New Heritage and Dark Tourism: A Mixed Methods Approach to Social Justice in Rosewood, Florida

EDWARD GONZÁLEZ-TENNANT

Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey, USA

Abstract

Scholars of 'difficult heritage' continue to seek new methods for producing meaningful engagements with diverse audiences while simultaneously supporting the goals of social justice. This article specifically examines the potential 'new heritage' has for social justice at dark tourism sites. New heritage is the intersection of new media technologies and cultural heritage, whereas dark tourism refers to the visitation of sites where tragedy or death is a primary aspect of a place's history. The author outlines a mixed methods approach combining virtual world environments and digital storytelling to support social justice. The article's case study focuses on Rosewood, Florida; a once prosperous African American community destroyed during a weeklong episode of violence in 1923. This event ended with the systematic burning of every black-owned building and the complete expulsion of the area's African American population. Dark tourism sites often provoke an emotional response from visitors. A deep emotional engagement with a place's history is often a requirement for engaging visitors. This article closes with a discussion of how new heritage can avoid depoliticizing complex histories of disenfranchisement while eliciting poignant and critical reflection from visitors.

Resumen

Los estudiosos de "legados difíciles" siguen buscando nuevos métodos para generar vínculos significativos con públicos diversos y simultáneamente apoyar las metas de justicia social. Este artículo específicamente examina el potencial que tiene el "nuevo patrimonio cultural" para la justicia social en los sitios de turismo oscuro. El nuevo patrimonio cultural es la intersección de las nuevas tecnologías de medios y el patrimonio cultural, mientras que el turismo oscuro refiere a la visita a sitios que tienen como aspecto primordial de su historia la tragedia o la muerte. El autor delinea un abordaje de métodos

mixtos que combina ambientes de mundos virtuales y la narración digital de historias para apoyar la justicia social. El caso de estudio del artículo hace foco en Rosewood, Florida, una comunidad afroamericana que alguna vez fuera próspera, que fue destruida durante un episodio de violencia de una semana de duración en 1923. El evento finalizó con la quema sistemática de todos los edificios que eran propiedad de personas de raza negra y la completa expulsión de la población afroamericana del área. Los sitios de turismo oscuro muchas veces provocan una respuesta emocional de los visitantes. Un vínculo emocional profundo con la historia de un lugar es a menudo un requisito para generar un vínculo con los visitantes. El artículo finaliza con una discusión de cómo el nuevo patrimonio cultural puede evitar despolitizar complejas historias de privación de derechos a la vez que despierta reflexiones conmovedoras y críticas en los visitantes.

Résumé

Les spécialistes du « patrimoine difficile » continuent de chercher de nouvelles méthodes pour engager un dialogue significatif avec des publics variés, tout en poursuivant les objectifs de justice sociale. Cet article examine plus particulièrement le potentiel que constitue le « nouveau patrimoine » en matière de justice sociale sur les sites de tourisme noir. Le nouveau patrimoine se situe à l'intersection des nouvelles technologies médiatiques et du patrimoine culturel, tandis que le tourisme noir fait référence à la visite de sites dont l'aspect historique principal est la tragédie ou la mort. L'auteur évoque une approche à méthodes multiples qui allie environnements virtuels et récit numérique afin de soutenir la justice sociale. L'étude de cas de l'article se penche sur la ville de Rosewood en Floride, une communauté afro-américaine autrefois prospère qui fut détruite lors d'une semaine de violence en 1923. A la fin de cette tragédie, tous les bâtiments appartenant à des noirs furent systématiquement brûlés et toute la population afro-américaine de la région fut expulsée. Le tourisme noir suscite souvent une réaction émotionnelle chez les visiteurs. L'investissement émotionnel dans un site est souvent indispensable pour impliquer les visiteurs dans son histoire. Cet article se conclut par une discussion sur la façon dont le nouveau patrimoine peut éviter de dépolitiser des histoires complexes de déchéance tout en provoquant des réflexions à la fois critiques et poignantes chez les visiteurs.

Introduction

How can sites of death and suffering contribute to the creation of a fair and equitable society? A growing list of scholars seek to answer this question by developing

innovative interpretations that successfully tread the narrow line between thoughtful reflection and depoliticizing rhetoric. This paper explores the potential new heritage holds for social justice in relation to the African American experience. New heritage is the intersection of new media technologies with the concerns of documenting and interpreting cultural heritage (Kalay et al., 2008). One important method for the creation of a fair and equitable society involves acknowledging the ways intolerance and violence at historic sites influence the modern world (Nieves, 2009). This article is particularly concerned with the interactive potential of new media (e.g., virtual world environments and digital storytelling) as an emerging praxis. New media refers to the 'translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers' (Manovich, 2001: 20). This includes the translation of analog materials (e.g., photographs, movies, and records) into digital formats, as well as the creation of fully digital artifacts, such as digital images and 3D models. The following pages explore the application of new heritage to the tragic history of Rosewood, Florida—once a prosperous African American community destroyed during a weeklong episode of violence in 1923. The community's history remains an important case study and highlights the intersection of difficult heritage and social justice in illuminating ways. The experiences of Rosewood's families, displaced from their homes nearly a century ago, echo stories of loss which are unfortunately common to the minority experience in America, further demonstrating how specific sites often speak to communal and generational concerns stretching beyond a location's immediate geography (Hirsch & Miller, 2011: 12).

The following sections provide an overview of Rosewood's history and an introduction to the Virtual Rosewood Research Project (VRRP). The VRRP utilizes a mixed methods approach to making heritage work accessible to a wider range of audiences by supporting the translation of academic research into public knowledge. After presenting a history of Rosewood and introducing the VRRP, I discuss how Rosewood engages the growing literature of dark tourism, or the visitation of sites where death is a primary aspect of a place's history. I join other scholars who warn against the uncritical implementation of new media at such sites, particularly when it is deployed to naturalize history and depoliticize complex issues of inequality (Brown, 2006).

Rosewood: development and destruction of a community

The former site of Rosewood is located approximately nine miles east of the Gulf of Mexico in western Levy County, Florida (Figure 1). A small village carved out of the swamp and pine forests of north central Florida. The town's name was derived from the large stores of red cedar in the area, the source of the town's initial economic vitality (Dye, 1997: 29). The town itself was never incorporated, but business directories and railroad commission reports state that the town was settled sometime prior to the Civil War, possibly as early as the 1850s (Hawks, 1871: 57). By 1920, after most whites had left, the town had three churches, a black masonic
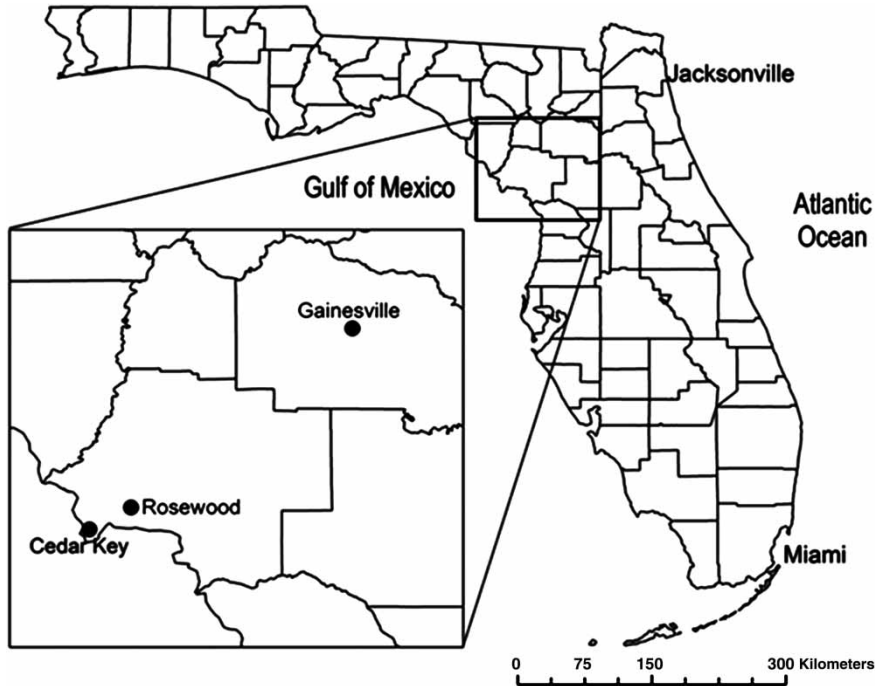
FIGURE 1   The former site of Rosewood.

hall, and a black school where a privately hired schoolteacher named Mullah Brown taught local children. The town had a mix of houses including two-story homes for large families, several two-room homes for smaller families, and a number of one-room shanties scattered across the landscape (Jones et al., 1993: 23).

The economic fortunes of Rosewood steadily declined in the second decade of the twentieth century after the Cummer and Sons Lumber Company built a large sawmill in nearby Sumner sometime around 1915. The post office and other businesses were relocated to Sumner by 1918 (Polk, 1918: 499–500, 550–551). Although these developments affected Rosewood families, the now majority black town continued to survive and the community continued to grow (Jones, 1997: 194). This came to an end the first week of 1923.

The State of Florida was no stranger to racial violence in the years preceding the 1923 destruction of Rosewood. The KKK is credited with either participating in or organizing an attack against black voters in Ocoee, Florida in 1920 (Ortiz, 2005). This attack resulted in the burning of a significant number of homes in the town's black district. In December of 1922 a group of whites lynched three black men suspected of killing a local white school teacher in nearby Perry. Following the lynching, the white mob descended upon a black neighborhood and burned several homes. The story was run for weeks in newspapers across Florida, reminding local whites of the supposed danger local African Americans posed (Jones et al., 1993: 17–18).

What has become known as the Rosewood Massacre or Rosewood Race Riot—referred to as the 1923 Rosewood Pogrom herein—was in fact a weeklong series of events. While commonly referred to as a race riot or massacre, the term 'pogrom' better describes the movement towards complete destruction—either through outright killing or forced removal—that typified the events of early 1923. Pogrom is increasingly acknowledged by other researchers (Lumpkins, 2008) as the more accurate term for such occurrences in America during the 1910s and 1920s. The event began New Year's Day morning after James Taylor left his wife and home for work as a machinist at the Cummer and Sons Sawmill in Sumner. While Taylor was at work, his wife Fannie claimed a black man attacked her at home. At the time, Sumner residents assumed a black man had in fact committed the crime, even though some black families suggested and most researchers today agree that the assailant was a white man with whom Fannie was having an affair (Jones et al., 1993: 25–27). Unfortunately, the fabrication of black assailants by white women represented a growing tradition in America during the late 1910s and early 1920s.

Levy County Sheriff, Robert 'Bob' Walker, organized a posse, and a pack of bloodhounds were used to track the black assailant. By the evening of Monday, January 1st the posse grew beyond the men initially deputized by Walker as individuals began arriving from nearby towns. The mob speculated the assailant must be a recently escaped black man from a local labor camp named Jesse Hunter, who was allegedly seen in the company of Rosewood's blacksmith Sam Carter a few days prior. Hunter became the prime suspect and the mob headed for Rosewood (Jones et al., 1993: 30).

While under considerable pressure, Carter admitted to giving Walker a ride in his wagon to the nearby town of Gulf Hammock. Carter led the growing mob to the spot where he had taken the accused in his wagon earlier that day. When the bloodhounds were unable to pick up the scent, and after Carter was unable to satisfactorily answer the mob's questions, his body was riddled with bullets and his corpse left on the road between Sumner and Rosewood, where it was found the next day. A little over a month later a jury found that Carter had been 'shot by unknown party [or parties]' (Jones et al., 1993: 38), echoing attributions common to the time (Dray, 2003). After Carter's murder, the posse approached other black homes in Rosewood seeking more information. In the growing frenzy the posse nearly hanged Aaron Carrier, who was rushed out of the area. The posse also threatened to lynch Sylvester Carrier, a close relative of Aaron Carrier. However, no further deaths occurred in Rosewood for three more days.

Then, on January 4th a 'party of citizens' went to investigate unconfirmed reports that an unidentified group of blacks had taken refuge in Rosewood (Jones et al., 1993: 38). What spurred these reports is unknown, and it is likely that the group simply wished to attack blacks after what they viewed as an anti-climactic ending to the events of Monday. This group targeted Sylvester Carrier, who was unpopular with local whites for standing his ground against everyday racism. Upon arriving at Carrier's home, two members of the mob, Henry Andrews and C. P. 'Poly'

Wilkerson, approached the house's porch and attempted to enter without permission (Jones et al., 1993: 40). Carrier and others in his home opened fire on the whites and a pitched gun battle commenced.

The battle continued into the early hours of Friday, January 5th. Dispatches were received in nearby communities and additional whites began arriving in Rosewood. These additional arrivals likely included members of the KKK who had been participating in a large New Year's rally in Gainesville, approximately forty-five miles northeast of Rosewood. Reports of wounded white men in Rosewood roused local whites, and they came for revenge and violence. When whites left Rosewood for several hours Friday morning to replenish ammunition and take care of their wounded, African Americans in the town left their homes and fled into nearby swamps. Upon returning later that day, the white mob burned down several homes and at least one church. When they entered the now empty Carrier house they reportedly found the bodies of Sylvester Carrier and his mother, Sarah Carrier, who had been shot during the previous night's gun battle (Jones et al., 1993: 43–44). Lexie Gordon, an African American widow of approximately fifty was reportedly shot in the back as she fled her burning home on Friday (Jones et al., 1993: 44–45). Gordon was the sixth recorded death in Rosewood after Sam Carter, Sylvester Carrier, Sarah Carrier, Henry Andrews, and C. P. 'Poly' Wilkerson. The seventh death took place sometime on Friday when whites shot Mingo Williams in the head as they drove through nearby Bronson headed for Rosewood.

Hearing about the trouble in Rosewood and the African Americans hiding in the nearby swamps, two Jewish brothers who worked for the railroad took their train out of Cedar Key around 4am on Saturday January 6th, 1923 and headed towards Gainesville. They stopped at several towns along the way including Rosewood, Wylly, and Otter Creek to rescue frightened African Americans. According to some accounts, only women and children where allowed on the train. The train took survivors to other cities along the railroad, cities like Archer and Gainesville, where descendants attempted to rebuild their lives, and where many remain to this day (Jones et al., 1993: 61).

That Saturday, James Carrier, brother of Sylvester and son of Sarah, returned from the swamps to Rosewood. He was apprehended by the white mob and taken to the black cemetery. He became the eighth murder as he was lynched near the fresh graves of his brother and mother (Jones et al., 1993: 50–51). On Sunday, the white mob returned to Rosewood one last time and burned the remaining African American homes and buildings (Figure 2).

Case study: The Virtual Rosewood Research Project (VRRP)

The Virtual Rosewood Research Project (http://www.virtualrosewood.com) is a mixed methods approach drawing on new media for heritage and social justice. This is a conscious strategy designed to maximize access to the data and results for other researchers and the public. As an engaged project (González-Tennant,

FIGURE 2   Burnt remains of homes and buildings in Rosewood.

2010), this approach balances the requests of descendants with the rigors of scholarly work. The case study focuses on the virtual methods and delivery options currently available to heritage workers who view new media as an emergent praxis. I begin with a brief overview of virtual archaeology and netnography. This includes engagements with visitors to the Virtual Rosewood Museum and other dark tourism sites in Second Life. I also discuss other technologies, including the complete virtual reconstruction of Rosewood circa 1922 (available online) and the use of digital storytelling for social justice.

Virtual archaeology and netnography

This section outlines two important methodologies employed for this case study. The first concerns the representation of archaeological sites in virtual world environments, commonly referred to as virtual archaeology. The second refers to netnography, or the translation of traditional ethnographic approaches to online settings. My own application of these approaches combines them into a form of online ethnographic archaeology, or netnographic archaeology.

The use of virtual world environments by archaeologists has rapidly grown in recent years (Bawaya, 2010). The term 'virtual archaeology' entered the archaeological vernacular twenty years ago, referring to the use of 3D models to represent archaeological contexts (Reilly, 1990). Common usage during the 1990s centered on visualizing sites and the production of images and short videos. Since the development of Web 2.0 and the ability to deliver interactive content, the creation of virtual world environments allowing visitors to interactively explore past landscapes is defining the widening field of virtual archaeology. Perhaps the best known example of the potential for delivering archaeological content via the internet in an immersive and interactive format is the virtual reconstruction of archaeological work at Çatalhöyük (a Neolithic site in modern day Turkey) in the popular online world Second Life (www.secondlife.com) by professors and students at the University of California, Berkeley (Morgan, 2009). Unfortunately, the Second Life version of this site is no longer in operation, having been removed in 2011 due to

maintenance costs. It is important to note that the creators involved rarely utilized the space for the types of events and tours I describe below.

While virtual archaeology remains primarily concerned with prehistoric and monumental contexts, a handful of projects have focused on the recent past. This includes the virtual reconstruction of a mid-twentieth century African American neighborhood in West Oakland, California, an online world modeled on traditional video games where visitors interact with pre-programmed characters to explore local history (Kalay & Grabowicz, 2007). This type of work is part of a larger movement recognizing the influence video games have upon players, and a conscious effort to harness this influence for positive social transformation (McGonigal, 2011). One of my primary interests regarding new heritage involves the exploration of virtual archaeology for the recent and contemporary past (Buchli & Lucas, 2001), representing a 'dynamic new field which engages critically with what it means to be 'us', with the politics of late-modernity' (Harrison & Schofield, 2010: 186). Recent scholarship challenges archaeologists and heritage workers to explore the use of emerging technologies to document and interpret sites destroyed and erased by supermodernity (González-Ruibal, 2008). New virtual platforms provide researchers with a wide range of methods engaging the public in new and creative ways. These are transdisciplinary approaches allowing researchers to combine traditional methodologies with modern concerns. Heritage scholarship continues to underscore how tangible heritage (e.g., archaeological sites) only 'becomes 'heritage' when it becomes recognizable within a particular set of cultural or social values, which are themselves 'intangible' (Smith & Akagawa, 2009: 6). This realization requires heritage workers employ a more ethnographic engagement within online worlds, mirroring concerns present at physical sites and aimed at gauging how various groups value heritage.

Kozinets (2010: 191) defines netnography as online ethnography providing 'guidelines for the adaptation of participant-observation procedures … to the contingencies of online community and culture that manifest through computer-mediated communications.' This term is used instead of virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000) for a number of reasons. Virtual ethnography as a method tends to focus primarily on the online aspect, often divorcing such research from the non-virtual side of issues and experiences. Also, as Boellstorff (2008: 65–66) cogently argues, qualifying one's methodology as 'virtual' is seen by many as reducing the overall value of such research by confusing the term 'virtual' with notions that such interactions are 'less real' and therefore of less value.

Netnography embraces a mix of methods for collecting and analyzing online data. Many of these involve translating traditional qualitative research practices to the internet, including the use of online surveys and text analysis of forums and websites. New forms of data collection have also become available and include the use of video conferencing for in-depth interviews. Ethical standards for netnographic research are no less rigorous than traditional qualitative research. This requires sensitivity to the wishes of informants. The majority of my netnographic

involvement took the form of participant observation, the principle methodology of cultural anthropology where a researcher participates in the everyday activities of a group. If a quote was not part of a formal interview or I was unable to obtain permission to use it, I use pseudonyms and paraphrase statements. Asking other Second Life users if I could use transcripts of our conversations elicited a mix of responses. For some, the question raised their interest and became an active discussion about anthropological research in online worlds, a common experience encountered by netnographers (Boellstorff, 2008: 76–79). Other users requested to remain anonymous or refused outright to allow their names and quotes to be used. One user I encountered while exploring Second Life's World Trade Center (WTC) memorial had entered only one line into their avatar's profile. Derivations of the following statement are increasingly common in Second Life as more journalists and researchers explore online worlds.

> I DO NOT consent to my instant messages or chat being logged, shared, saved or transmitted in any form on Second Life or outside of it. I consider it an immediate Terms of Service violation as per the Second Life Terms of Service. (anonymous Second Life user)

As an ethical netnographic researcher I honored other user's requests to remain anonymous or not have their conversations cited by either not including their quotes or paraphrasing them. I did not devalue their requests simply because they were made in an online world. I use public statements such as descriptions of sites and locations without specific permission as this information is clearly intended for public knowledge.

I utilized an approach combining virtual archaeology and netnography to simultaneously address the growing concerns of heritage's present value with its ability to contribute to social justice. I utilized this approach in Second Life; a massively multiplayer virtual world (MMVW) launched in 2003 by Linden Labs in San Francisco, California. Joining and participating in Second Life is free, although owning land and building objects requires a monthly fee. Upon joining, users create a profile and avatar. This may or may not include information about the user's actual name, location, job, age, gender, and so forth. Users move around the virtual landscape by walking, running, flying, or teleporting between locations. Land in second life is divided into regions. Users can purchase various sizes of land between small plots of 512 square meters to entire regions of 65,536 square meters. The user community and individual property owners create the majority of sites and objects in Second Life, and the trade in objects and services within Second Life is part of a booming virtual economy linking online currencies with real-world ones (Castronova, 2005).

Social justice education in second life

Dozens if not hundreds of universities, colleges, and primary schools have a presence in Second Life. The majority is experimenting with the relevance of interactive, user-centered technologies for education. Second Life has emerged as the dominant venue

for these explorations. A recent review (Bowers et al., 2010) of forty-two articles published between 2005 and 2008 in EDUCAUSE and the Chronicle of Higher Education showed that most educators see the adoption of Second Life within education as a positive experience. They view the challenges of adopting Second Life in broad terms of adopting any new technology. Most framed their experience as experimental and saw Second Life as encouraging exploratory education to aid students at all levels, including low-income, at-risk students (Harrell & Abrahamson, 2010).

While the majority of researchers celebrate the adoption of online worlds for education, others warn about the (re)inscription of negative identity politics online. Researchers remind us how privilege and whiteness are inscribed in online worlds (Sanchez, 2010). Noticeable examples of privileging whiteness in Second Life include favoring Caucasoid-looking avatars. Racism and discrimination still occur through a variety of visible and invisible ways. Educators using virtual environments for social justice need to find ways of articulating their efforts without reproducing colorblind assumptions about society. Online communities are not immune to the inscription of discrimination any more than physical ones are. Fortunately, a growing tide of non-white, non-male, non-hetero online world inhabitants is addressing these concerns in new and important ways (Nakamura, 2008). These include creating educational sites in Second Life and holding online conferences and forums exploring race and diasporic identity in the digital age (González-Tennant & Cong-Huyen, 2010).

One group which has embraced the potential for social justice education within online worlds is the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community. As of May 2012, the Second Life Destination Guide (secondlife.com/destinations) lists approximately two dozen LGBT friendly locations, many of which include social justice education as a primary goal. The listed sites are only a fraction of the overall LGBT friendly locations, such as the Transgender Outreach Center (TOC). Groups like the TOC are exploring the potential of Second Life to help marginalized communities explore their identities. Recent studies are demonstrating how the exploration of identities considered non-normal by dominant society within virtual spaces help individuals develop real world strategies for expressing and defending their identities (Cabiria, 2008). One drawback to these locations in Second Life is the time commitment required to realize such goals. For instance, one individual I encountered at the TOC remarked that she had been coming to the center for a couple of weeks 'to meet fellow sisters and brothers in gender identity' but had only met one other user besides myself. Social justice sites whose primary approach is to encourage dialogue on issues continue to struggle if nobody visits them or the creators are not involved on a regular basis.

These are concerns that virtual memorials and museums can address in a variety of ways. A site creator does not have to visit these locations as often, as the exhibits are designed to speak for themselves. A virtual memorial is equally capable of eliciting a genuine emotional reaction from visitors. This is an important point for heritage workers who do not visit virtual sites, and consequently devalue them as

inauthentic. Numerous memorial sites exist throughout Second Life. These include memorials to national tragedies and wars (Figure 3) as well as areas where individuals can purchase small plots and create personal memorials in the form of graves or monuments. These smaller, user-created monuments are some of the most emotionally touching locations in Second Life. One visitor I encountered at a child's memorial (Figure 4) put it thusly,

> Visiting the grave of a child in Second Life is a very emotional experience. I am drawn out of myself and transported to the grave, it hits me and is real, as real as visiting a cemetery in the real world. That site turned my desk and computer into a place of meditation, and I cried real tears after reflecting on the loss another human being felt (sic)

Contrary to the assumptions of potential critics, online worlds can be transformative places. The experience of telepresence connects visitors to one another and transcends the immediate technology. The true effect of taking a moment and connecting with the pain and suffering of another person in an online venue is difficult to describe in words, but the emotions it elicits are real and can have a profound effect on virtual travelers (Baym, 2010).

Another successful site in combining an emotional connection with social justice education is the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Second Life (Figure 5). This location combines the emotional connection of a memorial with new interactive methods of education to support social justice. Visitors freely explore the site and history of Kristallnacht. Various points throughout the museum are labeled with
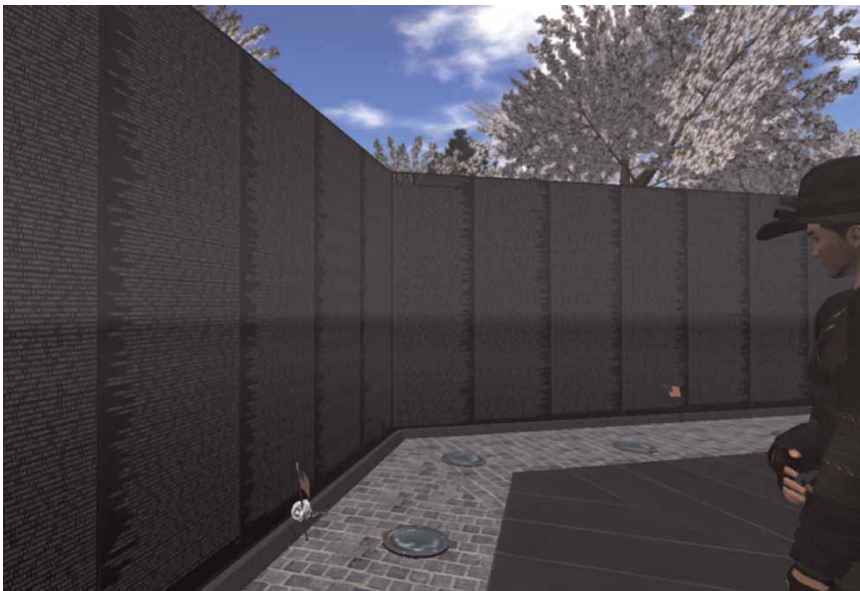

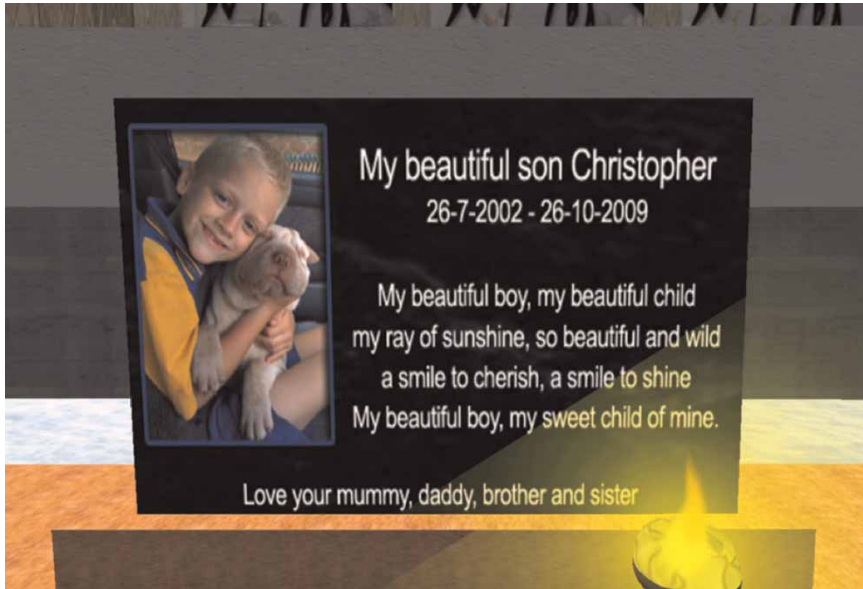FIGURE 3   Vietnam memorial in second life.

FIGURE 4   Child's memorial in second life.

FIGURE 5   Holocaust memorial in second life.

the words 'Witness Point.' At these locations a mix of media can be triggered heightening the visitor's experience. For instance, while visiting a desecrated Synagogue (Figure 6), a visitor can touch a burnt prayer book, activating the following automated message, 'after seizing the archives and valuables, Nazis destroyed the

FIGURE 6   Desecrated synagogue at Holocaust museum in second life.

interiors of synagogues and desecrated religious objects, such as prayer books.' The voices of Holocaust survivors are heard by visitors as they move about the virtual museum, and oral testimonies recount the desecration of synagogues in Germany. The overall mix of audio, virtual buildings, and interactive messages presents a powerful experience encouraging critical reflection concerning the effects of the Holocaust. The engagement of multiple senses makes full use of virtual world environments' potential. The Holocaust Memorial Museum in Second Life successfully presents a tragic history while avoiding the depoliticizing rhetoric often encountered at similar non-virtual sites, a point I return to in my discussion of dark tourism below.

Virtual Rosewood Museum in second life

My use of Second Life for social justice centers on the creation of a virtual museum. The museum's basic design is that of a repurposed historic building converted into a local history museum (Figure 7). The virtual museum allows visitors to experience the site in a number of ways. In the repurposed building, visitors can explore the history of Rosewood through museum-like displays, including a diorama of the town as it stood in the early 1920s. In a second, modern-looking building visitors can take a seat in a theater and watch a twenty-five minute documentary about Rosewood. A smaller structure represents the home of an African American family in Rosewood located next to a timeline of the 1923 riot itself (Figure 8).

Second Life provides, for a fee, a complete package for the creation and delivery of virtual reconstructions of archaeological contexts. Second Life allows a user to control many aspects of their virtual land. For instance, while building and outfitting

FIGURE 7   Virtual Rosewood Museum in second life.

the virtual museum, I kept the land closed to others. Now that the site is open, I have placed restrictions on it, including removing visitors' ability to fly (although this can be circumvented by experienced users with a simple hack). In order to deliver the virtual museum content, all a creator has to do is open the land to visitors. The content is delivered in the same format it was created, without the need for converting between formats or using additional software. This is not the case for the other methods of content creation discussed shortly.

FIGURE 8   Virtual Rosewood Museum in second life.

Another benefit of Second Life for social justice is its effectiveness as an educational tool. Recent studies (Cabiria, 2008; Bowers et al., 2010; Harell & Abrahmson, 2010) demonstrate that educators increasingly view Second Life as an appropriate technology encouraging active learning. My experience with the Virtual Rosewood Museum supports these studies. Within a couple of weeks of opening it to visitors, students from a class on social justice visited the site while I was completing minor details; hanging pictures and setting up a donations box. At first, I did not know the dozen or so individuals exploring the museum in mass were part of a class. I found this out after one of them, Lorrie, approached me. I never found out the name of the instructor or the location of the course. Lorrie simply informed me their teacher gave them 'a list of places that would be good to go learn about social justice, and this was one of them, along with an Islamic culture site and Nonprofit Commons.' The later site, I found out, is primarily dedicated to teaching visitors about sustainable development.

Several weeks later, another set of students visited the site and many of them approached me to ask about my personal opinions regarding racism in American society. Students shared observations like 'I'm sure many Americans are racist but are unaware of it' and 'hopefully as new generations honestly explore issues of racism, they'll gradually be completely accepting of differences.' Comments like these allowed me to address issues of colorblind racism. These conversations demonstrate that dialogue is seen as an effective tool for combating discrimination among today's students. The Virtual Rosewood Museum continues to grow and I am frequently 'in world' to speak with other Second Life users. This includes leading tours for educational groups, like the Virtual Pioneers (http://virtualpioneers. weebly.com/), a group of educators exploring the potentials of virtual world environments for teaching history (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9   Virtual pioneers visiting virtual Rosewood Museum, December 4, 2011.

Whereas Second Life is a particularly useful pedagogical tool, delivering content via traditional internet methods such as websites still reaches the greatest number of individuals. In recent years, the possibilities for web-based delivery of virtual world environments have rapidly grown.

Virtual Rosewood on the World Wide Web

Currently, a handful of programs dominate the 3D industry. These include expensive software packages like 3DS Max and Maya with individual licenses typically costing between US$1,000 and US$3,000+. These are also complex programs with steep learning curves. In the past, the high cost and lack of training limited the use of these programs for archaeological visualization. Today, companies are increasingly creating educational licensing programs. Autodesk, the parent company for 3DS Max, Maya, AutoCAD, and other industry-standard software began offering fully functional educational versions of their software in 2010. Educators and students can download three-year educational licenses for these programs as well as teaching resources by visiting http://students.autodesk.com.

I used Autodesk's 3DS Max to construct a virtual version of Rosewood as it stood in late 1922. The production pipeline for producing Virtual Rosewood began with modeling individual structures. The design of these building was based on information from property documents, census records, historical photographs, and personal accounts. Oral histories also describe the appearance of homes in and around Rosewood.

Mary Hall Daniels—the last living survivor of the 1923 riot that destroyed her family's home—remembered asking her mother and sisters about their house in Rosewood. They explained, 'we had a big two-story house and we still lived there after our father died because it was a lot of us children.' Dr. Arnnett Shakir remembered his mother telling him that relatives, the Carriers, had 'a two-story house and with a porch on it, lace curtains, and manicured lawns. My grandmother also played piano. So, there was a piano in the house.' Earnest Parham, who was 18 in 1923, remembered substantial houses in Rosewood, such as the Bradley's, whose home 'wasn't painted but it was a big substantial house.' Eva Jenkins, who was thirteen in 1923, had one of the clearest memories of her home in Rosewood. She described it thusly:

> Our house had three bedrooms and this big hall down the middle (open hall) and a kitchen and dining room and it was onto the house; a lot of people said their's were separate from the house, but ours was all joined, we had front porch and back porch, and two big old Magnolia trees in the front yard, oak tree with a swing on it. But anyhow they had nice furniture (Eva Jenkins, 1993)

Some of the property deeds include basic building descriptions. Other times, census records provide a basic idea of the numbers of people living in a structure, indicating whether a building was home to a large or small family, used as a boarding house, and so forth. The size and construction of public buildings like stores,

churches, schools, and masonic lodges were fairly standard for the area at the time and photographic evidence of similar historic structures from nearby locations were used as templates.

After building a 3D model, the next step involves texturing it. Texturing, as the name suggests, refers to the placement of colors, patterns, and/or images on the 3D model. It involves a flat image pasted onto a 3D surface. Models are then rendered to increase their photorealism. Rendering refers to the final production of an image or video using the textured 3D model. The process involves complex computer calculations to determine how light would interact with the 3D model as if it were a physical structure, producing shadows and adding additional realism to the model.

Once individual structures are modeled, their placements must be accurately mapped in the virtual landscape. The events of 1923 remain at the very edges of living memory and survivors have difficulty remembering the spatial organization of a town they last saw as children ninety years ago. Reconstructing a virtual version of Rosewood requires, at the very least, a basic spatial template locating structures on the landscape. The ability to reconstruct this spatial information benefits from the development of geographic information systems (GIS). The methodology for reconstructing the spatial layout involves the following steps: (1) identify the appropriate historic property records; (2) translate the boundary information into a GIS file; (3) identify the owner in the census; (4) add census data to the GIS record; and (5) overlay this information on other forms of data including aerial photographs from the 1940s to help visualize the exact locations of structures. In regards to Rosewood, these steps are repeated hundreds of times for a fifty-year period between 1870 and 1930, providing a basic template for the virtual reconstruction.

Delivering high quality 3D content in an interactive way via the web was practically impossible a few years ago. Recent developments such as growing user base and consistent increase in high-speed internet are responsible for changing the practicality of delivering virtual world environments. The appearance of new software facilitating the delivery of 3D content via web browsers is another important development. A popular program for this type of work is the Unity3D game engine. A game engine is a software program designed for the creation and development of video games. Archaeologists and heritage workers are increasingly using game engines to deliver 3D content (Kalay & Grabowicz, 2007; González-Tennant, 2010; Rua & Alvito, 2011). Unity3D easily reads 3D models created with 3DS Max, eliminating the need for costly third-party conversion software. Games engines like Unity 3D also offer convenient methods for uploading virtual world environments to the internet (Figure 10).

Visitors to the VRRP website can freely explore a fully reconstructed version of the town as it existed in late 1922. The availability of the virtual world environment on an easily navigable website is producing a number of engagements. This is primarily due to popular coverage of my research in Florida-based newspapers and

FIGURE 10   Screenshot of web-based virtual Rosewood.

periodicals. A key benefit of managing a website is the ability to monitor visitor traffic. In the day following a Sunday write-up in the *St. Petersburg Times* the website had more than five hundred visitors. Many of these visitors explored the virtual reconstruction of Rosewood and viewed other new media artifacts on the VRRP website. Dozens of visitors watched a twenty-six minute digital documentary also hosted at the website. Digital storytelling is a powerful tool encouraging public engagement with Rosewood's history, and new engagements between researchers and landowners are ongoing.

Remembering Rosewood: Digital storytelling as engaged heritage

Digital storytelling traces its roots to a series of workshops in Los Angeles during the early 1990s. These workshops proved so successful that a Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) was created shortly thereafter and remains the national center for working with digital media to tell personal stories (Lambert. 2009: 1–10). The impulse to share personal lives continues to characterize digital storytelling. Lambert's (2009) recent book by the CDS captures this spirit as well as outlining the components, themes, and methods for creating digital stories.

My goal for adopting a digital storytelling approach as an emerging method of new heritage was motivated by numerous concerns. A major benefit digital storytelling has over traditional film/documentary making is cost. Modern media such as film follow an industrial logic (large scale production studies, expensive equipment costs, necessity of labors), whereas new media provides a post-industrial method that is not regulated by mass standardization. This aspect of new media means its potential as an emancipatory form is literally hardwired into its very structure.

The primary equipment required includes a computer, video capture device, and editing software. A decade ago these three components could easily cost thousands of dollars. Today, low-cost computers and video capture devices are available to people around the world, and individuals or small groups can create digital storytelling projects with little investment. Indeed, most smart phones have the required hardware, software, and sharing capacities to quickly create and share digital stories.

I was also motivated to explore digital storytelling because of my interest in utilizing the internet as a *primary* location for sharing research. The internet as a delivery vehicle allows a wider range of individuals and groups immediate access to scholarly work. The internet also eliminates the cost of producing hard media such as DVDs, further reducing the cost of sharing research.

My utilization of digital storytelling resulted in a twenty-six minute documentary, prepared in consultation with descendants for use in educational tours to the area around Rosewood. A central mission shared by many of the descendants is to keep the story of Rosewood alive. Their interest inspired me to experiment with digital storytelling's emphasis on small-scale, personal perspectives. The resulting digital documentary describes the historical and geographical context of Rosewood from settlement in the mid-nineteenth century until the 1923 pogrom. A significant portion of the documentary provides a glimpse into the lives of survivors between 1923 and today. This portion of the documentary is based on oral history interviews I conducted in 2009 with the last two remaining survivors, one of whom, Robie Mortin, has since passed away.

A particularly touching moment in the documentary occurs when Robie Mortin describes meeting her father for the first time following the riot. Mortin's father recognized early on how the accusation of rape and subsequent attacks on Rosewood residents might turn into large-scale violence. He sent Robie, who was eight at the time, to nearby Williston with her sister. After hearing about the destruction of Rosewood several days later, and not being able to meet up with their father, the two girls assumed he had been killed. They began looking for work and during the following months made their way to Riviera Beach, Florida, north of Miami. They worked as migrant farmers. Robie Mortin shares what happened one morning when she went to a newly constructed church several months after moving to Riviera Beach:

> There was a ditch that separated Riviera Beach from Kelsey City, there was a long ditch there. There had a bridge across it, and of course all the milk houses were there, and the Hearst Chapel AME Church there. They had built that church right on that side of the ditch. So, we went to church, and would you believe our daddy was there, and we didn't know where he was, we didn't know where he was, hadn't seen him in months. We walked into the church that Sunday, and there was our father (Robie Mortin, private interview with author, 2009)

The ability of digital storytelling to share touching moments like these with a wide audience represents an important point for heritage workers interested in social

justice. Robie Mortin's words, delivered in her soft, ninety-four year-old voice, touches viewers in an unmistakable way. The emotional impact of her brief story demonstrates the trials and, in this one example, happy surprises that make a life scarred by trauma bearable.

The honest depiction of research methods in the documentary, aligned with descendant goals, has produced new and exciting engagements. This includes opening up new potentials for traditional archaeology. The landowners who currently live in and around Rosewood are often reluctant to have researchers on their properties. There is a mix of reasons for this. Some landowners simply do not want other folks on their property, while others are excited to learn they 'own a piece of history,' even a tragic history like that in Rosewood. Negative experiences with academic researchers motivate a third group of landowners to deny access to their properties. Until recently, this third group included the individual who owns the property containing Rosewood's historic African American cemetery, Robert 'Bob' Whitener. Upon reading newspaper accounts and viewing the digital documentary, he reached out and invited me to visit his property. He specifically cited the digital documentary as a primary reason for extending an invitation to me and allowing researchers to document the cemetery. Presently, James Davidson (University of Florida) and I are preparing reports and articles based on our documentation of the cemetery and its importance for descendants as they struggle with the tragic history in Rosewood.

Discussion

The utilization of a mixed methods approach to new heritage continues to produce satisfying engagements with students, landowners, and the public. As of October 8, 2012 the VRRP website has been visited by more than 6000 unique visitors in the two years it has been online. I credit the development of a sustainable, long-term project as directly responsible for this success. As part of this ongoing work, I have endeavored to understand the centrality of dark tourism to Rosewood as a site, history, and community. What is the attraction of concentration camps, historic prisons, and locations of racial violence? The answer to this question for a growing group of scholars rests upon the belief that such sites can meaningfully contribute to broad conversations on the nature of intolerance and hatred in the modern world, particularly as a method to destabilize bigotry and engender the creation of a more fair and equitable society. This goal requires the development of a truly democratic culture celebrating difference while looking prejudice squarely in the face and challenging the historical legacy of American disenfranchisement. Sites of death and suffering provide the raw emotional material motivating critical reflection on injustice. Heritage workers must tread softly; otherwise, our efforts may work against these goals.

The investigation of dark tourism, also referred to as thanatourism, is a term originally coined by Foley and Lennon (1996). Dark tourism involves the 'visitation to

places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives' (Tarlow, 2005: 48). A handful of scholars question the ability of these sites to contribute to social justice. While numerous sites claim to provide a critical awareness of intolerance, hatred, and injustice as configured through time, Lennon and Foley's (2000) research suggests many locations accomplish little more than an essentialized, bifurcated view of history as the struggle between good and evil. The conflict between cultural groups is typically couched in nationalist terms, and is often represented as the battle between opposing cultures. The public debate about the so-called Ground Zero Mosque in New York City represents a recent example of how nationalist symbolism was conflated with place and deployed against other cultural groups at such palimpsests (Huyssen, 2003). The possible construction of an Islamic community center several blocks from the former site of the World Trade Center was seized upon by America-based Christian fundamentalists to attack ethnic and religious difference. Fundamentalists cloaked their rhetoric in terms of respect, sensitivity, and *tolerance*. Such debates highlight the difficulty of transforming past trauma into anything other than a superficial justification for the continuation of intolerance at best, overt hatred at worst. The utilization of heritage to support nationalistic sentimentality is by no means restricted to Western contexts. Changi Gaol in Singapore represents one site where distrust and hatred of Japanese actions during World War II continue to elicit strong, nationalistic responses from site visitors (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 13–14).

There are numerous types of sites that fall within the rubric of dark tourism. Some of the earliest forms of travel and community-based leisure dealt with death, including religious pilgrimage (Lennon & Foley, 2000) and gladiatorial games (Stone, 2006: 147). Sites associated with war have recently become the most common form (Smith, 1998). Tourists are also increasingly visiting graveyards (Seaton, 2002), holocaust museums (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 145–161), prisons (Strange & Kempa, 2003), and a growing list of heritage sites associated with African slavery (Dann & Seaton, 2001).

Many authors (Seaton, 2002; Sharpley, 2005; Stone, 2006) suggest that constructing a continuum of dark tourism is useful in analyzing these sites. Stone's (2006) seven-part continuum is particularly useful for highlighting the kinds of sites that lend themselves to social justice. His light to dark spectrum differentiates between a site's intended goal (entertainment or education) as well as its ability to create an emotional connection between sites and visitors. On the lighter side are sites *associated* with death. These sites have a low political value because they are primarily oriented towards entertainment and are perceived as inauthentic. On the darker side are sites *of* death having a higher political value because they are primarily oriented towards education and perceived as authentic. His continuum, arranged from lightest to darkest, includes dark fun factories, dark exhibitions, dark dungeons, dark resting places, dark shrines, dark conflict sites, and dark camps of genocide. Dark fun factories are essentially amusement parks whose primary focus is to

entertain. They are seen as inauthentic and include attractions like the London Dungeon. Dark exhibitions remain entertainment-oriented while offering general educational opportunities. A popular example is *Body Worlds,* a traveling attraction seeking to improve anatomical instruction through the display of plasticized bodies. Dark dungeons center on converting historic prisons and asylums into modern attractions and present an even mix of entertainment and historical education. Eastern State Penitentiary in Pennsylvania is a former prison turned tourist destination, one increasingly associated with paranormal activity. Dark resting places involve romanticized cemeteries associated with gothic architecture and literature. Edgar Allen Poe's grave in Baltimore, Maryland is a key example. Dark shrines are associated with recent death and are initially sites of commemoration, which can become sites of tourism, such as Ground Zero in New York City. Dark conflict sites center on war and battlefields and associated museums whose primary purpose is education. Finally, dark camps of genocide represent 'those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main thanatological theme' (Stone, 2006: 157). These are sites *of* death possessing a high political value stemming from the site's powerful emotional content and ability to address modern concerns of violence, death, and intolerance.

Stone's continuum is useful for identifying which sites have the greatest potential for social justice. These are sites *of* death that elicit strong emotional reactions from site visitors. The emotional connection provides an opportunity for educating the public about the nature and history of violence in the past.

The struggle to find sites successfully confronting past trauma and directly engaging visitors in ways supporting critical reflection produces mixed results. Lennon and Foley (2000: 21) view the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance (MOT) as a site successfully drawing on historic violence to support critical reflection. At this museum, visitors are confronted with various media (e.g., photography, video, oral history recordings) in an attempt to support critical reflection among visitors regarding their own attitudes towards racial and religious difference. Brown (2006) provides a powerful counterpoint to Lennon and Foley's examination of the MOT. Brown's ethnographic engagement with the museum draws upon numerous visits over an extended period of time. Her analysis better represents the imposing architecture of the MOT, the overly structured nature of tours (visitors are not allowed to roam freely through the museum), and the deep ambivalence produced by a bewildering array of media installations. The MOT's 'extensive trafficking in stereotypes and clichés' (Brown, 2006: 120) depoliticizes its pro-Zionist agenda, naturalizes history, and collapses complex categories of identity (e.g., race, religion, nationality) into a struggle between good and evil.

Dark tourism sites struggle to successfully confront the legacy of social inequality as they elicit strong feelings of anxiety in site visitors. This tension arises as such places question the very foundations of modern society. Anxiety about the project of modernity is difficult to avoid in places like World War II concentration camps. These sites question 'key tenets of the project of modernity such as progress,

rationality, science, technology, industrialization and liberal democracy' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 21). Visitors to these sites are confronted—through personal artifacts, photographs, and interpretive signage—with a primary example of how rational planning and modern industry are prerequisites for state violence. If successful, dark tourism sites should encourage thoughtful tourists to confront the legacy of modernity, echoing concerns of critical philosophers who have questioned the role of rationality and state bureaucracy for more than half a century (Horkheimer et al., 2002).

The commodification of the past has become increasingly common in a world where global telecommunications technologies can instantaneously promote death as a heritage resource and destination (Palmer, 1993). The consumption of dark tourism is fueled by the late twentieth century's revolution of speed and new modes of communication. Augé's (1995) discussion of supermodernity is illuminating for dark tourism. His discussion of non-places—supermarkets, airports, expressways—resonates with the sites of death and suffering. Non-spaces are places whose primary role revolves around consumption and communication, while spaces refer to those traditional places like the home where social bonds (e.g., familial, religious) constitute a central function. The separation of place/non-place is not a value-laden dichotomy, but an analytical tool demonstrating the blending of public and private. In regards to dark tourism, the separation between non-spaces and spaces is apparent in the differentiation between sites *about* death and sites *of* death. Recognizing this difference is important if a site is to successfully contribute to social change by eliciting an emotional connection between visitor and past victim (Miles, 2002). The ability to produce this emotional connection is affected by forces beyond the individual site, interpreter, or visitor. Much in the same way archaeological sites are meaningful insomuch as they relate to present concerns (Smith & Akagawa, 2009: 6), the emotional connection at dark tourism sites results from the influence of current events (wars, terrorism, public debates) and popular culture (movies, television) which lend 'moral meanings to the sites of death and the macabre' (Stone, 2006: 150). Creating an emotional connection between visitor and site history is important, but alone it does little to provide the public with the tools and perspectives useful for understanding the present implications of the past.

Groups like the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience provide examples of dark tourism sites that contribute to critical reflection. Member museums of this coalition struggle between the tensions of respecting the concerns of ex-residents and descendants with a growing dark tourism industry. This is a key issue facing the District 6 Museum in South Africa, which grapples the problem of maintaining a 'respectful, private atmosphere for its primary community of ex-residents' while sharing lessons of resistance to state violence with tourists (Ševčenko, 2011: 244). My exploration of new media is not designed, as in places like the Museum of Tolerance, to subject visitors to 'sensory and emotional overload' while simultaneously delivering 'an intense moral-political didactism' (Brown, 2006: 125). At its core, the VRRP seeks to create a personal engagement with the history of Rosewood, the

town as an historic place, and the people who lost so much during the first week of 1923. I have made an effort to not overwhelm visitors with technology. Other projects (Kalay & Grabowicz, 2007) include non-player characters (NPCs)—preprogrammed avatars that react to visitors—to drive a game-like experience of a vanished physical and social landscape. A virtual world environment devoid of NPCs promotes individual exploration. Alternatively, the Virtual Rosewood Museum in Second Life is available if group exploration is desired by educators or other interested parties. The available information is delivered in various formats inviting visitors to freely explore various aspects of Rosewood's past and present. The digital documentary also avoids stereotypical representations of Rosewood as a site only of tragedy. This is a common complaint descendants levy against John Singleton's 1997 film *Rosewood*. The fast-paced movie overwhelms audiences and decontextualizes the 1923 events. Oral histories and a deeper history contextualize the full range of experiences before, during, and after the 1923 pogrom. Ultimately, my use of new media deviates in many ways from locations where multimedia exhibitions engulf the visitor's mind, where 'power and history make little or no appearance in representations or accounts of ethnicized hostility or conflict' (Brown, 2006: 109). The VRRP explores the complex history of African American disenfranchisement with a thorough contextualization of Rosewood's history, as both a location and a community.

The future of virtual Rosewood

The VRRP and associated website is part of a larger, multi-year and multi-institution endeavor to document Rosewood's history, the Rosewood Heritage Project. This project was launched in 2012 with the documentation of the African American cemetery (Figure 11). This project builds upon the work discussed in this article and combines traditional archaeology, documentary research, oral history, and new media applications to further explore the intersections of heritage work and social justice. Readers are invited to follow this work by visiting the VRRP (http://www.virtualrosewood.com) or joining the Rosewood Heritage Project's Facebook page.

A primary goal for the immediate future involves the implementation of common principles from the Sites of Conscience group. These principles are focused on physical sites and museums, but many of these practices can be implemented for new heritage. The principles outlined by Sites of Conscience include posing open-ended questions to stakeholders and visitors, providing different constituencies with different modes of engagement, developing youth programs, and providing information to patrons about similar sites and groups (Ševčenko, 2011: 251–252). We anticipate crafting a series of educational guides for high school and undergraduates. These guides will focus on the role of race riots in denying African Americans from political participation and the development of modern structural violence as one ramification of historic racism.

FIGURE 11   Gravestone in Rosewood's African American Cemetery

Conclusion

The goal of this article is to explore emerging intersections between new heritage and social justice. A mixed methods approach to new media combining online worlds, virtual world environments, and digital stories represents a pedagogical toolkit. The forms of knowledge produced by the synthesis between heritage and new media accomplish a number of things. It highlights the experiences of descendants and other interested parties, provides tools for critically engaging with history and media, and offers researchers new techniques for crafting the way historical knowledge is accessed and interpreted by others. In many ways, new media offers a new set of tools not found in the master's house (Lourde, 1984: 110–113) and therefore potentially very liberating. New heritage represents a constellation of approaches and technologies not regulated by gatekeepers and tradition, although certainly in dialogue with them. Obvious and sizable obstacles to full participation with new heritage include the manifestation of a digital divide as well as the (re)inscription of negative identity politics within virtual spaces (Nakamura, 2008). However, just as the printing press was utilized in the past to democratize knowledge, so too can we teach ourselves and others to draw on new media methodologies for the same. Only time will tell if this optimistic viewpoint will produce transformative fruit or if mass standardization will assert itself and crush individual creativity and expression. I have chosen the former and hope the Virtual Rosewood Research Project will prove a useful and reproducible model for other sites of difficult heritage.

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