Brooklyn jail. Later that night a group of men attempted to hang Johnson and then took him outside and shot him dead. No charges were brought in the incident. In 1911 an article in the *Evening Sun* described race relations in Fairfield: 'The blacks call the whites by their first names and the whites, fraternally, greet the blacks in the same spirit. They eat together and live together. Fairfield makes its own laws, settles its own disputes, cleans up its own bloody sawdust and ignores civilization' (in McGuire 1993).[6]

5 When Jeffries was asked if he knew Rev John Widgeon, he replied, 'Yes indeed. Yes I knew John Widgeon. Everybody in Fairfield knew Reverend John Widgeon. Actually, I didn't know much about his background, of course, at that time I was a youngster. When I first met Reverend Widgeons, I guess I was about three or four years old. And Reverend Widgeon not too long after; I can't remember all the dates or the times. But when Reverend Widgeon became too old to perform, my father recommended Reverend Ernest Wesley Williams as the next pastor' (Jeffries 2011, *pers comm*).

6 In 1993 Fairfield resident Jennie Fincher, who moved to Fairfield in 1914 from Virginia, stated: 'It was a mixed neighborhood. Whites and blacks lived together, everybody got along, and there was no trouble at all' (McGuire 1993).

Nonetheless, Jeffries expressed the sentiment that life in Fairfield was indeed tough for African Americans. He referred to it as 'Baltimore's forgotten corner'. He stated that his fondest memory of the neighbourhood was 'when my father and mother decided to leave Fairfield'. However, Jeffries did not really fit in with the city life in West Baltimore where his family settled in the 1940s, and he spent most of his leisure time returning to Fairfield to visit family and old friends. Jeffries describes the difficulties of life in Fairfield:

> Where the boys from Fairfield were concerned they got the unwanted jobs. Sort of like the last hired, the first fired. Most were never hired. But the fertilizer factories were dusty and dirty work. The coal pier, the scrap yards. The oil companies. You couldn't work there. Ship yards. No. Where the ship building dry dock, when the ship was coming for repairs, they would hire the African American boys over to clean the doors of the ship to go in the hole and clean all, to get all the filthy oil out of the ship. Clean up the building room, and when that's done, out they go. So it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy for us down there … . These are hardships we had to endure because of our race. So now I'm going to say this, we made the best of it.
>
> (Jeffries 2011, *pers comm*)

Jeffries recalled the impressive vegetable and flower gardens Fairfield residents maintained and that 'Arabbers', the produce vendors with horse-drawn carts who can still be seen working on the streets of Baltimore City today, often travelled out to Fairfield. He explained how geographic isolation and racism from surrounding communities also produced a strong network for residents:

> We lived so far from the real markets, like the closest market was in South Baltimore. And we wasn't allowed too much shopping in Brooklyn, but they had a meat market in Brooklyn named Hawkin's Meat Market … . But we didn't do too much traveling in Brooklyn or Curtis Bay. We weren't welcomed there. So, on the weekends those of us who had a little transportation would rally the neighbors … . They would pool neighbors and do their shopping in South Baltimore around Cross Street Market. Up and down Light Street or Cross Street and Charles Street … . We also had some of those merchants in South Baltimore would come to Fairfield and take orders and deliver them. Browns Meat Market was one that used to come to Fairfield. They would take orders and deliver them. Take orders and bring them to us. Like I said, not everybody was able to get there. Pooling their resources.
>
> (Jeffries 2011, *pers comm*)

This strong sense of community for African Americans out on the industrial peninsula endured for generations. Jimmy Drake has many fond memories of Fairfield, especially during the 1950s and 1960s when work was plentiful and Fairfield residents established community events, such as baseball games, carnivals and even Sunday afternoon drag races. Both Jeffries and Drake recall the community baseball games, festivals and parties that brought together generations of Fairfield residents.

The area may have been 'Baltimore's forgotten corner', but the neighbourhood had a strong sense of community and often functioned as 'one big family' out on the industrial peninsula, until jobs disappeared and it began its decline. All that remains of Fairfield today are a few

crumbling structures and these enduring memories. Yet the stories of boom and bust, and the subsequent invisibility of residents on the peninsula, offer important lessons about urban industrial development, environmental justice and, most centrally, learning to see urban industrial communities as an important part of the fabric of urban space in the past, present and future. Looking at the histories and stories from one single house in a neighbourhood can make the complex social relationships within industrial places come alive.

A Way Forward

The drive in humanities scholarship to 'illuminate the taken-for-granted groundwork of American culture, to grasp how space and place permeate the grand acts as well as the ordinary events of American life', combined with critical heritage studies and its attention to *living* heritage, offer ways to see de-industrialisation from a new vantage point (Franklin and Steiner 1992, 3). Significantly, it also provides opportunities to amplify the voices of those who are often neglected in the more official, broad-sweeping and over-simplified narratives that tend to dominate the media and 'heritagescape'. Cultures are a constantly changing amalgamation of social practices, practices that leave traces on the built environment – traces that are so often overlooked. For Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories, this is the time to see those traces before they slip away, are bulldozed over or, as in the case of the Fairfield neighbourhood of Baybrook, are turned into a massive parking lot for a salvage company.

Analysing place can often provide another level to the oral histories collected for Mapping Baybrook and the mining of the historical record. Mapping Baybrook pushes Ross's (in Williams 2009) 'scholarly reportage' idea further and embraces what American studies (and other interdisciplinary fields) can help scholars and students to become: public–private investigators. Investigators seek knowledge and to *approach*, as much as possible, the truth by uncovering aspects, facts and details that relate to their subject. They aim to look below the surface, even in the dark and often-hidden landscapes. Investigators must read from various perspectives and always with a sceptical eye: the public–private eye. Primary sources – the maps, census documents, deeds, city directories and periodicals – are, of course, important to the investigation. Nevertheless, as helpful as archives and government documents can be, interdisciplinary place-based research must also involve looking at the *living* cultural landscape and talking to the people who know it best.

The main strength of Mill Stories is its shifting of expertise from the researcher to the informant. To most effectively define, understand, interpret and safeguard living heritage, those who own its meanings and significance must be at the centre of the process. Indeed, researchers and students must be willing to take intellectual risks and 'meet people where they are', in the words of Ross (1991, 191).[7] The stories of industrial workers and residents are often overlooked for sweeping tales of big business and big bucks, and to bring to light the human, sociocultural impacts of industrial decline, as these projects aim to do, requires local-level, community-driven work.

[7] Ross pulls this idea from Stuart Hall's introduction to the first edition of the *New Left Review* in 1960 (see Hall 1960). Ross (1991, 191) writes: 'Much is to be gained from following the suggestion in the editorial of the first edition of *New Left Review*, which states that the task of socialism today is "to meet people where they are, where they are touched, bitten, moved, frustrated, and nauseated", and not, we might add, to tell them where they *should be*'.

The aims of the Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories projects are to know what community members are saying in the bars, the living rooms, the backyards and on the streets. This desire to know what people are really thinking begins to blur the distinction between the public and the private, which is a good place for interdisciplinary place-based research to begin: the liminal space between. Interdisciplinary place-based research – whether drawn from American studies and/or critical heritage studies – is project- and people-based as much as it is focused on 'evidence'. Gaining insight into the connections between all the different aspects of histories, cultures and living heritages maximises good humanities research and helps to strengthen the much-needed counterpoints to the over-simplified narratives that dominate mainstream news and media. In essence, we are seeking to find de Certeau's (1984) *practice of everyday life* by meeting people where they are; however, when the people and places are long gone, we rely as much on our imaginations as we do our research methods and evidence.

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Justin Sikora is a Historic Resource Specialist with OC Parks in Orange County California. He co-manages the interpretation, exhibit development, event planning, volunteer management and internship coordination for the county's historic sites. His current research explores the post-World War II transformation of southern California from agrarian ranch farming to rapid suburbanisation, and the tensions this brought within a profoundly militarised landscape. This investigation will be the subject of an exhibit which features the photographs of a photojournalist from Orange County who documented these changes from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. He completed his doctoral research at Newcastle University, England, at the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies, where his research explored on-site interpretation at historic battlefields and how sites' interpretive presentations influence visitors' valuations of these spaces.

Michelle Stefano studied art history (BA, Brown University, 2000) and museum and heritage studies (MA, Gothenburg University, Sweden, 2004) and completed her PhD in heritage studies at the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University in 2010. Since 2011 she has worked for Maryland Traditions, the folklife programme of the state of Maryland, of which she is now its Co-director. Since 2012, she has led the partnership between Maryland Traditions and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. As part of this partnership she is a full-time faculty member in the American Studies Department, teaching students museum and heritage studies, cultural research and documentation, as well as collaborating with other scholars across disciplines on research projects focused on culture, place and community.

Gemma Tully has worked in collaborative heritage and museum studies for over ten years. Her PhD research developed new strategies for the presentation of Egyptian heritage in European museums, based on consultation with diverse Egyptian communities and European museum visitors. In 2013 she completed a post-doctoral research project exploring perceptions of the Theban Necropolis (Egypt) by its varied stakeholders. Since 2014 she has directed the community archaeology component of the Archaeological Mission to Mograt Island, Sudan. She is also a museum educator and a regular guest lecturer on museum and heritage courses at European universities.

John Tunbridge studied at Cambridge, Bristol and (as Research Fellow) Sheffield Universities, and arrived at Carleton University in Ottawa to teach Urban Geography in 1969. Forty years ago he made pioneering contributions to heritage studies in geography and has since written extensively on heritage and related tourism issues, particularly in waterfront contexts. His research was enhanced by visiting teaching roles at Australian, UK (Portsmouth) and South African universities, and he retired formally from Carleton as Emeritus Professor of Geography in 2008. Since then he has been Visiting Professor at Brighton University and was recently Adjunct Professor at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. Among his many (continuing) publications he has co-authored six books, notably *The Tourist-Historic City*, *Dissonant Heritage*, *The Geography of Heritage* and *Pluralising Pasts*, inter alia with Gregory Ashworth (see above).

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