SOMETHING BLUE: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PHYSICAL CONSERVATION AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE REVIVAL OF INDIGO-CULTURE IN THE NORTH AMERICAN SOUTH

by

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(Under the Direction of Eric MacDonald)

ABSTRACT

This thesis introduces a new two-part framework for the revival of indigo-culture in the North American South. The first part facilitates assessment of the craft, and the second part facilitates revival. Current frameworks for the revivals of other crafts and arts, such as music, are inadequate to encompass the cultural diversity involved with this craft, especially the diversity that exists in the South. This thesis describes the historic nature of indigo-culture in the South, assesses its current conditions, and introduces the framework for the revival of indigo-culture.

INDEX WORDS: Indigo, Indigo-Culture, Natural Dyeing, Vat Dye, Craft Revival, Heritage Crafts, Revival Framework, Colonial America, American South

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DEDICATION

To David, thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Indigo-culture is the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of a craft that encompasses the plants and processes that result in dyeing with the natural dye indigo. This natural dye produces a profoundly blue color that has been sought after throughout history. Indigo has relevance for the North American South as one of the three main cash crops (the other two were rice and cotton) during the 1700s. This craft is presently in a revival phase in the South and this thesis proposes a new framework to guide this revival.

Craft revival is a cyclical system of preservation born out of a renewed interest in an old craft. There are extant systems for the assessment and preservation of cultural heritage, but they are generally systems designed and authorized by governmental bodies and often require specialist knowledge to use. The aim of this proposed framework is to focus attention first on what the craft is and then to focus on how to revive, and thus preserve, the craft. This framework also does not necessarily require specialist knowledge or learning for its use thus, making it accessible for diverse groups and useful regardless of education.

Indigo is an excellent candidate for this kind of framework for revival because it has a diverse and culturally complex history in the United States. Practitioners come to the craft of indigo for many reasons, its color, its unusual processing method, its history. Like many crafts, revival and preservation are often secondary to the love of the practice itself. This particular craft has deep historical connections to the southern United States, and those connections reach even

further back into the histories of indigenous Americans and Americans of European and African ancestry.

Indigo is a profoundly blue natural dye that has been used to enhance skin and material culture since prehistory and has become one of the world's most ubiquitous colors through denim and blue jeans.[1] Three hundred years ago indigo became a valuable commercial crop in the southern colonies of North America. A combination of circumstances led to a decline in the production of indigo after about 1800. Now, during the first quarter of the twenty-first century, a disjointed revival of indigo-culture is occurring in the US South.

The roots of indigo-culture in America include many diverse cultures, and this diversity brings its own challenges for preservation. Native Americans, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, Germans, Moravians, and various West African tribes were all historically involved in indigo-culture in the South. Navigating these distinct histories, honoring each without diminishing any while maintaining each cultural story within its place in the larger history is a challenge, not only for historians but also for revivalists and preservationists.

The greater part of indigo-culture is intangible. It is the knowledge, the meanings, the skills, and the rituals, be they agricultural, religious, or otherwise, that work together to create the final products of dye or dyed textile. Balancing the preservation of indigo-culture's intangible cultural heritage and diverse histories with contemporary artistic necessities of creative expression, and other necessities of economic viability for professional practitioners and ecological sustainability can be a difficult process. This process could benefit from a structure that facilitates this balance.

[1] Dominique Cardon, *Natural Dyes: Sources, Tradition, Technology, and Science* (London: Architype Publications, 2007).

Craft revival carries with it the risk of sacrificing historic integrity in favor of popularity. In a time when technology enables access to the techniques, methods, and patterns of myriad other cultures, heritage craft revival is a balancing act between creative freedom and historical authenticity. Without a guide or framework, it is possible to lose one at the expense of the other.

No scholarly literature specifically addresses the revival of indigo-culture in North America or the South. In addition, no framework for the revival of indigo-culture exists that could guide this craft revival in the South. It is this area of indigo-culture that is addressed by this work.

Research Questions

To safeguard against the loss of cultural resources through the process of revival it is necessary to ask how the tangible and intangible cultural resources related to indigo-culture can and should be conserved and revived? To help answer this question two further questions must be asked. The first is "What is the history of indigo-culture in the American South?" The second vital question is "What remains of indigo-culture in this region?" Tangible and intangible cultural resources may require different treatment, and so it may be necessary to divide these into two categories. The question then is, how can the tangible and intangible resources of indigo-culture in the South be preserved and revived?

In seeking answers to these questions, others may arise, such as, is revival of indigo-culture part of a greater movement in the revival of heritage crafts and, if so, what can these other revivals tell us about how indigo-culture might be successfully revived?

Limitations and Delimitations

Although much has been accomplished through the research completed for this thesis, several key limitations have also been identified. Lack of data was a major limitation in gathering historic context and in investigating revival of indigo-culture. Much of the literature concentrates on the commodities of cotton and rice rather than on indigo. Where indigo-culture is a central theme in an article or book, South Carolina is the state most commonly identified with it. There is evidence of the importance of indigo-culture for other states, but these small pieces of information are scattered among many articles and books. An example of this is in David Rembert's "The Indigo of Commerce in Colonial North America," which has one reference to North Carolina, three references to Georgia, four to Florida, none to Louisiana, and twenty-nine to South Carolina. A search for "indigo revival" in the University of Georgia Libraries search engine yielded zero results. Other search terms such as "indigo colonial America," "indigo 1700s," and "indigo Louisiana" yielded no more than two or three useful articles or books. The search term "indigo Georgia" almost exclusively yielded results on the indigo snake. Consequently, it was necessary to consult articles on other kinds of craft revival that could be compatible with indigo-culture revival.

Data on small farms and homesteads that cultivated indigo during the colonial period was sparse. Although a thorough search of available records and census data may shed light on this subject, this was not within the scope of this thesis. Because of the lack of ready data on small-scale cultivation and production, this thesis concentrates on the industrial, plantation-level, commercial scale of indigo cultivation and production. Evidence of commercial dyehouses within the major period of significance of 1709–1800 was elusive and would require a more concerted search of local records than was possible for this thesis. There is evidence that

Moravians in North Carolina traveled to Pennsylvania for training in indigo dyeing, which indicates that commercial indigo dye enterprises must have existed despite the lack of ready evidence. [2]

Very little data is available on any Native American indigo-culture. The literature shows clearly that West Africans were specifically chosen for their skill with indigo cultivation and processing, which could suggest that Native Americans were enslaved to work on indigo plantations for similar reasons.[3]

Methodology

It was necessary to separate the tangible resources of indigo-culture from the intangible ones. This division made it easier to consider the current conditions of indigo-culture in the South and to understand the different methods for preservation that may need to be employed. The main accepted definition of intangible cultural heritage is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the United States, the main definition for tangible cultural heritage is defined by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. These definitions define treatments for the preservation of cultural resources specific to their nature as tangible or intangible.

[2] Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 4, *1780–1783* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Print Company, 1930), 1517.

[3] Melanie McKay and Maaja Stewart, "Black, White, and Indigo: African Knowledge in the Grandissimes," *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* 14, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2007), 106–29.

Tangible cultural heritage is described by the US National Park Service as all objects and places that can be touched.[4] Examples of tangible heritage include things like buildings, structures, monuments, and objects. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) encompasses the skills, knowledge, histories, actions, customs, rituals, representations, practices, performance, and expressions that can be associated with tangible heritage. Examples of intangible cultural heritage include dances, festivals and celebrations; the process of craft production; and physical making. Together, tangible and intangible cultural heritage combine to create what the UNESCO UK website describes as "The Memory of the World."[5]

Beyond the separation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the three main methods utilized in the research of this thesis were literature review, interview, and field research. A fourth method involved theme identification and utilized a brainstorming method to reduce the many themes drawn from the literature on craft to a few manageable elements that would help focus the formulation of the framework on revival.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed could be grouped into several categories. One category comprised the history, science, botany, processes, and techniques of indigo-culture gathered from sources such as historical documents, archival collections, historic newspapers and advertisements, and books and articles on indigo-culture and colonial social history, agriculture, economics, and commerce. A second category comprised the history of indigo-culture in the southern United States gathered from sources similar to those encompassed in the first category. Colonial,

[4] National Park Service, "Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage," Heritage Initiatives: Cultural Resources National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/heritageinitiatives/tangible.html, accessed May 2020.

[5] UNESCO UK, "The Memory of the World," https://unesco.org.uk/.

twentieth-century, and twenty-first century manuals and books on dye-craft were also useful. Concepts, theory, and systems relating to historic preservation and tangible and intangible cultural heritage formed a third category, with data gathered from books and articles as well as websites of various historic preservation organizations such as UNESCO, Historic England, and the Heritage Crafts Association. Finally, concepts, theory, and systems relating to revival, specifically craft, craft brewing, and music, were gathered from books and articles on the subject.

Interview

An informative interview with indigo expert Donna Hardy provided leads to further literature and the names of indigo-related organizations and companies, the investigation of which contributed to this thesis. Hardy is the founder of the International Center for Indigo Culture and of Sea Island Indigo. She has also worked with Dr. Brian Ward at Clemson University's Coastal Research and Education Center in Charleston, South Carolina, to preserve the naturalized *Indigofera suffruticosa* found on Ossabaw Island. Hardy is a prominent figure in the revival of indigo-culture in the South.

Field Research

The field research involved participation as an assistant on three indigo workshops and a Family Day at the Georgia Museum of Art. The first two workshops were conducted on Ossabaw Island with Heather Powers and in partnership with the Ossabaw Island Foundation. The third workshop was conducted at Indie South, a retail store in Athens, Georgia. Techniques of processing and dyeing were learned during these workshops, (see Appendix A), that informed the literature with practical knowledge and aided the structuring of theme identification for the

four elements of craft and the framework for craft revival. This knowledge built on previously gained knowledge and dyeing skills and illustrated the practical challenges of cultivating, processing, and dyeing with natural indigo. Observation of the participants enables a better understanding of the main motivations and interests of those participants with regard to indigo-culture. These workshops also confirmed that high-quality, historically informed transmission of craft skills is vital to the revival and preservation of indigo-culture.

Participation in a Family Day at the Georgia Museum of Art illustrated the challenges of the curation and exhibition of the physical artifacts of craft. The exhibition also made clear how demonstrations of craft, like the one performed by Mary Lee Bendolph and her fellow Gee's Bend quilters, can be helpful, especially when presented with explanations from the craftspeople themselves. This experience confirmed that physical skills require a physical interpretation.

Literature Review

History, Science, Botany, Processes, and Techniques of Indigo-Culture

There is a large body of research about indigo mostly focused on areas such as history and art history, technical art history (largely in the field of historic textile restoration), ethnobotany, anthropology, geography, science, and ecological sustainability. Authors such as Dominique Cardon, Catherine Legrand, Jenny Balfour-Paul, and Jamieson B. Hurry have contributed enormously to the understanding of the history and the current conditions of indigo-culture in the world. Theirs are the seminal texts on global indigo-culture.[6]

[6] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*; Catherine Legrand, *Indigo: The Color That Changed the World* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2013); Jenny Balfour-Paul, *Indigo* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998); and Jamieson B. Hurry, *The Woad Plant and Its Dye* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930).

Hurry's *The Woad Plant and Its Dye*, published in 1930, shows that woad farming was still in existence, albeit on only two farms in England, at the time of printing. He also states that woad was still being used to dye the fibers for tweed in the Highlands of Scotland. *The Woad Plant and Its Dye* is still the seminal book on woad in Britain and, though not so helpful with indigo-culture in America, it did provide some excellent historical background for the political dynamics of colonial America from a British point of view.

Cardon has written probably the most important and comprehensive text on natural dyes, *Natural Dyes: Sources, Tradition, Technology, and Science*. Indigo-culture is one of twelve detailed, superbly researched, and informative chapters on a wide range of natural dyes. She focuses on the chemistry, botany, and historical importance of the various species of indigo. Chapter Eight, "Cocaigne to Cowboys: Indigo Plants, Indigo Blues," contains the most comprehensive explanation of indigo biochemistry and includes scientific descriptions of each of the various species. Her book *The Dyer's Handbook*, a translation of an eighteenth-century dye master's record book, was a rare glimpse of a dye master's recipe book. Cardon's books have been most useful for their technical expertise and explanation of the biochemistry of indigo. Her sections covering indigo's historical significance were also very useful. [7]

Catherine Legrand and Jenny Balfour-Paul have specialized in global indigo-culture and both concentrate more on the history and current conditions of the craft than on the chemistry. Legrand organizes her exploration of indigo by geographical area, whereas Balfour-Paul organizes her work more by history and culture. Legrand's book is part record of her travel to the various indigo producing areas of the world. Balfour-Paul has a chapter on the various indigo

[7] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335–408; and Dominique Cardon, *The Dyer's Handbook: Memoirs of an 18th-Century Master Colourist*, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016).

species, one on the history of indigo, and one on decorative techniques. Other chapters cover indigo-dyeing worldwide, medical uses, and its use as a pigment and ink. Legrand's book was particularly useful for its excellent photographs, as was Cardon's *Natural Dyes*, and its concentration on each geographical area that allowed me to see immediately the differences and similarities in various indigo traditions. Balfour-Paul's *Indigo* contained a vast quantity of information and offered an access point for other related and relevant literature.[8]

While none of these books specifically addresses indigo revival, they do suggest the multiple levels of historical significance of indigo-culture, globally and within the United States. These books also informed areas of this thesis regarding the biochemistry of indigo and the ubiquitous nature of the blue dye and its socio-cultural-spiritual meanings within European and African culture.

History of Indigo-Culture in the Southern United States

These books by Cardon, Legrand, Balfour-Paul, and Hurry offered a global historical perspective on indigo-culture. These writers provide an overview of indigo-culture's global importance and its significance to the various root cultures and cultural groups from which the indigo-culture of America developed. This world history offers a foundation and perspective from which to view indigo-culture in America and its place in the production of the American story and identity. Andrea Feeser's *Red, White, and Black Make Blue* was an excellent introduction to the history of indigo-culture in the colonial South, whereas Florence Pettit's

[8] Legrand, *Indigo*,; and Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*,89–113, 11–88, 147–76, 115–46, and 217–28.

America's Indigo Blues illustrated that the North's relationship with indigo was of a very different nature than the South's.[9]

Kay and Lorie Lee Triplett's *Indigo Quilts* contained some information that promised to offer a new perspective on a genre of indigo resist-dyed textiles thought to have originated in America in the 1700s.[10] Their work on indigo received the Lucy Hilty Research Grant and the Meredith Scholar Award; however, some of their assumptions appear inaccurate and easily misconstrued. They intimate that European settlers may not have had the technology to produce the textiles referenced in *Indigo Quilts* and that the calicos may have been produced by West Africans.[11] There is, however, ample evidence to show a high level of dyeing and printing skill present among European settlers in the American colonies in the 1700s. This evidence can be found in articles such as Kimberly Wulfert's "The Man of Many Vases," about the eighteenth-century Philadelphia calico printer John Hewson.[12] Giorgio Riello, in "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," details how Europeans took Indian knowledge of calico printing during this period and developed the technology on which modern textile printing is based.[13]

Indigo Quilts was more of a starting point for further research than a reference book and led to a deeper look at the differences between indigo-culture in the North and South. Answers were found by revisiting Florence Pettit's *America's Indigo Blues: Resist-printed and Dyed*

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[9] Florence H. Pettit, *America's Indigo Blues: Resist-Printed and Dyed Textiles of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Hastings House, 1974); Andrea Feeser, *Red, White, and Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013).

[10] Kay and Lori Lee Triplett, *Indigo Quilts: 30 Quilts from the Poos Collection* (Concord, CA: C&T Publishing, 2015), 4.

[11] Triplett and Triplett, *Indigo Quilts,* 4–45.

[12] Kimberly Wulfert, "The Man of Many Vases; John Hewson, Calico Printer," *Folk Art,* Fall 2007, 60–61.

[13] Giorgio Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), 19–24.

Textiles of the Eighteenth Century and Chapter Three, "Indigo's Heyday, the Downfall of Woad and Salvation by Denim," of Jenny Balfour-Paul's *Indigo*.[14] These books referenced John Leander Bishop's 1861 book *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860,* which detailed the rise of indigo-culture in the American colonies and offered surprising details of the very early introduction of woad and indigo cultivation and dyeing to America.[15] Articles such as Wulfert's "The Man of Many Vases" and Nancy Andrews Reath's "A Philadelphia Calico Printer," about noted patriot textile printer John Hewson, gave a fuller picture of the importance of indigo and calico printing and dyeing in colonial America.[16] These articles also shed some light on the impact of indigo and indigo resist printing on the American identity and the connections between calico printers such as John Hewson and anti-British political activism.

G. Terry Sharrer's 1971 articles "Indigo in Carolina" and "The Indigo Bonanza, 1740–90" introduced some of the deeper implications of the British Acts that led the colonies of America into the Revolution. Sharrer also detailed the destruction caused in South Carolina by the British during the American Revolution and the consequential effects of that destruction on indigo cultivation, processing, and commerce at that time. Asa Ellis's 1800 book *The Country Dyer's Assistant* shows that dyers were expressing the importance of a quality textile trade by Americans for an American market even twenty-three years after the Revolution.[17]

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[14] Pettit, *America's Indigo Blues*; and Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 41–87.

[15] John Leander Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Edward Young and Company, 1861), 350.

[16] Kimberly Wulfert, "The Man of Many Vases: John Hewson, Calico Printer," *Folk Art* (2007), 58–61; Nancy Andrews Reath, "A Philadelphia Calico-Printer," *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 26, no. 138 (1931): 25–28.

[17] G. Terry Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza in South Carolina, 1740–90," *Technology and Culture* 12, no 3 (July 1971), 447–55; G. Terry Sharrer, "Indigo in Carolina, 1671–1796," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 72, no. 2 (April 1971), 94–103; Asa Ellis, *The Country Dyer's Assistant* (Massachusetts: E. Merriam and Co., 1798).

D. H. Rembert's 1979 article "The Indigo of Commerce in Colonial North America" discussed the importance of learning the species of indigo grown in colonial America for reintroduction and revival of indigo-culture in the South.[18]

John J. Winberry's 1979 article "Indigo in South Carolina: A Historical Geography" and Melanie McKay and Maaja Stewart's 2007 article "Black, White, and Indigo: African Knowledge in the Grandissimes" provided a good grounding on the central role of indigo in the colonial South. Initially, South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina seemed to be the main areas of indigo-culture in the South until the McKay and Stewart article led to an investigation of the cultivation of indigo in other states. McKay and Stewart claim that the French were growing indigo successfully more than twenty-five years before Eliza Lucas Pinckney successfully grew her first successful crop in 1744, confirmed in a statement in Jack D. L. Holmes's 1967 article "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas." The Holmes and the McKay and Stewart articles showed how indigo and slavery were intwined by referencing letters written by the French colonists to the French authorities specifically requesting slaves with expertise in indigo cultivation and processing. These requests and the success of indigo-culture in Louisiana led to the French colonists chartering their own ships to West Africa in search of expertise in indigo.[19]

The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney serves as useful historical reference.[20] The few short passages that specifically reference Pinckney's experiments with indigo are interesting but

[18] David H. Rembert Jr, "The Indigo of Commerce in Colonial North America," *Economic Botany* 33, no. 2 (1979): 129.

[19] John T. Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina: A Historical Geography," *Southeastern Geographer* 9, no. 2 (1979): 91–102; McKay and Stewart, "Black, White, and Indigo," 116–17; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 8, no. 4 (1967): 330–33.

[20] *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney 1739–1762*, ed. Elsie Pinckney and Marvin R. Zahnister (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972).

not enormously informative from the perspective of this thesis. Kacy Dowd Tillman's "Eliza Lucas Pinckney as Cultural Broker: Reconsidering a South Carolinian Legacy" casts some doubt on the complete truthfulness of the letters and suggests that Pinckney may have had her own motivation when writing them.[21] Letters, according to Tillman, although useful historical sources, must be understood as subjective and biased sources of historical data.

Concepts, Theory, and Systems Relating to Historic Preservation and Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

There is a substantial body of research into the concepts and theory of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) but very little that directly examines the intangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture. An example of this literature on ICH are articles written and edited by Laurajane Smith in *Uses of Heritage,* who brought together research from the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia.[22] These articles aided in the development of a deeper understanding of preservation themes in this thesis, including concepts such as memory, performance, place, and intangibility. Smith challenges "old" definitions of heritage and their focus on material culture, which was particularly helpful for this thesis. Another example of the literature on ICH is Chiara Bortolotto's "From Objects to Process: UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage,'" which charted UNESCO's shift from artifact-centered preservation to intangible, process-driven heritage conservation.[23] This text referenced Pierre Nora's article "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," which further clarified what is meant by intangible cultural

[21] Kacy Dowd Tillman, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney as Cultural Broker: Reconsidering a South Carolinian Legacy," *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the South* 18, no. 2 (2011): 49–65.

[22] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[23] Chiara Bortolotto, "From Objects to Process: UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage,'" *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 19 (2006).

heritage.[24] Nora's concepts contributed to both my elements of craft in Chapter 3 and my framework for craft revival in Chapter 7. Nora describes history, *histoire*, as a separation from the past, from our ancestry, and from the actions of the past. *Memoire*, on the other hand, is our connection to the past, to our ancestry, and to the experience of "ritual repetition of timeless practice [that] remains in permanent evolution."[25] This "ritual repetition of timeless practice" echoes Alexander Langlands's concept of the "deep time-signatures"[26] inherent in heritage crafts and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH Article 2 text that states that ICH is "transmitted from generation to generation [and] constantly recreated by communities [as it] remains in permanent evolution [as craftspeople] continue to adapt to survive."[27] This literature aided the distillation of what craft is and of what craft means for construction of the elements of craft. It also highlighted the necessity for quality transmission and what craft preservation might look like.

Concepts, Theory, and Systems Relating to Craft Revival

Much of the literature on craft revival has focused mainly on areas such as craft brewing, heritage trades, and traditional musical instruments and music. Literature on indigo and craft revival together is sparse and, as relating to North America, nonexistent, which makes this work the first of its kind. This thesis fills a gap in the greater discourse on craft revival, preservation of indigo-culture in the South, and the field as a whole. This thesis draws upon research in several related fields that, though not specifically focusing on indigo-culture and its revival, can be used

[24] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989).

[25] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7–8.

[26] Alexander Langlands, *Crœft* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 341.

[27] "Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," UNESCO ICH, accessed December 2018, https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention.

to shed light on how revival of indigo-culture might occur and provide the foundation for a possible framework for its revival. It is also situated within a wider discussion of how ICH can and should be treated within the preservation and museum community.

Alexander Langlands's *Crœft* examines the development of what craft has historically meant aside from its more modern meanings, which owe more to a reaction to industrialization than to the original Anglo-Saxon idea of cræft as used by Alfred the Great. This ancient meaning owed more to an indefinable idea of wisdom, knowledge, skill, experience, or resourcefulness.[28] Industrialization, Langlands proposes, has "robbed us of the need to be physically skillful and dexterous" and forced twenty-first-century Westerners to live in a constrained and narrowed reality.[30] He states that this lack of necessary physical skill has made twenty-first-century people blind to the immense complexity of the natural world.[31] Richard Sennett, in *The Craftsman*, talks about craftsmanship as being in a state of engagement, a special condition of involvement with one's environment.[32]

The concept of lost knowledge that once bound us to nature, each other, and community is echoed by Daniel Carpenter of the Heritage Craft Association, who laments the "precariousness of tacit skills."[33] Carpenter characterizes the voices of our craftspeople as having been excluded from heritage debates, explaining that these debates are generally kept within the

[28] Langlands, *Crœft*, 7.

[30] Langlands, *Crœft*, 12.

[31] Langlands, *Crœft*, 11.

[32] Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 20.

[33] Daniel Carpenter, "The HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts, 2019 Edition," Heritage Crafts Association and University of Exeter (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2019), 3.

domain of museums and heritage professionals rather than accessible to, and in discussion with, ordinary working craftspeople.[34]

Langlands also strays into this realm by drawing attention to the skill, knowledge, wisdom, and historical significance of our craft past. Langlands also discusses the importance of craft in the twenty-first century, as skills for resilience where "a new *craefty-nss* is required, a rethinking of what it means to be powerful, resourceful and knowledgeable through the medium of making."[35] He describes this making as "the medium that defines us as human beings."[36] These ideas guided the definitions of the elements of craft, of what craft is at its core. Together with the articles on intangible cultural heritage, *Crœft* also helped define what craft might mean beyond simply an artifact of artisanal endeavor. *Crœft* and the text of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage acted as a benchmark against which my concept of craft could be tested, what the elements of craft might be and what a new framework for crafts such as indigo-culture might look like.

Amareswar Galla's article "The First Voice in Heritage Conservation" helped clarify the element of the Voice within craft, how this Voice relates to preservation, and why it is a helpful concept as part of the proposed framework for craft revival.[37] Laurajane Smith's *Intangible Heritage* expanded on the UNESCO convention text, helping me to refine my framework. Articles such as Kroezen and Heugens's "What Is Dead May Never Die," an article on the Dutch craft-brewing revival, explained how some revivals need to "borrow" from the same or similar crafts in other countries in order to be able to revive and to fill in gaps of lost expertise,

[34] Carpenter, "HCA Red List, 2019," 3.

[35] Langlands, *Crœft,* 343.

[36] Langlands, *Crœft*, 343.

[37] Amareswar Galla, "The First Voice in Heritage Conservation," *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* 3 (2008): 9–25.

machinery, or technique.[38] Bortolotto's "From Objects to Process," Pierre Nora's "Between Memory and History," and the *Oxford Handbook on Music Revival,* edited by Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill, helped define a theoretical framework for craft revival and indigo revival in particular.[39] The first two texts helped define what is meant by intangible cultural heritage and by revival. "From Objects to Process" describes how UNESCO's concept of intangible cultural heritage came about, and Bortolotto's use of Nora's concept of histoire and mémoire became central to my discussion on intangible cultural heritage and revival. It also greatly informed the construction of my framework, most especially of memory. *The Oxford Handbook on Music Revival* proved to be one of the most important books regarding revival, what it can and should mean and how revival can be framed in the context of intangible cultural heritage. The concept of "Historically Informed Performance" was especially useful when thinking about significance, authenticity, and preservation.

Magazine and journal articles such as Merle Patchett's "Historical Geographies of Apprenticeship," Fernando Armstrong-Fumero and Julio Hoil Gutierrez's "Legacies of Space and Intangible Heritage," and Jay Gatrell, Neil Reid, and Thomas L. Steiger's "Branding Spaces: Place, Region, Sustainability and the American Craft Beer Industry," offered ideas on the importance of transmission and place for craft and intangible cultural heritage.[40] "Branding Spaces" discusses the linking of place to product and making. "Historical Geographies" states

[38] Jochem J. Kroezen and Pursey P. M. A. R. Heugens, "What Is Dead May Never Die: Institutional Regeneration Through Logic Reemergence in Dutch Beer Brewing," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (2018), 35.

[39] Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[40] Merle Patchett, "Historical Geographies of Apprenticeship: Rethinking and Retracing Craft Conveyance Over Time and Place," *Journal of Historical Geography* 55 (2017): 30–43; Fernando Armstrong-Fumero and Julio Hoil Gutierrez, *Legacies of Space and Intangible Heritage* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 3; Jay Gatrell, Neil Reid, and Thomas L. Steiger. "Branding Spaces: Place, Region, Sustainability and the American Craft Beer Industry," *Applied Geography* 90 (2018): 360–70.

that the process of transmission of craft skills and knowledge is "dynamic, relational and context-specific."[41] "Legacies of Space and Intangible Heritage" confirms the importance of Place as historical connection.[42] Smith's "Class, Heritage, and the Negotiation of Place" tackles the question of ownership, access, and interaction with heritage, which she expands on in "'The Envy of the World': Intangible Heritage in England and Uses of Heritage" with discussion of the "Authorized Heritage Discourse" and its effect on the consumption and access to heritage.[44] Journal articles such as Bruce Metcalf's "Craft's New Borderland," craft magazine articles such as "Craft is Cooler Than Ever…, New Modes of Curating and Mediating Craft," and "Bringing Art to Life Through Multi-Sensory Tours" discuss craft revival and posit new ways of exhibition and curation.[45] "How Designers are Reviving the Rich Textile Tradition," published by the *Times of India*, adds to the international perspective on craft revival.

What is clear from this research is that, in so many ways, revival in itself is a form of preservation. How much integrity the revived craft has, from a preservation perspective, depends on to what extent the revival is "historically informed."

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[41] Patchett, "Historical Geographies," 30–43.

[42] Armstrong-Fumero and Gutierrez, *Legacies of Space*, 3.

[44] Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton, "'The Envy of the World': Intangible Heritage in England," in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London, Routledge, 2008), 290.

[45] Bruce Metcalf, "Craft's New Borderland: A grass roots movement of handicraft is taking hold," *Metalsmith* 30, no. 1 (2010): 36–43; André Gali, "Craft is Cooler than Ever…," *Norwegian Crafts Magazine* 4 (April, 2015), http://www.norwegiancrafts.no/articles/craft-is-cooler-than-ever; Wendy L. Dodek, "Bringing Art to Life Through Multi-Sensory Tours," *Journal of Museum Education* 37, no. 1 (2015), 115-124; and Shweta Vepa, "How Designers are Reviving the Rich Textile Tradition," *Times of India* (November 6, 2015), https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/fashion/buzz/how-designers-are-reviving-the-rich-textile-tradition/articleshow/49685519.cms.

Thesis Organization

Chapter 2 sets out the historical context of indigo-culture in the South. The chapter describes the history of indigo-culture in North America and the differences between indigo-culture in the North and the South and illustrates the history of indigo-culture in the South viewed as a series of revivals.

Chapter 3 looks at the current conditions of indigo-culture in the South. This chapter reviews the recent developments in the revival of indigo-culture to date in the southern United States. It also discusses how this revival is manifesting, who the main revivalists are, and what these practitioners hope to achieve for indigo-culture in this region.

Chapter 4 investigates the historical context of indigo-culture in the South and introduces the elements of craft. These elements help deconstruct a craft into its vital components to discover what the craft is. Chapter 5 is a discussion of factors influencing the proposed framework, and Chapter 6 lays out the framework, explaining how it works and who may find it useful. Chapter 7 describes implementation of the framework, and Chapter 8 concludes this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIC CONTEXT OF INDIGO-CULTURE: A SERIES OF REVIVALS

Indigo is a language of blue, articulated through the special processing of several families of plants and "spoken" in various "dialects" in almost every corner of the world. A sub-discipline of natural dyeing, it is one of the world's most ancient and ubiquitous dyes and is unusual for two reasons: the first because it is naturally color fast, which means that it does not fade through exposure to water or sunlight, and the second because it requires fermentation, rather than boiling, to produce the dye. The name indigo comes from ancient Greek and Roman *indikon* and *indican*, which indicates that the blue dyestuff originated in India. Indigo has come to be used as an umbrella term used to describe several different plant species from several plant genera that bear the precursors to the profoundly blue dye indigo. The many botanical genera of indigo-producing plants include *Isatis*, *Strobilanthes, Wrightia, Persicaria*, and *Pilenoptera.* However, the *Indigofera* genus is, perhaps, the most globally influential. With approximately seven hundred species, the *Indigofera* species is present in the largest number of countries in the world. The strongest, most profound blues are made with the leaves from *Indigofera* species such as *I. tinctoria* and *I. suffruticosa* that prefer a tropical climate in which to grow. Plantillo (*Indigofera suffruticosa*), which is native to South and Central America, was the species that became the

backbone of the commercial indigo trade in the Southern colonies of North America during its heyday between 1709 and 1800.[46]

The word "indigo" can refer to a color, a group of blue dye–producing plants, the dye itself, and a craft process that has agricultural, industrial, creative, and cultural aspects that have global importance and deep, multiethnic, historical significance.

"Indigo-culture" is a term used by scholars and serious practitioners of the craft to encompass the wide variety of meanings, disciplines, and skills associated with the cultivation, processing, products, and intangible cultural heritage of the natural dye called indigo. An example of the use of the term indigo-culture is the International Center for Indigo Culture which was founded to steward the "history, science and art of indigo."[47] This diversity of meanings and histories is encompassed by the hypernym indigo-culture. Indigo and culture are hyphenated because, in this context, the two words function together.

Global Overview

Plant and Distribution

The utilization of indigo-producing plants can be seen on every continent since antiquity, though different native plants were used to create the dye in different geographical areas. For example, woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) was common in Europe, *Indigofera* species were common in India, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, and dyer's knotweed (*Persicaria tinctoria*) was the plant commonly used in Japan. Species such as *I. tinctoria* and *I. suffruticosa* produce such a strong blue that they have been cultivated and are sometimes naturalized in many more geographical

[46] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335–38 and 354.

[47] "Welcome to the International Center for Indigo Culture," ICIC Home page, accessed June 2019, https://www.internationalcenterforindigoculture.org/.

areas than other species and genera of indigo. Dominique Cardon's map of the global distribution of indigo clearly shows that two genera (fig. 2.1), *Indigofera* and *Isatis*, have most commonly been used. Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) grows best in temperate climates and *Indigofera* species grow best in more tropical zones.

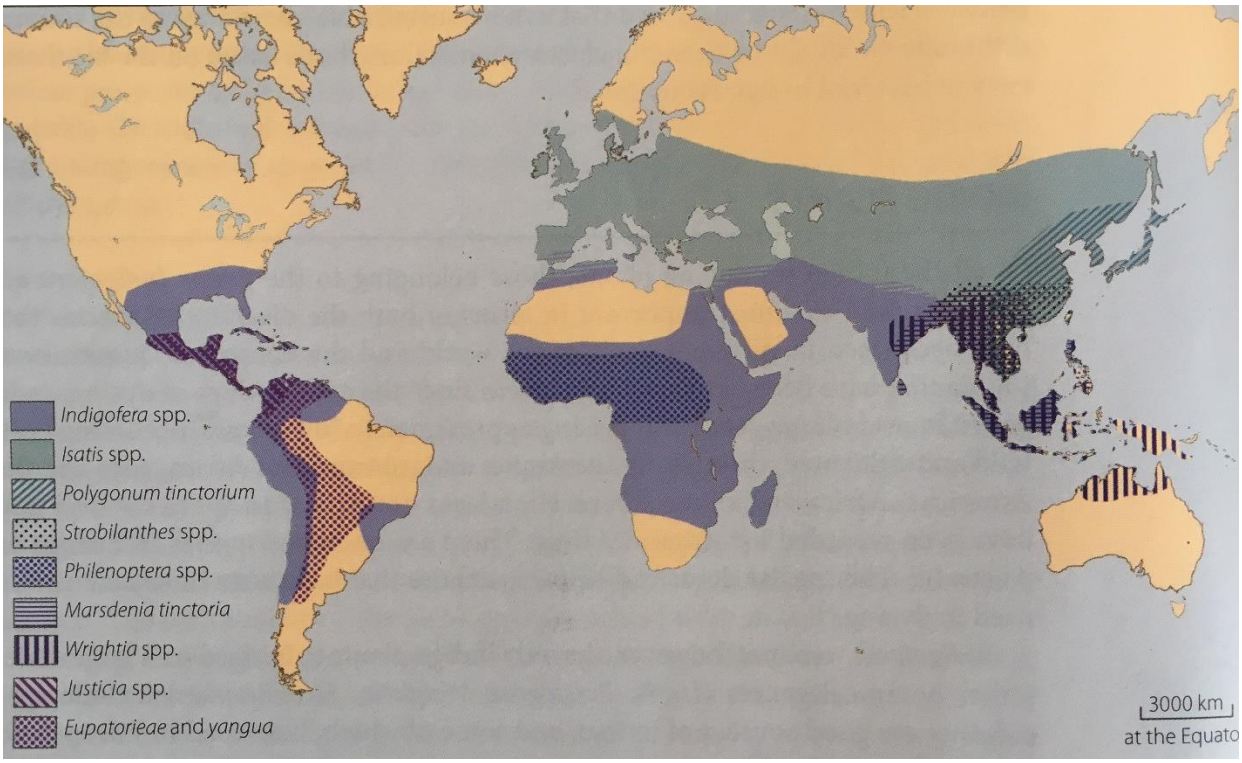

Figure 2.1. Global distribution of indigo plant families. Source, Dominique Cardon's *Natural Dyes*, 354.

Cultivation and Processing

Indigo is part of the larger story of natural dyes. Most natural dyes are extracted from the flowers, leaves, twigs, bark, wood, or roots of plants, shrubs, vines, or trees. Some dyes, like cochineal, are extracted from insects. Colored earths like ochre have also been traditionally used for dyeing. Creating dye out of all these natural substances shares a similar process called decoction, whereby the substance is heated in water until it colors the liquid, making a dye.

Fibers and textiles are then immersed in this colored water until the desired color or tone is achieved. For the color to be made permanent in the fibers of the textile it is often necessary to use a mordant such as alum.

Indigo and the precious shellfish dye Tyrian purple rely on a fermentation process. The fermented indigo liquor is called a vat dye after the wooden vats or clay pots used in this fermentation process, often buried in the ground to help maintain an even temperature of 50°C (122°F).[48]

Indigo is a pigment that is not soluble in water and can only sit like paint on the surface of a substrate. To extract the color from the fresh or dried indigo leaves no mordant is required to make the color permanent, or what is called "fast." It is the process of fermentation that transforms the pigment into a dye. Indigo leaves are macerated in hot water until hydrolysis occurs. This is a process by which the hot water ruptures the chemical bonds of the leaf tissues, releasing usually encapsulated enzymes that in turn release sugars and indoxyl. At this stage the dye liquor is yellow or pale green known as *leuco*-indigo. An alkali, usually lime in the form of wood ash or calcium carbonate, is added to neutralize the acids created by the fermentation process. The lime helps preserve the vat and the bacterial proliferation maintains a state of anoxia, lack of oxygen, by producing hydrogen. Only in this alkaline, anoxic state can indigo behave like a dye and penetrate textile fibers. Exposure to the air after immersion in the dye liquor creates the permanent bond for color fastness and the yellow green of the *leuco*-indigo blooms into indigo blue. It is the skillful method of processing that differentiates between indigo

[48] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 340.

pigment and indigo dye, and this level of skill distinguishes indigo from almost all other natural dyes.[49]

Natural indigo also contains other constituents that add to the complexity of the overall color. Isatin produces a blue shade, and indirubin produces a red or purple shade of indigo. Minor indigoid colorants are also present in natural indigo that produce blue (*cis*-indigotin), red (isoindirubin), and brown (isoindigotin). It is the combination of these shades within the blue dye itself, together with mineral impurities and other colorants such as flavonoids, that produces the complex blue hue associated with natural indigo.[50]

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Since the beginning of human culture, people have expressed themselves through color and form, with certain colors holding special significance. Red ochre and other pigments were used by early Neanderthals, as demonstrated by the cave art dating to 115,000–120,000 years ago found in the Cueva de los Aviones. Modern humans created art from ochre and other earth pigments around 40,000 BCE and some of the most famous early art works are those of the cave paintings at the Apollo 11 Cave in Namibia (ca. 25,500–23,500 BCE) and at Lascaux in southwest France dating to about 15,000 BCE.[51]

[49] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 340–41.

[50] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 339.

[51] Wil Roebroeks, Mark Jan Sier, Trine Kellberg Neilsen, and Dimitri De Loecker, "Use of Red Ochre by Early Neandertals," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109, no 6 (2012); Dr. Dirk Hoffmann, "Neanderthals Created Symbolic Objects More than 115,000 thousand years ago," Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, *Scitechdaily*, February 23, 2018, https://scitechdaily.com/neanderthals-produced-symbolic-objects-more-than-115000-years-ago/; and Laura Anne Tedesco, "Lascaux, ca. 15,000BC," *MET Museum*, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lasc/hd_lasc.htm.

Of all the colors used since antiquity, blue became the most ubiquitous, either on its own as blue or over-dyed to create greens and purples. Indigo is the world's predominant ancient Source blue dye and pigment. At present the earliest archaeological evidence of the use of indigo is from fragments of textiles discovered in Peru (Figure 2.2) that are believed to be approximately 6,200 years old. This predates earlier discoveries of the use of indigo in Egypt by approximately 1,600 years. The native European indigo is woad, *Isatis tinctoria*. The earliest woad-dyed textiles found in Europe were found in a salt mine in Hallstatt, Austria, and are approximately 3,500 years old.

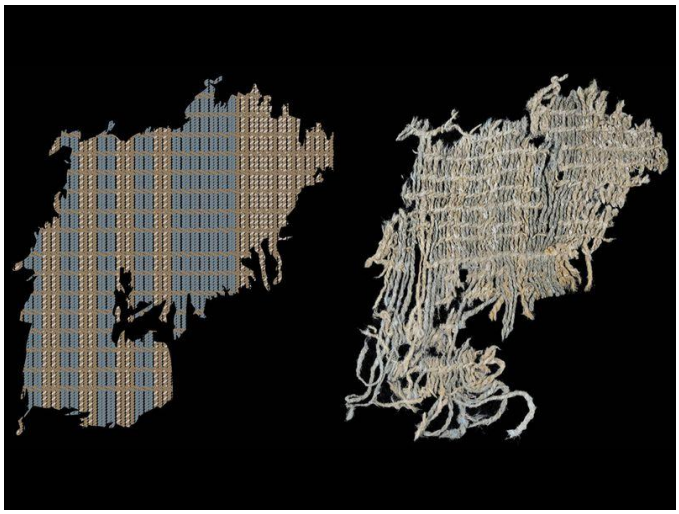

Figure 2.2. A computer rendering of the dye and weave pattern of a fragment of indigo-dyed cloth found in Peru and the original fragment. Source Aaron Sidder, "Earliest Evidence of Indigo Dye Found at Ancient Peruvian Burial Site," Smithsonian.com, September 15, 2016, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/earliest-evidence-indigo-dye-found-ancient-peruvian-burial-site-180960477/.

Of the European textiles analyzed by a study in 2014, 33 percent of Bronze Age (1500–1100 BCE) and 58 percent of Iron Age (850–350 BCE) textiles were found to have indigotin,

indirubin, and isatin.[52] Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History*, wrote, "There is a plant in Gaul, similar to the plantago in appearance, and known there by the name of '*glastum*:' with it both matrons and girls among the people of Britain are in the habit of staining the body all over, when taking part in the performance of certain sacred rites; rivalling hereby the swarthy hue of the Æthiopians, they go in a state of nature."[53] It is interesting to note that, although the processed plant creates a blue pigment and dye, the juice from the fresh leaves stains the skin black.[54]

The visible transformation from yellow through green to blue as the indigo oxidizes has been connected to spiritual transformation and rites of passage by numerous cultures.[55] Spiritual, religious, mystical, and ritual meanings and uses were and are still attributed to these blue dye-bearing plants, their dye, and the color they produce. In areas such as West Africa, Europe, and India, indigo as a color and a product is connected iconographically with the sky and all things celestial. A woad stripe was painted along the length of British deep-water vessels, and woad-dyed flags were raised to indicate the death of a captain or officer on board, giving rise to the expression "feeling blue."[56] In areas as distant as Eastern and Western Europe, North Africa, and Papua New Guinea, indigo-dyed objects such as clothing, ribbons, or doors and window frames are considered to ward off misfortune and "baffle the evil eye."[57]

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[52] Anna Hartl, Art Néss Proaño Gaibor, Maarten R. van Bommel, and Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer, "Searching for blue: Experiments with woad fermentation vats and an explanation of the colours through dye analysis," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* (2014), 9-39.

[53] Pliny the Elder. "Plants Used by Nations for the Adornment of the Person," in *The Natural History*, book 22 chapter 2, ed. John Bostock, M.D., F.R.S., and H.T. Riley, Esq (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855).

[54] Charles B. Plowright MD, "On the Archaeology of Woad," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 9 (1903): 96.

[55] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 7.

[56] The Mobile Riverine Force, "The Origins of Navy Terminology," 2019, https://www.mrfa.org/us-navy/the-origins-of-navy-terminology/.

[57] Sibylla Putzi, *A–Z World Superstitions and Folklore* (Petaluma, CA: World Trade Press, 2009), 18, 48, 260, 272, 303, 304, 355, 356, 378, and 398; and Folklore Society, *Folklore: A Quarterly Review of Myth, Tradition, Institution and Custom*, vol. 9 (London: David Nutt, 1898), 128.

Most indigo-producing plants also have a host of medicinal properties ranging from wound healing, antibacterial qualities, cough and respiratory tract remedies, and anti-inflammatory properties to cures for cancer, cholera and dysentery, gum disease, rashes, arthritis, and rheumatism to a tonic for digestion and low energy. These medicinal qualities may have contributed to the high esteem in which indigo has been held for millennia, to its widespread use, and to the beginnings of indigo as a commodity of exchange leading to early naturalization in areas to which it was not native.[58]

Indigo was not just a product to beautify or articulate spiritual and religious ideas; it was also a driver of more negative motivations such as politics and slavery. The Silk Roads enabled exotic dyes, spices, and textiles to reach Europe by land and sea from China, India, and Japan (Figure 2.3). In Europe, the dyers' guilds became powerful during the medieval period. *Indigofera tinctoria* became more common after Vasco de Gama discovered the ocean route around Africa to India in 1498. During the sixteenth century, the dyers' guilds pushed for the prohibition of imports of Indian indigo to protect the woad trade. Penalties imposed in England, France, and Germany for sharing the secrets of the guild or the purchase, use, or sale of imported indigo were as severe as death.[59] By 1631, European sanctions in *Indigofera* imports were beginning to be relaxed, and *Indigofera suffruticosa* was being imported by the Spanish from Guatemala.[60]

[58] Deni Brown, *The Royal Horticultural Society New Encyclopedia of Herbs and their Uses* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2002), 209, 244, 272, and 309; and Balfour-Paul, 98–113.

[59] Rembert, "The Indigo of Commerce , 128–34; and Hurry, *The Woad Plant and Its Dy*e, 51–174.

[60] Rembert, "The Indigo of Commerce," 128–34.

Figure 2.3. The routes of the Silk Roads showing the enormous network of trade that included the trade in indigo. Image from UNESCO's "About the Silk Roads," https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/about-silk-road.

Various attempts were made to encourage the cultivation of the native woad in Europe as an influx of *Indigofera tinctoria* dampened the profitability of woad. By the 1700s woad was mainly used as the vegetable fermentation starter for indigo vats, like a sourdough starter or vinegar mother. The proportion of woad to *Indigofera* became smaller and smaller until use of the "hydrosulphite vat" became the more common method. The hydrosulphite vat allows the oxygen to be driven out of the liquor without the need for fermentation.[61]

Synthetic indigo, Indigo Pure, though discovered in 1865 by chemist Adolph von Baeyer, was first synthesized and launched onto the market in 1897 by German company Badische Anilin Soda Fabrik (BASF). Indigo Pure was eventually manufactured at a lower cost than its

[61] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 82.

agricultural counterpart. This price differential caused the textile industry to shift from natural to synthetic indigo around 1900.[62]

The shift to synthetic indigo was not immediate, and in 1900 Germany imported 1,000 tons of indigo from India. At this same time, British and French governments insisted on using natural indigo for their servicemen, and British planters in India even formed the Indigo Defense Association to protect their assets. There was some debate over whether natural or synthetic indigo was the superior product, with some arguing for synthetic indigo due to it being a pure blue. The presence of other indigoid colorants like indirubin, isoindigotin, flavonoids, and minerals, inherent in natural indigo, fueled protracted debate over whether they represented impurities or welcome and additional complexity of tone and color.[63]

Sales of synthetic indigo helped fund the initial German military offensive of the First World War and meant shortages of synthetic indigo for other countries when German indigo supplies were cut off because of the war. This aided the continuation of the market for natural indigo. By 1930, in England, only two farmers were still cultivating woad for the dye market. In Bengal, natural indigo was still traded in London into the early 1950s, but by the 1960s the dye industry was preparing to phase out synthetic indigo as demand waned and other artificial blues, like Indanthren Blue, became available. The rise in popularity of blue jeans as a fashion item, and then fashion icon, revived indigo as a commercial product.[64] Blue jeans fade and wear in a way that becomes a unique signature of the wearer, like a textile fingerprint, transforming a mass-produced product into an item of individual identity. This property, combined with

[62] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 85–86.

[63] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 84.

[64] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 85; and Hurry, *The Woad Plant and its Dye*, 93.

connection to iconic images of the Wild West, the Gold Rush, film stars, and rock and roll, translated in 1998 into an annual production of over a billion pairs of blue jeans worldwide.[65]

One consequence of the popularity of blue jeans is its major contribution to the environmental pollution caused by the dye industry globally. The scale of the pollution caused by textile dyeing and finishing has motivated a movement toward sustainable methods of textile coloration. During the late twentieth and early twenty-first century there has been a revival of natural indigo cultivation, processing, and dyeing with the aim of reducing reliance on toxic synthetic indigo processes. Small-scale production of *Indigofera* species continues in southern India, western Africa, and Central America. In Europe and the UK, revivals of woad production like the SPINDIGO project have benefited from European Union funding, and there have been projects to revive *Indigofera suffruticosa* production in coastal areas of the North American South.[66]

North America 1600-1700

Cultivation and Process

Baptisia is the only native indigo genus to grow in both the northern and southern United States.[67] It is possible that native Baptisia species were harvested, processed, and used for dyeing by Native Americans, though there is no direct evidence for this. Native American farming skills are well documented in literature such as *Feeding Cahokia: Early Agriculture in the North American Heartland,* as is Native American knowledge and skill with medicinal herbs as shown

[65] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 87.

[66] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 377.

[67] USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Baptisia Vent., wild indigo, accessed May 2019, https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=BAPTI.

in books such as *Indian Herbology of North America*.[68] The young shoots of *Baptisia* species were harvested as an asparagus-like vegetable. The Mohicans and Meskwaki used a decoction of the roots externally as an antiseptic, a wound wash, and to treat gum disease. It was also used internally for the treatment of tonsillitis and upper respiratory tract infections. It is interesting to note that the leaves, roots, and pigment of *Isatis tinctoria*, *Indigofera suffruticosa*, *I. tinctoria* and *Persicaria tinctoria* (woad, indigo, and dyer's knotweed, respectively) are used interchangeably around the world to treat wounds, inflammation, fever, yeast infections, and viral infections. As certain medicinal uses of these plants utilize the plant in its pigment form, some knowledge of the processing it into a dye by Native Americans may be assumed.[69]

Bishop records that in 1630 Mr. Higginson in Salem wrote that "the Indians dye with excellent holiday colours that no raine nor washing can alter."[70] To create colorfast dyes, Native Americans would have required knowledge of mordants, which attests to a high level of dyeing skill. La Barre shows that Native Americans had a tradition of beer making.[71] Brewing beer and controlling the fermentation in an indigo vat are sympathetic skills. Native American plant knowledge, together with brewing expertise, could have resulted in competency in the production of indigo dye.

Indigo was being cultivated in northeastern North America as early as 1650, when Guilan Van Rensselaer experimented with wild indigo near Albany in what is now New York state. Augustus Heerman also grew indigo near New Amsterdam, now New York City. These

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[68] Gayle J. Fritz, *Feeding Cahokia: Early Agriculture in the North American Heartland* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2019); and Alma R. Hutchens, *Indian Herbology of North America: The Definitive Guide to Native Medicinal Plants and Their Uses* (Boston: Shambala Books, 1991).

[69] "Indigo," Horticulture, Purdue University, https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/med-aro/factsheets/INDIGO.html; and Brown, 140, 244, and 309.

[70] Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures*, 350.

[71] Weston La Barre, "Native American Beers," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 40, no. 2 (April–June 1938).

experiments failed. The Navigation Act of 1661, however, stated that certain goods including indigo, and woods used for dyeing could only be legally shipped to England and no other country. This suggests that indigo was being cultivated for sale to England in sufficient quantity and quality to warrant protection under the law by making its sale to foreign buyers illegal.[72]

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Though there may have been some domestic and commercial dyeing and printing, little evidence of such activities exists from this period.

North America 1700–1800

Cultivation and Processing

There is little literature concerning commercial cultivation of indigo in the northern States during this period.

Before cotton became a cash crop in America, flax and hemp were encouraged by many provinces of the North during the early 1700s. These provinces included Newport, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Boston, and producers were rewarded with bounties for growing crops that were encouraged by the British government. The crops that were chosen by settlers at this stage in the European settlement of North America appear to be remarkably similar regardless of colony. This similarity of crop choice could be because settlers grew what was familiar to them or because the cultivation of certain crops was encouraged by British and colonial authorities. It is possible that indigo was also grown at this time on a domestic or small commercial scale but

[72] Bishop, A History of American Manufacturers, 322 and 347–48.

that very little record remains. Later, as industrialization dominated in the North, the large textile and dye crops seem to predominate in the South.

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

The earliest commercial dye house and printers in Massachusetts is considered to be George Leason and Thomas Webber of Boston, who advertised in the *Boston New Letter* (April 23, 1712) that they had established a "Callander Mill and Dye-House in Cambridge Street, Boston near the Bowling-Green."[73]

In the North, calico printing became an act of independence and of rebellion against the British. The punitive Navigation Acts regulated the import and export of goods, denying Americans the right to print their own textiles, and forced them to buy only British products. Restrictions were removed in 1774, but the British had developed superior printing techniques that could not be replicated in America. These superior techniques rendered American printing inferior in quality to British printed textiles and therefore less marketable. Further laws were enacted by Parliament making it an offence to import any machinery, information, or expertise to the colonies in America. John Hewson (1744–1821), whose ancestor signed the warrant for the death of Charles I, was encouraged by Benjamin Franklin to emigrate to America with his family to Philadelphia in 1773. He was a master dyer and printer who had worked in several large workshops. Hewson is said to have traveled, without the English authorities' knowledge, with six journeymen and all the necessary equipment with which to start his own establishment.[74] With

[73] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 68; and Harold E. Gillingham, "Calico and Linen Printing in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 52, no. 2 (1928), 98.

[74] A journeyman is the intermediate stage between apprentice and master and translates as a competent craftsperson without the high level of skill, knowledge, and experience of a master craftsman. The usual period of apprenticeship was seven years, after which the apprentice became a journeyman. A journeyman was a traveling craftsman working

this illegally transported machinery and expertise, Hewson produced printed textiles in direct and overt competition with Britain. In 1775, two years after his arrival in America, Hewson joined the Philadelphia Militia. He was captured by the British in 1778 but escaped soon after. Although his factory was destroyed by the British, Hewson took on a partner, pattern maker and block cutter William Lang, restored his factory, and resumed his indigo-dyeing and woodblock-resist operation, creating patriotic handkerchiefs like "The Effect of Principle, Behold the Man" (Figure 2.5). Hewson is known as America's foremost woodblock printer and is said to have been a major force in the development of the early American textile industry. His textiles were commissioned and worn by Martha Washington (Figure 2.4).[75]

Figure 2.4. Handkerchief, 1775–90. Resist block print on cotton, wool, and linen titled "George Washington, Esqr. Founder and Protector of America's Liberty and Independency," created by John Hewson Sr. originally designed by request of Martha Washington from a miniature of her husband. Source, the Winterthur Museum Collection – 1959 0963.

by the day (or journey), who eventually graduated to a master craftsman who owned his own establishment and trained his own apprentices.

[75] Gillingham, "Calico and Linen Printing,", 98; Nancy Andrews Reath, "A Philadelphia Calico-Printer," *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 26, no. 138 (1931): 25–28; Wulfert, "The Man of Many Vases," 58–61.

Figure 2.5. Handkerchief, ca. 1806. Copperplate printed on cotton, attributed to John Hewson Sr. after Gilbert Stuart. Titled "The Effect of Principle, Behold the Man." Source, the Art Institute Chicago collection – reference number 1952-564.

After the Revolutionary War, in 1793, Hewson wrote to General and Mrs. Washington sending several yards of his woodblock-printed chintz with the letter. He requested that Martha Washington make the chintz into a dress to make the more affluent Philadelphians aware that his American-printed chintz was fine enough to rival those made by foreign printers. There is no record of a reply, so it is unknown whether the Washingtons replied or whether Martha Washington fulfilled the request. However, it is recorded that she frequently wore Hewson prints, so it is feasible that she took the request seriously.

There exists a group of resist-printed textiles called American indigo-resist prints because, with a few exceptions, they are only found in American collections, though their true origin has not been determined. Florence Pettit proposed that they may have been printed in New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania. Pettit also posited that they may have been home-dyed by

Connecticut housewives.[76] Kay and Lori Triplett suggest that they may have been printed by Africans brought to America as part of the slave trade. A 2004 study into the fabrics found that they were not all printed in the same studio nor with the same level of skill for either the printing or the cutting of the woodblock. Some of the textiles feature the painting technique commonly used in India, but the study came to no conclusion about their provenance or origin.[77] These prints are interesting because they are mostly blue on a white ground, which is consistent with some calicoes exported by the Dutch at this time. However, many Indian and European wax-resist calicoes tend to be white on a blue ground because to have a white ground requires the entire ground to be covered with the resist. The paucity of good records for the 1700s can be attributed to lack of literacy, lack of standardized spellings for names, lack of business records, and perhaps even the desire of colonists to avoid taxation. When settlers could be taxed on their worldly goods even when moving between colonies, it is perhaps not surprising that some tax avoidance occurred.[78]

North America 1800–1900

Little literature exists that details cultivation and processing of indigo in North America in this period. This was, however, the period in which one fabric, denim, became the most ubiquitous. The Gold Rush in 1849 created a need for ever stronger work wear that could cope with the rigors imposed on workers' clothes. In 1873, Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis received their patent for the rivet-strengthened work trousers they invented in response to the need for

[76] Pettit, *America's Indigo Blues*, 16.

[77] Triplett and Triplett, *Indigo Quilts*, 4.

[78] Pettit, *America's Indigo Blues*, 199–204.

ever more rugged work trousers.[79] The yarn for these trousers was originally dyed with natural indigo using a much older pattern of weave called *bleu de Nîmes* after its city of origin, Nîmes, in France. Bleu de Nîmes became anglicized as "denim." An indigo-dyed textile made in Genoa, Italy, was known in England as "Gene fustian," which became known as blue jean.[80]

Blue jeans companies like Wrangler and Levi Strauss, and indigo dyeing and printing companies such as Stifel and Sons made the work clothes that came to signify farming in America and the iconic denim-clad cowboy of the West. Although Levi Strauss jeans were dyed and not printed, Stifel and Sons continued to use the traditional patterns of the German, Austrian, and Eastern European indigo resist-dyed cotton.

North America 1900–2020

Cultivation and Processing

There is little direct data on the cultivation and processing of natural indigo for this period. However, there was a period of transition between Indigo Pure, the BASF synthetic indigo, being launched onto the market in 1897 and domination of the market by this synthetic blue. An article by interior and textile designer Candace Wheeler in the March 18, 1916, *Daily Times Enterpris*e calls for the revival of natural indigo to revive agriculture in the South and a superior colorfast blue dye. In the same year, an educational article in the *Atlanta Semi-Weekly Journal* of May 6 responded to a letter inquiring about indigo cultivation. Also in 1916, on August 28, the *Augusta Herald* ran an article about the scarcity of dyes due to the war with Germany and the possibility of revival of indigo-culture as a response to this shortage. Natural

[79] "1873 – Blue Jeans Are Born," History, Levi Strauss & Co., accessed August 2019, https://www.levistrauss.com/levis-history/.

[80] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335.

indigo cultivation and processing continued in the South through the turn of the century and into the twentieth century, but mostly at a smaller scale following the folk and traditional craft revivals that ebbed and flowed through the 1900s.

Revivals since the 1990s have often focused on Japanese indigo, dyer's knotweed, rather than purely the traditional *Indigofera* species. Japanese indigo grows well in more temperate climates and can yield as many as three cuts per year with a high indigo yield. Not all revivals are focused on aspects of historic preservation and, in a time of climate change, indigo practitioners, like the settlers before them, are choosing the best indigo-bearing plant for their needs, geographical area, and soil type.

Dyer's knotweed, *Persicaria tinctoria,* is also chosen for its traditional processing method. The dried plant is traditionally processed by a composting method that is similar to the woad processing, or couching, in the Languedoc in France in the eighteenth century.[81] This composting method produces a high-quality product. During the 1990s, dyer's knotweed began to be used in America by practitioners of Japanese indigo dyeing like Rowland Ricketts, artist and associate dean of the Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture and Design, Indiana. Cooperatives like Fibershed in California favor the Japanese indigo, having worked with Ricketts. Small industrial dye companies like Stony Creek Colors in Tennessee utilize both *Persicaria tinctoria* and *Indigofera* species. *Indigofera suffruticosa* has been found naturalized on Ossabaw Island and is being cultivated on a small scale from the naturalized seed.

[81] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 380–81.

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Indigo dyeing and printing have experienced revivals in North America throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These revivals mostly occurred on a domestic and artisanal level until environmental sustainability and folk revival movements around the 1970s began to promote natural dyes as a sustainable method to synthetics. North America has been part of the greater global movement toward attempting to find solutions to the world's most polluting industries that gained momentum through the 1990s and 2000s.

The South 1600-1700

Plant and Distribution

There are two main native indigo-producing genera in North America, *Indigofera* (in the forms of *I. caroliniana* and *I. lespotsepala*) and *Baptisia* or false indigo (in the forms of *B. tinctoria, B. alba,* and *B. australis*), both of which are members of the *Fabaceae* (pea) family. The native varieties of indigo in North America are not generally considered to contain enough colorant for large-scale use. However, planters experimented with these native species and, to some degree, used them throughout the indigo boom of the 1700s. [82] The native species had one advantage over the imported *Indigofera* species, which was that, because they were growing wild, they could be harvested without the cost of cultivation. In addition, the very existence of these native indigo species promised the opportunity of even greater profits from the commercial, imported varieties such as *I. tinctoria* and *I. suffruticosa.*[83]

[82] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 94.

[83] Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures*, 347–48.

Neither woad, *Isatis tinctoria*, or Indian indigo, *Indigofera tinctoria*, were found to tolerate the southern climate well. The southern summers were too hot for woad, and in the southern winters *I. tinctoria* succumbed to frost. *Indigofera suffruticosa* tolerated the heat and was more frost hardy, which made it the ideal for cultivation in the South. To cultivate such crops in the punishing climate of the South, slaves from Africa were brought as the laboring force for Southern plantations.

Cultivation and Processing

Reports of Carolina indigo reached England and by 1671 a tariff on Jamaican indigo offered an opportunity to planters and farmers in the American colonies. Terry Sharrer, Jack Holmes, and John Winberry maintain that indigo was grown only in small quantities before the mid-1700s.[84] In *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860*, J. Leander Bishop quotes a publication published in London in 1621 that stated that indigo, in the form of woad, was being grown in Virginia and that indigo was thriving in the same colony by 1649 and still growing in 1650.[85]

Indigo was listed among items that the British Navigation Act of 1661 prohibited from being sent to any other country except England.[86] Though this act constrained commercial market possibilities, it also created a sure market for indigo with England.[87] The proprietors of Carolina directed colonists to carry seed stock of cotton, indigo, and ginger roots with them from the West Indies to grow in the areas they would settle. According to John Winberry, these

[84] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza in South Carolina," 455; Holmes, "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas,", 347; and Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 92.

[85] Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures*, 30, 31, and 314.

[86] Sharrer, "Indigo in Carolina," 94.

[87] Drew A Swanson, *Remaking Wormsloe Plantation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 47.

settlers cultivated indigo along the Ashley River in 1670, but for several reasons, including lack of expertise in manufacturing, climate conditions, and poor marketing, rice superseded indigo as a crop by 1700. The 1670 Parliamentary decision to insist that Jamaican planters produce sugar rather than indigo created a shortage of indigo and opened opportunities for other colonies to expand their interests in this direction. [88]

Lewis Cecil Gray writes that there are reports from 1672 that two or three indigo crops a year were possible in South Carolina, which was the same level of production achieved in Barbados at the time. Thomas Ash wrote in 1682 that he could not discover the reason why some farmers and plantations ceased growing indigo when the quality was so good, and John Leander Bishop states that in 1682 very good indigo was successfully processed in the settlement of Carolina. Gray also comments that in 1690 indigo was among the commodities accepted by the South Carolina authorities for quitrents, which would suggest that sufficient quantity and quality was being grown for it to be considered a commodity.[89] In 1694, a special act was ratified that encouraged the production of indigo along with wine, silk, and cotton. By 1699, Edward Randolph reported that the trades in indigo, ginger, and cotton were reduced and settlers were producing pitch, tar, and turpentine and cultivating rice instead.[90] It is clear that indigo was being cultivated and processed successfully and traded as a commodity during the 1600s. What is not clear is the extent to which this cultivation, processing, and trade flourished as well as on what scale (industrial, domestic, or small commercial).

[88] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 91.

[89] Bishop, *A History of American Manufacturers*, 322; and L. C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Clifton, NJ: A M. Kelley, 1973), 54.

[90] Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 54.

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

There is very little data on dyeing and printing in the southern colonies during this period.

The South 1700–1800

Cultivation and Processing

This period saw the indigo boom that defined indigo-culture in the South. This boom required the expertise of Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans. Most European settlers did not have the expertise to process indigo. Consequently, West Africans were enslaved and imported to the southern colonies, where they were aided by enslaved Native Americans.

Researchers such as Clemson University's Andrea Feeser have shown that Native American enslaved labor was used alongside West African expertise. Little is written about whether these Native Americans were enslaved specifically for their indigo cultivation and dyeing skill or simply for general labor. As French and English colonists were prepared to send ships as far as West Africa with special mandates to find and enslave those with particular expertise in indigo-culture, it seems logical that those Native Americans who were enslaved to work with indigo also possessed particular or compatible skills with regard to the cultivation and processing of indigo.

Feeser discusses the possibility that Indian Johnson, the overseer for the Mount Oswald indigo plantation in east Florida during the 1760s, had African as well as Native American ancestry. As an overseer of indigo cultivation and production, he must have had some special expertise in indigo cultivation and processing if he were to succeed where others had failed. Feeser suggests that Johnson may have come from a community of Settlement Indians, Native

Americans who lived on the outskirts of white settlements, or that his parents may have been from one of the tribes displaced by white settlement.[91] Names of enslaved Native Americans are recorded in the Pinckney and Lucas family records. These names include "Indian Peter," Mary Ann, and her two children Prince and Beck.[92]

The cultivation and processing of indigo in the South occurred on a domestic, domestic - commercial, and industrial-commercial level. Many households grew and processed their own textiles and dyes. Those who had land, time, and labor were able to cultivate and process enough to dye the textiles of others. Gray considers the heyday of domestic indigo manufacturing in the South to be between 1775 and 1815.[93] Evidence of such domestic processing is presently very limited.

Industrial-commercial cultivation and processing of indigo is better documented especially concerning operations in South Carolina. Indigo-culture in the southern US reached its height between 1740 and 1790 with a total value of 35 percent of the annual export from South Carolina to England before the Revolutionary War.[94] It would be easy to assume that this annual export was South Carolina's alone, but indigo from colonies such as North Carolina was marketed through Charleston and included in Charleston's export statistics.[95] This may have contributed to South Carolina's reputation as the major hub for indigo-culture in the South. More research is required to tease out the quantities of South Carolina indigo exported from Charleston versus the indigo simply marketed and exported through the port. Balfour-Paul states that even

[91] Feeser, Red, *White and Black Make Blue*, 93–98.

[92] Feeser, Red, *White and Black Make Blue*, 105–8.

[93] Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 455.

[94] Rembert, "The Indigo of Commerce," 129.

[95] Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 295.

though a large quantity of indigo was exported to England, a considerable amount was "consumed by the home market."[96]

Newspaper articles and pamphlets containing instructions for growing and processing indigo were widely available between 1744 and 1747, encouraging the spread of indigo-culture. Indigo could be grown on a variety of soil types, from sandy coastal soils to pine barrens, but preferred "the 'rich light soil, unmixt with clay or sand' of the oak-hickory interfluves."[97] It would grow on the higher fields where land had been cleared for the cultivation of rice in the semi-drained coastal floodplains. Planting began around the middle of April (Figure 2.6) through to mid-May and took place in sequential waves to stagger harvesting, which occurred from August or September until the weather was too cold to sustain the plants.

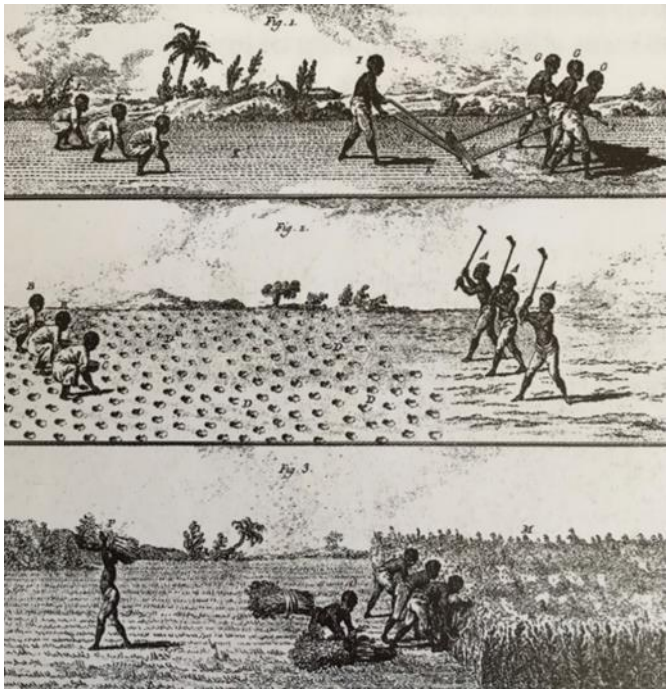

Figure 2.6. Cultivation and harvesting by African slaves on indigo plantations in the Caribbean – from L'Art de l'Indigotier, 1770. Source, Dominique Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 365.

[96] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 68.

[97] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

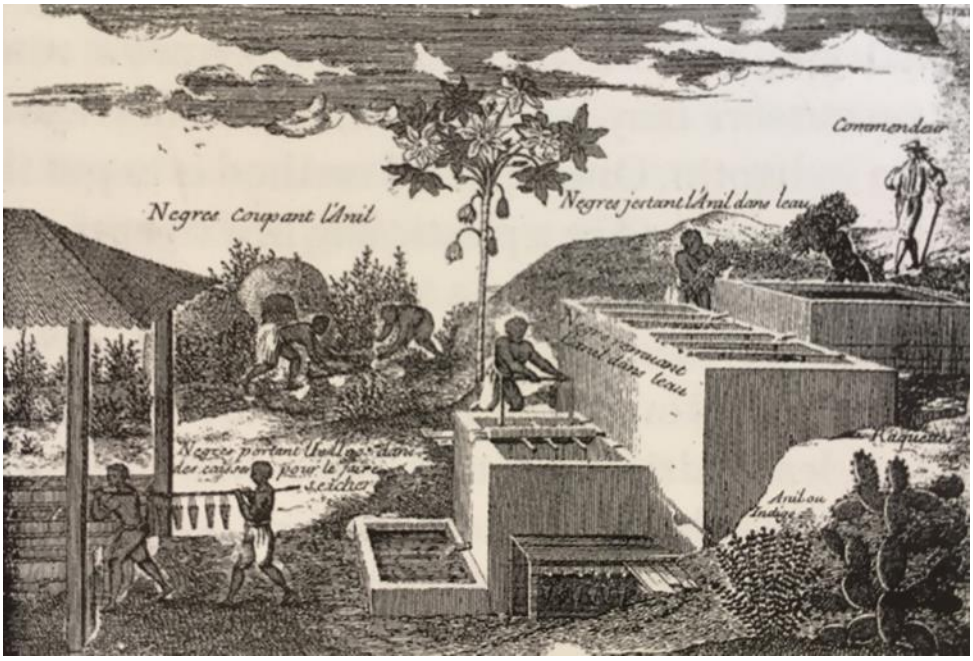

Figure 2.7. Seventeenth-century industrial extraction of indigo paste, French West Indies – from Histoire générale des drogues, traitant des plantes, des animaux et des minéraux, 1694. Source, Dominique Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 342.

Once the tops of the plants were harvested, just before full flowering, the extraction process began. The plant tops were taken to a three-tiered tank system (Figure 2.7), put into the top tank, covered with water, and left to steep or macerate for ten to twenty-two hours. This steeping, or rotting, tank (*pourriture* or *trempoire* in French, *pudridora* in Spanish) allowed the vegetable matter to break down through the process of fermentation. The expression "rotting tank" is a misnomer as it is undesirable to allow the mixture to rot. The rank smell from the macerating plant material may have led to this name.[98]

[98] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335–53.

The aim of this maceration in water is to convert as much indican into indoxyl as possible via a process of hydrolysis, which is the chemical breakdown of a compound due to reaction with water.[99] When the liquid in the steeping tank turns green, it is ready for the next stage.

The liquor is drained into the second tank, which is situated below the steeping tank, and is called the beating tank (*batterie* in French or *batidora* in Spanish). At this stage, an alkali such as lime is added, and the liquor is beaten with a paddle so that as much oxygen as possible comes into contact with the indoxyl. This action makes a precipitate (a sludge) of indigo, which falls to the bottom of the tank once the beating is stopped.[100]

This blue "clay-like indigo sludge" is known as the "mal." Once it has formed a layer on the bottom of the tank, it is transferred to the third tank, which is called the *diablotin* (little devil), *bassinot* (little basin), or *voleur* (thief) in French or *recibidora* (collector) in Spanish. The mal is then boiled to remove impurities and prevent refermentation. Once the impurities have been boiled off, the mal is scooped into muslin bags, hung up, and allowed to drain (Figure 2.8) of all water before being spread out on trays to sun dry into blocks that are cut into smaller, two-inch squares for sale (Figure 2.9).[101]

[99] Oxford Dictionary Online, https://www.oxforddictionaries.com.

[100] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335–53.

[101] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 335-353; and Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

Figure 2.8. Draining the indigo paste, El Salvador. Source, Dominique Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 344.

Figure 2.9. Indigo block, Gujarat, India. Source, Dominique Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 344.

Processing the indigo leaves into dye proved an even greater challenge than cultivation because the process requires skill and knowledge that was not always possessed by the farmers and planters who grew indigo. One common mistake was the addition of too much or too little lime to the *batterie*, which would result in a ruined or inferior product. More experienced planters understood that "the better the steeping, the less necessary the lime" and that the liquor

had to turn "a peculiar tint of fluorescent blue" that signaled that it was ready to let the sediment settle.[102] An English dyer, John Ledyard, wrote from Melksham in Wiltshire to South Carolina planters advising that superior indigo was produced by adding concentrated lime to the battery tank. Another challenge to producing a high-quality product was the length of time the indigo was given to cure or dry out. If the indigo bricks were too damp, they would rot in the transport barrels. Some producers sent their indigo in old barrels that leaked; others used fillers such as soil added to the bottom of the barrel or flour and starch added to the blocks themselves, which lessened the quality of the final product. All these circumstances, either purposeful or accidental, were eventually reflected in both the value and the reputation of colonial American indigo.[103]

Louisiana

The French began their interest in indigo in Louisiana early in the eighteenth century. In 1712, Tivas de Gourville wrote to the French authorities in Paris saying that indigo was thriving in the woodlands of Louisiana, which led them to think that it would be a suitable cash crop. In his initial letter, De Gourville asked the French authorities to send men with expertise in indigo cultivation and West African slaves with knowledge and skill in the cultivation of indigo and rice. By 1713, a Frenchman called Duclos suggests that the company should buy "a negro indigo grower with seeds who would teach here the way to cultivate the plant."[104] This enslaved African was considered to be a good investment who could be easily sold again in the colony for the same price the company had paid for him in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). By 1719,

[102] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 453.

[103] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 453.

[104] McKay and Stewart, "Black, White and Indigos," 116.

the French colonists were sending their own ships to West Africa with a specific charter to bring back indigo experts and seed along with quantities of seed rice.[105]

In 1724, De La Chaise, in a letter to the Company of the Indies, wrote that there was a great demand for enslaved Africans to work on indigo cultivation. He added that the indigo grew well in Louisiana and that the processed indigo was "fine and copper-colored."[106] There were three types of indigo in the Floridas and the lower Mississippi, described as *flotant* or *flora*, violet or *gorge de pigeon* (pigeon's throat), and copper or *cuivre*, with copper being the most valuable and sought after.[107] From 1718 to 1734, Du Pratz was a supervisor on several indigo plantations in the Natchez area and recorded the processing methods he learned from the enslaved African experts on those plantations. By 1731, the French utilized this imported skilled workforce on five Chapitoulas Concessions, land grants along the Mississippi River that are now part of the city of New Orleans (Figure 2.10). On these concessions were established profitable plantations of indigo with a workforce of "315 Negro adults, 126 children, and 53 whites."[108]

[105] McKay and Stewart, "Black, White and Indigo," 106–29.

[106] McKay and Stewart, "Black, White and Indigo," 117.

[107] According to Balfour-Paul (68) these three types of indigo were in the British colonies called Fine Flora, Fine Purple, and Fine Copper; see also Holmes, "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas," 330.

[108] McKay and Stewart, "Black, White, and Indigo," 117.

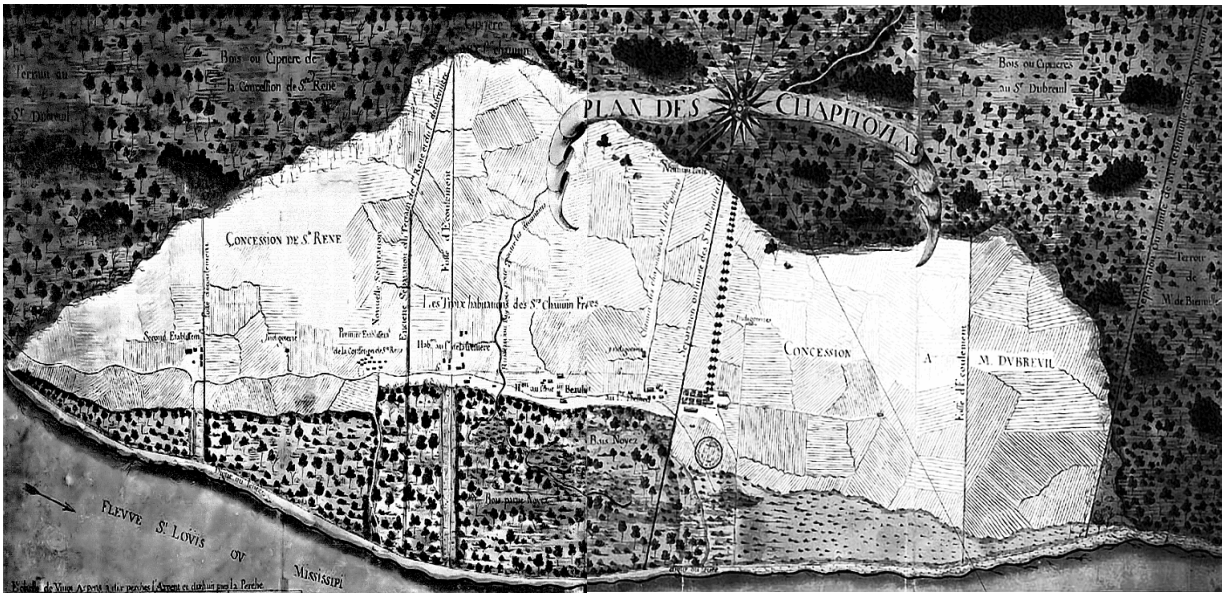

Figure 2.10. Map showing the Chapitoulas Concessions along the Mississippi River on land that is now present-day New Orleans. Source, City of New Orleans "New Orleans Maps," http://websitesneworleans.com/neworleansmaps/id108.html

The boom in Louisiana lasted until the 1790s, when gambling, rising insurance costs in London, and the slave revolt in 1796 were followed by a series of disasters including disease in 1796 and 1797 that destroyed the crops. By June 1799, the crops were already overrun with caterpillars and the crop decimated.[109]

Florida

According to Gray, indigo was the primary staple of British Florida during the 1700s. Though the crop was not large, at between 20,000 and 60,000 pounds, it was possibly the most significant commercial form of agriculture for Florida during this period. The wild indigo that grew in Florida was considered to be of the highest quality, if properly cultivated. Lack of

[109] McKay and Stewart, "Black, White and Indigo," 118 and 119.

knowledge and expertise, however, often resulted in a lower-quality product. In 1770, Governor Grant wrote that he considered Florida indigo to be of better quality than indigo from "the French Islands or any British Colony."[110] He also stated in 1771 that the indigo there was biennial and was ready for market a full two months before South Carolina's.[111] Grant had considerable land holdings, approximately 1,450 acres of cleared land in British East Florida, six miles north of St. Augustine, where he grew indigo and rice. This may mean that his statements were, at least in part, an effort to boost trade of his own product or, as Gray says, "excessive optimism."[112] Grant commented that a large percentage of the Florida indigo was "equal to Spanish Flora."[113] The naturalist William Bartram noted that the soil and climate of west Florida was ideal for indigo cultivation and described the indigo he examined on a Mr. Marshall's plantation as almost as good as the "best Prussian blue."[114] Interestingly, Governor Grant made a connection between the cost of the production of indigo and its resulting quality and argued for a greater bounty from the British treasury commensurate with the higher production cost of what he said was the particularly high quality of the Florida indigo. Grant and his fellow Florida planters were denied a higher bounty.

By 1792, a combination of factors including competition with tobacco and other crops, insects, blight, and lack of continuing interest saw a decrease in indigo production.

[110] Gray, *History of Agriculture,* 294–95.

[111] Gray, *History of Agriculture,* 295.

[112] Gray, *History of Agriculture,* 295.

[113] Gray, *History of Agriculture,* 295.

[114] Holmes, "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas," 342.

Georgia and the Carolinas

Indigo was not successfully cultivated in North Carolina until 1739, but cultivation was hampered by the climate.[115] It was then also cultivated in Georgia in 1740 and South Carolina in 1744 in what John J. Winberry describes as a "revival" of indigo-culture in the Americas rather than its beginning.[116] This "revival" is a Euroentric perspective and, if a Native American indigo-culture can be established, it may then be described within a different context in North America.

The 1749 British Parliamentary Bounty of 6 pence for every pound of indigo imported into England from America helped spur the growth of indigo-culture in the South. The rapid growth of this crop has been attributed to this bounty; however, the bounty came after the first flush of major indigo profits. Winberry suggests that King George's War (1739–1748) was responsible for the success of indigo-culture in America. This war meant that supplies from England's regular ports of exchange in the French and Spanish West Indes were cut off. Around the same time, maritime insurance had been raised so that it became uneconomical to ship bulky commodities like rice. The price of rice recovered after the war, and farmers returned to their habitual crops. The Parliamentary Bounty became integral to the success of indigo in the South by supporting a higher price for American indigo, which allowed for a transition to planting indigo as a complementary crop with rice.[117]

In 1747, 138,300 pounds (weight) of indigo dye was exported from South Carolina. By the end of the French and Indian War (1754–1763), planters had converted so much of their land

[115] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 92; and Gray, *History of Agriculture,* 295.

[116] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 92.

[117] Swanson, *Remaking Wormsloe Plantation,* 47–48; Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 447; and Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina:," 92.

from corn to indigo that it was thought corn would no longer be exported but would have to be imported from abroad.[118]

One woman is given the lion's share of credit for the success of indigo-culture in the South: Eliza Lucas Pinckney, the daughter of George Lucas, governor of Antigua. She became the wife of prominent landowner and aristocrat Charles Pinckney. Some historians such as G. Terry Sharrer credit her as the person who introduced commercial indigo to the South. To give Pinckney complete credit, however, is to disregard the achievements of earlier colonial farmers, the expertise of enslaved Africans and possible indigenous indigo-culture. To focus on Pinckney also disregards the achievements of her contemporaries, such as the Pinckneys' neighbor Andrew Deveaux, who encouraged her horticultural and agricultural experiments, acted as a mentor, and helped her process indigo plants into dye. George Lucas had attempted to procure an African slave skilled in indigo-culture from Monserrat, and there were slaves who supervised entire operations on the Pinckney plantations.[119]

Nevertheless, Pinckney is credited, through her experiments and eventual success with processing indigo, with helping to salvage an economy that, in South Carolina during the early 1700s, was failing. She has become somewhat of a cult figure, larger than life. This elevated status was in no small way encouraged by her own letterbook, which has been used as an objective historical document rather than the subjective personal correspondence of a young woman aware of the politics and power of the well-crafted letter.[120]

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[118] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina , 91–94.

[119] David L. Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo-culture in South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 42, no. 1 (1976), 71–72.

[120] Tillman, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney as Cultural Broker," 49–65.

Kacy Down Tillman offers an alternate description of Pinckney as a "cultural broker" aware of, and mistress of, the image projected through her correspondence. Tillman makes some interesting points about the necessity of the careful and conscious crafting of letters in the 1700s with the aid of various contemporary letter-writing manuals such as *Familiar Letters on Important Occasions* (1741). Correspondence during this period was maintained to establish and reaffirm connections and allegiances with England. Literate colonists used letters as a kind of proxy, or virtual, body that enabled the author to remain virtually "present" in the old country while physically living in the new country. Correspondence, Tillman suggests, should be viewed as conscious fabrications and affirmations of social status, alignment, and identification. Though Pinckney is frequently viewed as an American heroine, she consistently affirmed her allegiance to, and support of, the British Crown and country through her correspondence. By the age of sixteen, Pinckney managed three plantations and the care of her frail mother and younger sister. She experimented with a wide variety of seeds and plants from her father, sent seed to various relatives abroad, and worked to maintain the educational, musical, and lingual accomplishments and refinements that she had been taught prior to arriving in America. The man who became Eliza's husband, Charles Pinckney, also worked to encourage the success of indigo-culture in South Carolina by publishing articles in the *South Carolina Gazette* under the pseudonym Agricola.

In October of 1744, about indigo harvest time, articles were published in the *South Carolina Gazette* by Agricola arguing that, due to low rice prices, planters should cultivate other crops such as flax, silk and, most especially, indigo. Agricola professed the native indigo, *Baptisia tinctoria*, to be the "perfect Weed in our Fields and Woods [that grew] as good Indigo

as it doth in the French Islands," promising greater profits than any other crop.[121] To facilitate learning about the cultivation and processing of indigo, he promised to publish excerpts from the *Gardeners Dictionary* by Philip Miller, the botanist and chief gardener at the Chelsea Physic Garden in London, which was first published in 1731. Miller cited Dominican missionary Jean Baptiste Labat's (1663–1738) *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l'Amerique* (1722), which detailed the full process of indigo cultivation and processing into dye. Labat's description, translated into English by Miller, "first guided South Carolinians in their culture of indigo [which] would have been otherwise difficult to have obtain'd as *Miller's* Dictionary is but in very few hands."[122] It is possible that Eliza took advantage of this book for her experiments in 1739–44.

In April 1745, Agricola offered two case studies, one from a description of seventeenth-century methods used in South Carolina and another from "the only Person in the Province that I have heard of, who is a profess'd INDIGO *Planter*."[123] Both Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Andrew Deveaux had cultivated successful crops of indigo in the autumn of 1744, so either person could be the planter mentioned by Agricola. In her memoires forty years later, Pinckney told her son that his father "gained all the information he could from the French prisoners brought here [during King George's War] and used every other means of information, which he published in the *Gazette* for the information of the people at large."[124] Eliza Lucas Pinckney benefited from one particular French prisoner of war, Captain James de la Chapelle, who by 1746 was training

[121] Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney," 71.

[122] Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney," 71.

[123] Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney," 71.

[124] Coon, "Eliza Lucas Pinckney," 75.

planters and overseers in the art of indigo processing and who printed instructions for making the dye.[125]

Governor Glen reported in 1749 that "an acre of good Land, may produce about eighty Weight of good indigo… but as much of the land hitherto used for Indigo is Improper, I am persuaded, that not above Thirty Weight… per acre can be Expected."[126] Some backcountry indigo farmers reported yields of around 26 pounds per acre, but this may have been due to the use of the less productive native variety *Indigofera caroliniana*. A single slave could plant a bushel of seed over four acres, sowing seed at eighteen-inch intervals. Most farmers and planters could harvest two cuts, sometimes three, from their crop before the onset of frost killed the plants. Guatemalan and West Indian producers, however, were able to take advantage of a longer growing season. *Indigofera* species are perennial in climates where frost is no threat, which reduces the necessity for annual planting. The survivability of the plants and the longer season resulted in the ability of Guatemalan and West Indian farmers to harvest six to eight cuts from their fields, which placed colonial America at a distinct disadvantage.[127]

Carolina indigo gained a reputation for quality, and an increasing British demand meant that total imports into Britain more than doubled between the 1750s and the 1770s. By the 1760s Charles Town dominated the market. The export of indigo from Charles Town squeezed out competitors like Georgetown and Savannah.[128] George Town had ceased its indigo export trade

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[125] Kathleen A. Staples and Madelyn Shaw, *Clothing Through American History: The British Colonial Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2013), 179

[126] I could not find precisely what a *Weight* was or a modern equivalent. However, the Encyclopedia Britannica mentions a traditional measurement of mass called a Troy Weight which was a traditional system of measurement based on grain and includes the troy grain, pennyweight, ounce and hundredweight. British Imperial System, measurement system, *Encyclopedia Britannica,* https://www.britannica.com/science/British-Imperial-System

[127] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95 and 96; Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 447; and Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 354.

[128] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

by the 1760s, which meant that Charles Town had a near monopoly on export from the southern colonies. The high volume of sales on the coast meant that the backcountry began to adopt indigo as a crop. Indigo was being cultivated in Orangeburg in the late 1740s, Congaree by the 1750s, south of Camden along the Wateree in the 1750s, St. Stephen's Parish in 1754, and in Williamsburg along the Black River by the 1760s (Figure 2.11). The threat of Cherokee attacks held back European westward settlement but, when that ended after 1761, indigo-culture "spread into the Piedmont and [indigo] was being grown in the Ninety Six District at least by the 1770s" (Figure 2.12).[129] Indigo's ability to thrive in riverine areas and its high value made it a crop worth the expense and effort of transportation by cart over large distances (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11. Map of generalized areas of indigo cultivation in South Carolina. Source, Winberry, 94.

[129] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

The indigo blocks were taken by cart from the backcountry or by periauger or schooner from the coastal plantations to Charles Town to be further exported by ship after the "making season" and rice harvest. [130] A main route existed along which southern indigo was transported to the northern colonies via Augusta, Georgia, and Salem, North Carolina, "at least until the end of the [Revolutionary] war."[131]

A major trade route was facilitated by the Moravians (Czechs) of Salem, North Carolina. Southern indigo was transported from "as far as the Ninety Six District in South Carolina along the Piedmont to Philadelphia" a major hub for indigo resist printing. [132] *The Records of the Moravians* document the first year their community purchased indigo in bulk in 1776.[133] The last mention of indigo in the Moravian records is October 1, 1805.[134] Figures 2.13 and 2.14 show the main highways that spanned the colonies from the South into the North along which indigo traveled from the back country to hubs like Augusta to reach Charleston and the North through Salem to Pennsylvania.

[130] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 94.

[131] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

[132] Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 95.

[133] Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 3, *1776–1779* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Print. Co, 1926), 1038.

[134] Fries, *Records of the Moravians,* 3:2821.

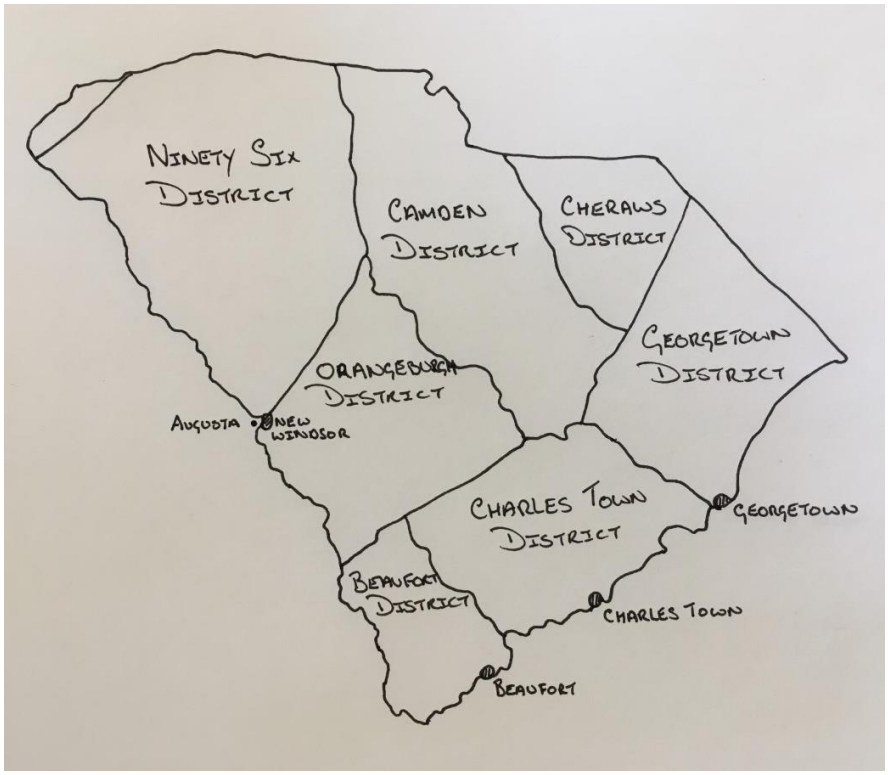

Figure 2.12. Map of South Carolina Districts ca. 1769 showing proximity of Ninety Six District to the hub of Augusta. Not to scale. Drawn by AJM Braithwaite.

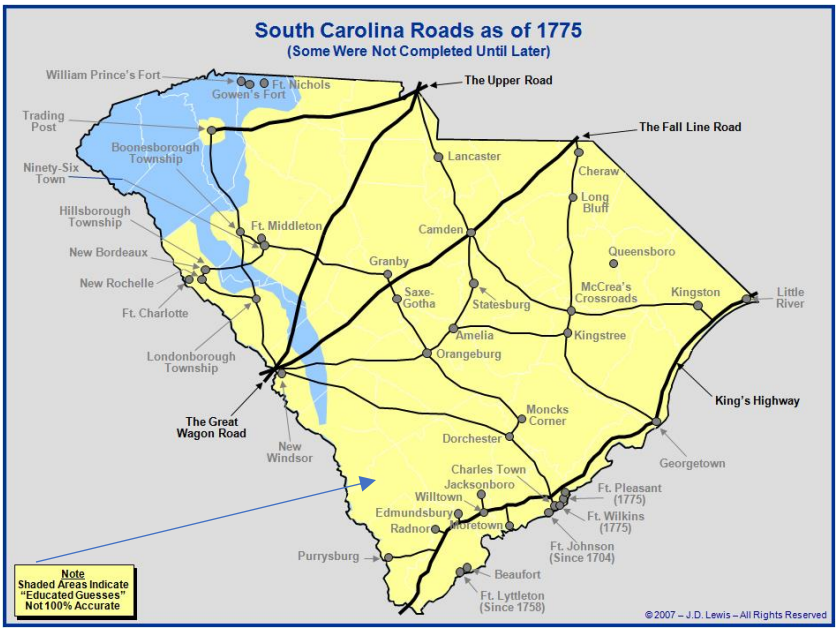

Figure 2.13. Map showing the main highways through South Carolina ca. 1775. Source, Carolana.com, https://www.carolana.com/SC/Royal_Colony/sc_royal_colony_internal_roads_1775.html

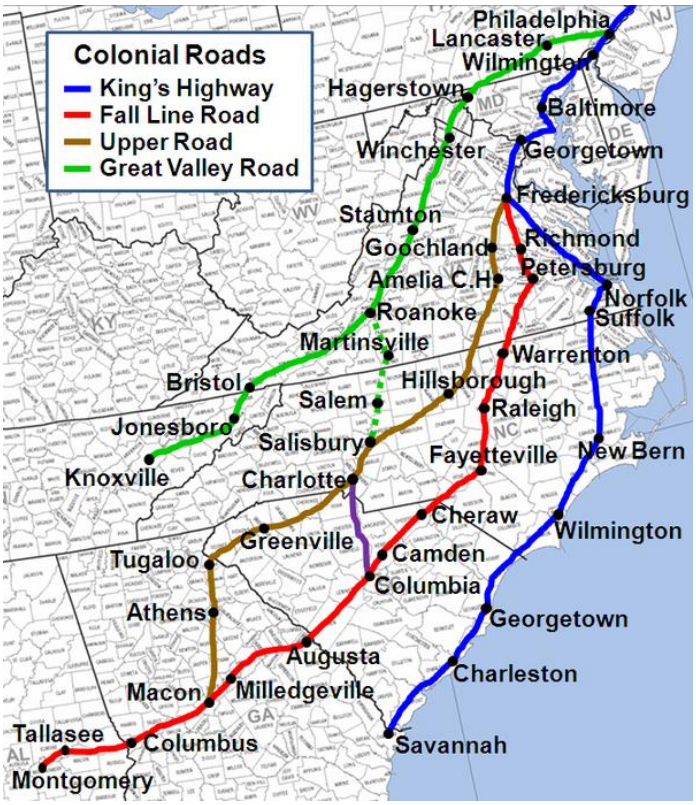

Figure 2.14. Map showing the main highways from North to South and from the South through Salem to Pennsylvania ca. 1740s. Source, Family Search, https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Upper_Road

Shortly before the Revolutionary War, Carolina indigo was being sold for the following prices:

1st quality = five shillings and nine-pence per pound (5s. 9d per pound)

2nd quality = four shillings and two-pence per pound (4s. 2d per pound)

3rd grade quality = two shillings and nine-pence per pound (2s. 9d per pound)

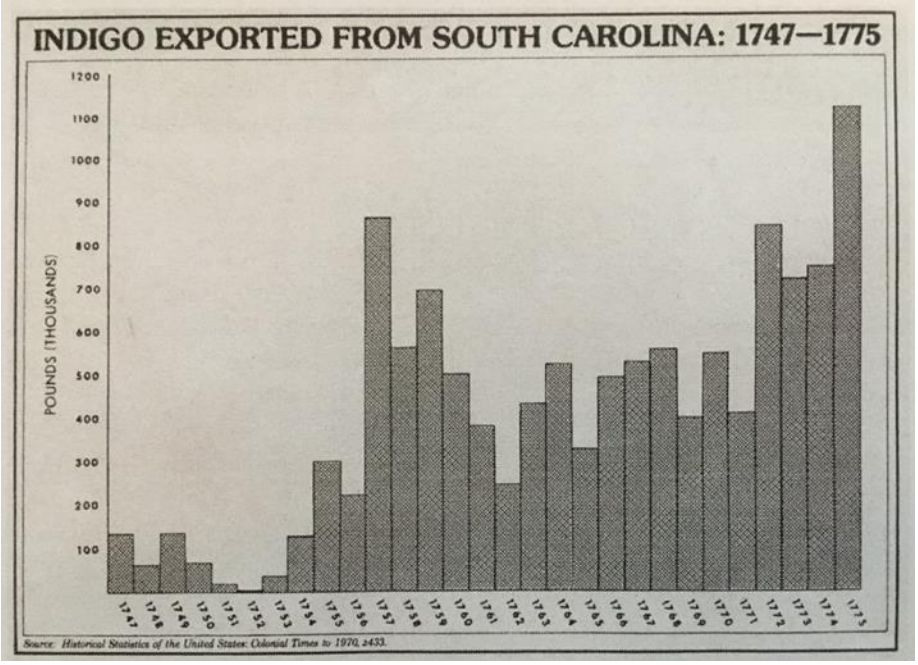

Figure 2.15. Indigo exported from South Carolina between 1747 and 1775. Source, Winberry, 93.

The production of indigo in the South slowed after the Revolutionary War. Sharrer describes the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 as a contributing factor to the decline of indigo-culture in the South. The invention stimulated the production of cotton, which then began to replace cultivation of indigo. Soil fertility depletion and climate conditions combined with insect infestations, a paucity of good-quality expertise and general knowledge of indigo production, poor prices and marketing, and competition from other geographical areas to create a decline in indigo-culture during this period.[135]

Though indigo was a staple crop in South Carolina for only fifty years, the crop contributed to the economic success of the southeastern colonies. At the height of the boom in the commercial cultivation and production of indigo in the southern states, South Carolina exported over a million pounds in weight of processed indigo (Figure 2.15). Like in Louisiana,

[135] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 455; and Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 92.

rice, cotton, and indigo were the main cash crops that instigated the importation of West Africans as enslaved labor to take advantage of their expertise in the cultivation and processing of these products.[136]

The Revolutionary War dampened sales and disrupted cultivation. Despite debts, an unstable currency, and a shortage of capital, indigo production slowly increased in the South until, by 1783, 270,000 pounds (by weight) were exported from Charleston. In 1792, exports from South Carolina totaled 839,666 pounds of indigo. During the 1780s there was a shift in indigo production to the backcountry while coastal plantations shifted focus to cotton production. By 1795 one backcountry merchant complained that, although the farmers were producing more indigo than ever before, they had been unable to sell their product for some time. By 1796 the Edisto Island planters, considered to have been producing the best-quality indigo in the Americas, turned their land over "to the cotton plant."[137]

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Dye houses and print workshops appear to have come later to the South than to the northern colonies. Evidence that mordant printers were working in Virginia in 1762 comes from equipment, dyes including indigo, and alum mordant left after the death of Lazerus Copperedge in Northumberland County and recorded in his will. Dyers Andrew Lee and Levi Manning advertised in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1771, and John Brown began advertising his dyeing business in 1773, also in the *South Carolina Gazette*.[138]

[136] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza," 447; Rand embert, "The Indigo of Commerce," 129.

[137] Rembert, "The Indigo of Commerce," 128–34; and Winberry, "Indigo in South Carolina," 98.

[138] Staples and Shaw, *Clothing Through American History*, 177.

The South 1800–1900

Cultivation and Processing

Gray says that the heyday of domestic manufactories extended to 1815, encouraged where money was scarce or imports hard to procure.[139] The clubhouse of the Augusta National Golf Club was built in 1854 by Dennis Redmond, who is said to have been an indigo plantation owner.[140] If Redmond was indeed an indigo plantation owner, then indigo was still being grown in the Augusta area in 1854. Some indigo-culture continued through this period, supported by a domestic market and supplied through small mills such as those in Alamance County, North Carolina (Figure 2.16 and 2.17). Loss of enslaved labor force after the Civil War is likely to have forced a more precipitous decline of indigo-culture in the South. Where indigo-culture survived, rurality and poverty seem to be the controlling factors of its survival through necessity. One exception to this is the Alamance Cotton Mill (Figure 2.16), North Carolina, the first industrial-scale mill in the South that produced the Alamance Plaid (Figure 2.17). The textiles from this mill were the first dyed textiles to be commercially made south of the Potomac River. Investigation of the records of the Alamance Cotton Mill, housed at the University of North Carolina (Collection No – 00004) with volumes covering the years between 1838 and 1889, may record whether the indigo used came from local farms or was imported and if and when the transition from natural to synthetic indigo occurred.[141]

[139] Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 455.

[140] John Boyette, "Augusta National Clubhouse is Home to National Treasures," *Augusta Herald*, February 16, 2012.

[141] "The Alamance Cotton Mill," *NCpedia.org*, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/alamance-cotton-mill.

Figure 2.16. Photograph of the Alamance Cotton Mill taken shortly after its construction in 1837. Source, NCpedia.org, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/alamance-cotton-mill.

Figure 2.17. Example of the Alamance Plaid from the first year it was produced, in 1853. Source, NCpedia.org, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/alamance-cotton-mill.

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Although indigo sales and cultivation declined during the 1800s, decline is not termination. Bishop records indigo being cultivated and processed in the South until 1833, when prussiade of potash (potassium ferricyanide), also known as Turnbull's blue or Prussian blue, began to be used by some as an indigo alternative. The last mention of indigo dyeing in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* is on October 1, 1805, when "Br. Christian Blum cannot work at his indigo dyeing and would like to make chairs."[142] After this last reference, indigo is referred to as "blue-dyeing," and after 1822 there are only a few mentions of dyeing in the *Records* but nothing of indigo or blue-dyeing.[143]

By 1865, Adolf Baeyer identified the chemical structure of indigo, but it was not until 1897 that the German company Badische Anilin Soda Fabrik (BASF) was able to launch the successful synthetic indigo called Indigo Pure. The new synthetic indigo did not completely obliterate the natural indigo market, and BASF even had to add a malodorous smell to Indigo Pure to appeal to dyers accustomed to using natural indigo.[144]

The South 1900–2020

Plant and Distribution

Indigofera suffruticosa has been found naturalized on Ossabaw Island, Georgia's third largest barrier island. It is possible that this naturalized indigo is a survivor from the plantation period of the mid- to late-1700s on Ossabaw and adapted to the unique conditions of the barrier

[142] Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 5 (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1925), 2821.

[143] Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 7 (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1925), 3122 and 3141.

[144] Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures*, 314 and 372; and Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 84.

island. This discovery offers hope that indigo has survived on other barrier islands and, perhaps, on the land of other historic plantations in the South.

Cultivation and Processing

There is little written about the cultivation and processing of indigo in the South in the twentieth century.

The indigo that has naturalized on Ossabaw Island is currently being cultivated by the Ossabaw Island Foundation and is used for historical interpretation and workshops that highlight the historic importance of indigo in Georgia and in the South as a whole.

Uses – Dyeing and Printing

Indigo dyers and printers like J. L. Stifel and Sons printed cotton textiles with traditional indigo resist patterns from Germany, Austria, and Eastern Europe. These everyday American textiles sold in catalogues such as Sears and Roebuck. Stifel and Sons produced indigo resist textiles beginning in 1835. Johan Ludwig Stifel, who had been an apprentice printer, came to the US from Germany and set up a small dye house in Wheeling, West Virginia.

The stock patterns for this company are very similar to the white-on-blue Blaudruck patterns still printed in Germany (see Figures. 2.18 and 2.19). The company became one of the largest indigo resist dyed textile companies in the US until they closed in 1956.

Figure 2.18. Advertisement for indigo-dyed textiles by J. L. Stifel and Sons advertisement in the Sears and Roebuck and Co. 1922 Spring Catalogue. Source, the Hathi Trust Digital Library. https://www.hathitrust.org/

Figure 2.19. Blaudruck printing, sample book of Josef Koo, Germany, 1921. Source, Legrand, 32.

Key Findings on the History of Indigo-Culture

Although indigo-culture in North America had its boom in the colonial South between the 1730s and 1780s, experiments during the mid-1600s continued through the 1690s, abated

slightly, and then revived during the first third of the 1700s. Early experiments in indigo-culture occurred near New Amsterdam, in Virginia, and along the Ashley River in South Carolina. Indigo-culture is considered to have declined completely by the 1790s, with the Revolutionary War ringing the death knell. However, the Moravians were still working with indigo in 1805. The heyday of domestic indigo manufactories lasted until 1815, and the Alamance Cotton Mill was producing indigo-dyed textiles during the nineteenth century, including the Alamance Plaid, first manufactured in 1853.

In the twentieth century, craft schools like the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina helped preserve traditional crafts like weaving and natural dyeing. Ecology movements of the 1970s renewed interest in natural dyes as traditional crafts because they offered greater ecological benefits than synthetic systems of dyeing. Since the 1990s, the ecological impact of the toxic industrial dye industry has precipitated a movement toward the revival of traditional, natural dyes, indigo in particular.

Physical Features of Indigo Production

Some physical features of indigo-culture survive in the South, such as plantation houses associated with indigo-culture, indigo-processing tanks, and naturalized indigo like those on Ossabaw Island. Some protections are required to preserve these few remnants of indigo-culture in the South, and efforts are needed to maintain their physical integrity.

Intangible Factors of Indigo Production

On the surface, little surviving intangible culture for indigo-culture seems to exist in the South, but efforts are being made to preserve the history; revive the cultivation, processing, and

making of indigo; and maintain the knowledge of the craft. Further research may fill gaps and show indigo-culture to have been far more constant than the current evidence suggests. With this research, more of the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture may be uncovered. Preservation of the intangible culture maintained by the Gullah-Geechee of coastal Carolina and Georgia is necessary and requires more research. Investigation into Native American indigo-culture could aid understanding of those peoples' part in the indigo story of the South.

CHAPTER 3

CURRENT CONDITIONS OF INDIGO-CULTURE

Indigo-culture is diverse and encompasses a wide variety of cultures and cultural expressions, especially in the southern United States. Associated skills, ranging from agricultural and horticultural to scientific and creative/artistic, add further diversity of intangible cultural heritage that relate to this craft. This diversity complicates and thwarts simple definitions of indigo-culture and, when judging the value of indigo-culture for the purpose of revival and preservation, requires an approach that takes all these elements into account.

Many of the extant systems of historic preservation assessment focus on buildings, structures, monuments, and sites. These are usually assessment strategies systematized by official bodies such as the National Park Service (NPS) in the US, Historic England, or the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These bodies, in turn, report to governmental departments of government such as the Department of the Interior in the United States, the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport in the United Kingdom, and the United Nations for UNESCO. UNESCO is also the main body responsible for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The benefit of preservation systems under the aegis of government departments is that they are supported by the laws of that government. A less beneficial aspect of such large

organizations is that their systems can be intimidating to those not versed in the protocols and language of that organization.

Laurajane Smith posits that heritage discourse promotes a set of values born of elite Western grand narratives of class, aesthetics, national identity, and technical expertise.[145] This idea of heritage is one where history serves a nation's image of itself, a fiction of nation building, rather than connecting it with ordinary, present-day attitudes, needs, values, or aspirations.[146] Perhaps then, there is a need for a simple system of assessment accessible to artists, artisans, and enthusiasts who may not have formal preservation training.

As there are adequate systems in place for the assessment and preservation of the tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture in the South, it is worth discussing what could be achieved within the current systems to protect and preserve that material culture. It is also useful to discuss the merits and difficulties of the main system of assessment and preservation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through UNESCO and question what a simpler system might look like.

The Historic Cultural Landscape

From the mid-1700s to the early 1800s, fields of indigo would have been a common sight. Most country-dwelling southerners during this period would have recognized an indigo crop just as readily as one might now recognize a field of corn, sorghum, or the white bolls of cotton. Crops change, however, and the plough obliterates any sign of the previous crop. Remnants of the old indigo fields survive in places such as Ossabaw Island, but a keen eye is needed to identify indigo growing among the lush vegetation.

[145] Smith, *Uses of Heritage,* 11.

[146] Smith, *Uses of Heritage,* 11–12.

Of the physical cultural landscape where indigo once grew, very little is left to see. Other crops have been cultivated in these fields, and the pattern of the landscape with cotton in the lowlands and indigo on the higher ground is no longer legible. Some of the dykes and rice fields of coastal Georgia and South Carolina are still discernible, but indigo fields have no special form by which they could be identified apart from any other crop field. Some indigo may have survived in now-wooded areas on the coast and in the backcountry where historic plantations or smallholdings once grew the crop, but no record of such historical survivors could be found.

Many historic plantations, however, still exist throughout the South, and many farmsteads would have grown this once valuable crop. Dr. Samantha Joye, professor of marine sciences at the University of Georgia, explained that it could be possible to discern, through the kind of microbes in the soil, what crops had historically been grown in a given area. Mapping these microbial signatures could perhaps indicate how prevalent indigo-culture really was in the South, how long indigo was cultivated, and which species of indigo were cultivated.[147]

Some physical artifacts of indigo-culture remain in the South. The remains of indigo-processing tanks have survived at four locations in South Carolina. One was found on St. John's Island in South Carolina (Figure 3.1). In 1979, a full set of three vats was identified on what was the Otranto plantation in Berkeley County. The site was being redeveloped, and one of the tanks was moved to a site off Bushy Park Road, Charleston, South Carolina (Figure 3.2).[148] The other two tanks were considered too deteriorated to survive the relocation. In 1997, a tabby indigo tank

[147] From a conversation in the fall of 2019 after her lecture for an environmental ethics class at UGA.

[148] "Otranto Indigo Vat," Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=29485, accessed June 2019.

was documented at the Burlington Plantation, and a 1994 survey identified the remnants of another indigo tank at the Charleston Naval Weapons Station.[149]

Figure 3.1. A possible indigo tank on St. John's Island, South Carolina. Source, Robert Behre, "Indigo is Long Gone as an SC Cash Crop, But Traces Linger on the Lowcountry Landscape," *Post and Courier*, July 24, 2019.

Figure 3.2. Otranto Indigo Vat, Berkley County, South Carolina. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=29485.

[149] Robert Behre, "Indigo is Long Gone as an SC Cash Crop, But Traces Linger on the Lowcountry Landscape," *Post and Courier*, July 24, 2019.

Indigofera suffruticosa has survived on Ossabaw Island and it is possible that indigo plants may persist on other barrier islands.

Tangible Cultural Heritage

Although little tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture survives, some remnants still exist. The very scarcity of these historic remnants justifies their preservation. The remaining material culture pertaining to indigo is also part of the larger narratives of European settlement in the United States and of plantation culture and the success of the southern colonies. This tangible cultural heritage can be assessed and preserved through extant systems.

Systems of assessment of tangible cultural heritage generally concentrate on the historic value and preservability of solid, physical objects. Examples of tangible cultural heritage are buildings, structures, objects, monuments, sites, and districts. The official structure for recognizing tangible culture in the United States is the National Register of Historic Places, which is overseen by the U.S. National Park Service. Tangible culture is easier to define than intangible culture precisely because it can be seen, touched, and physically experienced in the three-dimensional world. Tangible culture can be assessed based on physical condition, remaining historical context, quality of craftsmanship, construction and design, and its associations with people of prominence or wider patterns of history.[150] These various considerations fall beneath the more umbrella terms of historic significance and historic integrity, which, in turn, fall beneath an overall concept of historic context.

[150] National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, Department of the Interior (1995), 1–2.

Evaluating historic context relies on ascertaining what part of national, state, or local history or prehistory the material culture represents. Further historical research determines whether this facet of history is important enough to highlight and whether the type of material culture sufficiently represents this facet of history.[151] Solid connections to an important design or innovation, or an area, period, or person in history endows tangible culture with historic significance and the quantity of physical features pertaining to these areas that remain determine its historic integrity.

The tangible remains of indigo-culture could have significance under as many as seventeen out of the thirty areas of significance listed in the *National Register Bulletin 15*.[152] These areas include agriculture, archaeology, art, commerce, economics, ethnic heritage (Black, European, Native American), exploration/settlement, health/medicine, industry, invention, landscape architecture, law, maritime history, politics/government, social history, and transportation.

The indigo-processing tanks (fig. 3.1) found on St. John's Island, South Carolina, are one example physical remnants of indigo-culture that could be eligible for preservation. The relocated Otranto Plantation indigo-processing tanks (fig. 3.2) could be considered to have less historical integrity due to their relocation. However, the provenance of the tanks is known, and so few indigo-processing tanks survive that there is a strong argument for their continued preservation and protection. One challenge for the protection of such structures is that, even if listed in the national register, there are no legal ramifications should a landowner decide to damage, alter, or demolish tangible cultural heritage on their own land.

[151] NPS, National Register Bulletin 15Îbid., 7.

[152] *NPS, National Register Bulletin 15*, 8.

There are slightly more legal protections for buildings or structures under federal agency jurisdiction. Under sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 federal agencies are considered responsible for the preservation of historic properties under their care. They are also required to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable period to comment on any action planed on or near a building listed in or eligible for listing in the national register. These laws do not necessarily prevent a building or structure, or its historic features, from being changed, damaged, or demolished. These laws simply demand offering the advisory council opportunity for consultation, a requirement to use historic buildings if feasible, and to carry out preservation work on historic buildings that are occupied and make appropriate records should an historic building be altered or demolished. There is a provision under section 110 (f) that requires a federal agency to minimize any damage to a National Historic Landmark. A key phrase in section 110 is "to the maximum extent possible," which is a subjective level of required planning and action.[153]

In some countries, such as the U.K., damage, alteration, or harm to the interior or exterior, or demolition, without official consent, is a criminal offense that can result in fine or imprisonment. Even like-for-like repairs to a listed building can require official consent. It is an offense in England even to demolish a non- historic building within a conservation area without official consent. [154] Official consent can be denied, and the first importance is placed on the protection of the building rather than the desired use of that building by the owner. Conversely, in the United States, any regulation that denies the owner their beneficial use of their property,

[153] National Park Service, *Federal Historic Preservation Laws* (Washington DC: National Center for Cultural Resources, 2002), 63.

[154] Jonathan Taylor, "Heritage Protection in the UK," Building Conservation Directory (2004), last modified 2019, https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/uk-heritage-protection/uk-heritage-protection.htm.

land or building, constitutes a "taking" that requires the property owner to be compensated for their loss. Should compensation not be forthcoming from those interested in the preservation of the property, the owner is entitled, by constitutional right, to demolish their building.[155] UNESCO has recourse to laws such as the 1970 Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (CCPIA), which requires States Parties to prohibit the import of cultural property stolen from other countries and to restore stolen or looted objects to their source countries. This law applies to items stolen from museums and public buildings and monuments and as a consequence of armed conflict, terrorism. The US implemented articles 7(b)(i), 7(b)(ii), and 9 of the CCPIA, which deal with the import of pillaged cultural property, return of stolen cultural property, and the assistance of other countries in cases of potential looting, respectively.[156]

The two main legal weapons for historic preservation in the US are historic districts with planning restrictions, zoning and ordinances, and conservation or preservation restrictions applied by choice by the landowner or property owner.

Historic districts are locally or municipally designated areas of historic significance with contributing (historic) and noncontributing (not historic or without sufficient integrity) buildings. Such districts are administered by residents in the form of a commission. These historic district commissions regulate what alterations, additions, restorations, or demolition are to be allowed within the boundaries of the historic district.[157] Where planning or zoning ordinances and permits are violated, fines can be a deterrent and stop work orders can delay damage or

[155] John R. Nolon and Patricia E. Salkin, *Land Use in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN Thomson West, 2006), 310–11.

[156] Sara C. Bronin and Ryan Rowberry, *Historic Preservation Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul, MN: West Academic Publishing, 2014), 512–15.

[157] Bronin and Rowberry, *Historic Preservation Law*, 22–24.

destruction until a penalty can be enforced. No such restrictions apply to privately owned land or buildings outside a historic district that has restrictions as part of its planning and zoning ordinances, and such restrictions can be different and specific depending on the historic district, local authority, and state.[158]

Conservation restrictions generally apply to land, but can also apply to buildings where they serve a similar use, which is to protect and preserve the property of the owner. Restrictive covenants can be one way for a property owner to preserve land or a building for a specified period or in perpetuity. The property owner may gain benefits such as state and federal tax credits or deductions in exchange for relinquishing certain rights over the land. This kind of covenant could be one effective way to protect the few remaining physical remnants of indigo-culture in the South. To achieve this would require a program of education for landowners that would illustrate the importance of preserving and protecting the structures and the land that surrounds them for future research, for interpretation, and as physical testimony of the history of indigo-culture.

Information and education for professionals and the public as to the importance of indigo-culture in the history of the South could raise awareness of the kinds of structures associated with indigo-culture that might yet be located and verified. This kind of education could take the form of workshops and lectures, museum exhibitions, television documentaries, or websites. Institutions such as the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, in Athens, grow indigo and conduct workshops on indigo dyeing that illustrate the connections between plant, dye, and

[158] National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Local Preservation Laws," Preservation Leadership Forum, last modified 2021, https://forum.savingplaces.org/learn/fundamentals/preservation-law/local-laws.

history.[159] These kinds of educational workshops incorporate teaching-through-doing, which is compatible with the teaching of a craft history such as indigo because it engages the participant with the intangible cultural heritage of the craft.

Historical Markers

Although few legible physical signs of indigo-culture may remain in the landscape, historical markers can offer information and maintain awareness of locations of historic indigo production. These markers fall into two main categories: places directly connected to indigo-culture and those where indigo-culture is interpreted as being part of a wider historical context such as engineering or colonial crops.

Historical Markers That Indicate Places Directly Connected to Indigo-Culture

The historical marker for Governor James Grant's Plantations (Figure 3.3) is particularly informative. This marker offers some context for the cultivation of indigo and indicates that 1,450 acres of land were cleared by enslaved Africans for the cultivation of indigo. The sign also affirms that processing was conducted on the plantation and gives some reasons for the decline of indigo-culture. This kind of marker provides historical context for indigo-culture and slavery and indicates the size of some plantations.

[159] The State Botanical Garden of Georgia has held a number of indigo workshops similar to their "The Colorful History of Indigo" workshop conducted as part of their 2019 Heritage Days Festival.

Figure 3.3. Historical marker marking the location of Governor James Grant's 1,450-acre tract near St. Augustine, Florida. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=80967

The marker for Drayton Hall near Charleston (Figure 3.4), South Carolina, is like the marker for Governor Grant's plantation but is less informative and focuses on the importance of the hall's architecture. Markers like the one for Drayton Hall are useful for marking where indigo was grown but do not provide interesting qualifying data about social, agricultural, or engineering history. The historical marker for the Alamance Cotton Mill in North Carolina (Figure 2.16, p. 64) is brief but incredibly informative. This marker tells us that an important cotton mill once stood on the place where the marker now stands, that it was built by E. M. Holt in 1837, after the main indigo boom, and that it was the first mill south of the Potomac to produce factory-dyed cotton textile (Figure 2.17, p. 65).[160] This is particularly significant because it shows indigo being used on an industrial scale during the 1830s, later than is commonly indicated in the literature, and that the South had industrial dyeing enterprises. It is also useful because it enables researchers who are interested in this subject to search for cotton

[160] "The Alamance Cotton Mill," NCpedia.org, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/alamance-cotton-mill.

mills in relation to indigo dyeing rather than dyehouses. It is possible that the Alamance Cotton Mill marked a shift that brought dye processing in-house rather than relying on an outsourced dyehouse where the mill sent its cotton to be dyed by an independent dye master.

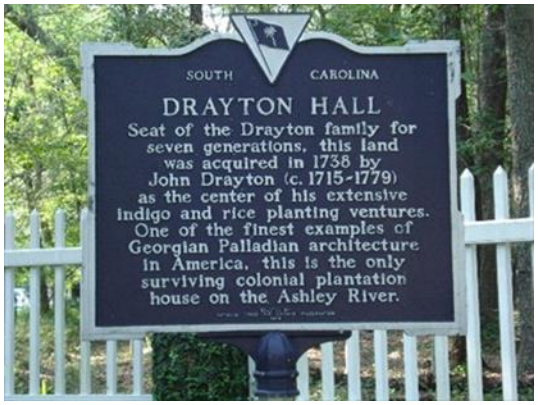

Figure 3.4. Drayton Hall historical marker, Waymarking. Source, Waymarking online database, https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM4CNB

Historical Markers Indicating a Wider Historic Context

Historical interpretations like those at the Kingsley Plantation (Figure 3.5) near Jacksonville, Florida, cannot indicate original indigo fields but can give an idea of what the crop would have looked like in the landscape. These markers also offer information about the kinds of crops grown during the colonial period.

Figure 3.5. Historical interpretation at the Kingsley Plantation, “Plantation Crops” historical markers, Kingsley Plantation, Jacksonville, Florida. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=40143.

Markers like the “Walk to Freedom” marker (Figure 3.6) at St. Augustine, Florida, contribute to discussions on slavery and social justice by marking the location of an uprising of over 600 Mediterranean indentured servants in the 1770s. These “Menorcans,” as they became known, left the Turnbull plantation in New Smyrna and walked to St. Augustine to seek asylum from the British governor, Patrick Tonyn. This marker is particularly interesting because it commemorates the enslavement and ill treatment of Europeans, 964 of whom did not survive the first nine years of their indentured term.

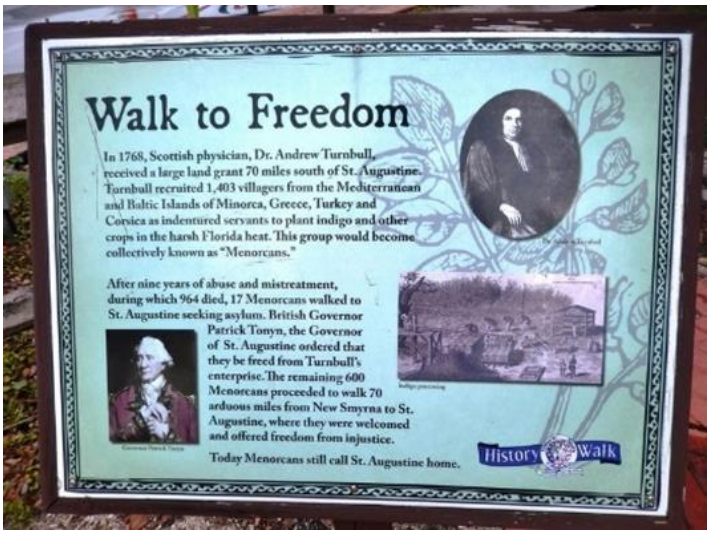

Figure 3.6. "Walk to Freedom" historical marker, St. Augustine, Florida. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=134498.

Some historical markers, such as the "Water Power!" marker (Figure 3.7), also at St. Augustine, indicate the use of engineering in agriculture. This marker explains that water wheels were used to grind processed indigo into pigment powder. "The Old Sunbury Road" marker (Figure 3.8) indicates the main road to and from the once thriving seaport of Sunbury, Georgia. Located between Ossabaw and St. Catherine's Islands, Sunbury was the port from which indigo and rice were exported and was the terminus for a major route for indigo. Sunbury's importance as a port began to decline in the 1780s. This marker is important because it recognizes the importance of Georgia trade routes and ports in the success of indigo-culture.

Figure 3.7. “Water Power!” historical marker, St. Augustine, Florida. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=143892

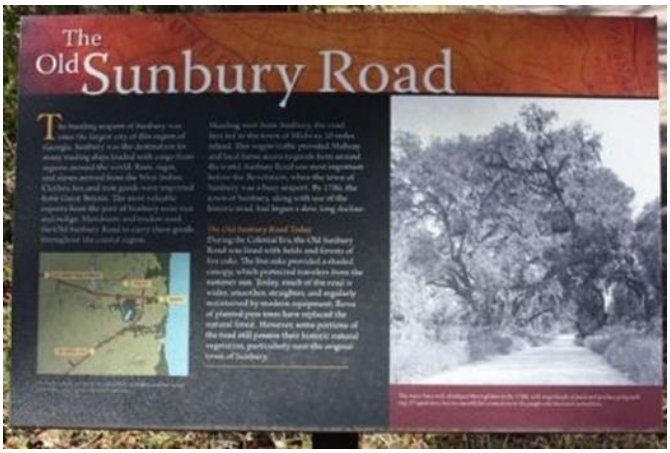

Figure 3.8. “The Old Sunbury Road” historical marker, Sunbury, Georgia. Source, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=17242

Historical markers commemorating indigo-culture give some idea of the area under cultivation during the colonial period and the technology and manpower employed to support it. These markers, (and those listed in Appendix B), also give an idea of the human cost of indigo-culture in relation to issues of slavery and indenture. Markers are one way in which the memory of indigo-culture is preserved. They can also be a starting point that encourages individuals to

research further and learn more. It is, however, the practical transmission and demonstration of skills, together with transmission of history that best supports indigo revival and understanding of the historical context.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

The main system for preserving intangible cultural heritage is the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention). This preservation system has formed a definition of ICH subscribed to by 180 States Parties as of July 27, 2020 (a list of signatories that does not include the United Kingdom or the United States).[161] This convention is a departure from the World Heritage List that has been criticized as Eurocentric and monumental. Unlike the World Heritage List, the ICH Convention recognizes the importance of community and the individual in the remembering, making, performance, and transmission of ICH like heritage crafts.[162]

There is a possible obstacle to the use of this system of ICH preservation for indigo-culture in the South. The troublesome technicality within this convention depends on the reading of a stipulation in article 2 that states that ICH be "transmitted from generation to generation."[163] If this stipulation is interpreted as a requirement of an unbroken line of transmission through a system of apprenticeship, indigo-culture in the South would not be able to meet this provision. If the generational stipulation could be interpreted as the continuation of indigo-culture through

[161] UNESCO ICH, "The States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), last modified 2020, https://ich.unesco.org/en/states-parties-00024.

[162] Nicolas Adell, Regina F. Bendix, Chiara Bortolotto, and Markus Tauschek ed., *Between Imagined Communities of Practice: Participation, Territory and the Making of Heritage* (Gottingen: Gottingen University Press, 2015), Open Edition Books, accessed 2021, https://books.openedition.org/gup/234?lang=en.

[163] Article 2, paragraph 1, "Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," UNESCO ICH, https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention.

phases of popularity and through various cultural groups, not necessarily continuously within one particular cultural group, the craft would comply with this part of article 2. The twenty-first-century revival of indigo-culture is finding its way forward through artists, artisans, and historians who have often begun their indigo journey as enthusiastic amateurs before becoming experts. These new practitioners may have learned their skills via a variety of media, from traditional one-on-one learning and researching historical documents on dyeing to YouTube and video-conferenced workshops. Many indigo practitioners come to this craft through their art practice, historical interest, or natural dye experience and may add to their knowledge by studying the indigo plants, processes, and techniques of other countries and cultures. Indeed, because different indigo bearing plants grow better under different climatic conditions, some craft practitioners may find it necessary to learn about the cultivation and use of other kinds of indigo if they wish to grow and use their own fresh plants. It may be necessary to creatively interpret the generation-to-generation transmission clause to encompass a looser definition.

The twenty-first-century indigo revival is not an organized movement with a single vision or mission. At this point in the revival of indigo-culture in the South, practitioners may be better served by a simple framework for revival and preservation. Such a framework could focus group or individual efforts while offering a common language for those individuals and groups to coordinate with other indigo revivalists within the South and globally. Over time, that same simple framework could be used to identify the common ground between indigo-culturalists in the South and define the historic aspects suitable for possible inscription onto the UNESCO ICH List. In the meantime, indigo-culture practitioners and revivalist preservationists could use a simple, unintimidating, framework to discuss and delineate the boundaries of the craft, its historical significance, and scope of adaptation without losing historical context and authenticity.

For such discussion to be successful and effective, it may be useful to deconstruct the craft into its components, or elements, to understand and agree what the craft comprises before discussing how to revive and preserve it.

Purposeful Efforts of Indigo Revival in the South

Revival of indigo-culture in the South is occurring for many of the same reasons as it is reviving in other parts of the world. Global awareness of the need for humanity to live more sustainably has increased interest in natural dyes and traditional crafts that encourage a greater respect for and connection with the Earth. An interest in the history of indigo-culture and the challenge of learning a dyeing technique that is different from any other also drives this revival. Blue is one of the most ubiquitous colors for clothes, and the dye industry is one of the world's most polluting. Colonialism and industrialization have undermined, or in some cases stripped, communities of their cultural identities. This "lost memory" can be restored through the revival of heritage crafts and the restoration of the "memory" or intangible cultural heritage that accompanies the physical practice.[164] Indigo-culture is unique in that, in the South, it contains the "lost memory" of Native Americans, West Africans, Europeans, and English; we share in the history, and yet each culture also has its own history and relationship with indigo. This intersection of cultures can be used as a meeting-place, a learning place, where the lost memory can be revived, preserved, and kept alive.

"Purposeful" in this context of the title to this section, means efforts that are made with a specific purpose of revival, knowledge of the historical context of the craft, and transmission of

[164] Catherine E. McKinley, *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011); 210.

the craft in this context. Many people seem to be interested in being involved in the whole process, from cultivation to dyed product. Engagement with indigo-culture is characterized by two scales of involvement: small scale and larger, commercial, scale.

Small-Scale Indigo-culture

Most people interested in indigo-culture would only be able and willing to practice the craft on a small domestic scale. However, as production at a small or domestic scale was the historical norm rather than the exception, it would seem appropriate that these, small-scale, domestic or cottage industries become the norm once again. Where there is a general lack of skill or time for domestic dyeing, a single craftsperson or group of craftspeople can provide a dyeing service for a small community. Industrial production is only necessary where large urban settlements mean that inhabitants do not have the space with which to produce their own dye.

Figure 3.9. Robin Gunn explaining the history of Ossabaw Island and indigo-culture on the island to participants on an indigo workshop with Donna Hardy and Heather Powers. Photograph by Amanda Braithwaite.

Workshops like those run by Donna Hardy and Heather Powers provide participants with a basic level of skill and entry-level historic background in indigo-culture. Like learning to drive, the skill of creating a successful indigo dye vat is learned from a teacher but honed through practice and experience. A description of an indigo workshop is provided in Appendix A. These kinds of learning experiences are commonly an enthusiast's first access point for physical experience of indigo dyeing and can lead to independent study and practice or a continuation of practice with a dye master like Hardy. Hardy and Powers have taught workshops privately for small groups, at such places as the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and on Ossabaw Island (Figure 3.9) for the Ossabaw Island Foundation.

One theme in the reintroduction of indigo to southern agriculture is the heirloom plant and heritage breed movement that seeks to promote the use of traditionally grown plants and historically raised animals to specific, appropriate areas. Chefs Scott Peacock and Edna Lewis were experimenting with historical methods of indigo production in Marion, Alabama, and have been collaborating with botanists and farmers working with heirloom plant varieties and animal breeds historically grown and raised in the Alabama Black Belt.[165] A number of the Barrier Island authorities and foundations have plans to use indigo-culture to aid in their historical interpretation. In line with the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) is a "long-term effort to grow heritage crops on Sapelo for the sake of economic development within the Hog Hammock community."[166] The International Center for Indigo-culture (ICIC), the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, and the Cornelia Walker Bailey Program on Land and Agriculture

[165] Natalie Chanin, Scott Peacock, Plant Safari + Indigo," *Alabama Chanin Journal*, 2016, https://journal.alabamachanin.com/2016/10/scott-peacock-plant-safari-indigo/.

[166] "New Partnership to Reintroduce Indigo on Sapelo Island," Cornelia Walker Bailey Program on Land and Agriculture, University of Georgia, https://cwbp.uga.edu/new-partnership-to-reintroduce-indigo-on-sapelo/.

have formed a partnership to re-introduce indigo on Sapelo Island. Historic preservationist at the Jekyll Island Authority Taylor Davis is planning to cultivate and process a small patch of *Indigofera suffruticosa* for the purpose of historical interpretation.

Cultivation of indigo plants and demonstrations and workshops that show the process of indigo dyeing are utilized by historic house museums in the South. Middleton Place National Historic Landmark, with the oldest landscaped garden in the US, has workshops concentrating on the roles that enslaved people performed in the process of cultivation and processing of indigo. Actors in costume perform living history and offer interpretation of the lives of those who lived on the plantation.

Professional artists like Arianne King Comer specialize in indigo dyeing and printing. She has trained in Yorubaland, Nigeria, with batik artist Nike Olyani Davis and has brought Yoruba dyers to the US "to restore the African connection."[167]

Larger-Scale Indigo-culture

Larger-scale operations like CHI Design Indigo in Columbia, South Carolina, combine skills learned in Japan to inform a revival of southern indigo-culture. As with many of the commercial indigo endeavors, creative expression partners with ecological sustainability. Caroline Harper, a professional textile artist, is partnered with David Harper, a land conservation professional who believes that indigo "reconnects us to the land and to each other."[168]

This theme of environmental sustainability is at the core of Stony Creek Colors in Goodlettesville, Tennessee, the largest commercial natural indigo dyehouse in the southern

[167] McKinley, *Indigo: In Search of the Color*, 109.

[168] "About Us," International Center for Indigo Culture, accessed June 2019, https://www.internationalcenterforindigoculture.org/about.

United States (Figure 3.10). This company received a $450,000 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program Phase II grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to investigate ways to expand the traditional natural indigo vat to an industrial scale. Stony Creek is encouraging farmers to transition from growing tobacco to indigo in order to achieve the 15,000 acres in indigo production it will take to produce 2.8 percent of the American market for indigo and be able to offer a viable, scalable quantity of high-purity "bio-based dyes." *Persicaria tinctoria* and *Indigofera* species blends innovation, contemporary technology with traditional methods, techniques, and processes. The company works with farmers and textile mills to improve the indigo dye to make it more reliable and with companies such as Wrangler, Patagonia, Lucky Brand, Tellason, and Left Field NYC to produce natural indigo collections.[169]

Figure 3.10. Stony Creek Colors' 80,000-square-foot Springfield, Tennessee, facility. Source, Jamie McGee in Jamie McGee, "A Natural Denim by Way of Middle Tennessee," *Tennessean,* 2016, https://www.tennessean.com/story/money/2016/07/18/natural-denim-way-middle-tennessee/86870796/

[169] "Red, White and Blue: Sustainable, Domestic Dye for Denim," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2015, https://nifa.usda.gov/blog/red-white-and-blue-sustainable-domestic-dye-denim.

Outside of the South, groups like Fibershed in California are promoting indigo as part of bio-regional textile production and dyeing, where the full cycle from earth to product and back to earth occurs in a discrete geographical region. The emphasis of these groups is on regional sustainability and resilience rather than on historic preservation. There is also a Fibershed in Melbourne, Australia.

There are commercial indigo enterprises in other parts of the world. In Europe, the emphasis is mainly on the reintroduction of woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), the native indigo of Europe. Companies such as Bleu de Lectoure, who in 2010 produced twenty tons of leaves a day for processing, are using historical techniques as part of an agricultural cooperative. In England, the Woad Centre partnered with the Ministry for Agriculture, Farms, and Fisheries and a European Union group SPINDIGO in a wider effort to revive heritage crops and breeds. In 2018, UNESCO inscribed Blaudruck, an indigo resist dyeing technique, onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Between 1994 and 1997, a 928,681 Euro project, of which 702,029 Euros was funded by the European Union, for the "Cultivation and Extraction of Natural Dyes for Industrial Use in Natural Textiles Production" was coordinated in Germany with partners in England. This project was tasked with reintroducing the cultivation of historic European dye plants such as madder, weld, goldenrod, and woad for contemporary industrial use. Efforts are also being made to continue the tradition of indigo dye masters in Japan like those of Kanji Hama who practices Katazome, the traditional art of stencil-printed indigo-dyed kimonos. Craftspeople in Yunnan, China, are also working to continue their traditional indigo craft.[170]

[170] "Bleu de Lectoure," Voices on Cloth: Maiwa Podcasts, Maiwa School of Textiles, Vancouver, Canada, March 1, 2010, https://www.schooloftextiles.com/podcasts/2018/4/5/bleu-de-lectoure; "Blaudruck, Modrotisk, Kékfestés, Modrotlač, resist block printing and indigo dyeing in Europe," Representative List of the Intangible Cultural

Regional, national, and international conferences also attest to a global interest in and revival of indigo-culture. A list of conferences and symposia on indigo culture is in Appendix G.

Key Findings on the Current Conditions of Indigo-Culture

Indigo is being revived globally, partly for the purposes of heritage conservation and partly for ecological and sustainability. Ultimately, these are not incompatible motivations, and sustainability is one of many reasons why certain crafts are presently in a state of revival. It is fortunate that indigo-culture is multifaceted, diverse, and both aesthetically and practically desirable. It was William Morris who espoused the desirability of crafts being both beautiful and functional, and it is these two attributes in tandem that vastly improve the chances of a successful craft revival.

Heritage of Humanity, 2018, https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/blaudruck-modrotisk-kekfestes-modrotlac-resist-block-printing-and-indigo-dyeing-in-europe-01365; Kitty Corrigan, "Bolt from the Blue," *Country Living Magazine*, 2008; Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 383; CORDIS, "Cultivation and Extraction of Natural Dyes for Industrial Use in Natural Textiles Production," European Commission, 1997, https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/AIR20981; Deborah Needleman, "How a Japanese Craftsman Lives by the Consuming Art of Indigo Dyeing," *New York Times Style Magazine*, November, 26, 2018; andJoyita Ghose, "Navigating the Warp and Weft of Time: Natural Indigo Dyeing in Yunnan," *Yale Environment Review*, May 31, 2020.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF CRAFT REVIVAL

A Definition of Craft

A craft is the combination of skills and knowledge that combine to create an object of utility and aesthetic charm. The master craftsperson is the pinnacle of achievement in crafts skill and knowledge. Alexander Langlands describes the word "crafts" as one that contains multitude meanings in the twenty-first century, from professional heritage craft to craft beer to an activity undertaken by amateurs as recreation. Langlands defines craft as a process of making a product, but not necessarily an object, with skill, from raw natural materials to a standard of quality.[171]

Heritage crafts are crafts that have proven their utility over hundreds or sometimes thousands of years. These kinds of old and ancient crafts include weaving, dyeing, printing, blacksmithing, gold- and silver-smithing, basketry, thatching, stonemasonry, tile and brick making, carpentry, woodturning, and myriad others. These are the crafts that every society relied on especially before mechanization and mass production.

Some crafts, like blacksmithing and carpentry, have been vital crafts without which society could not function well. Color crafts like dyeing, painting, and printing are not usually necessity crafts, but they are crafts that have facilitated the eloquent exhibition of hierarchy, status, class, and meaning and, as such, are central to society.

[171] Langlands, *Cræft,* 9.

History of Craft Revival

The core skills of necessity crafts like weaving, basketry, ceramics blacksmithing and carpentry have survived relatively well. However, certain less used skills of even the most constant crafts have been superseded by modern technology and so require revival. Certain styles and types of these old necessity crafts, especially those that are regionally specific, can fall into disuse, be forgotten, or have few and aging practitioners.

Over the last century, some heritage crafts have been maintained through careful and deliberate maintenance, but many more have been lost. Revival is a process by which lost or rarely practiced crafts are brought back to viable status. Craft schools, like Penland in North Carolina, and organizations like the Heritage Craft Association (HCA) in the UK, actively support, promote, and teach the skills of traditional crafts. The HCA has a Red List that includes categories of those crafts that are currently viable, endangered, critically endangered, and extinct. Institutions, organizations, charities, and governments offer grants programs that aim to support the revival and maintenance of heritage crafts. Many more revivals are begun and maintained by enthusiasts who may or may not have any background in the craft's skills.

Twenty-first-century craft revivals can trace their roots back to the Arts and Crafts movement, which began during the late nineteenth century as a reaction to industrialization and the loss of traditional skills, knowledge, and crafts. This movement laid the foundations for craft councils and interest in, and awareness of, the value of heritage crafts. Craft councils were originally founded to provide support and information for craftspeople and to investigate emerging markets for craft teachers and craft products. As these organizations developed, they became more active in craft theory, blurring the boundaries between art and craft. During the

twentieth century professional artists began to employ traditional craft skills to question issues of gender, race, class, and status. More recently, craft councils held conferences where contemporary issues could be presented and discussed with the same rigor as fine art forms, (see Appendix C). This shift in the purpose and motivation of craft councils echoed the shift toward more fluid and interdisciplinary practice in the arts as a whole. A new balance is still being found between traditional skills and contemporary technology and practice. Mass manufacturing, climate change, ecological impacts, and a general reduction in production quality have once again focused attention on the beauty, utility, sustainability, and value of heritage crafts.

1880s–1920s

Craft Revival in the UK

Industrialization and migration from the countryside to the swelling cities during the middle to latter part of the 1800s meant that traditional craftspeople were lured by the steady wage of the factory and the opportunities afforded by a large and bustling city. This migration meant that traditional crafts, knowledge, and ways of living that had remained fairly constant for centuries were being threatened by "progress." With the advent of mass production came a reevaluation of the handmade, handcraftsmanship, and what was envisioned as the natural. Fear of this racing tide of progress, where machines were replacing people, fueled a desire for a return to the unique, bespoke, and obviously handcrafted object with shape and form derived from Nature.[172]

[172] Monica Obniski, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, "The Arts and Crafts Movement in America," Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/acam/hd_acam.htm.

The movement was spearheaded in England by the architect and designer Augustus Pugin (1812–1852) and art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900). Pugin and Ruskin formed the philosophical foundations for the movement by advocating for a revival of medieval architecture, design and craft. They argued that the medieval approach that resulted in the formation of craft guilds that controlled quality of mastery, transmission and product was a perfect model for true craftsmanship and high-quality materials and craft objects.[173]

William Morris (1834–1896), who became the movement's figurehead, expressed the sentiments of the group when he stated, "Nothing should be made by man's labour which is not worth making, or which must be made by labour degrading to the makers."[174] Morris detested the modern world and wrote, "apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilisation."[175]

Morris was a great proponent of indigo discharge printing, a process by which the fabric is dyed and then a design either partially or fully bleached out by use of a bleach paste. In order to find colors that were both colorfast (did not fade with light or washing) and gentler than the brash synthetic aniline dyes made from coal tar, Morris scoured ancient texts such as those by Pliny the Elder and Herodotus, along with Gerard's *Herbal* and old French dye manuals. He also enlisted the help of his business manager, George Wardle, whose family had originally been silk

[173] Ibid.; and Victoria and Albert Museum, "William Morris and Historical Design," https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/william-morris-and-historical-design.

[173] Ray Watkinson, "Living Dyeing: Morris, Merton and the Wardels," *Journal of William Morris Studies* 12, no. 3 (1997): 20–25.

[174] William Morris, *The Collected Works of William Morris: With Introductions by His Daughter May Morris*, vol. 23, *Signs of Changes; Lectures on Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 205.

[175] Morris, Collected Works, 279.

dyers. He recorded his experiments with natural dyes in his essays on Arts and Crafts and in the *Merton Abbey Dyebook*.[176]

Shops like Liberty & Co. encouraged the commercial success of Arts and Crafts design and craftsmanship including work by Morris. Liberty & Co. also commissioned designs that were either made for the shop or made in the shop's workshops like the Furnishing and Decoration Studio and the Liberty Cabinet Works. Collaborations between artists, designers, and craftspeople created the products that would be forever associated with the Arts and Crafts movement.[177]

Craft Revival in North America

The American Arts and Crafts movement was highly influenced by the British movement and also aligned itself with Morris's work. The strong socialist undercurrent of the British Arts and Crafts movement was not central to the American movement, except for a few utopian communities.

Across the US, societies formed that sponsored lectures and journals to promote the arts and crafts ideal. The Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston and the Arts and Crafts Society of Chicago were both founded in 1897, with many other societies being founded in other large cities across the United States. Societies in smaller, more rural towns followed.[178]

[176] Watkinson, "Living Dying," 21.

[177] British and Irish Furniture Makers Online, "Liberty & Co (1875–2020)," https://bifmo.history.ac.uk/entry/liberty-co-1875-2020, accessed 2020.

[178] Obniski.

Craft Revival in the South

Craft revival in the South followed a similar trajectory as England and the United States as a whole. Craft revival in the South was dominated by the revival of mountain crafts as more researchers focused on endangered skills and knowledge of the Appalachian people. In western North Carolina during the 1920s a craft revival movement promoted existing mountain crafts while encouraging those interested in learning craft skills. People such as Louise Livingstone Pitman (ca. 1902–1979) and Lucy Morgan, founder of Penland School of Craft, were drawn to western North Carolina to learn the crafts available in this area. Craft schools such as Penland and the John C. Campbell Folk School were started to foster the crafts and craft skills transmission.[179]

Craft guilds such as the Southern Mountain Handicraft Guild were founded to promote traditional crafts, craftspeople, and their products. Craft communities and cooperatives were founded to support crafts practitioners and encourage the viability of the crafts in an area. The pottery community of Seagrove in North Carolina, begun with two craftspeople in 1917, was one of these craft communities. As part of this movement, efforts were made to "reposition Cherokee craft, previously suppressed, within the cultural landscape."[180] An annual festival celebrating traditional culture was established on the federally defined Cherokee reservation of Qualla Boundary in 1914. By the 1930s, this festival was instrumental in integrating the Cherokee into the wider craft community and drew positive attention to masterful native weaving and wood crafts that were shown in the traveling exhibition *Mountain Handicrafts* in 1933.[181]

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[179] "The People," Craft Revival: Shaping Western North Carolina Past and Present, Western Carolina University, https://www.wcu.edu/library/DigitalCollections/CraftRevival/people/index.html

[180] Carol Crown and Cheryl Rivers, *Folk Art: The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 23, ed. Carol Crown, Cheryl Rivers, and Charles Reagan Wilson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013), 71–72.

[181] Carol Crown and Cheryl Rivers, "Folk Art," 71-72.

1930s–1960s

Craft Revival in the UK

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society continued to mount regular shows until, and beyond, its fiftieth anniversary exhibition in 1938. It merged with the Cambridgeshire Guild of Craftsmen to form the Society of Designer Craftsmen in 1960.

Women's magazines such as *Woman, Women's Weekly,* and *Modern Woman* featured needlework patterns and other craft projects that promoted the arts and crafts ideals of skillful craftsmanship and honesty of materials. These articles mediated aspects of style and taste and sought to educate the reader using traditional crafts to introduce new ideas in popular taste. Home craft was a means of self-expression for women and a way to balance the conservative and the modern. Home craft was an acceptable way for women to express skill and an inexpensive way to modernize a home.[182] This kind of inexpensive home improvement through home craft transitioned into the make-do-and-mend attitudes of World War II and the aftermath of rationing.

Like the Industrial Revolution and the 1920s Age of Speed, the 1960s was a forward-looking decade. With these periods of looking forward come a fear-reaction to rapid change that induces nostalgia and a revisiting of some vision and version of the past as safe, continuous, and wholesome.

[182] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Needlework Patterns, Home Craft and Women's Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s," http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/n/needlework-patterns-home-craft-and-womens-magazines-in-the-1920s-and-1930s/.

Craft Revival in North America

In the Hudson River Valley, Eleanor Roosevelt and her three business partners, Nancy Cook, Marion Dickerman, and Caroline O'Day, founded Val-Kill Industries, a business that made handcrafted replicas of colonial furniture and metalwork. Beyond simply expressing a "desire to produce really beautiful things," this workshop was a socioeconomic experiment.[184] The project was an attempt to stem the tide of the abandonment of rural farms in favor of urban factories, "to build up in a rural community a small industry which would employ and teach a trade to the men and younger boys, and give them adequate pay, while not taking them completely from the farm."[185] The maintenance of younger generations in rural areas is something with which many communities still struggle, and the migration of potential young farmers to the city remains a pressing issue.

In 1939, Aileen Osborn Webb led an affiliation of craft groups, Handicraft Cooperative League of America, with an aim to developing urban markets for rural craftspeople. A neighbor and friend of Webb's, Anne Morgan, founded the American Handicraft Council the same year and the two organizations merged in 1942 to become the American Craftsmen's Cooperative Council, Inc. At this stage, they initiated the American Craftsmen's Educational Council. A provisional charter was granted by the Board of Regents on behalf of the Education Department, New York, in 1943, which was made an absolute charter in 1948. This charter made the Cooperative Council "an educational association to provide education in handicrafts and to further and stimulate public interest in and appreciation of the work of handcraftsmen."[186]

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[184] Victoria M. Grieve, "'Work that Satisfies the Creative Instinct': Eleanor Roosevelt and the Arts and Crafts," *Winterthur Portfolio* 42, no. 2/3 (2008): 160–61.

[185] Grieve, "Work that Satisfies," 160-161.

[186] American Craft Council.

In 1950, the Educational Council inaugurated a national competition, "Young Americans," for craftsmen under the age of thirty. It held twelve Young Americans competitions between 1950 and 1988. By 1951, the American Craftsmen's Cooperative Council was dissolved and in 1955 the American Craftsmen's Educational Council changed its name to the American Crafts Council (ACC). This change enabled the Crafts Council to open the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, now the American Craft Museum, in 1956. The first national conference, Craftsmen Today, was held in 1957 with 450 people attending.[187]

Craft Revival in the South

An article in the *Daily Times-Enterprise* from March 18, 1916, by textile designer and "mother'" of interior design Candace Wheeler called for a return to large-scale cultivation and production of natural indigo. By this time, natural indigo had largely given way to the cheaper alternative of synthetic indigo. Wheeler thought that the "reestablishment of Indigo as a crop for Southern agriculture [that] might develop into an interest of the utmost importance."[188] She bemoaned the American reliance on synthetic, aniline, indigo from Germany and the shortage of this product due to the ongoing war. Wheeler also acknowledged natural indigo's superior quality and value, noting that indigo-dyed cotton sold for a higher price than synthetically dyed cotton. In the article, Wheeler insisted that natural indigo-dyed fabric "grows softer with age and wear without losing a jot of its characteristic color, while chemically dyed cotton, of perhaps an almost identical tint, will lose itself in spots or develop shades of purple or even red under undue exposure to light or dampness."[189]

[187] American Craft Council.

[188] Candace Wheeler, "Indigo for Dye Purposes," *Daily Times Enterprise*, March 18, 1916.

[189] Wheeler, "Indigo for Dye Purposes," 16.

Other articles echoed this sentiment such as a 1920 article in the *Fayetteville News* in which dye authority H. E. Armstrong stated that the German company BASF "does not make Indigo, but only one of the constituents of indigo, called indigotin," which produces an inferior, one-dimensional product.[191] Balfour Paul mentions this in her book *Indigo* and describes how BASF added substances like "soap, starch, glue, casein etc. to the vat, in order to obtain the same effect with Indigo Pure."[192] A 1937 *Jackson Herald* (Jefferson, Georgia) article stated that natural indigo was being used by handicraft workers, and in 1950 a W. S. Payne is mentioned in an article in the *Butler Herald* (Butler, Georgia) as planting "Blanket Indigo" as a trial.[193] These articles show that not only did proponents of natural indigo persist after the introduction of aniline dye, but that experimentation and cultivation still occurred in some areas for the purpose of dyeing textiles, at least until the 1950s.

This craft revival in the South lasted about fifty years, between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1930s, and centered around the southern Appalachians of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. It began as an effort to provide work for rural families and alleviate poverty by producing handcrafted products. This revival of what was loosely described as "mountain work" evolved organically out of missionary projects, craft schools, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations. What began as independent, individual craft revival centers evolved into combined groups and guilds to promote education, collective and cooperative marketing campaigns, and reduced competition. This revival movement was typified

[191] H. E. Armstrong, "German Process Faulty," *Fayetteville News*, July 16, 1920.

[192] Balfour-Paul, *Indigo*, 84.

[193] Eugenia Boone, "Jackson County Home Demonstration News," *Jackson Herald*, September 30, 1937; and "Soil Conservationist M.P. Dean Shows Gains in Taylor County," *Butler Herald*, July 20, 1950.

by organizations like the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers and the Southern Mountain Handicraft Guild, now the Southern Highland Craft Guild.

The drive to produce sustainable, rural economic enterprise had to be balanced with a desire to preserve, maintain, and value the knowledge, skills, and traditions that were in danger of extinction as well as a yearning to maintain traditional rural life within a fast-industrializing country. What had begun as community craft forms evolved, because of this revival, into more individualistic forms of folk art. This change shifted the focus to art pieces made by a single artist/creator rather than focusing on a craftsperson who works with and serves a local community for that community's greater improvement.[194] This process of elevation in the status of craftsperson to artist is a microcosm of the larger craft revival movement that can be seen in the shifting focus of crafts councils in the US and England.

Schools such as Penland and craft communities like the potter's community of Seagrove, North Carolina, are living examples of the continuation of Arts and Crafts principles. The Arts and Crafts movement helped traditional crafts achieve a level of status, meaning, and esteem in society and elevated the value of handmade craft objects over mass produced products.[195]

The 1970s Revival

Craft Revival in the UK

As the 1960s moved into the 1970s the new decade brought a strengthening of the reaction to progress and a drive to return to a connection with Nature and handicrafts. This shift can be seen through the self-sufficiency movement pioneered by activists and writers like John

[194] M. Anna Fariello, "The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture," 71–72.

[195] M. Anna Fariello, "Making History: Revival in Context," Digital Collection of Western Carolina University (2007), https://www.wcu.edu/library/DigitalCollections/CraftRevival/story/revivalincontext.html

Seymour with his 1976 book *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency*, which included numerous heritage rural crafts necessary for successful self-sufficient smallholding.

Other circumstances also contributed to the craft revivals of the 1970s. The emergence of the equal rights and feminist movements in the 1960s triggered an increased interest in what had previously been viewed as "women's arts" such as quilting, weaving, natural dyeing, and needlework.

Rough networks of social activist groups like those concerned with ecology, equal rights, and self-sufficiency combined with journalists, scientists, radical student groups, and political organizations to formed a more cohesive force which was expressed through new environmentalist magazines like *The Ecologist* and *Resurgence*. The environmentalist movement valued the environmentally sustainable practices of the past, including heritage crafts, and sought a balance between progress and the sustainability of traditional practices and ways of living.[196]

In England, the founding of state-backed groups such as the Crafts Advisory Committee (CAC) in 1971 drove craft revival in the UK. The CAC mandate was to be useful in the investigation of loans and grants, in regional connections, exhibitions, and craft education. The CAC was renamed the Crafts Council in 1979.[197]

Craft Revival in North America

The new environmentalist movement was expressed in the United States by actions such as the first Earth Day protests on April 22, 1970, organized to protest environmental

[196] Campbell Williams, "The Ecologist and the Alternative Technology Movement, 1970–75: New Environmentalism Confronts 'Technocracy,'" *Technology and Humanity* 12, (2008): 1.

[197] Craft Council, "History," accessed 2019,. https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about/history.

destruction.[198] This movement's focus on environmental sustainability was compatible with and often included a focus on heritage craft practice. Heritage crafts became a place of intersection between art, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

Textile artists such as Miriam Schapiro incorporated craft techniques into their art to raise the profile and status of skills that were associated with women. She intended to promote and validate traditional crafts with a view to defending women's work as a legitimate art form and to incorporate traditional craft into a high art context. Feminist writer Patricia Mainardi theorized that traditional crafts had been as underrated as certain musical genres like jazz. She believed that racism and sexism had sidelined craft and music because of associations with color, gender, and class.[199] Craft councils and other traditional craft organizations became forums for quiet activism and expressions of wider social movements. Craft and craft revival, at least in part, became an expression of these movements.

The founding of craft organizations vitally and practically contributed to craft revivals during the 1970s by promoting of traditional crafts. These organizations provided access to quality transmission, support for craftspeople, the production of journals, and created museums and spaces for product sales and conferences. The Craft Council received two National Endowment for the Arts grants in 1979 ($150,000) and 1985 ($500,000) to support its efforts.

[198] Sophie Yeo, "How the Largest Environmental Movement in History was Born," Future Planet BBC, April 21, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200420-earth-day-2020-how-an-environmental-movement-was-born.

[199] Carolyn Ducey and Mary Ellen Ducey, "Quilt Symposium 77: 'Fine Art-Folk Art'" in *Uncoverings*, vol. 24 of the Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group (2003).

Craft Revival in the South

The eighth national conference of the American Craft Council was held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 1977. The conference focused on the "historical traditions and evolutions of the new South."[200]

1980s–2020

Craft Revival in the UK

The UK Crafts Council became independent of the Design Council in 1982. The Crafts Council was granted a Royal Charter, and its objective shifted to promoting fine works of craftsmanship to the public, and to advancing and encouraging the conservation and making of the highest quality craft products. Exhibitions hosted in the council headquarters in Lower Waterloo Place promoted craftspeople early in their careers.

In 1991 the Crafts Council moved to another location in London that housed a shop and café with a reference library, gallery space, and workshop for craft classes. In 1999 the Crafts Council transitioned from being state-backed to being under the aegis of the government organization the Arts Council of England. This transition withdrew the Crafts Council's ability to function as a grant-making organization and shifted its focus to service delivery. During the early 2000s the council mainly focused on exhibitions and showcasing the highest level of contemporary craft practice. The education workshop, gallery, shop, and café were closed in favor of concentrating the council's efforts on national development, working in partnership at a local level. The organization also focused on offering programs to support craft practitioners in the early stages of their development and business. During the last twenty years the council has

[200] American Craft Council.

produced several surveys and reports, including two in 2015, "Our Future is the Making" and "Make Your Future." The Council also launched a craft education program for schools.

Craft Revival in North America

By the 1980s the American Crafts Council had opened a second museum, American Craft Museum II, in New York City. In 1989 an exhibition, *Craft Today USA*, opened at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and included about 200 works that toured fifteen countries until 1992. By 2002 the American Craft Museum was renamed the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) to keep pace with the new interdisciplinary nature of craft and art and a softening of the boundaries between the two.[201]

Two conferences, "Shaping the Future of Craft," in 2006, the first for twenty years, and "Crating A New Craft Culture," in 2009, acted as platforms for discussion between a wide spectrum of disciplines within and outside of craft. Following these conferences, the council hosted "convenings" that were organized as "curated peer-to-peer conversations [to] articulate the issues, challenges and concerns they are facing in the field today."[202] The 2019 conference, "Present Tense," describes itself as a "national conversation on craft's relevance as a powerful catalyst for navigating and making meaning in an increasingly complex present."[203]

Key Findings of the History of Revival

Industrialization caused a decline in traditional crafts and traditional ways of living, especially in rural areas. The Arts and Crafts movement was born as a reaction to this decline

[201] The American Craft Council.

[202] The American Craft Council.

[203] The American Craft Council.

and as an effort to revitalize and promote the value of traditional skills, knowledge, and crafts as an antidote to the inexorable race of progress. This movement lasted between the latter part of the 1800s and the 1920s and 1930s.

Crafts were promoted during the 1930s through women's magazines as a way for women to express their individuality and update their homes to a more modern aesthetic. The editors of these magazines became the arbiters of style and taste while encouraging craft skills in the home. The make-do-and-mend attitude of World War II and the immediate aftermath of rationing continued this domestic concentration on homecrafts.

The postwar boom of the 1950s and 1960s also gave rise to another reaction against progress and a renewed interest in traditional crafts. Disparate networks of social activists within movements like equal rights, civil rights, ecology, and self-sufficiency began to gather together to form a more cohesive movement based on common ideological ground. These activists combined forces with journalists, radical student groups, and political groups to form a more cohesive movement that gave rise to Earth Day in 1970 and a new environmentalism. Part of this new environmentalism was a movement toward sustainability and a questioning of the morals and ethics of industrial societies and their impact on the planet. Heritage crafts were once again, as they had been within the Arts and Crafts movement, promoted as an environmentally-sustainable and ethical alternative to mass consumption and polluting industry.

Crafts councils in both the UK and the US were founded during the twentieth century to support craftspeople through grants, programs of education, and showcasing talent in exhibitions and craft museums. The boundary between craft and fine art began to blur during the latter part of the twentieth century. A primary focus of craft councils and organizations like the Heritage

Craft Association in the twenty-first century is the encouragement of an appreciation in the public of fine workmanship and of the time, skill, knowledge, and effort of the craftsperson.

Elements of Craft

All crafts share certain aspects, a combination of tangibles and intangibles. The most obvious tangible aspect of craft is the product. Intangible aspects include skills, history, performance or action of making, associated rituals, festivals, or legends. These aspects can be thought of as elements. Like the four terrestrial elements of earth, water, air, and fire that describe four modes of existance that must be in balance, a functioning craft is a balance of its combined cultural elements.[205] A heritage craft requires the practitioner to be sufficiently versed in all elements that are historically part of that craft. Though these basic elements remain the same, they can be expressed differently from practitioner to practitioner and from one cultural group to another.

Indigo-culture, as it relates to the southern US, can be particularly challenging. It is not wholly defined by one people, culture, or place, nor is it necessarily easy to define how it might be, or have been, differently expressed from one state to another or one group to another. Histories such as those of plantation culture include people associated with indigo-culture from African and European extraction. This combined history is simultaneously a divided history with difficult and painful cultural undercurrents such as slavery and colonialism. Crafts like indigo-culture can be a gateway to individual connection to ancestral history through making. Such a craft can also, perhaps, offer a space of shared passion and experience, a space for conversations

[205] Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Marion Boyars, 2009), 49.

based on mutual knowledge and skill. Deconstructing indigo-culture into its craft elements could enable practitioners to begin to unpick the craft, tease out the strands of history, knowledge, and skill, and initiate new research sparked by fresh understanding of an ancient craft.

These elements, like overlapping circles, create a product at their center. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the product is the smallest portion of a craft and made up of the overlapping circles of knowledge, voice, and action: the constituent parts that combine to create the craft product.

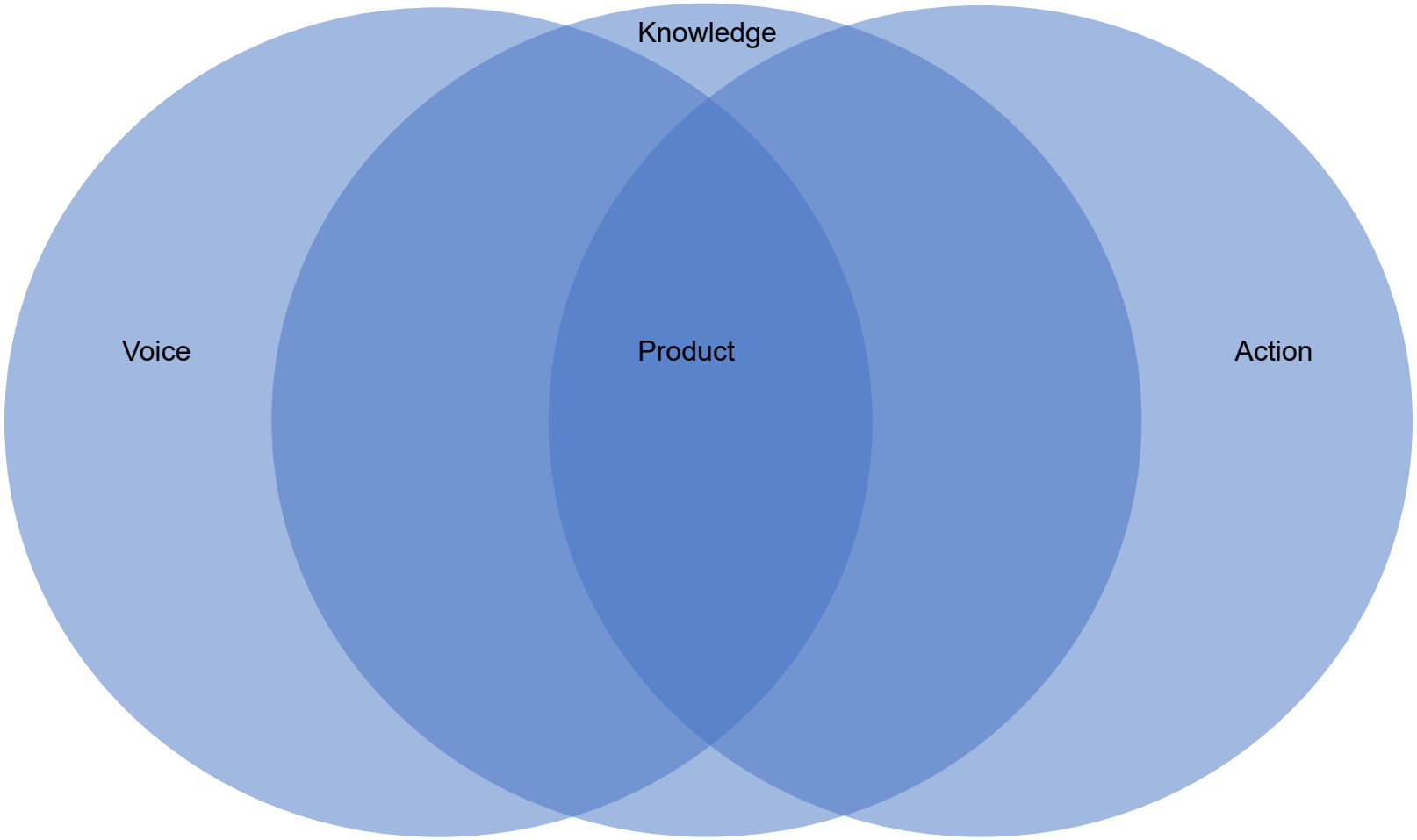

Figure 4.1. The Four Elements of Craft. Diagram by AJM Braithwaite.

The product is the tip of the iceberg (fig 4.2), that part (tangible heritage) that is visible above the water with all the intangible heritage lying beneath, visible only those who dive below the surface. The action is the closest element to the product because it is the physical making. The voice is the history, rituals, stories, legends, wisdom, and songs. It is more obscure than the action or the product but less obscure and easier to access than the knowledge. The knowledge is the experiential knowledge, the expertise and mastery, and the reasons for certain practices within the craft; it is often the hardest element to discover, discern, and decipher.

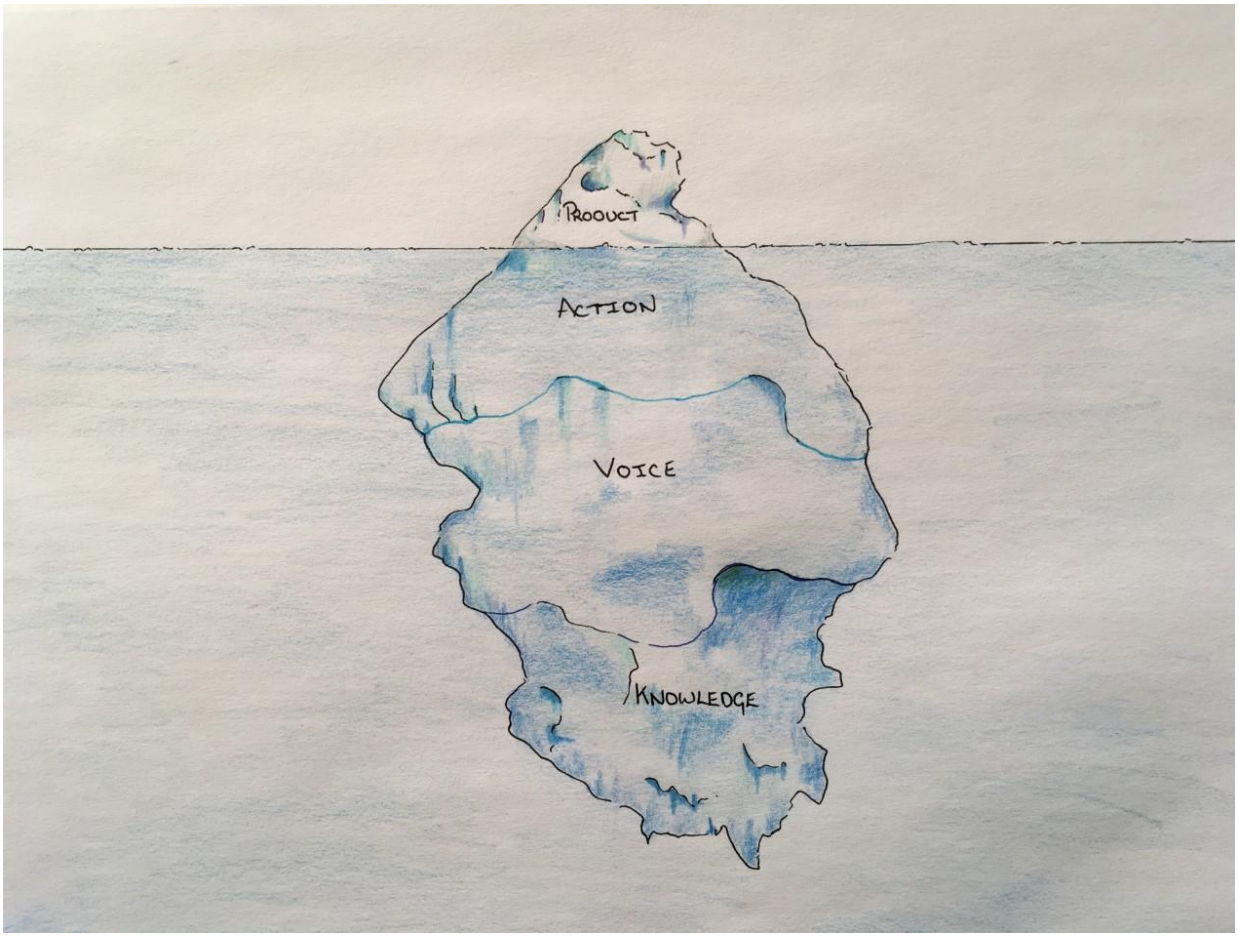

Figure 4.2. Iceberg analogy diagram. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

The exercise of deconstructing the craft into its basic elements enables the revivalist-preservationist to focus on specific areas of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The word

expressing each element of craft can be used at the center of a mind map, such as those illustrated by thinking technique expert Tony Buzan, to further define the associations and meanings within each element.[206] This quick and simple exercise allows a group to efficiently identify individual associations and connections, share and discuss them with a group if desired, and then draw a new mind map encompassing the combined or shared associations (fig 4.3). This is one way for individuals to clarify what they see as essential parts of their craft and for a group to reach a consensus. The reaching of consensus is especially important when individuals with differing expertise, cultural background, motivations, and revival visions come together to plan a more concerted revival/preservation plan.

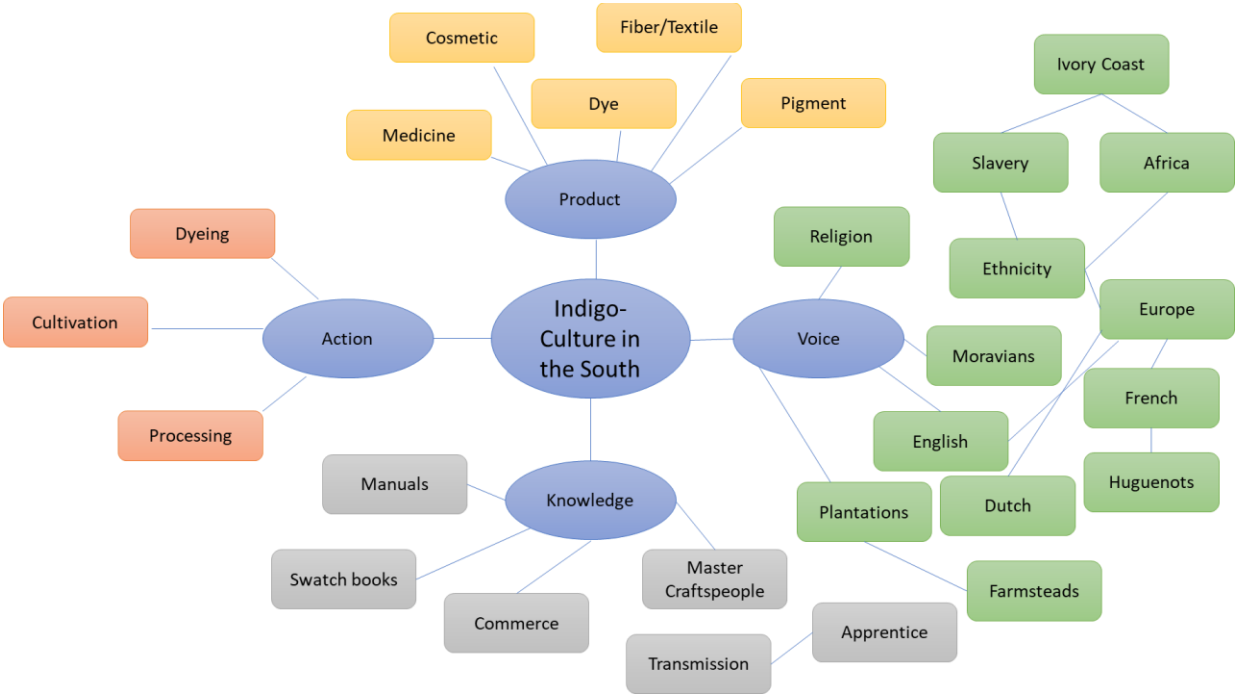

Figure 4.3. Example of a mind map exploring the elements of indigo-culture in the South. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

[206] Tony Buzan and Barry Buzan, *The Mind Map Book*, (London: Plume, 1996).

A series of mind maps exploring these elements could look like those below. Starting with indigo-culture in the South (figs 4.3 and 4.4), exploring the individual elements further to gain a more in-depth view of those elements (figs 4.5–4.7), and visualizing the connections between component parts of the elements (fig 4.8).

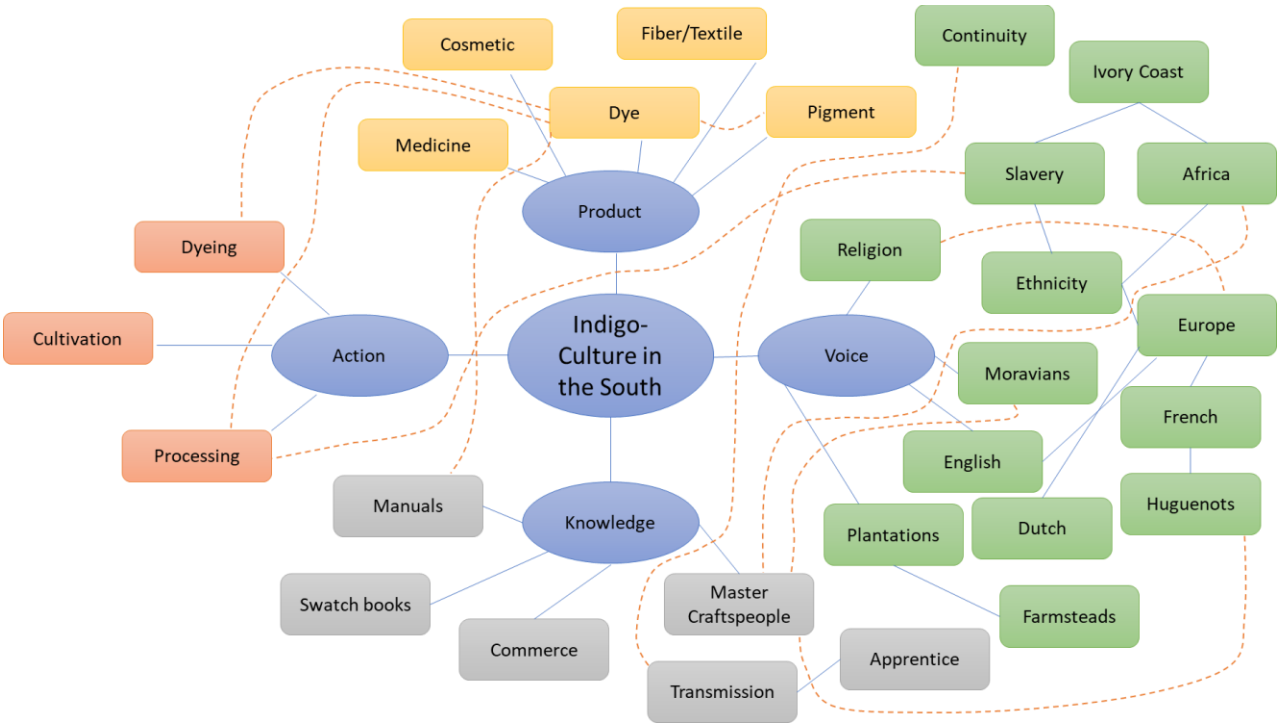

Figure 4.4. Example of a mind map with some connections drawn between aspects of elements. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

Connections, drawn in orange in figure 4.4, show how connections between aspects within elements can be illustrated. In this mind map, connections are made, for example, between dye and dyeing, religion and the Moravians and Huguenots, slavery and the Ivory Coast, and between slavery and master craftspeople. These connections are made because the act of dyeing makes a product from the dye. There is also a connection illustrated between dye and processing for the same reason. Religion is connected to the Moravians and Huguenots because they were persecuted for their religion and both groups emigrated from Europe and brought their

dye expertise with them. The Ivory Coast is connected to slavery and to master craftspeople because people from this area of Africa were targeted for enslavement due to their skill in dyeing and cultivating of indigo, cotton, and rice.

These deconstructed elements offer a visual representation of the craft of indigo-culture, enabling revivalist-preservation-practitioners to instantly grasp the various facets of a craft. Such mind maps can also be used to combine the ideas of several people. Figures 4.5–4.7 show examples of the kind of mind maps three people might draw. Some aspects of the element of knowledge are similar or the same, other aspects differ between these examples. Each mind map features memory as an important aspect of the element. In different ways all three maps express transmission. Two maps express performance as aspects. Figure 4.8 illustrates how these aspects can be combined to bring together several participants' viewpoints and make additions through discussion and agreement.

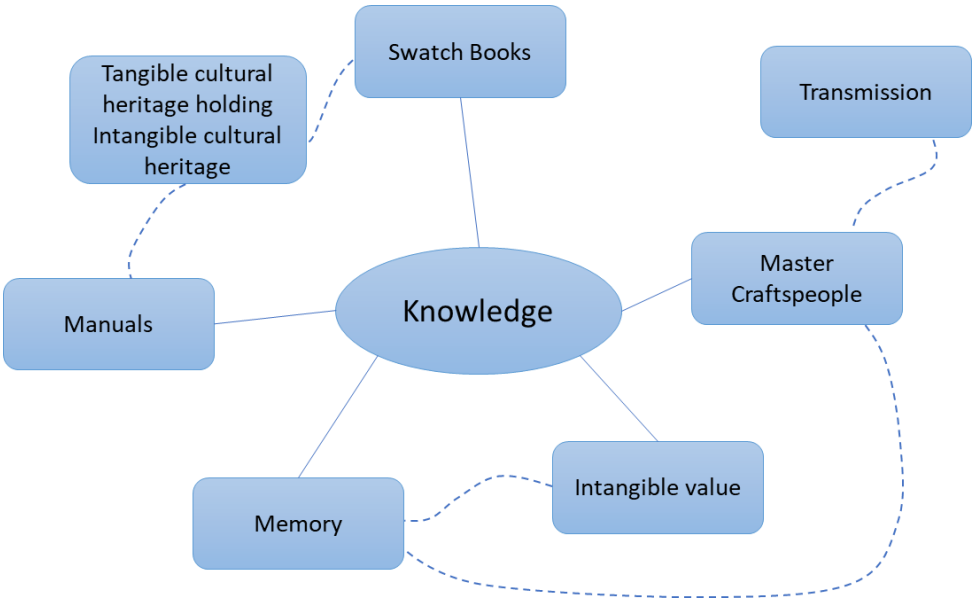

Figure 4.5. Example of one way this element can be deconstructed. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

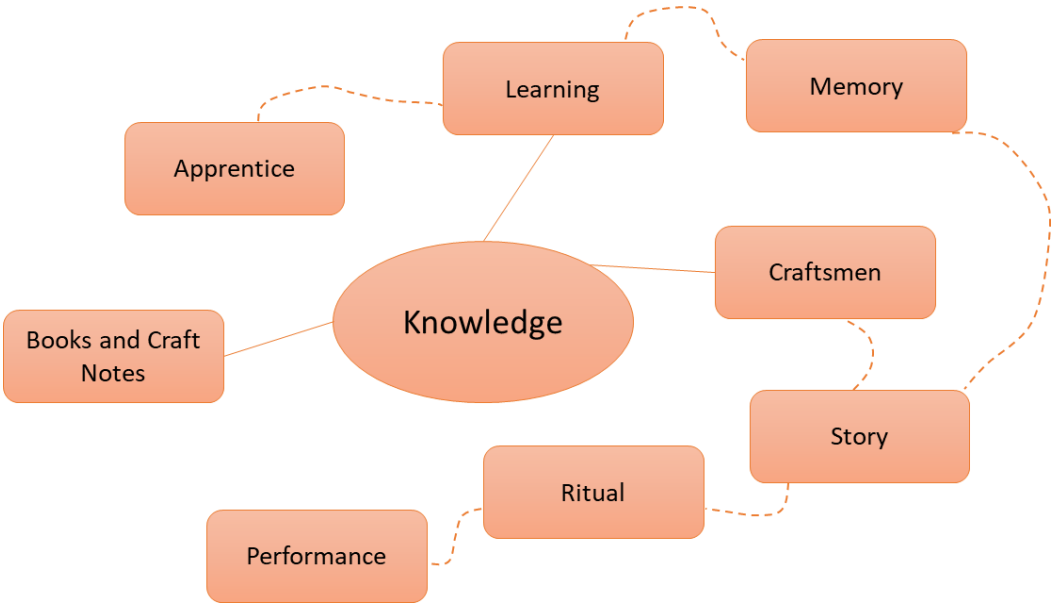

Figure 4.6. Example of a second way this element could be deconstructed. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

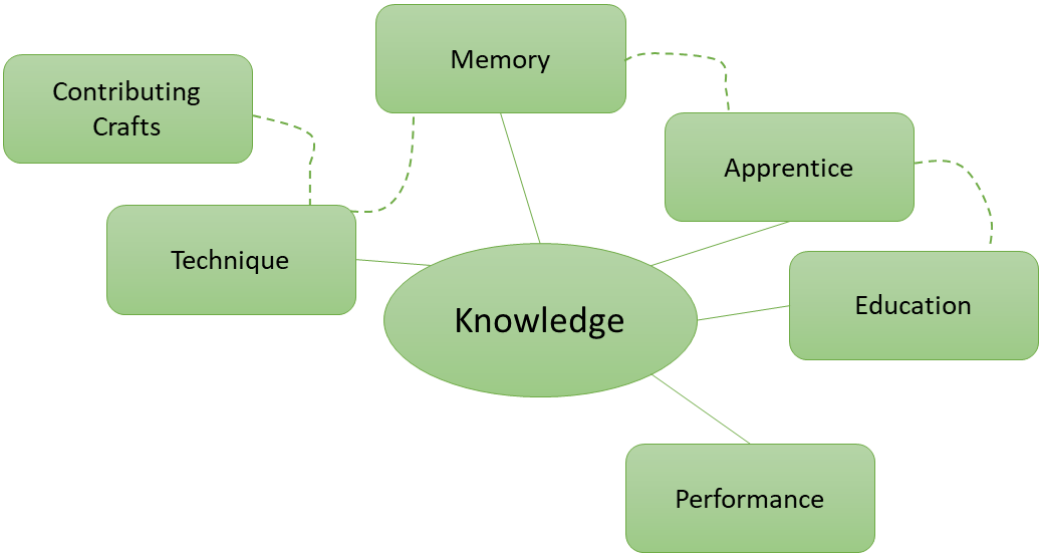

Figure 4.7. Example of a third way this element could be deconstructed. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

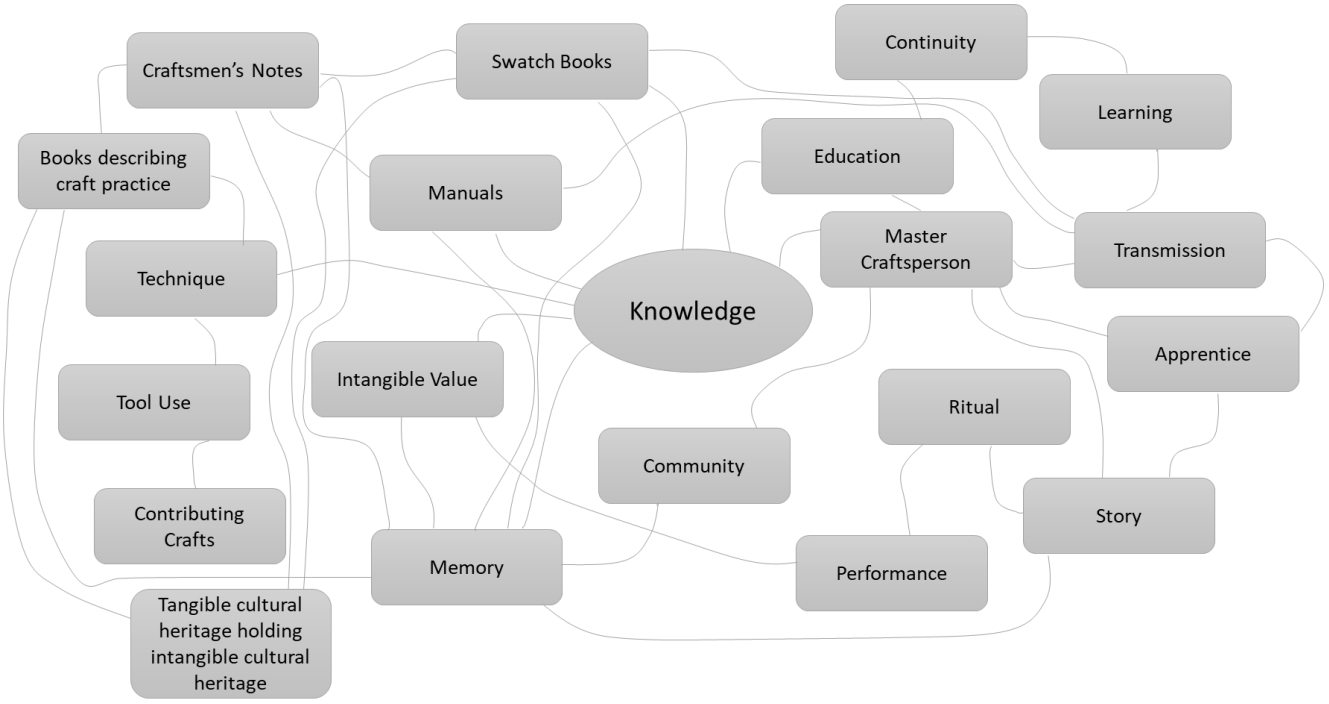

Figure 4.8. Example of how several mind maps can be combined to reach a consensus. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

Figure 4.8 shows how discussion and combining of the three mind maps can lead to additions such as tool use. "Books & craft notes" becomes the two aspects of "craftsmen's notes" and "books describing craft practice." In these four examples the connections between the aspects are drawn in hard lines.

The four elements of craft were defined in a similar way to the examples above. The mind map method revealed multiple aspects of craft which were then grouped according to associated meanings. For example, technique, practice, maker, performance were logically grouped under a collective term of "actions". Likewise, associated meanings like history, stories, songs, rituals, and traditions were grouped under the collective term of expression or voice. To discern such associated groups, a mind cloud was formed of terms that denote aspects of craft. These aspects were then grouped by association (figs 4.9 and 4.10).

Figure 4.9. Word cloud for craft. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

Figure 4.10. Color-coded connections to craft. Beginning to define clusters of words into meaning categories. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

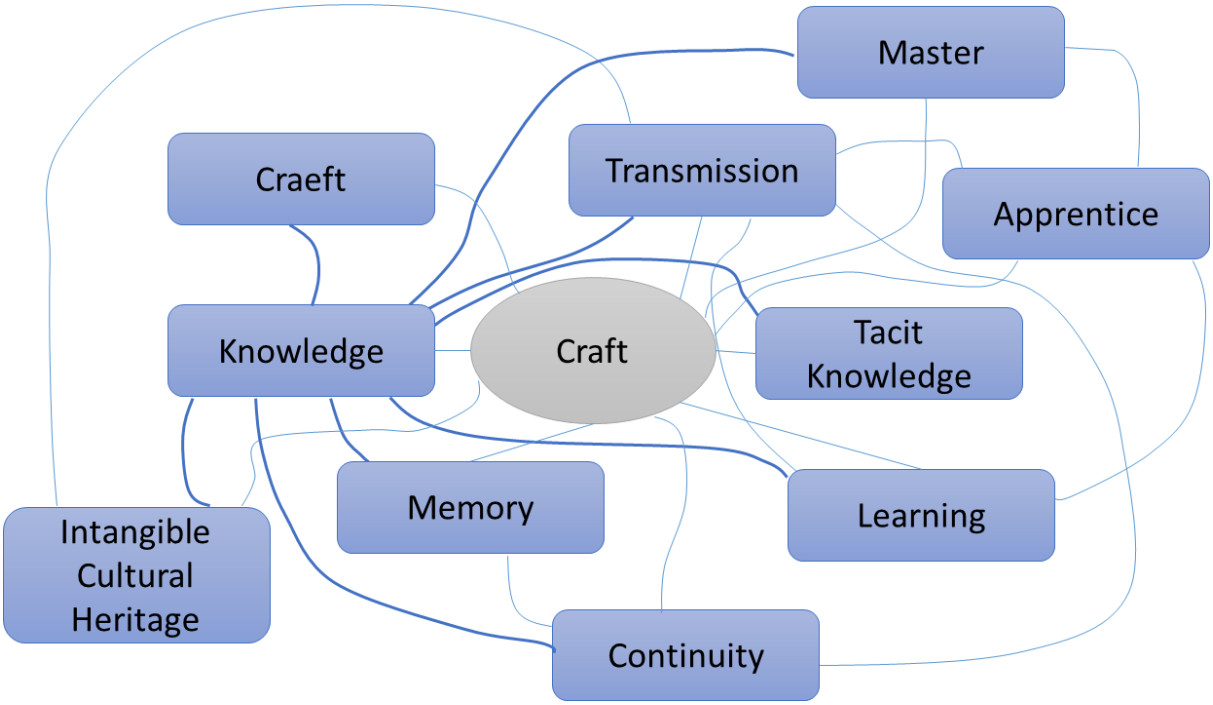

Figure 4.11. A group of associated aspects of craft grouped together. Connections made between aspects show the aspect with the most associations in that group. This indicates its logical choice as the element of craft associated with those meanings or aspects of craft grouped together from the main word cloud of aspects of craft. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

One cluster of words, those in light blue in Figure 4.10, were grouped together in Figure 4.11 and connections drawn between the aspects. The aspect with the most connections, knowledge, becomes a collective term for all associated aspects of craft.

Using the mind map system, the following elements of craft were discerned:

- **The Knowledge**
- **The Voice/History**
- **The Action/Physical Skills**
- **The Product**

The Knowledge is that which can be written down. In the case of a living craft, it is largely tacit in nature and, with a historic craft, it is often lost or obscured by time or the lack of master practitioners.[208]

The Voice is the history of the craft and the individuals, families, or groups of craftspeople, their traditions, rituals, songs, and stories.

The Action is the practical, physical, competence, the "practice," the skills that define the craft.

The Product is the tangible result of the knowledge, voice, and action of the craftsperson. It is the only truly tangible element, yet it embodies the history, learning, skill, and time, the cræft, of the maker.

The Elements of Craft: In More Depth

The Knowledge

Manuals and handbooks, such as the one about which *The Dyer's Handbook* was written and Asa Ellis's *The Country Dyer's Assistant*, give us an access point into the recipes and processes of indigo-dyeing techniques of the past.[209] The *Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney* allows us a view into the trials of cultivation and processing and some of the specific challenges met by American colonials, challenges that can still be met in contemporary cultivation of indigo.[210]

The physical Action of a craft can be revived from these kinds of historical documents alone, especially if revived by a craftsperson already skilled in an akin craft. However, the Voice

[208] Tacit knowledge is experiential knowledge, the kind of knowledge that is gained through doing or making.

[209] Cardon, *The Dyer's Handbook*.

[210] Pinckney, *The Letterbook.*

may be lost with this kind of revival and a new Voice will need to be found or constructed. Indeed, it may be argued that this new construction of the craft Voice is an inevitable part of revival.

Where local Knowledge cannot be found in the original locale, it may be necessary to combine any historical local Knowledge with Action drawn from other, near kin, traditions. It may also be necessary to build the Voice from any existing historical snippets in combination with those from the root cultures associated with the craft.

A question arises about difficult histories such as the planter/slave histories of indigo-culture in the South. These may not be Voices we wish to "revive," and yet their history cannot be denied and must not be allowed to fall silent. In such cases part of a craft revival can be used to educate and give voice to the historical voiceless.

The Voice

The Voice is, perhaps, the most useful element for locating a craft practice in Place because the traditions, rituals, songs, stories, patterns, etc. may be in a specific locale. For example, the Sumbanese people of an isolated East Indonesian island express the Voice through indigo dyeing that is performed as a kind of cult of female secrets linked to stages of womanhood and cycles of reproduction. Older women practice a secret mystic art associated with herbal medicine, body art, and, more covertly, witchcraft.[211] Conversely, Blaudruck (also called Modrotisk, Kékfestés, or Modrotlač depending on the location), an indigo resist printing process inscribed onto the ICH representative list in 2018, is practiced over a wide area including

[211] Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider, *Cloth and Human Experience* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 141.

Austria, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, and Slovakia. Echoes of Blaudruck can be seen in the US through indigo resist printers such as Stifel and Sons. In this case the process, the Action, is the same or similar, but the Voice may be very different according to the cultural group. The patterns, "representations of local flora and fauna [are] interrelated to the local culture of the regions" are unique to each geographical area, craftsperson, or family of craftspeople.[213]

Within historic preservation, or heritage conservation, there is what is called the "First Voice," which is similar in nature to my construction of the Voice. The First Voice can simultaneously be used to describe the indigenous voice, the gendered voice such as that of women, the voice of the craftsperson, or even a voice of cultural diversity. Amareswar Galla writes, "In short the First Voice is the voice of the bearer of intangible heritage—individual or collective—or those that are the closest as primary stakeholders to a heritage resource, be it intangible or tangible, movable or immovable, natural or cultural."[214]

In this sense, especially in a postcolonial context, tangible cultural heritage can only be interpreted through the clear expression of the intangible heritage via the First Voice. In South Africa there is a concept of historic preservation of intangible cultural heritage or *amasiko/ditso*.[215] This concept describes intangible cultural heritage as dynamic, vibrant, and vital. Thinking of heritage as alive rather than situated in a "dead" past makes the Action of craft a living performance of heritage preservation and of creation of future heritage conservation.

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[213] Blaudruck/Modrotisk/Kékfestés/Modrotlač, resist block printing and indigo dyeing in Europe, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/blaudruck-modrotisk-kekfestes-modrotlac-resist-block-printing-and-indigo-dyeing-in-europe-01365

[214] Galla, "The First Voice," 12–13.

[215] Galla, "The First Voice," 12-13.

The Action

The Knowledge and the Voice are the soul of the Action; they are the depth and the meaning that inform the craftsperson's skill. The Action is a space of intersection between history, mind, and hand. In essence, it is a performance. It is a kind of living heritage conservation, an action from the past performed by a person in the present who is maintaining the skill for the future. Whenever indigo is cultivated on ground where it was historically cultivated, the production of every dye vat, cakes of indigo, and the dyed and printed indigo textiles echo the motions of the past. These very acts preserve the craft through doing. They also create a tangible artifact that testifies to the knowledge, skill, and creativity of the craftsperson and their teachers. The Action invokes the "lineage" of craftspeople from the past even if the skills have been revived through historic written documentation. Essentially, such "recovered" knowledge is like a thread that has been dropped and then picked up later; the thread is the same, but the hands are different.

The Product

The Product is the touchstone of the craft, the tangible article by which the quality of the skills of the craftsperson or group are measured. Sometimes the product is all we have of a particular craft, and any revival must be reverse-engineered from the surviving artifacts and current knowledge in akin crafts. An akin craft for indigo-culture in the South could be indigo dyeing in other cultures, other kinds of natural dyeing, and even, to some degree, brewing, lacto-fermentation, and other fermentation crafts. The complex part of indigo dyeing is that it requires the dye liquor to be anoxic (without oxygen), which is very different from other natural dye techniques and requires a specific set of skills for success.

Museums largely contain the products of artists and craftspeople, the tangible artifacts destitute of their original context. The African Renaissance movement, when reimagining the "museum as post-colonial cultural centre" has argued that tangible cultural heritage is comprehensible only when interpreted through intangible heritage that is the greater part of the whole.[217]

It can seem as if indigo-culture in the South died due to forces largely outside the control of the producers and that only a few tangible artifacts of indigo agriculture and industry are left. It is easy to assume that the voices of indigo craftspeople are silent and that we can only go to the historical record for any hope of hearing them.

The historical record is certainly one place where we can piece together some semblance of the voices of the planters, workers, processors, producers, dyers, and printers that make up the indigo voices of the past. A second way to connect with those long-dead voices is by reenactment through technical art history, experimental archaeology, or living history, where the performance of the actions of the past illuminates and reanimates the histories.

What we require are access points, places of entry into the past from which revival can flow. The four elements of craft offer not only a way to break down and discuss craft in manageable bites, but an access point to heritage crafts.

We are familiar with the Product because it is every artifact found in the museum, in the archaeologist's dig, or in our homes. It is the tangible remnant of the past, but without the other elements it is without context and without its full meaning it is a mystery.

It is necessary to understand the product: how it was made, where it was made, why it was made, what it does, what it was for, and what it meant to those who made and used it. The

[217] Galla, "The First Voice," 14.

answers to these questions are frequently elusive, but when a craft is living it is easier to reach a fuller contextual understanding. Living crafts enable understanding of value and significance because the history, the Voice, is still clear.

Few products of indigo-culture in the South survive. According to the available evidence a large quantity of the indigo cakes were sent abroad, and a significant quantity of indigo was transported via wagon trails to the North via hubs such as Augusta, Georgia, and Salem, North Carolina. Very few surviving indigo-dyed products can be verified to have been dyed from indigo grown, processed, and dyed in the South during the 1700s. It may be possible, in the future, to ascertain such provenance through scientific analysis of the few indigo resist dyed textiles of the 1700s thought to have been made in America. Such analysis does not at present exist, however.

Repositories of historic textiles could be analyzed, and catalogues of recorded textiles could also be a Source future research. The archives of the Henry D. Green Center for the Study of the Decorative Arts at the Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, contain records of textiles that may have been dyed with natural indigo from southern plantations and farms. Some of these records state that they are dyed with indigo, but many only specify color and further analysis would be necessary to ascertain any levels of indigotin present in the fibers. The black-and-white photographs that accompany these records shed no light on shade or color that could offer some indication as to the likely presence of indigo. It would be useful for these records to be updated with new photographs, and for as many of these textiles as feasible to be analyzed for indigotin content. Some of the chintzes recorded in the archive bear a resemblance to John Hewson's work. These may have been printed in North America, and may even have been printed with southern indigo traded through networks like the Moravian trade network via Salem,

North Carolina. More research is needed to verify provenance of these prints and to ascertain any connection with southern indigo plantations and Moravian trade networks.

The Elements of Craft and Indigo-culture

Indigo-culture in the South has left some surviving artifacts including archaeological remains of processing tanks, period etchings, map cartouches, and illustrations and paintings showing indigo cultivation and processing.[218] Historical archives contain letters, account ledgers, journals, newspapers, and advertisements provide some information about what was made, by whom, and where these products were sold and sent.

This data is, to a large degree, ephemeral and much of the mark of indigo on the cultural landscape has long been ploughed over and obliterated by other crops and modern farming methods. Candace Wheeler stated, in her 1916 article in the *Daily Times Enterprise*, that within living memory every farmhouse in the southern US from Texas to Virginia had a lye tub, or indigo vat.[219] There may still exist direct generational lines of indigo growers, processors and dyers, cottage industries, or domestic producers in remote rural areas that could justify inscription of indigo-culture in the South onto the UNESCO representative list for Intangible Cultural Heritage. Evidence of such generational transmission of indigo-culture in the South is elusive, however. This poses certain difficulties for the validation of preservation of indigo-culture in the South, at least so far as the UNESCO ICH list is concerned. It is because there is no clear generational transmission and very little surviving physical evidence that revival should

[218] Behre., "Indigo is Long Gone."

[219] Wheeler, "Indigo for Dye Purposes," 16.

be the primary concern for indigo-culture in the South. Revival of indigo-culture now would continue a tradition of revival of this craft that has already been established.

Historic newspaper articles, pamphlets and guides, letters, letterbooks and diaries, deeds, and land registry and will documents all contribute to the **Knowledge** that is, can, and should be preserved. Collation and curation into a managed, possibly digital collection specific to indigo-culture would preserve surviving Knowledge for the future and contribute to some semblance of the **Voice** being preserved.

Indigo, as *Indigofera suffruticosa*, survives from the first revival of indigo in the 1700s on barrier islands such as Ossabaw. There may be other islands and old plantation sites where this plant has also survived that could be discovered with further research. There are some archeological remains of processing tanks in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina and, perhaps, a map of all such remains should be made in order to ascertain how much tangible cultural heritage survives of this craft. These tangible surviving artifacts have greater meaning if there is a continuity of **Action**, if the performance of the craft is living, vibrant, and relevant.

CHAPTER 5

FACTORS INFLUENCING A REVIVAL FRAMEWORK

Intention of Craft

Like the Arts and Crafts Movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the craft revival of the 1970s, there is a twenty-first-century movement toward the handmade and heritage craft product. This movement, like the earlier ones, can be seen as a reaction against industrialization and the alienating influence of mass production. It can also be seen as an affirmation of cultural identity and continuity in an increasingly globalized world. This new, global craft revival also focuses on cultural diversity, activism, social justice, community, sustainability, and care for an environment suffering the long-term repercussions of the Industrial Revolution.

During the twentieth century attitudes toward craft spanned a spectrum from those who viewed craft as a leisure activity to those who saw it as a radical and politically oriented vehicle for social change. In the twenty-first century television has provided a forum for promoting heritage crafts. Television programs such as *Blown Away* (Netflix), *Forged in Fire* (History Channel), *The Repair Shop* (Netflix), and the BBC's *Edwardian Farm, Victorian Farm*, and *Tales from the Green Valley* have showcased heritage crafts. These kinds of television series raise awareness, educate audiences about the value of heritage crafts, and encourage new practitioners. Organizations like the Heritage Crafts Association and the English and American craft councils support heritage crafts and craft revival. These organizations also lobby

governments on behalf of craftspeople, giving practitioners a collective voice and opportunities to effect political change. Although contemporary craftspeople are often isolated, organizations offer a community of professionals who, though practitioners of different crafts, experience similar challenges.

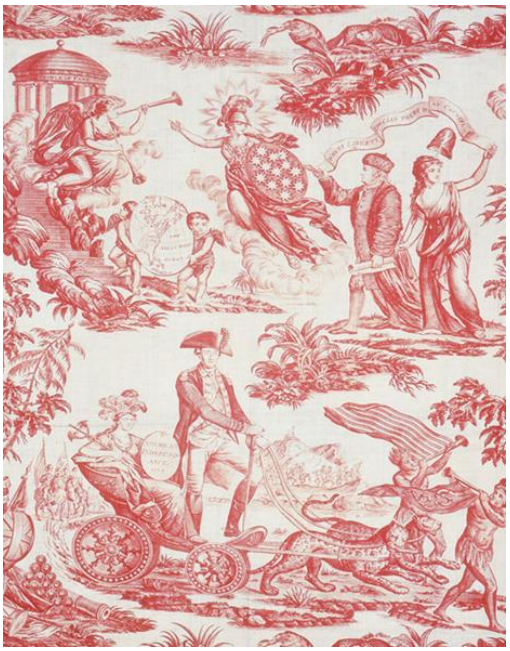

Figure 5.1. Copper-plate-printed cotton and linen textile representing George Washington, ca. 1780–90. Source, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Craft exists at an intersection of individual skill and community good, a sentiment echoed by the language of the UNESCO Representative List for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As with the Arts and Crafts movement championed by William Morris and John Ruskin, craft movements inhabit a space that is both public and personal, political, and philosophical that exist within a wider context of community. Different countries also have their own approaches to craft as a movement. Social activism has been a part of traditional craft groups in the United Kingdom since the medieval craft guilds and the birth of the Freemasons. American craft movements, on the surface at least, appear to be less radical and more oriented

toward aesthetic ideals than toward social reform. Colonial American craftspeople, like indigo print master John Hewson, were known to have been politically active in rebellion against the British Crown during the 1700s, and copper-plate-printed calicoes with Patriot themes were printed in England during the Revolutionary War (Figure 5.1). In a time when mass consumerism is contributing to climate change and global pollution, becoming a master craftsperson could be seen as a radical choice.

A "Vital Act of Rebellion"

Craft as Social Activism

The title of the 2020 conference of the Heritage Crafts Association (HCA), UK, "Craft Uprising!" (Figure 5.2), appears to invoke militant political activism. The socialist overtones of the poster are at first shocking and uncomfortably reminiscent of Communist and National Socialist iconography (Figure 5.3) — something of which the designers surely must have been cognizant. The rhetoric, too, could be interpreted as agitating. Daniel Carpenter, a founding trustee of the HCA, states that "At a time when populism has pushed mainstream politics to the extremes and climate change has reached a critical tipping point, craft is occupying an increasingly crucial role—to engage with those we disagree with or to take refuge within our communities of interest, to reflect the counter-cultures happening around us or to become that vital act of rebellion."[221] Other rhetoric describes the keynote speakers as "disrupting the fast-fashion industry" and discussing "the role of craft in change-making" as expressed by the

[221] Daniel Carpenter, "Craft Uprising! – The Heritage Crafts Association Conference 2020," Heritage Crafts Association, 2020, https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/craftuprising/.

Craftivist Collective. This collective is an inclusive group that views craft as a vehicle for positive change.

Figure 5.2. Poster for the Heritage Crafts Association 2020 conference. Source the HCA website.

Figure 5.3. Socialist Labour Party propaganda poster. Source Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/Wee-Blue-Coo-Propaganda-Socialist/dp/B00GHSNL8C?th=1.

This rhetoric is perhaps not so very different in spirit from the Arts and Crafts movement of Ruskin and Morris who "found in the medieval guild a model of communal solidarity among pre-proletarian craftworkers and the origins of the aesthetically sublime."[224] Morris's statement reflects C. R. Ashbee's attitude that "the return to traditional crafts …is personal as well as political [and the belief that] humanity and Craftsmanship are inseparable."[225] The contemporary rhetoric also echoes Morris's concept of socialism, which he described as "a condition of society [with] neither brain-sick brain workers, nor heart-sick hand workers [in] which all men would be living in equality of condition, and would manage their own affairs unwastefully, and with the full consciousness that harm to one would mean harm to all – the realization at last of the meaning of the word COMMONWEALTH."[226]

The Craftivist Collective includes Natalie Melton, creative director of the Craft Council (England), who describes craftivism as "a gentle protest [that is] a beautiful way of expressing political, social and cultural values."[227] This "gentle protest" group has worked with organizations such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Ben and Jerry's ice cream, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Craftivist manifesto (Figure 5.4) speaks of using craft as a positive influence for change, using beauty and gentleness to change the world for the better.[228]

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[224] William Morris, *How I Became a Socialist* (London: Twentieth Century Press, 1896), 9.

[225] Michael S. Kimmel, "Review: The Arts and Crafts Movement: Handmade Socialism of Elite Consumerism?" *Contemporary Sociology* 16, no. 3 (1987): 388–90.

[226] Kimmel, "Review: The Arts and Crafts Movement," 388-390; Morris, *How I Became a Socialist*, 9.

[227] Nosheen Iqbal, "A Stitch in Time: How Craftivists Found their Radical Voice," *The Guardian*, July 28, 2019.

[228] Iqbal, "A Stitch in Time."

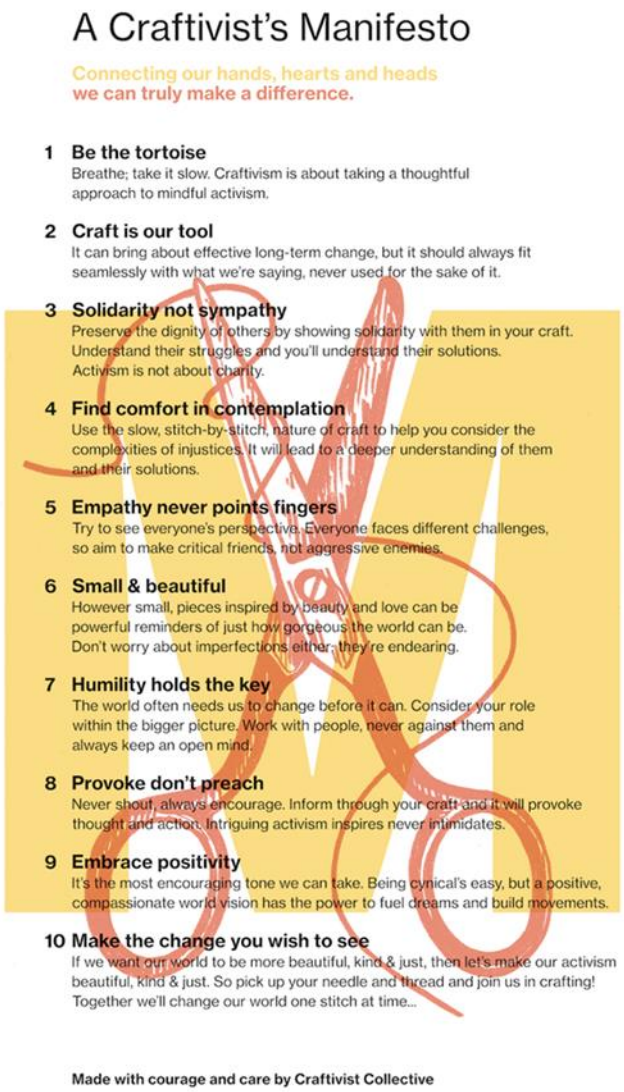

Figure 5.4. The Craftivist Manifesto by the Craftivist Collective. Source, Craftivist Manifesto, "What Exactly is the Craftivist Collective?" Craftivist Collective, https://craftivist-collective.com/our-story/, accessed August 22, 2020.

Alexander Langlands states in *Crœft* that "a new *crœfty*-ness is required, a rethinking of what it means to be powerful, resourceful and knowledgeable through the medium of making."[230] This is craft as personal and social change and is another facet of craft revival. To place in context the apparent militancy of the Heritage Crafts Association conference title, it is

[230] Langlands, *Crœft,* 343.

worth understanding that traditional crafts in Britain suffer from a lack of recognition as neither arts, nor heritage. This lack of recognition places heritage crafts beyond all the current grant, support and promotion bodies. The HCA, whose president is HRH Prince Charles of Wales, exists to work with all individuals, groups, guilds, and organizations involved with heritage crafts. The HCA is concerned by the loss of traditional crafts and determined to safeguard skills and knowledge for future generations. The HCA is the only group to have a "Red List of Endangered Crafts" with information about the issues that currently affect the viability of those crafts. These issues include training, recruitment, aging workforce, loss of craft skills, market issues, supply of raw materials, small business issues, changing methods of working, funding, legislation, and lack of awareness of the historic value.[231]

Arts and crafts in the US can seem more focused on contemporary craft expression, promotion of aesthetics, and a move toward craft as a fine art practice rather than preservation of historic crafts. It can also, however, be viewed as a movement with the aim of the spiritual regeneration "of a humanity too long in the bonds of an unlovely materialism."[232] This aim is expressed in the US as less focused on social justice than it is in the UK. One area of the United States where the arts and crafts movement has been more like the British path of social activism is the Craft Revival of Appalachia (1890s–1940s), which sought to promote, encourage, and support an "awakened interest in home industries" and to combine the aesthetics with the social welfare of the craftsperson. [233] Industrialization often meant that traditional apprenticeships and community craftspeople lost their livelihoods due to the availability of cheaper, poorly made

[231] "What We Do," Heritage Crafts Association, https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/what-we-do/.

[232] Robert W. Winter, "The Arts and Crafts as a Social Movement," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 34, no. 2 (1975): 36.

[233] Fariello"Making History."

mass-produced goods. The main motivation of the Arts and Crafts movement in the Appalachians was to provide work and training that would sustain the populations and viability of small communities. This motivation for rural economic viability is continued by organizations such as HandMade in America, founded in 1993. The organization was founded "with the belief that economic revitalization was not necessarily tied to luring industry to the region but in making known the heritage and craftsmanship that are so vitally a part of western North Carolina."[234]

For many countries, revival of heritage crafts is a combination of affirmation of cultural identity, revitalization of traditions, and artisan job security. An article in the *Times of India* (2015) discusses the "dream of restoring India's craft traditions [by designers] collaborating closely with artisans and helping create better livelihoods."[235] The article also states that leading designers need to be active in reviving India's traditional textile crafts.[236]

Industrial mass production means that the hand of the maker is, at best, anonymous and possibly exploited or, at worst, mechanical and soulless. Most of the objects in our homes lack the essential meaning of grounding in place or in the personality of a maker. Access to an excess of products means that those products cease to have value. Traditional crafts allow for reconnection to earlier forms and designs, grounded in Nature, that offer solidity, continuity, and connection. These forms and designs fulfill a desire for authenticity and some protection against a technological world that is increasingly fractured and fragmented.[237]

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[234] Fariello, "Making History."

[235] Vepa, "How Designers are Reviving the Rich Textile Tradition."

[236] Vepa, "How Designers are Reviving the Rich Textile Tradition."

[237] Timothy J. Scrase, "Precarious Production: Globalisation and Artisan Labour in the Third World," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2003): 449; and Thomas Thurnell-Read, "A Thirst for the Authentic: Craft Drinks Producers and the Narration of Authenticity," *British Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 4 (2019): 1448–68.

"Meaningful Ways to Live"[238]

Ecology and Sustainability and Arts and Crafts

Wholistic and low-impact systems of production combined with cooperative, more humane life-/work-styles, seem to be key impetuses for the twenty-first-century movement toward a more craft-based society. These ideals reflect concern about climate change, dwindling natural resources, pollution, globalization, inequality, and a general concern about human impacts on the natural world and global ecosystem. These concerns are leading to interest in better and more equitable use of resources, zero waste, circular economies, and more equitable, life-affirming methods of production and commerce. Phrases such as "farm to fork," "field to fabric," and "seed to closet" sum up the move toward the whole systems approach of craft production in the twenty-first century.[239]

St. Andrews Sustainability Institute, Scotland, states a belief that craft has a "role to play in [the] pragmatic transition to more sustainable societies."[240] The institute argues that craft encourages an awareness of materials and the natural world, but also that craft contributes to alternative, and more creative, definitions of "sustainability." Craft, in this sense, encourages a pragmatic yet more creative worldview that pushes the boundaries of how we look at the world, humanity, and Nature. This alternative view acknowledges a rising awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of everything.[241]

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[238] Carpenter, "Craft Uprising!"

[239] Stony Creek Colors, "Our Purpose," https://stonycreekcolors.com/.

[240] St. Andrews Sustainability Institute, "Craft and Sustainability: Reflections on ways of knowing and doing in the past, present and future," University of St. Andrews, https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/sasi/research/projects/craft/.

[241] St. Andrews Sustainability Institute, "Craft and Sustainability."

Many new companies are actively working to strike a balance between mass production and sustainability. The British company Full Grown grows chairs (Figure 5.5) by combining ancient tree-growing techniques with modern technology to grow, graft, and sculpt chairs from living trees. This new system of mass production contributes to a new kind of sustainable woodland management.

Figure 5.5. Diagram showing the living chair process of the Full Grown company from sapling to finished product. Source Full Grown, fullgrown.co.uk.

Four principal characteristics of craft can be identified that contribute to environmental, economic, and personal sustainability:

- Specialized knowledge – tacit knowledge or physical, kinesthetic intelligence.
- Localization – craft production dependent on locally sourced materials and locally appropriate techniques and forms of making.

- Ethics and authenticity – freedom of making, engagement in the whole process embodying authentic and ethical modes of life and work.
- Continuation of tradition – craft as an articulation of culture and of custom, belief, and history offering an assemblage of meanings related to material culture.[242]

These principal characteristics bear some similarity to the Elements of Craft proposed in Chapter 4. Specialized knowledge is like the Knowledge and contains some aspects of the Action in the sense of physical competency and skills. Continuation of tradition is like the element of the Voice as an articulation of culture. Localization has some similarities with the Product but also with the Action. The four-point system above specifically addresses sustainability, whereas the elements of craft are designed to encompass sustainability as integral to craft rather than to singling out sustainability as a separate issue. The system above also reflects an idea that craft-making treads more lightly on the planet than does industrial manufacture. This idea is not explicit, but implicit in the four elements of craft. This four-point system for the characteristics of sustainability was helpful for informing the proposed framework for craft revival.

***Crœfty* Communities**

Resilience, Self-Reliance, and Craft

Skilled craftspeople in a community create a more resilient and self-sustaining community. Craftspeople are generally focused on ethically-guided, ecologically-friendly, sustainable practices using traditional methods to produce useful and aesthetically pleasing

[242] Xiaofang Zhan et al., "Craft and Sustainability: Potential for Design Intervention in Crafts in the Yangtze River Delta, China," *Design Journal* 20 (2017): S2920.

objects with a genuine purpose, need, and market. As a rule, craft products are designed to last. They are designed to be used and mended, then "given back to the earth and to be replaced at no cost to the environment."[243] This original circular economy is one that is in harmony with twenty-first-century movements toward a global circular economy based on three main principles: (1) design out waste and pollution, (2) keep products and materials in use, and (3) regenerate natural systems.[244] The Fibershed communities are consciously working toward this kind of self-sustaining community where products are grown, made, sold, used, and recycled in the same bioregional community.[245]

Community is about continuity, cooperation, and companionship. Community is, or should be, an extension of the family that provides a feeling of safety, inclusion, and belonging. Traditionally, local craftspeople were active members of the community who provided products and services that contributed to the overall safety, beauty, prosperity, and smooth running of the local systems of agriculture, commerce, and the home. Craftspeople were once the heart of every community, essential threads in the fabric of society with a valued place, function, and meaning. Highly skilled craftspeople also gave a community prestige and a sense of pride that can be seen clearly in the historic areas of cities such as London, where certain areas became synonymous with specific crafts and trades. Spitalfields contained the community of master weavers and dyers, Pudding Lane the butchers, Soho the metal traders, Hatton Garden the jewelers, and Tottenham Court Road the carpenters and furniture makers.[246]

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[243] Langlands, *Cræft,* 340–41.

[244] "Concept: What is a circular economy? A framework for an economy that is restorative and regenerative by design," The Ellen Macarthur Foundation, https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept.

[245] Simon Moreton, "Craft as Community," Craft Communities, http://www.craftcommunities.com/craft-as-community.html.

[246] Danielle Thom, "Made in London: the past and the future of craft in the city," Museum of London (2017), https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/made-london-past-future-making-design.

Communities defined by geographical location and associated with a specific craft still exist in places such as Seagrove in North Carolina. Areas with a connection to indigo-culture, such as Charleston, South Carolina, are also attracting groups of associated artisans. Increasingly discussions about "place" and community include digital, virtual spaces such as the Internet. Through this medium, craftspeople who once would have been isolated are now able to connect to other craftspeople, training, knowledge sharing, exhibition spaces, possible collaborators, and buyers. These kinds of virtual spaces allow for an extended community that is particularly useful for a craft in the early stages of revival.

Local Global

Communities That Are Larger Than Just Ourselves

In the twenty-first century we are increasingly aware of the interdependence of our global environmental, industrial, and commercial systems. Industrial manufacturing techniques aimed at global markets act as centralizing and divisive processes of production that tend to homogenize material culture. Alternatively, craft practices usually have a strong local identity with culturally specific responses to local problems. They also have a context-based knowledge that promotes the application of holistic practices and community-centered production.[247] In short, the industrial factory model of production is homogenizing, culturally deficient, and alienating, whereas the craft model of manufacture is diverse, culturally rich, and uniting through human connection.

The seeming paradox of connection and diversity functions symbiotically within the craft paradigm. Crafts may be unique to an area or contain unique practices or design, adding to local

[247] Zhan et al, "Craft and Sustainability,"., S2919.

and global cultural diversity. Equally, a craft such as indigo, though expressed differently in each cultural area, shares a great deal in practice and process across cultures and is therefore crossculturally unifying. A craft such as indigo-culture can act as a community space where many cultures can meet, connect, and find common ground.

Technology such as the Internet can provide forums for crosscultural communication and knowledge-sharing. It can also provide opportunities for otherwise unavailable markets for craft products. Where the local market for craft products may not be sufficient to sustain a thriving community of craftspeople, the Internet and good postal systems can contribute to economic viability. The flexibility provided by online marketplaces also contributes to the possibility of greater geographical mobility. In this way, craftspeople can move to areas of greater economic viability or to a crafts community while maintaining already established markets.

Knowledge sharing (local, national, and global) could be considered to dilute cultural forms of intangible cultural heritage; however, innovation and change is written into the Articles for the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Equally, knowledge sharing can strengthen cultural ties and identities especially for groups living as a diaspora. This kind of sharing and extended cultural community could support revival of craft cultures. When and how much crafts should evolve is a question for each individual practitioner and for their extended cultural groups. Craftsperson-to-craftsperson knowledge-sharing and the teaching and demonstration of craft skills contributes to awareness, understanding, and respect for the skills and processes of craft. This kind of knowledge sharing, in turn, leads to greater protection and preservation of those crafts. The greater the number of skilled and culturally respectful practitioners, the greater the possibility that crafts will survive.

Blue That Is Green

Indigo-Culture, Sustainability, and Revival

There are three major drivers of twenty-first-century interest in indigo-culture: (1) producing indigo is a unique technique, different from any other natural dye method except for production of Tyrian Purple, (2) indigo-culture is an ancient and historic dye that has been practiced since pre-history, and (3) the ecological sustainability of natural dyes as opposed to highly polluting and wasteful synthetic dyes. Thanks to denim, indigo blue is one of the most ubiquitous dye colors on the planet. This ubiquity increases the potential positive impact of a more sustainable and natural alternative to synthetic indigo, if such an alternative could be made viable for industrial dyeing needs.

The Fibershed community in California produces its own indigo from Japanese indigo, or dyer's knotweed. Fibershed envision international communities of regenerative, bioregional systems of fiber production and processing. The group advocates a cyclical, soil-to-soil textile process that carefully manages local resources without pollution or water wastage. Its goal is low-impact and zero-carbon bioregional cultivation, production, processing, and manufacture of finished, dyed textiles. Fibershed's aim is to utilize the best of low-impact traditional and modern scientific, farming, processing, and manufacturing techniques to produce artisan yarn and textiles that counteract the vast polluting industrial textile production of the present. The community's main ethos is to create textiles that are locally grown, locally produced, locally used, and locally returned to the Earth.[248]

[248] Our Mission and Vision, About, Fibershed, https://www.fibershed.com/about/

Stony Creek Colors in Tennessee, which produces natural indigo that supplies companies such as Wrangler, Patagonia, and Lucky Brand, has worked with farmers, chemists, mills, and USDA Rural Development funds to encourage the use of natural dyes in the fashion industry.

A solution to polluting aniline dyes could be a product made by biotech company Colorfix. It converts molasses, a byproduct of the sugar industry, into dyes that Colorfix suggests will be environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable while not requiring an increase of arable land that could otherwise be used for food production.[249] This kind of more sustainable industrial process could work in combination with craft processes such as natural plant-dye production.

Key Findings on Craft Revival

There have been several themes within craft revival since the Arts and Crafts movement. To a large degree, craft revival has been associated with a reaction against industrialization's effects on the environment. It is also a response to a decline of craft livelihoods as a result of inexpensive, poorly-manufactured mass-produced goods: the soulless extrusions of an overindustrialized world. With the new environmentalism of the 1970s, as epitomized by the first Earth Day protests across North America in 1970, craft came to be associated with social and environmental activism. Craft has come to stand for authenticity, cultural expression, sustainability, and ethical modes of living that promote equality and a light ecological footprint.

Craft practice has become an expression of this activism, a way of exploring solutions to the planet's most pressing socio-economic-environmental challenges and a statement of a

[249] Jess Cole, "5 Ways to Fix Fashion's Biggest Pollution Problem," *Vogue* (2019), https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/news/5-ways-to-fix-fashions-biggest-pollution-problem/image-gallery/13a38d47bbf7c2f15a160ef0dc6a7611.

holistic way of living. It is almost an alternative lifestyle, a rejection of a fractured and fragmented consumerist and technological world. It is ironic then, that the Internet has become a marketplace for craft that can free the craftsperson from the old constraints of isolation by offering a place for craftspeople to meet, share knowledge and skills, and offer support.

This new attitude to craft is one of craft as preservation of the environment, as preservation of natural and cultural resources and connection to heritage through making. Craft revival in the twenty-first century is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness and interdependence of everything that comes from working closely with natural materials through skills hundreds or thousands of years old. This is craft as resilience, and it is sustainability of culture, individuals, communities, economies, and the environment.

Revival as a Concept

Craft revival occurs for many reasons, but it is important to define what revival means in this context. Is revival the same as renaissance, reconstruction, or rebirth? Is it a resuscitation after death? To think of revival in these terms, the thing to be revived must already have died. This necessitates the question, does any craft actually die, or does it just cease to be noticeable? Mark Slobin states that, when discussing music, or craft, revival, it is not simply a matter of bringing that skill and knowledge back to life because such things cannot truly die. It is more useful to not think in terms of a straight line of evolution, but of a spiral cycle where interest resurges, changing with each cycle.[250] These kinds of cycles can be seen in fashion, where a cut or silhouette or the length of hemline will fall out of popularity and then come back into fashion.

[250] Bithell and Hill, 4.

It is too easy to see craft as something only of the past, a commodity to be consumed that is compared in value to "modern" mass-produced products of often inferior quality, design, and skill. Crafts and craftspeople can find themselves associated with a picturesque and unchanging past, anachronistic to the present.[251]

Craft is, however, relevant, vital, and present in "now." It is in a perpetual process of reinvention and creative flux contrary to what can be a staid image of traditional making. Craft is, as described in article 2 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, "constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment."[252] In order for any craft to revive, it must be relevant in the age in which it is being revived. How it is revived will be determined by that age. When a craft is revived, a decontextualization is followed by a recontextualization. A kind of deconstruction and transformation of the craft may occur that changes the traditional cultural, social, or geographical contexts that made up the traditional knowledge. In this process of recontextualization a new legitimacy may need to be established by demonstrating an authentic connection to the craft by the appropriating group. In addition, this recontextualization and potential transformation may result in the formation of groups of practitioners and interested participants that diverge from the traditional context. This is an intentional act of reimagining and reinvigorating the past for the purpose of the present that is a recurring cultural phenomenon across cultures and eras. This process contributes to the vibrancy of cultures.[253] Indigo-culture in the Southern US is no exception.

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[251] "Designers meet Artisans: A Practical Guide," Craft Revival Trust, Artesanfas de Colombia S. A. and UNESCO (2005), v.

[252] Kristina Niedderer and Katherine Townsend, "Craft, Innovation and Creativity," *Craft Research* 5 (2014), 3; and article 2, Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003.

[253] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 4.

It is possible to view the revivalist process and culture as intrinsically inauthentic. This perceived inauthenticity has been an argument against awarding government grant funding support to revivalists. It has also been an argument against the academic study of such revivals.[254] However, UNESCO stresses the need for control of heritage to be in the hands of the associated communities so that a sense of ownership and continuity is established through these crafts. UNESCO also states the need for heritage crafts to be relevant to the present and an active part in addressing present and future needs. Indeed, UNESCO has moved away from strict concepts of authenticity regarding intangible cultural heritage, favoring a construction of heritage that is dynamic and evolutionary.[255]

It could be said that under certain circumstances heritage becomes a form of ancestor worship rather than continuity with a living and present past. Fixed and static, heritage in these terms is embodied in physical artifacts that acquire symbolic meaning outside of their original function or meaning. These artifacts are then legitimized by scientific analysis that delivers a kind of "authenticity status." Conservation then becomes a battle against inevitable decay and ruin rather than a process of memory and cultural creation and re-creation.[256] There is a struggle then between an obsession with deterioration driven by a desire to preserve artifacts and UNESCO's concept of heritage as a dynamic process of cultural production. Heritage is a living process, and culture is identified more with human action than with the inanimate product of that action.[257]

[254] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 6–8.

[255] Bortolotto, "From Objects to Process,", 26.

[256] Bortolotto, "From Objects to Process," 27.

[257] Bortolotto, "From Objects to Process," 27.

The concept of revival frames certain kinds of engagement with the past that can encompass processes like re-articulation, re-interpretation, refocusing, re-assessment, reshaping, revitalization, regeneration, rediscovery, and renaissance. Revival also includes processes like renovation, restoration, rescue, recovery, reactivation, resurgence, resumption, reimagining, reframing, re-appropriation, reinvention, re-indigenization, reproduction, and re-creation. Revival encompasses any or all these processes depending on the individual, collective, or cultural/ethnic group defining revival.[258]

Other Revivals That Could Influence a Framework for Craft Revival

Although awareness of indigo-culture in the South is rising, practitioners are widespread, and often indigo cultivation, processing, and dyeing are not the primary occupation and Source income for these practitioners. If indigo-culture is to be a viable living craft, like earlier successful craft revivals, it must provide creative work that does not rely on subsidy. The craft must be innovative and adaptable to contemporary needs and provide the practitioner with a life-supporting income. To discern a path for successful indigo-culture revival in the South, it may be helpful to investigate some of those revivals that have been successful in their preservation of heritage crafts and their provision of fiscally viable work.

Craft Brewing Revival

Craft can be seen as an antidote to modern industrial alienation from the physical processes of skilled labor. Craft also privileges the unique product over the cheap, ubiquitous, mass-produced, standardized product. Craft brewing is defined by the idea of small-batch,

[258] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 4–5.

locally made, independent products centered on quality and individuality. It can be viewed in harmony with other contemporary craft revivals that signal a desire to move away from the factory made (brewing, textiles, farming, etc.) toward the sustainable, environmentally friendly, slow-food, farm-to-table and field to fiber local and bioregional.[259]

This revival of traditional brewing techniques that focuses on quality and flavor rather than standardized generic industrially made product can be linked to other similar movements. One of these similar movements is the revival of traditional farming techniques as exemplified by the development of the grass-fed livestock market that also focuses on quality and flavor. Rather than a relentless progress that increasingly separates the consumer from the product and sells modernization as a rejection of the past, practices like craft brewing are a reinvigoration of the past to serve present needs. Traditional heritage craft processes are "refurbished" and repurposed in the same way in which we refurbish and repurpose craft objects to fulfill the specific needs or aesthetics of the present generation.[260] A good example of this refurbishment of the past is the renaissance of traditional brewing techniques in Holland after a period of industrial, factory brewing.

Traditional brewing in Holland was typified by variety and diversity of beer styles that echoed and contributed to bioregional individuality and identity. Breweries were community and family centered, with their own family- and community-specific brewing practices that contributed to this diversity of beer styles. With the Industrial Revolution, beer became an industrial, automated process with standardized product and superior transportability and longevity at the expense of quality, diversity, and complexity of flavor. Community- and family-

[259] Thomas Thurnell-Read, "Craft, Tangibility and Affect at Work in the Microbrewery," *Emotion, Space and Society* 13 (2014): 46–54.

[260] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead May Never Die," 2 and 30–32.

centered craft skill processes were sacrificed for productivity and profit. The dominance of these large breweries diminished the profitability of the smaller traditional breweries until, by 1980, Dutch beer could be described as a uniformly industrial beverage.[261]

During the 1980s it was so difficult to find local expertise within Holland that it was necessary to borrow from surviving elements of traditional brewing process and technique in the UK, Belgium, and Germany for a craft-brewing revival to occur in Holland. Among the Dutch craft breweries that are now successful, some are completely traditional with use of traditional equipment and processes. Others have combined traditional techniques with some contemporary equipment or methods, and some are creating a traditional-style beer with more modern industrial-style equipment, methods, and techniques.[262]

Reemergence of craft brewing in the Netherlands can be typified by a three-step sequential process:[263]

1. **Rediscovery of the traditional craft processes** – retired local practitioners are found, and their knowledge is combined with that of appropriate craft knowledge from other countries where the craft survives.
2. **Refurbishment of the traditional craft processes** – the retired local craftspeople are encouraged to teach new practitioners, and those same new practitioners gain further knowledge through transmission of skills via craftspeople from other geographical areas with similar traditions and craft.
3. **Reincarnation of the traditional craft processes** – the craft begins to be financially viable with a product that can be marketed and skills that are transmitted to continue the

[261] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead May Never Die," 8–9.

[262] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead May Never Die," 7–12.

[263] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead May Never Die," 15–28.

craft knowledge. Part of this reincarnation is the evolution of the craft to support contemporary needs.

Ideas Drawn from Craft Brewing to the Revival of Indigo-Culture

In terms of indigo-culture one could see this progression in its latest revival as individuals such as Donna Hardy, Caroline Harper, Arianne King-Comer, Rowland and Chinami Ricketts, and Sarah Bellos (Stony Creek Colors, Tennessee) have rediscovered the specific craft process of indigo dyeing and production. “Refurbishment” would be their borrowing from living indigo traditions to fill in the gaps of knowledge and restore the remnants of indigo-culture in the US. Third, their use of the traditional skills articulated in their own way evolves the craft to satisfy present needs in an act of “reincarnation” of indigo craft.

Music Revival

Music revival could also be said to follow the rediscovery, refurbishment, and reincarnation progression of revival. In a similar way to the traditional craft-brewing revivals, when music is rediscovered it may be necessary to have a period of refurbishment where any “missing pieces” in the work, style, tuning, or instruments (if the music is earlier than standardized instruments) may require an injection of knowledge from other areas of musical scholarship for it to function fully. Following this refurbishment, practitioners from other musical styles may draw upon this rediscovered music and combine it with their own to create something new. These practitioners may use more modern, standardized instruments or have historically correct instruments made on which to gain the most faithful and accurate rendition of the rediscovered music.

A musical group such as Groupe OC plays the traditional music of thirteenth-century Languedoc that is not a direct and slavish performance but an interpretation of the memory of the music of the Languedoc. Like the musicians of the past, Groupe OC interprets the music through the musicians' own experiences. Languedoc directly translates as language of OC, OC being Occitan, the traditional language of the southern French people that was spoken as a first language in rural areas until recently. Groupe OC describes their music as "solidly anchored in the soul of Languedoc [at a] crossroads of tradition and modernity [that is] dynamic and evolutionary.[264] Rather than the traditional museological fixation on the authenticity of the tangible artifact, this method is one that is supported by UNESCO's approach to intangible cultural heritage.[265]

In Pierre Nora's view, *histoire*, or history, is a separation from the past, from ancestry and from our connection to a living past, whereas *mémoire*, or memory, is a connection to and experience of the past. *Mémoire* is an experience where "each gesture, down to the most every day, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice."[266] This "ritual repetition of a timeless practice" through craft allows the twenty-first-century person, separated from that past through constant change and technology, to connect with a living past through action and making.[267] Until the Industrial Revolution, the actions of everyday life had changed little from those of even the distant past; bread, butter, cheese, and beer were made in the same way for thousands of years. The smith, the bodger (greenwood furniture craftsman), the chandler, the weaver, and the ploughman all worked in the same way their ancestors had worked

[264] "Biography," Groupe OC, https://www.groupe-oc.com/en/groupe/3-biography.

[265] Bortolotto, "From Objects to Process," 26–27.

[266] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7–8.

[267] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7-8.

and with very similar tools. This authenticity of action, this living connection to the past through the physical performance, the "ritual repetition" of making, rooted individuals and communities to place, fostering a sense of continuity, of *mémoire*. Authenticity for intangible cultural heritage could be described as mindful engagement with *mémoire*.[268]

The *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* suggests three types of criteria vital for authenticity but that may be different depending on culture, technology, political motives, and class: (1) Product-oriented criteria, (2) Person-oriented criteria, (3) Process-oriented criteria.[269] These criteria can be very easily related to craft. Product-oriented criteria for craft would revolve around quality, technique, and materials. Person-oriented criteria would center around transmission and the craft knowledge and skills carried by the individual. Process-oriented criteria would be embodied by the concept of *mémoire*, our experiential connection to a living past through the ritual repetition of a timeless practice.

Like *mémoire,* craft "remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived… tying us to the eternal present."[270] Although Nora does not specifically address heritage craft in his discussion of history and memory, he does equate history as an oppressive and judgmental force that separates us from "memory entwined in the intimacy of a collective heritage."[271] He draws attention to "the irrevocable break marked by the disappearance of peasant culture, that quintessential repository of collective memory," a collective memory that was intrinsically

[268] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7-8.

[269] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival,* 19–24.

[270] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.

[271] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.

entwined with craft.[272] There is no life for the peasant that does not include craft at its center; craft is the backbone of all peasant work, play, ritual, and survival. In traditional peasant life, everything of use is handmade.[273]

Another gauge of authenticity for craft can be its transmission from generation to generation in a direct and unbroken line. [274] However, as has been determined above, craft, like *mémoire*, can be susceptible to dormancy for long periods only to be intermittently revived. In almost all cases of folk music revival, hereditary systems of transmission must be periodically modified in response to changing times and attitudes.[275] New methods of transmission, appropriate to that revivalist generation, must be employed so that new-practitioner-revivalists can be "initiated in a way that allows them to bypass [traditional] more organic, lifelong processes of acculturation and apprenticeship."[276] For revivalist musicians and for revivalist craftspeople who do not have access to a "community of primary culture-bearers or source practitioners," new methods of transmission and access must be found for the tradition, craft, or music to continue to exist as a living cultural medium.[277]

For preservation purposes, a term borrowed from the early music movement, "Historically Informed Performance," might be appropriate for revival of craft processes. [278] This idea may serve as a distinction between hobbyist and revivalist craft and, therefore, distinguish

[272] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.

[273] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7–9.

[274] Article 2, Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO ICH, https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention#art2

[275] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival,* 253.

[276] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 25.

[277] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 19–25.

[278] Dan Lundberg, "Bjarskpip in blossom on the revitalization process of a folk music instrument," *Swedish Society of Musicology* 10 (2007): 3.

between mindless play and mindful reconstruction "where the aim is to attain a high degree of historical relevance in the performance."[279] Donna Hardy, for example, uses a chemical vat to provide sufficient dye liquor to efficiently teach about traditional indigo-dyeing. Hardy explains the differences between a chemical vat and a fermented vat and informs her students about the history of indigo-culture, offering a global and southern context. The workshop, then, is historically informed, and the participants leave with a greater knowledge and appreciation for the challenges of traditional indigo dyeing. The cooperative Fibershed in California "couch" (compost) their indigo, which is a traditional technique historically employed by both Japanese and Europeans. However, Fibershed are developing technology to speed the composting process and designing machinery to mechanically harvest indigo. These are innovative solutions to old challenges that take their production and processing toward a more viable craft. Historically informed is exactly that, informed but not straitjacketed by history and tradition.

Key Findings on Other Craft Revivals

It is important to define revival in relation to craft. To achieve this, any definition of craft must embrace the values of diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness that define twenty-first-century values. Revival must also be able to embrace ideas of preservation and revival that are not Eurocentric but compatible with those of other cultures with different priorities for revival and preservation.

Craft is a crossroads between tradition and modernity, a ritual repetition of timeless practice that is a living connection to the past through physical performance. Craft revival is a historically informed, dynamically evolving, cyclical evolution of the craft process. Rather than a

[279] Lundberg, "Bjarskpip," 3.

straight line of transmission and practice through time, craft revival behaves more like a spiral that, like fashion, is a re-creation defined by the present needs and values of society.

Heritage crafts ebb and flow through history but rarely disappear as long as they remain relevant. It is sometimes necessary to borrow from similar craft traditions in other geographical areas to revive a craft that is in the ebbing part of the cycle. This borrowed knowledge fills the gaps of the existing fragments of craft knowledge to re-create a living tradition that then evolves to suit and fulfil the needs of a new generation of practitioners and consumers.

Crafts must be living, vibrant, and evolutionary to survive. They also need to be financially viable. It is important that the revived craft develops its own identity in connection to its history, place, and practitioners. Although history and historical context are important for the revival and relevance of heritage crafts, there must be room for innovation, evolution, and individual expression if the craft is to live. Authenticity of craft revival can be marked by historically informed performance, with the emphasis on informed. *Mémoire* is our innate, invisible connection to the living past, our connection to the authenticity of our people's cultural experience through the repetition of timeless practice.[280]

Search for a Framework for Craft Revival

Before formulating a framework for craft revival, a search was conducted for a simple framework that could facilitate the *how to* of craft revival for indigo-culture, but no single system for craft revival was able to encompass the complex histories and cultural diversity of indigo-culture in the South. Indigo revival is evolving in its own way. It is transmitted by passionate practitioners who have had to piece together their knowledge from a combination of historical

[280] Nora, "Between Memory and History, 7–9.

record, modern literature on natural dyeing, direct transmission from experienced natural dyers, the Internet, and personal experimentation and experience. Truly knowledgeable and experienced teachers are scarce, the craft is complex, and the quality of the dye and dyed product depends on multiple factors such as weather, humidity, kind and quality of textiles, species of indigo used, and the skill of the practitioner. The existence of organizations such as the International Center for Indigo Culture and of conferences focusing on indigo-culture in the southern US indicates a movement toward a more organized revival of this craft in the South and elsewhere. A more organized revival requires a framework for that revival that can help guide the craft toward successful resurgence and viability.

The challenge of revival is to represent and support many voices and maintain the cultural-historical knowledge and meanings in ways that are truthful, authentic, respectful, enduring, and sustainable. It is also important for a revival, or at least groups of revivalists, to have some cohesive plan for how the revival can and should develop, how the craft can endure and be viable.

The dearth of revival frameworks that facilitate the revival of crafts such as indigo-culture meant that it was necessary to search for revival frameworks in other disciplines. Indigo-culture shares some common ground with other forms of natural dyeing and crafts such as basket- and textile-weaving and decorative painting. This common ground is articulated by a range of competencies that include agriculture, horticulture and botany, art, chemistry, physics, religion, spirituality, philosophy, ritual, storytelling, politics, and creative imagination. Crafts such as these are loaded with meaning, and it is the meanings, more than the techniques, that are unique to each of the many cultures within which the crafts are performed.

The most comprehensive discussion of craft revival was *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, edited by Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill. Although written about music revival, it contained clear parallels to, and affinity with, the revival of indigo-culture. Like craft, music has the challenge of maintaining quality transmission, of finding master practitioners, and deciphering historic documents to aid revival by expanding and disseminating the traditional craft knowledge, maintaining historic authenticity, and finding consumer markets to create economic viability for the craft. Like music revival, craft revival is often championed by professionals and enthusiastic amateurs, and by practitioners who do not necessarily come from the same cultural background as the original, root tradition.

Bithell and Hill's discussions of authenticity, transmission, recontextualization, transformation, and the nature of revival were extremely useful and guided the creation of this framework. They discuss the discussion between revivalists who are perceived as genuine inheritors of a music tradition versus newcomers who are viewed as adapting a tradition to fit more closely their own ideas of style and performance. They discuss how each generation and each performer recontextualizes the tradition and transforms it through their personal practice. Bithell and Hill also discuss the slippery nature of ideas of authenticity which can be, at once, an invocation of genius and an establishment of historical accuracy. Authenticity can be a selective, subjective concept that means something different to each person using the term.

Authenticity is not a term that one can use without qualification, and it is subject to very different meanings defined by culture, social class, and educational background. An example of this difference in attitudes to authenticity can be seen in architecture, where the European ideal is to preserve a building for as long as possible in its original, physical state. By contrast, the Ise Jingu Grand Shrine in Japan is deconstructed every twenty years and rebuilt, a process that has

happened for over 1,300 years. This process of rebuilding binds the community together in a communal action, reaffirms the community's spiritual ties, helps preserve the original design, and maintains the traditional craft skills necessary for the construction and decoration of the shrine.[281] Authenticity, in this case, is preservation of the skills and knowledge that make the rebuilding possible, not the preservation of the shrine's physical form and materials.

These questions of authenticity frame the revival of craft just as they frame the revival of music of the reconstruction of a Shinto shrine. When many cultures can claim ownership over the history of a craft, it is more important still for stakeholders to discuss and reach consensus about what authenticity means. For indigo-culture in the South, it may be necessary to adapt Eurocentric ideas of authenticity to encompass West African and Native American notions of the authentic.

A Model for Music Revivals

Tamara Livingston's "Model for Music Revivals" in 1999 was an effort to formulate a constructive framework for music revival. It developed from a study on the revival of *choro*, an early-twentieth-century Brazilian urban music tradition that resurged during the 1970s and was undergoing another revival during the 1990s when Livingston conducted her study. After surveying music revivals, Livingston began to see certain recurring characteristics that formed the basis of the model, which was designed as a framework to understand a specific kind of music phenomena that does not predict potential dynamics of revival. It also opens a new avenue for crosscultural dialogue. At the time of her contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Music*

[281] Bithell and Hill, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, 15–32; and Rachel Nuwer, "This Japanese Shrine Has Been Torn Down and Rebuilt Every 20 Years for the Past Millennium," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 4, 2013, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/this-japanese-shrine-has-been-torn-down-and-rebuilt-every-20-years-for-the-past-millennium-575558/.

Revival in 2014, Livingston felt that recent music revivals offered a new diversity and scope that necessitated a reevaluation of her original revival model.[282]

In developing a framework for music revival, Livingston compiled a list of "distinguishing characteristics common to music revivals" that she describes as something like a recipe for revivals. This list was not designed to be exhaustive or prescriptive but to constitute what she calls "the basic ingredients:"[283]

1. An individual or small group of "core revivalists:" these core revivalists can be insiders or outsiders to the tradition. These revivalists experience a strong connection to the revival tradition and take the lead in rescuing it and teaching it to others.
2. Revival informants and/or original sources (e.g., historical sound recordings): transmission from living practitioners or from historic sources.
3. A revivalist ideology and discourse: revivals are characterized by a rejection of mass culture and are a reaction against, and a product of, modernity. They are sometimes connected to social and political movements.
4. A group of followers forming the basis of a revivalist community: members of these revivalist communities are marked by their "fluidity of membership, their impermanence and their ideological focus." They are also often nonterritorial, they cross national, class, age, gender, and cultural boundaries.[284]
5. Revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions): festivals and events founded to cater for practitioners and consumers of the revival.

[282] Tamara Livingston, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, ed. Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60–69.

[283] Livingston, T*he Oxford Handbook*, 60–63.

[284] Livingston, "Music Revivals:,", 60–69.

6. Nonprofit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market: presence of events and markets opened by the presence of the revival.

Livingston's model provided a starting point, but it did not address issues such as the multicultural nature of indigo-culture in the South or the different relationships those cultures might have with a place. This model addressed the presence and use of historical sources of transmission, but not the challenges of quality in the transmission of craft skills, knowledge, and history. "Ideology and discourse" did not span the breadth of cultural meanings within indigo-culture nor accommodate the inclusion of the many species and genera of plants relevant to the craft. This model also does not allow for the multidisciplinary nature of indigo-culture. "Nonprofit and/or commercial enterprises" does not encompass the fields such as agriculture, biology, chemistry, art, and spirituality that make up this craft.

Should this model be used for the revival of indigo-culture in the South, the craft would indeed conform to these "basic ingredients," but Livingston's model does not include aspects that my research indicated were also important for successful craft revival, such as quality of transmission, preservation of the intangible cultural heritage, grounding in geographical place, and ecological sustainability. Indigo-culture requires a framework that does not just describe what it is but helps revivalists ask the pertinent questions, the answers to which can guide the revival process for those revivalists. This framework must go deeper, cover wider territory, and allow for the ephemeral, the intangible, and the practical. The four principal characteristics of craft proposed by Zhan, Hernandez, Walker, and Evans were useful in that they shared some affinity with the four elements of craft discussed in Chapter Four and guided construction of the proposed framework in Chapter Six. "Specialized knowledge" touches on skills, but does not include transmission of those skills and knowledge. "Localization" identifies ideas of locality

and the importance of local materials, but not local historical importance and meaning, nor a grounding in a specific place. The characteristic of "Ethics and authenticity" is more concerned with living an ethical life through craft than being authentic and ethical in the context of the historical and cultural aspects of a craft like indigo-culture. "Continuation of tradition" probably most closely resembles ideas of preservation and maintenance of meaning that are so important in the revival process.[285] Although the ideas above informed the proposed framework in this thesis, it was still necessary to construct a framework to suit the special needs of craft, and indigo, revival.

Constructing a Framework

Any new framework needs to be flexible, simple, and functional. It needs to transcend culture and be supple enough to encompass non-European attitudes to preservation and revival. A framework would also need to be simple while allowing for complexity, and it should function as well for individuals as for groups without requiring specialist training or further education to use.

Livingston states that her initial framework was too West-centric and needed to be expanded so that it was not confined to the preservation attitudes commonly held in North America and Western Europe. Differences between the Western concept of authenticity and preservation is clear in cases such as that of the Ise Jingu Grand Shrine and are echoed in Amareswar Galla's "The First Voice in Heritage Conservation." Galla's article discusses the need for a "reworking of heritage policy and conservation from a hegemonic colonial or

[285] Zhan et al., "Craft and Sustainability, S2919.

otherwise 'first-world' construct into an inclusive post-colonial practice."[286] This shift of heritage construct is particularly important with a craft such as indigo-culture in the South where the root cultures are so diverse. Galla discusses current projects that support the conservation of heritage crafts while negotiating the complex needs and necessary sensitivities to cultures in a "post-industrial, globalized world environment."[287]

Daniel Carpenter of the Heritage Craft Association (HCA) discusses the necessity of revived crafts being viable, which, in 2021, means being ecologically sustainable, resilient to climate change, culturally inclusive, and financially sustainable for practitioners. These factors are necessary for a successful craft revival and preservation in the twenty-first century but do not, on their own, constitute a framework for revival.[288]

The Kroezen and Heugens article "What Is Dead May Never Die" identified that a main impediment to craft revival is that dormant heritage crafts belong to a different time, and traditional avenues for success do not necessarily exist in the twenty-first century.[289] The twenty-first century is a time in which industrial methods of production and transmission dominate. A system of factory working and factory learning has superseded traditional methods of working and learning that are intimate, small, local, and highly physically skilled. As the HCA Red List project manager Daniel Carpenter comments, heritage crafts as "cultural practices…have always ebbed and flowed through history, coming to the fore and fading away as part of a constant shift of markets, technologies, and social movements."[290] What makes the beginning of the twenty-

[286] Galla, "The First Voice," 12–13.

[287] Livingston, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival,* 60–63; and Galla, "The First Voice in Heritage Conservation," 12-13.

[288] Langlands, *Crœft*, 3; Carpenter, "The HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts," 2.

[289] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead may Never Die," 31–32.

[290] Carpenter, "The HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts," 2.

first century, in the West, different from previous times in history is the extent to which industrialization and technology have eroded many of our reserves of traditional knowledge, which lie dormant, or what Kroezen and Heugens describe as "decomposed." This process of patching together the living remnants of past crafts requires revivalists to borrow from similar craft disciplines to rebuild the craft to wholeness and viability.[291] The preservation and revival processes necessitate judicious borrowing to be successful.

Dan Lundberg's "Bjårskpip in Blossom: On the Revitalization Process of a Folk Instrument" introduced the concept of historically informed performance, which emerged as a softer, more flexible, concept than literal ideas of authenticity. As Lundberg states, definitions of authenticity "are vague and problematic [and] in the most literal sense of the word, cannot be achieved."[292] True authenticity implies that there is one genuine, original, historically accurate and reliable method or process, that there is no room for adaptation, evolution, or creative expression much less the cultural borrowing advocated by Kroezen and Heugens. Authenticity is, perhaps, a more static concept suited to buildings, structures, and monuments because they can more easily be understood in terms of authenticity. A building either does or does not have the requisite historic attributes to describe it as authentically belonging to a specific era. Craft is a more slippery concept that is more mobile and flexible. The concept of craft allows for the evolution, adaptation, and transformation so necessary to keeping it alive and relevant.

Gerard Lynch, in his article "Repositioning Craft Education and Training to Reconnect Artisans to Designers," argues for the preservation of crafts and their traditional apprenticeship modes of transmission. Lynch's article is in harmony with Langlands's *Crœft*, the Heritage

[291] Kroezen and Heugens, "What is Dead May Never Die," 31–32.

[292] Lundberg, "Bjarskpip,"3.

Crafts Association, and the Craft Council's ideas of craft as a verb, a performance, that must be preserved as an active practice, not simply as a process encapsulated in the amber of history. Lynch argues that it is the holders of advanced knowledge in traditional craft skills who are in greatest demand and who must become the future leaders in training and in promoting the craft. It is training to this high level of skill that enables "meaningful reconnection and collaboration with senior designers and allow[s] craftspersons to be viewed as associates rather than as subordinates."[293] High-quality transmission should be the goal of every revival movement because it is the quality of the knowledge, skills, and product that determines the long-term viability of a craft.[294]

The article "Protection of *Kyo-yasai* (heirloom vegetables in Kyoto)" discusses how greater appreciation of medicinal and health benefits of daikon, a Japanese heirloom radish, offered a grounding in place, in this case Kyoto.[296] The health benefits contributed to the revival, survivability, and economic viability of the crop through education of the public and the passion of farmers. The article explains how the strong flavors of the heirloom varieties were lost through time due to a cultural move toward milder flavors. This change in taste precipitated an extinction crisis that required a new way of thinking to spark a revival. In short, meaning had to be found and transmitted to the public and farmers to produce a new sense of value for the plants. This new sense of value contributed to a renewed pride in the vegetables that guided the preservation efforts. Kyoto is significant for heirloom varieties of vegetables because many

[293] Gerard Lynch, "Repositioning Craft Education and Training to Reconnect Artisans to Designers," *Journal of Preservation Technology* 44, no. 2/3 (2013): 3–13.

[294] Lynch, "Repositioning Craft Education," 3-13.

[296] Takako Nakamura et al., "Protection of *Kyo-yasai* (heirloom vegetables in Kyoto) from extinction: a case of *Sabaka-daikon* (Japan's heirloom white radish, *Raphanus sativus*) in Maizuru Japan," *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 4 (2017): 103–9.

unusual varieties were taken to be grown in the palace gardens during the late 1880s as curiosities for the court. This connection to Japan's history and to a specific place added to the importance and interest in the preservation of these heirloom vegetables.[297]

Margaret Olugbemisola Aero's "Ulli Beier; a Beacon in the Post-Colonial Renascence of Adire" discusses the challenges that traditional indigo-culture has had in southwestern Nigeria. Many of the challenges to a thriving indigo revival in Nigeria are like challenges facing indigo-culture and other heritage crafts in other parts of the world, including in the southern United States. Olugbemisola Aero explains that in traditional modes of transmission, namely intra-familial apprenticeship, skills are passed down from mother to daughter; this is now far less common because "young girls now preferred Western education in an Eurocentric setting."[298] Another challenge to the preservation of indigo-culture in Nigeria is the government tax applied to local indigo-dyed cloth that must compete with the mass availability of cheap imported textiles that are not taxed. A third issue is that many educated Nigerians see *adire* (traditional resist-dyed textile) "merely as rural cloth for poor, illiterate, rural dwellers," which is combined with a lack of societal value given to indigenous knowledge.[299] This disregard and lack of value for traditional skills and products could be a result of earlier colonialism and more recent industrialism and globalism. The loss of value for these traditional skills and products stems from a crisis of cultural meaning. Dyes and patterns, and the associated knowledge and skills, were once associated with core spiritual and cultural beliefs that were eroded by Christianity, colonialism, and Western-style education. Western, Christian teaching also eroded the traditional

[297] Nakamura et al, "Protection of *Kyo-yasai,"* 103-109.

[298] Margaret Olugbemisola Aero, "Ulli Beier: A Beacon in the Post-Colonial Renaissance of Adire," *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 9 (2013), 16.

[299] Olugbemisola Aero, "Ulli Beier," 16.

apprenticeship system of transmission. After independence, a renewed interest in adire was spearheaded by two Austrian artists whose work with local communities precipitated a shift in what remained of the traditional apprenticeship model. This new model embraced a new form of apprenticeship in the workshop that did not rely on gender or family connection. The breaking down of traditional boundaries allowed men, who were not historically involved in indigo dyeing, and women to set up their own studios and found a guild system. This shift in traditional transmission opened the field to the traditionally excluded which, in turn, created a more viable and vibrant craft culture. This shift also created an environment in which new techniques and dyes were introduced and individual artistic creativity worked in harmony with traditional craft process, essentially reviving and preserving the craft. Adire in Osogbo adapted to survive, building new traditions grounded in the old and centered in the traditional geographical place. Olugbemisola Aero believes that what is required is a paradigm shift in the transmission of craft to safeguard and make sustainable indigenous craft knowledge in the fast-changing world of the twenty-first century.[300]

[300] Olugbemisola Aero, "Ulli Beier," 16.

Recurring Themes

Livingston explains that her survey work highlighted recurring characteristics of music revival that led her to create her model for revival.[301] In a similar way, a pattern of themes emerged from the literature on revival that became the basis for this framework. The recurring themes were:

- **Meaning**
- **Transmission**
- **Preservation**
- **Place**
- **Sustainability**

Meaning in the sense of knowledge, history, spirituality, cultural stories, and cultural significance seemed to underpin revival; the craft, artform, or music had to *mean* something to the revivalists. The *Oxford Dictionary* definition for meaning is that which is "intended to communicate something that is not directly expressed," an "implied or explicit significance," and an "important or worthwhile quality or purpose."[302] Meaning, in the context of this framework, is the intangible: the history, the skills, the knowledge, the cultural significance, and the personal significance of the craft to the knowledge bearers, practitioners, enthusiasts, and revivalists. It also conveys the quality of value because the meaning of a craft gives it value, significance, and relevance. The word "connection" could express some level of these intangible cultural heritage, but it is already a part of, and does not encompass the many facets of, the word

[301] Tamara E. Livingston, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory," *Ethnomusicology* 4, no. 1(1999): 68–71.

[302] Oxford Languages, *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/

meaning. The word “value” was also rejected due to its strong sense of judgement and monetary inference that was not appropriate for these intangible aspects. Where different cultures are at an intersection within a craft there must not be judgmentalism because that can lead to racism and other forms of oppressive attitudes and behaviors not appropriate for the positive act of craft revival. Just as the craft of adire was revived in Osogbo by breaking down traditional boundaries of gender and familial apprenticeship, the revival of indigo-culture in the South needs to be inclusive if it is going to thrive. This theme is the most broad and subjective of the five themes in the framework and, because it deals with more intangible cultural heritage, it is also the most potentially problematic.

Transmission in the sense of passing on craft knowledge, skills, and history is repeated as a theme in the literature. Adequate systems for educating new practitioners and the public in the craft are necessary for a thriving craft culture. In Kyoto it was necessary to educate the public about the benefits of the daikon radish farmers teach about the benefits benefits of growing the crop. This two-fold education process created a successful revival. Lynch was adamant that quality education and apprenticeship were essential to maintaining heritage building crafts. Quality transmission was also vital for the preservation of the buildings constructed using these crafts, and for the acknowledgment of true master craftsmen by designers and other professionals. Four out of eight issues on the Heritage Crafts Association’s list of “Issues Affecting the Viability of Heritage Crafts,” part of the HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts, relate to the loss of adequate transmission. These include recruitment of new practitioners, aging workforce, and loss of craft skills.

Preservation was another main theme. This refers to the preservation of history, knowledge, and the skills themselves. It also encompasses the preservation of larger cooperative

craft products such as historic buildings and structures, which is only possible with the preservation of appropriate craft skills and the preservation of cultural heritage, identity, and history. Preservation would also encompass historically-informed performance for indigo farmers, processors, and practitioners who use historical records to guide but not necessarily to dictate, their endeavors. Donna Hardy, for example, does not necessarily utilize a fermentation vat for her indigo-dying workshops, in which a failed vat could compromise the learning experience for participants. This kind of indigo vat is tricky and can yield unpredictable results when more predictable results are preferable for a workshop. Hardy also utilizes powdered indigo rather than fresh leaves for workshops, which allows her greater control over the strength of the vat. The chemical vat is still a historic technique, but it is a more recent method, and the use of indigo powder has also been used historically to produce a stronger vat. Similarly, Fibershed in California are developing harvesting machinery for the harvesting of dyer's knotweed. This is not a historic method of harvesting, but it would make the process more economically viable for large-scale operations. Larger operations mean a craft that is more mainstream and more economically sustainable. The term "Historically-informed" implies a knowledge of historical methods while adhering to contemporary improvements, especially when it is logical to assume those improvements would have been adopted for large-scale production if they had been available in the past.

Location or **place** also emerged as an important theme, one that is more flexible and mutable in the twenty-first century due to global migration (both historic and more recent), technology, and genetic testing that can change our ideas of our ancestry and place of origin. Place, being a broader and more flexible term, functioned better for this framework than a word like "location." Location is, by definition, a fixed spot in physical space, whereas place can refer

to putting something down in a specific location, or to a place name, a position in society, rank or status, a job, a physical area, a geographical location, or one's philosophical locus of meaning within the world or within humanity. It can even refer to identifying something or someone, as in, to place or misplace something.[303] Location is literal; place is subjective, personal, and profound. So much of the historic context and significance of a heritage craft is connected to the place of cultural practice. For indigo-culture in the South this includes not only the areas and states in which this craft was practiced but also the root countries and cultures from which those skills originated.

The fifth main theme from the literature was **sustainability**, in both the environmental and economic senses. Patricia Reynolds, in "Living Heritage Crafts: Significance, Value, Risk, Endangerment, Sustainable Future," describes sustainability as "the ability of craft skills and knowledge to be passed to the coming generation."[304] Reynolds's definition is more compatible with this framework's theme of transmission. For this thesis, the Oxford Dictionary definition of sustainability as "the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level [and] avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance" is more appropriate.[305] Sustainability, both ecological and economical, is the basis of long-term viability for craft.

Key Factors Influencing a Framework for Craft Revival

Because of a lack of craft revival frameworks to guide a revival of indigo-culture in the South, other craft revivals were studied to gain insight into how such a framework might be

[303] Oxford Languages, *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[304] Patricia Reynolds, "Living Heritage Crafts: Significance, Value, Risk, Endangerment, Sustainable Future," report for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the Heritage Crafts Association, 2017, 7.

[305] Oxford Languages, Oxford English Dictionary.

constructed. To achieve this, revivals were selected that shared similarities with indigo-culture such as music revival, craft beer revival, heirloom vegetable revival, and indigo revival in Nigeria.

Tamara Livingston's "recipe" of basic ingredients of what constitutes a music revival included the revival of core remnants of that craft tradition, identification and use of original sources of knowledge, strong revival ideology, presence of followers of the craft, activities related to the craft, and nonprofit and commercial enterprises related to the craft. Livingston realized that her model for revival was Eurocentric and required reevaluation but did not articulate a full reevaluation of it.[306]

Zhan et al. focused on the importance of strong cultural identity that is influenced by place and community as well as the potential influence of design on the ability for craft revival to be strong, adaptive, and sustainable. Design in this case was used as an intervention to bridge the gap between traditional skills and modern aesthetic in order to make the crafts relevant and accessible to buyers and, thereby, economically sustainable.[307]

A desire for authenticity is a natural requirement for heritage craft revival, but Dan Lundberg highlights the potential for concepts of authenticity to be avenues for prejudice when he describes authenticity as "vague and problematic."[308] Instead, he proposes revival as historically informed performance. This is a softer and more flexible understanding of authenticity that allows for creativity, interpretation, and evolution. Amareswar Galla emphasizes the necessity for heritage conservation to be inclusive and that there should be a departure from Eurocentric, West-centric attitudes toward a fuller expression of diverse voices in

[306] Livingston, 60–63

[307] Zhan et al., S2919.

[308] Lundberg, "Bjarskpip,"3.

the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Margaret Olugbemisola Aero illustrates that heritage crafts must evolve and be more inclusive if they are to thrive.[309]

Education plays a vital role in the preservation and revival of heritage crafts. The revival of the heirloom radish in Kyoto illustrates the power of education on the revival and long-term sustainability of a heritage craft. This education relates both to transmission of skills and knowledge of those practicing a craft but also education of the public as to the value of the practice and the product.

Several themes developed from these discourses on cultural heritage preservation and revival that could act as the central themes around which to build a framework to guide the revival and, thus, the preservation of indigo-culture in the southern United States. These themes were meaning, transmission, preservation, place, and sustainability. Meaning highlights the knowledge, skills, and history of the craft. Transmission concentrates on the teaching of those intangible parts of the craft both in the sense of apprenticeship and education of the public as to why the craft matters and should be preserved. Preservation concerns the preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the craft. Place deals with the geographical areas associated with the craft and the more ephemeral notions of place that may be associated with the craft, such as ancestral connections. Sustainability focuses on the economic and ecological sustainability of the craft. Ecological sustainability is important because one reason for reviving indigo is because it is less environmentally polluting than synthetic indigo. Economic sustainability relates to the practitioners' ability to gain a living wage from their craft, thus enabling the transition from amateur interest to viable occupation.

[309] Galla, "The First Voice," 12–13; Aero, "Ulli Beier," 16.

CHAPTER 6

A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE REVIVAL OF INDIGO-CULTURE

A Two-Step System

Where the four elements of craft help ask and answer the question "what is indigo-culture?" the framework proposed in this chapter helps address how to revive indigo-culture. This framework is designed to be open and adaptive rather than rigid and prescriptive. It is designed to be an armature around which to flesh out the body of revival in a particular geographical area, for a particular cultural group, craft, or preservation organization, group of practitioner revivalists, or an individual practitioner-revivalist. For example, the Huguenot Society of South Carolina, is a cultural group that could use the framework to focus revival and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage connected to indigo, Huguenots, and South Carolina.

This framework also aims to aid the formulation of management and preservation plans for indigo-culture and other complex heritage crafts once they have been revived and are viable and sustainable. The only difference between using the framework for revival or for management and preservation is the intention, the purposeful direction of the revivalist.

The four elements of craft and the framework for the revival of indigo-culture function as a two-step process. The first step, the four elements of craft, articulates what craft *is* by deconstructing that craft into its vital elements. This deconstruction enables assessment and evaluation of what the craft has been in the past and what can, or should, be revived in the

present. The second step, the framework for craft revival, guides the *how to* of the revival process by addressing five themes that relate to five major challenges. These challenges are the maintenance of **meaning**, quality of **transmission**, **preservation** of the historic elements, grounding the craft in **place,** and achieving and maintaining environmental and economic **sustainability** for the craft and its practitioners.

In using this framework, it can be useful to frame these themes as questions. For example:

- **Meaning –** What are the historic, cultural, and regional meanings of this craft? How do I/we maintain the historic, cultural, and local meanings of this craft? What does the craft mean to me/us? What could or should this craft mean to me/this community in the future?
- **Transmission -** How do I/we attain a quality of skills and knowledge transmission that maintains the integrity of the craft with high-quality skills and historically verifiable knowledge and history? How do I/we find, maintain, and preserve the knowledge of our master practitioners so that we have a quality record of their skills, knowledge, and histories?
- **Preservation -** What tangible and intangible cultural heritage connected to this craft still exists in my/our geographical area that can and should be preserved for the benefit of future generations? What systems need to be put in place to preserve for future generations the tangible and intangible cultural heritage being created now by contemporary masters?
- **Place -** What connections to this craft exist, or existed in the past, in this region? What significance did this craft have in this region? How is the connection

between the craft and this region unique? What significance do contemporary masters and practitioners of the craft contribute to this place?

- **Sustainability -** How can this craft contribute to environmental sustainability through ecologically friendly practices? How can this craft be economically sustainable for practitioners and master practitioners in the long term?

The answers to these questions may not always be compatible between one group or individual and another. Each individual revivalist or group of revivalists will need to prioritize the solutions for their own geographical area, circumstances, and needs. The framework could be used by an individual, by a group within a workshop or business, or as part of a larger, charrette-type meeting or conference activity. It could also be used via a more virtual platform such as Google Docs or Zoom to include a wider or more international group for more globally applicable plans for craft revival. This framework works in a similar way to Edward de Bono's "Six Thinking Hats." The six hats method can guide an individual or group towards solutions via lateral thinking. The framework proposed in this thesis can guide craft revivalists toward solutions for successful craft revival. De Bono's system uses six symbolic hats to describe different kinds of thinking-focus such as available data, strengths, weaknesses, emotions, creativity, and objectivity. These "hats" are designed to be used to guide and focus discussion, while reducing the incidence of argument and encouraging creative thought.[310]

The five subjects or headings suggested in the proposed framework for craft revival emerged as the main areas of importance for craft revival. An individual or group may determine a necessity for additional headings based on their available data, experience, or needs. The main themes should be framed as questions that lead to further questions and creative solutions as

[310] Edward de Bono, *Six Thinking Hats* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1999), xi–3.

these questions are prioritized, thought about, and discussed. A question-framing session could be followed by a session that focused on the answers to the questions, which, in turn, could be followed by a solutions session. At the end of these three sessions proposed solutions and further questions could be prioritized into immediate action, medium-term action, and long-term goals. In this way a plan could be tailored to the individual or to the group.[311]

Livingston's recurring themes from the literature on revival formed the basis for the main five themes used in this framework for craft revival. These themes function as a cycle of revival and preservation (Figure 6.1). This cycle begins with transmission of meaning from teacher to student through craft knowledge, voice, and action with all the elements of craft preserved and grounded in place. The craft is made sustainable through education and historically-informed performance that balances fidelity to historic methods, ecologically-friendly practices, and sufficient adaptability to maintain vibrancy and creativity.

Economic sustainability ensures all the elements of craft survive to feed new meanings for new generations of practitioners. Each practitioner may carry a slightly different collection of historical skills associated with the craft, but the sum of those practitioners maintains the craft and its diversity through their diversity of skill-bearing. Ecological sustainability adds a meaning that encourages future transmission and preservation that, in turn, leads to connection and grounding to place that is associated with traditional geographical areas of production. New associations with new locations that may have little previous known historic connection to indigo-culture may create future historic associations and meanings that carry the craft forward and sustain it for future generations.

[311] De Bono, *Six Thinking Hats,* xi–3; Dr. Edward de Bono, "What Are Lateral Thinking Techniques," accessed September 17, 2020, https://www.edwddebono.com/lateral-thinking.

The four elements of craft sit within the framework for revival (Figure 6.2). The elements of craft represent the whole craft, and the framework represents a process of revival through various stages of a cycle of preservation. First the elements of craft describe what the craft was historically. They also facilitate identification of what survives in the present by drawing attention to what those survivors might be. Knowing what the craft was, and what survives, tells us what meaning this craft has had, does have, and could have to practitioners, to specific cultures, and globally. For revival to occur, the craft must be practiced and transmitted to new practitioners and new generations.

Transmission of the knowledge and skills of a craft is, itself, a kind of preservation. The more practitioners and enthusiasts of a craft that exist, the more likely it is that the tangible and intangible cultural heritage will be actively preserved for future generations. Grounding that craft in specific places or geographical areas creates a physical connection to past and present practitioners and the land associated with that practice. This connection allows for a kind of craft pilgrimage where people interested in the craft can learn more about its history and see the living craft. Examples of this are places such as Axminster in Devon, England, where woven and tufted carpets are still made despite a 102-year dormancy of the craft. Another example is traditional cidermaking in Somerset, England, where ancient orchards still produce cider made with traditional methods. The presence of these old cider orchards also helps the community maintain traditional folk stories, songs, and dances, such as wassailing, associated with the craft of cidermaking.[312] These kinds of sites of craft pilgrimage contribute to the economic sustainability of the craft. Traditional cidermaking has led to the conservation of ancient orchards, historic

[312] "Axminster Timeline," Axminster Heritage Centre, accessed September 22, 2020, https://axminsterheritage.org/timeline/; and Hilary Osborne, "Wassailing the Cider Orchard," *The Guardian*, January 21, 2010, https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2010/jan/21/wassailing-cider-apple-orchard.

orchard management methods, and the preservation of old apple varieties. Projects such as the Ossabaw Island indigo workshops and the dye garden at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia offer transmission of knowledge and skills that promote the preservation of indigo-culture in the South.

Knowledge of a craft's meaning leads to the maintenance of that meaning. To maintain that meaning the craft must be transmitted, passed on, and continued, which preserves it. Preservation involves research and preservation action, which grounds the craft in the places associated historically and presently with that craft. Maintenance of meaning, continuation of transmission, and preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage grounded in place with a priority to protect that place through sound ecology all lead to an economically sustainable, viable craft that gains in meaning. In this way, the cycle begins again.

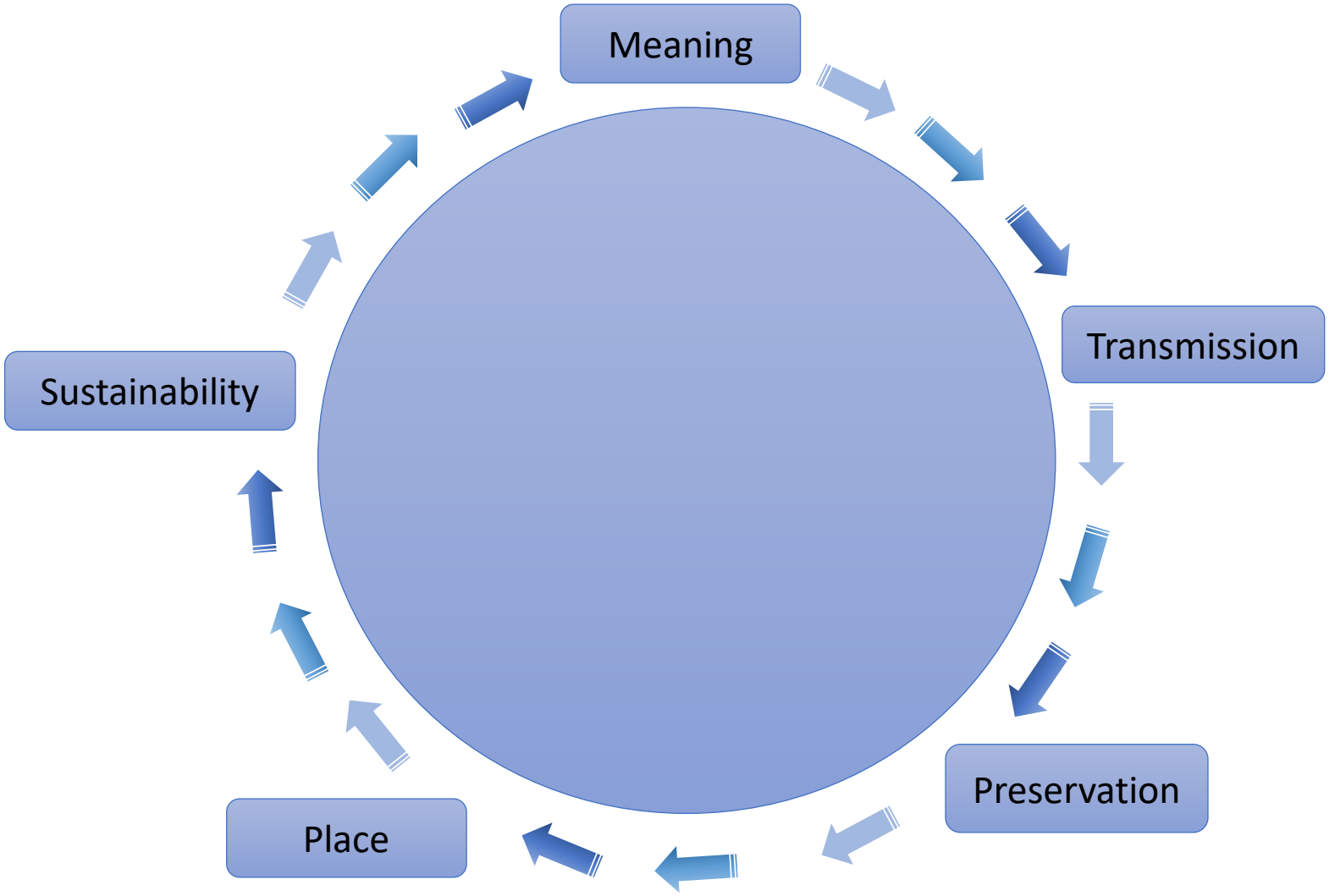

Figure 6.1. A Five-Part Framework for Craft Revival. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

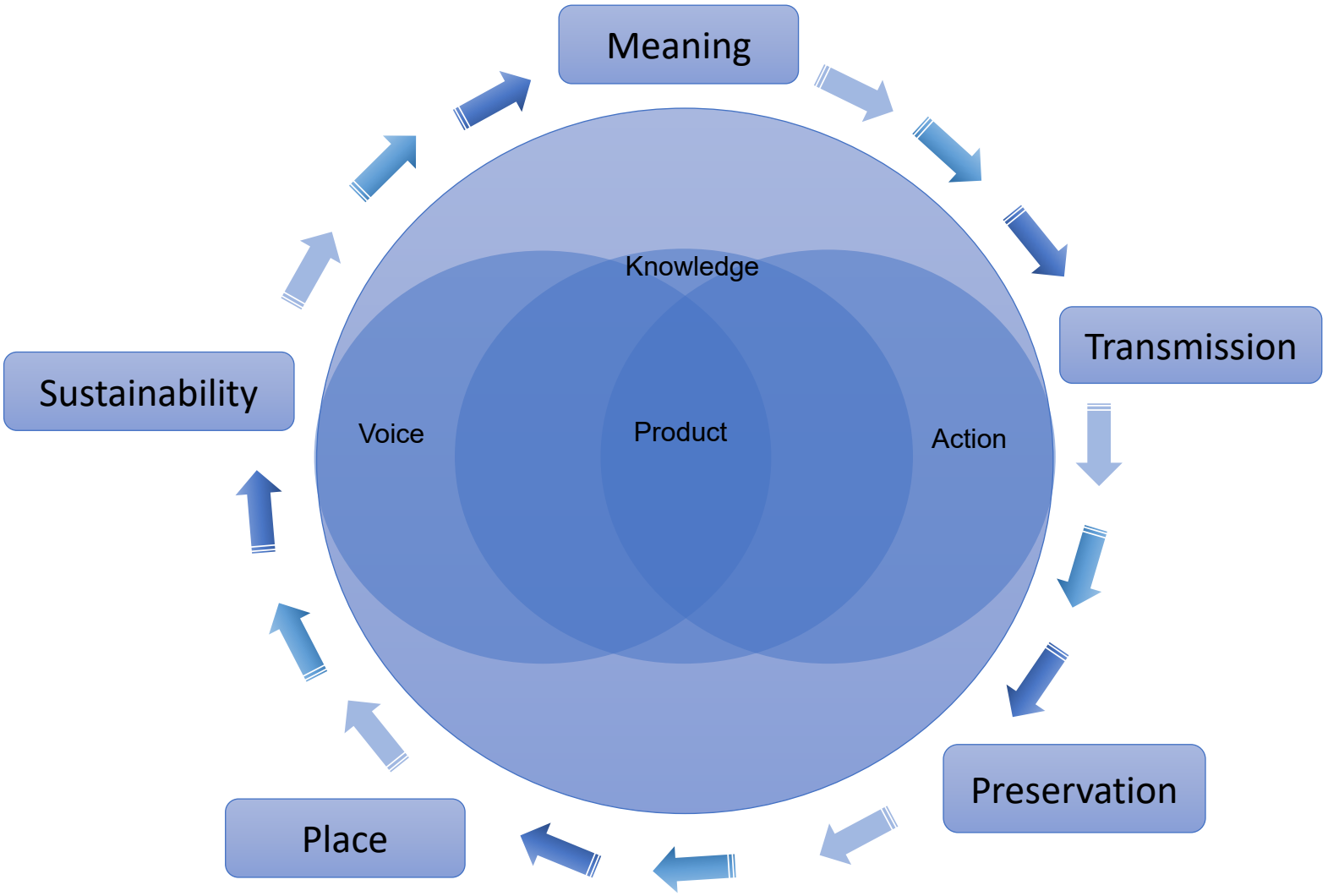

Figure 6.2. The Four Elements of Craft with the Five-Part Framework for Craft Revival. Image by AJM Braithwaite.

A Framework for Indigo-Culture Revival

What follows is an example of how the framework might function for indigo-culture in the southern US. Each theme can be subdivided into more specific areas of interest or importance allowing for a closer investigation and focus.

Meaning

Historical Meaning

Revival of indigo-culture in the South also connects practitioners with root cultures. Indigo was one of the major cash crops in the South between 1720 and 1800. Indigo-culture has deep historical associations to European history, like that of the Celts and ancient indigenous peoples of Europe, the medieval guilds, and to the migrations of persecuted Protestants through England to America. There are strong links to the women's arts of dyeing in West Africa and to West African creation stories that include indigo. Indigo is also connected to African histories of cultivation with crops like rice and cotton to the history of African enslavement. Native Americans also have a history of enslavement by Europeans regarding indigo, and there may be as yet unknown Native American indigo associations that would enrich indigo-culture in the South.

Cultural Meaning

The cultural meanings for indigo-culture in the South would be different for each of the cultural groups involved. However, there is a shared history, an intersection where these cultures meet. Each cultural group brought with it a unique set of skills, knowledge, folklore, history, and beliefs that combined to create the rich culture of the South. Each geographical area in the South

contains a different mix of these cultures, which gives that area its distinctive flavor and historical texture. The mix of cultures requires that each area and each practitioner find their own culturally relevant meanings. The sharing of these meanings between practitioner-revivalists can act as a bridge between cultures and a way to broach the more culturally uncomfortable aspects of the past.

The skills of cultivating, processing, and dyeing with indigo can be seen within the broader history of a past in which being physically skillful was a necessity rather than a luxury or hobby. Most women, most especially those from rural areas, had some skill in crafts such as spinning, weaving, dyeing, sewing, simple medicinal remedies, food crop cultivation, cooking, and brewing. Most men, again especially those from rural areas, possessed certain skills such as woodcraft, farming, animal husbandry, brick making, smithing, cart building, dry stone wall building, or hedge laying. These skills and crafts became less common with the advent of industrialization. Those crafts and skills that survive are the living memory of a skillful past in greater harmony with the environment. This historical knowledge is an access point for innovation even in a time when such skills are not necessarily vital to survival. Such skills provide a vital point of physical connection to the past. This connection enables a greater sense of understanding of the past, a greater appreciation for the past, and an opportunity to live in ways that make understanding of history more than simply words on a page. Because no craft exists without many other supporting crafts, revival of indigo-culture inevitably supports the revival of other heritage crafts such as tool making, carpentry, and brick laying.

Regional Meaning

South Carolina is the state most identified with indigo-culture, but Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, North Carolina, and other southern states have their own history of indigo-culture. Charleston claims Eliza Lucas Pinckney as the woman who introduced indigo to America. A rebalancing of the history of indigo to include other southern states with rich histories of indigo-culture is also necessary. Salem, North Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia, were two of the major trading hubs through which processed indigo was transported from farms and plantations to Pennsylvania. The Gullah-Geechee of Georgia and South Carolina still maintain a tradition of indigo-culture. Remains of indigo-processing tanks have been found in Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana that offer tangible evidence of indigo-culture and places of cultural pilgrimage for those interested in indigo-culture. More indigo-specific signage and information would help inform the public about the importance of indigo-culture in the southern US.

Transmission

Quality transmission of skills and knowledge is of vital importance for any craft, and indigo is no exception. Transmission of this craft, however, often relies on old and ancient manuscripts, historic documents, manuals, and pamphlets. These, in combination with skills gleaned from either root traditions in Britain, Europe, or West Africa - or sometimes from other akin traditions such as those of Japan inform the contemporary practice of indigo-culture.

Rarely does the transmission of indigo-culture in the South occur without some indication of its historical content. Practitioners such as Donna Hardy and Heather Parker inform their students about the history, good, bad, and ugly, of indigo-culture in the South. A comprehensive

book on the indigo-culture of the South that could guide new practitioners through the practice, history, and culture related to the craft would be useful. Presently no such books are available.

Organizations such as the International Center for Indigo Culture are working to provide high-quality education and transmission while encouraging scholarship and research. Although some craft schools such as Penland, in North Carolina, teach natural dye skills that include indigo dyeing, more high-quality training in all the processes of indigo-culture is vital for viable revival. A project to record and preserve recordings of contemporary master practitioners, so that their teaching, knowledge, and experience can be preserved, would be useful for indigo-culture.

Preservation

Very little of the tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture remains in the South, which makes its preservation a priority. It is also important to preserve the skills associated with indigo-culture that are being taught in 2021 and that contribute to the revival of this craft. The history of indigo-culture requires preservation. Continuing scholarship to expand the current body of knowledge, especially with regard to potential Native American indigo-culture, would contribute to the significance of the craft in the South.

Experimental archaeologists and technical art historians are experimenting with natural dyes such as indigo to better understand historical techniques so they can be replicated. This kind of experimental archaeology informs contemporary applications aimed at promoting ecological sustainability as well as restoration, reconstruction, and conservation of historic textiles.

Surviving descendant plants from indigo originally planted before 1800 require specialist efforts for preservation and, perhaps, more formal interpretation. The surviving *Indigofera suffruticosa* on Ossabaw Island is valued and preserved as living evidence of indigo cultivation

on Ossabaw. Workshop attendees find the experience of interacting with such plants a valuable physical connection to the past. This experience very much connects one to place.

Place

Place is important for indigo-culture in the South. Further research is required to document indigo-culture in the backcountry during the 1700s. Presently, because more is known about indigo-culture on the Eastern Seaboard, it would be logical for this region to remain the focus of concepts of place for indigo. However, if indigo grown in the backcountry was registered only through its sale in Charles Town, it could be useful to trace those sales back to their source, if possible. This kind of research may show a wider dispersal of indigo-producing farms and plantations, and confirm trade routes that spanned the southern states. Such data could yield a more accurate map of indigo-culture in the South.

Sustainability

Sustainability for craft has two main facets: ecological sustainability and economic sustainability. The research for this thesis found that ecological sustainability is a core driver for popular interest in indigo-culture and for investigation into historical natural dyeing methods. Ecological sustainability is also a major reason why people choose to learn about and train as practitioners in other crafts. Heritage crafts are associated with environmentally sustainable, smaller-scale, ecologically-friendly, community-oriented and socially-aware business practices. Diversity, individuality, and creativity add value for millennials who will accept higher prices for bespoke, authentic products that reflect their values and lifestyles.[313] Economic sustainability is

[313] Gatrell, Reid, and Steiger, "Branding Places," 361.

something all professional craft practitioners aspire to, and it is often the factor that determines whether a heritage craft successfully revives.

Ecological Sustainability

One of the most effective illustrations of industrial dyeing on ecosystems is the bizarrely colored rivers that exist near industrial dye factories and textile mills. Large pipes belching blue, purple, red, green, and orange effluent (figs. 6.3 and 6.4) with lurid scum suffocating riverside flora and fish attempting to survive among the chemicals (figs. 6.5 and 6.6). This effluent is powerful enough to dye the animals that venture through it (Figure 6.7). Incidences of bladder, kidney, central nervous system problems as well as lung cancer, are significantly higher among the workers in these factories.[314]

Synthetic indigo production transforms crude oil into benzene using the toxic hydrocarbon toluene, and then into aniline using nitric acid, sulfuric acid, or metals. Formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, and sodium hydroxide are then used to make n-Phenyglycine, which becomes indigo via a process using molten potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, and sodamide. 80,000 tons of synthetic indigo dye are produced each year.[315]

[314] E. Delzell, M. Macaluso, and P. Cole, "A Follow-up Study of Workers at a Dye and Resin Manufacturing Plant," *Journal of Occupational Medicine* 31, no. 3 (1989): 273–78; and J. M. Davies, D. F. Easton, and P. L. Bidstrup, "Mortality from Respiratory Cancer and Other Causes in United Kingdom Chromate Production Factories," *British Journal of Industrial Medicine* 48, no. 5 (1991): 299–313.

[315] Nicholas Wenner and Matthew Forkin, "Indigo: Sources, processes and possibilities for bioregional blue," Fibershed (2017), 7; and "Have Scientists Found a Greener Way to Make Blue Jeans?" *Smithsonian Magazine*, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/have-scientists-found-greener-way-to-make-blue-jeans-180967902/.

Figure 6.3. Pollution from synthetic indigo effluent, Bangladesh. Source Jim Yardley, "Bangladesh Pollution, Told in Colors and Smells," *New York Times*, July 15, 2013.

Figure 6.4. Dye effluent, Yangtze River, China. Source "The River that DID Run Red: Residents of Chinese City Left Baffled After Yangtze Turns Scarlet," *Daily Mail*, September 7, 2012.

Figure 6.5. Effluent from synthetic dye, Tullahan River, Philippines. Source “Detox My Fashion: Who’s on the path to toxic-free fashion?” Greenpeace USA, https://www.greenpeace.org/international/act/detox/.

Figure 6.6. Effluent from synthetic dye, China. Source “What is Causing Water Pollution?” University of Exeter, http://sites.exeter.ac.uk/s4s/are-dyes-polluting-our-water/.

Figure 6.7. Dog dyed blue from synthetic indigo effluent, Mumbai, India. Source Neville Lazarus, "Stray Dogs in Mumbai Turned Bright Blue by Contaminated River," *Sky News*, August 23, 2017.

In the twenty-first century, approximately 10 to 15 percent of the 800,000 tons of synthetic dye produced each year is released as textile effluent into watercourses.[316] The concerns, internationally, for the health and environmental impacts of such effluent have helped revive interest in natural dyes in the hope they will provide a sustainable alternative to noxious and toxic synthetic dyes. As indigo is one of the most used dyes in the textile industry, it is receiving a great deal of attention. This attention is focused on the revival of historic processing and dyeing techniques, and encouragement of cultivation to replace a portion of the annual global synthetic dye use with natural indigo. One benefit of this revival would be the revival of the natural indigo traditions of cultivation, processing, and dyeing in countries around the world whose indigo industries suffered with the introduction of synthetic indigo. In the South, this could mean that indigo industries that once thrived, like the historic Alamance Mill in North

[316] Mohamed A Hassan and Ahmed El Nemr, "Health and Environmental Impacts of Dyes: Mini Review," *American Journal of Environmental Science and Engineering* 1, no. 3 (2017): 64–67.

Carolina, could be revived. Perhaps textile patterns associated with a mill or region, like the Alamance Plaid, could also be revived.

Dyeing with natural indigo, however, is not completely environmentally-friendly. The chemical vat also utilizes some harmful chemicals. This kind of vat was born out of an eighteenth-century desire to make the indigo vat easier, faster, more controllable, and more reliable—all things necessary for replicable industrial production with a certainty of quality. Historically, the orpiment vat used arsenic sulfide and arsenic trisulphide, which is found in mineral form, and the copperas vat utilized ferrous sulphate (iron (II) sulphate) with lime and indigo. Zinc dust and slaked lime was added to indigo to make the zinc vat and, in 1870, the hydrosulphite vat was first formulated, which was found to be the most effective at creating an anoxic vat liquor. The hydrosulphite vat has become the dominant system for producing a reliable vat, and it is the same system used for the reduction of the synthetic indigo vat.[317]

If natural indigo is to be economically viable and ecologically-sustainable alternative to synthetic indigo, chemical vats are not an option for large-scale industry because they are also polluting, even though the chemical vats could be described as using historic techniques. Working toward ecologically sustainable and organism-safe alternatives to synthetic indigo is already firing a resurgence and revival of the traditional, ancient indigo fermentation vat. Historic manuscripts, documents, and manuals are being mined for suitable, scalable techniques and methods for producing indigo dye and for the dyeing process. A return to natural indigo is an issue of sustainability on two levels. First, synthetic indigo is made from nonrenewable fossil fuel, and second, a return to more natural methods would significantly reduce water pollution and toxicity.

[317] Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 361.

The transition of large-scale industrial dyeing from natural dye to synthetic dye, and a possible transition back to natural dye, is heritage conversation on many levels. It opens discussion on the long-term effects of the Industrial Revolution, ancient innovation, and the relevance of heritage crafts. The negative effects of industrial dyeing have also raised questions about the value of color, the meaning and cultural importance of decoration and adornment, need versus greed, big corporations versus small businesses and cyclical economies. From a preservation point of view, a major question is what we can learn from the past that might be not just relevant but vital to our collective survival and "thrival" on this planet.[318]

Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability is one of the major challenges of heritage craft revival and of maintaining long-term viability for crafts. The greatest challenges that affect the viability of heritage crafts are issues such as a lack of career opportunities, shortage or lack of craft schools and training, an aging population of master craftspeople, difficulties in recruiting new trainees and attracting younger people into heritage crafts, difficulty in making a living, lack of willingness for new trainees to continue with difficult or strenuous craftwork, and lack of awareness that heritage crafts exist as career options. Heritage craft skills continue to be lost, as schools and colleges teach information technology rather than craft skills. A lack of teachers with high-quality craft skills, fewer craft professionals working at the highest skill level, a fall in demand for craft skills, and a lack of general education as to the value of heritage craft skills all impact viability for craft professionals.

[318] "Have Scientists Found a Greener Way to Make Blue Jeans?" *Smithsonian Magazine*.

Wider market issues also affect heritage craft viability. It is often necessary to educate the public about the value of the handmade artisanal product versus mass-manufactured goods. The Internet makes more freely available inexpensive and poorly made products from around the world, but it has also enabled craftspeople to find markets that would not have been possible prior to such virtual commercial avenues. Many crafts are small businesses with self-employed practitioners. Not all craftspeople have good business skills, which can, with an increased bureaucratic burden such as insurance and health and safety, cause a craft business to fail.[319]

Key Findings on a Proposed Framework for the Revival of Indigo-Culture

The proposed framework is designed to be accessible and functional whether it is used by an individual or a large in-person or virtual group. It is also designed to facilitate discussion and corral that discussion while encouraging free and creative thinking within the bounds of the theme.

The framework functions as the second part of a two-part system. The four elements of craft deconstruct the craft into its vital elements to articulate what the craft *is*. Deconstruction of the craft into its essential components enables assessment and evaluation of what tangible and intangible cultural heritage remains to be preserved and what could be revived. The framework guides the *how to* of the preservation and revival of the craft by focusing on five themes that relate to specific challenges to successful craft revival. These main challenges to craft revival are the maintenance of meaning, quality of transmission, preservation of the historic elements,

[319] "Issues affecting the viability of heritage crafts," Heritage Crafts Association Red List of Endangered Crafts, accessed August 2019, https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/redlist/issues-affecting-the-viability-of-heritage-crafts/#:~:text=in%20Section%205.1.-,Particular%20issues%20mentioned%20included%3A,oriented%20career%20advice%20in%20schools.

grounding the craft in place, and achieving and maintaining environmental and economic sustainability for the craft and craft practitioners.

Meaning involves the historical, cultural, and regional meanings that contribute to the historic significance of the craft. Transmission relates to both transmission of craft skills and knowledge from master to apprentice but also education of the public in the significance, history, and value of the craft. Preservation relates to the conservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that remains of the craft. Place relates to elements of the craft that have regional importance. Sustainability relates to the ecological and environmental sustainability of the craft.

The five themes would form the focus of three sessions: a question framing session, an answer session, and a solutions session. Each session would work through the themes from meaning to sustainability with one simple intention of developing questions, answers, and solutions for each session. In this way, a group can be guided through the process efficiently and with a minimum of distraction. At the end of all three sessions, solutions and further questions can be prioritized into immediate action, mid-term action, and long-term goals. This framework is designed to be flexible enough to tailor to the individual or to a diverse group, to be used with all participants present in a room together or via Google Docs or Zoom.

The framework works cyclically with questions recurring and evolving with the process of revival and preservation. The maintenance of meaning, the understanding of the importance and significance of the craft, leads to interest in learning the craft and to a demand for quality transmission. The demand for quality transmission leads to research into the history and historical techniques of the craft that preserve that knowledge which grounds the craft in place, since the research highlights regional importance. Knowledge of regional importance encourages interest in the ecological impact of the craft. This focus on the environmental impact, in turn,

leads to priority of the environmental sustainability of, and community and practitioner resilience related to, that craft. Meaning, transmission, preservation, place, and ecological sustainability lead to economical sustainability that makes the craft viable, the revival successful, and adds to the meaning of the craft, which increases transmission. The cycle begins again, and new sessions are needed to focus attention on the most pressing issues of the craft and to create a forward plan for the next cycle of preservation.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework is intended to be used by individuals and groups involved with the revival and preservation of indigo-culture in the South. If the framework proves to be useful successful with guiding the revival and preservation of indigo-culture in the South, it could be used to guide the revival and preservation of other heritage crafts.

The framework is, as yet, untested and so will require some use to gauge its effectiveness. The framework may prove to be fully functional in its present state, or necessary changes or additions will become clear during framework sessions. The framework is meant to be flexible. and so evolution is not failure but adaptation to need.

It is not necessarily the intention of this framework to require trained session facilitators, but such facilitators may prove helpful for larger groups where a trained independent session leader could be beneficial. For individuals or small groups who do not wish to have a facilitator, a short video could be made to explain the process. This instructional video could be available on YouTube for greatest access and ease of use.

It may be beneficial either to hold separate sessions to focus on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, or to have two boards on which to write the questions, answers, solutions, and action plans. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage may require different plans, treatments, and priorities. In the early stages of the application of this framework, it may be useful to try

each system (different sessions for tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the same session but with different boards to record the responses) to ascertain which works best.

This research has already highlighted some areas that require action. There are further areas where research and preservation efforts are needed. This framework could be used to focus efforts in these areas.

Tangible Cultural Heritage

More research is required to identify and expand knowledge of areas about regional importance for indigo-culture in the South. It would also be useful to ascertain which northern states had connections with indigo traded with southern states. It would also be interesting to learn how long this trade lasted and why such trade began and ended. Augusta, Georgia, and Winston Salem, North Carolina, would be logical starting points as they were both major backcountry hubs for indigo trade during the 1700s. Further investigation into indigo-culture in other southern states is also needed to gain an overview of the extent of indigo-culture in the South.

Simultaneously, an inventory of tangible cultural resources is needed to map any surviving remnants of indigo-culture. This inventory could include historic plantations and farms associated with indigo-culture, naturalized plants like those growing on Ossabaw Island, indigo-processing tanks like those found on St. John's Island, any textiles associated with southern indigo, and any buildings or structures still standing that have associations with indigo-culture. The framework could guide the search for tangible remnants of indigo-culture by highlighting areas of meaning as starting points. It could also be used to devise creative search methods for locating surviving physical signs of indigo-culture in the landscape.

Once tangible culture is discovered it will be necessary to document, record, and preserve those physical remains. The framework may be useful in devising innovative, creative ways to raise public awareness of these sites and to map them in a way that would encourage tourism. It may be beneficial to design an interactive map for mobile devices that could show sites associated with indigo-culture and provide interpretation of these sites.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

If naturalized indigo plants have survived on Ossabaw Island, it is possible that plants have survived on other barrier islands or elsewhere in the South. A full inventory of those surviving plants should be followed by the creation of nurseries to preserve the naturalized plants through propagation. This would enable practitioners in the South to grow, process, and dye with material descended from plants grown in the area since the 1700s. It would also enable repopulation of those plants should those growing on the original sites be lost. This is a concern for barrier islands which may be affected by storms and sea-level rise due to climate change. Preservation efforts are also needed to ensure the conservation of the plants in situ if other sites are discovered.

Efforts should be made to ascertain the extent of Native American indigo-culture. Native American skill and knowledge of herbs and brewing make it likely that indigo-dyeing expertise existed in Indigenous American culture. No such knowledge and skill has as yet been proven, but research may improve understanding of the Native American contribution to southern indigo-culture.

It would be useful to compile a list of experts in southern indigo-culture and to create an archive for video teaching recordings of living experts, and for any literature on the subject

produced by these experts. Recording any living experts and creating an archive related to indigo-culture would facilitate research in the future, and preserve the knowledge of living experts and master practitioners. Donna Hardy, Arianne King Comer, David and Caroline Harper, Heather Powers, and Sarah Bellos form the beginning of a list of experts on indigo-culture associated with the South. The members and board of the International Center for Indigo Culture may be best placed to begin compiling such a list.

This framework could be used to define ways to educate the public about the importance of indigo-culture to the South. It could also be used to guide museum exhibitions focused on indigo-culture or other heritage crafts. The framework itself could be used as an educational tool to focus inquiry for those interested in heritage crafts. The Georgia Museum of Art's (GMOA) Henry D. Green Center for the Study of the Decorative Arts, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) in Winston Salem, North Carolina, and the Charleston Museum's textiles department would be appropriate institutions for exhibitions highlighting southern indigo-culture.

The framework could also be used to identify, guide, and prioritize ways to make indigo-culture economically viable for practitioners in ways that preserve the intangible cultural heritage. Deconstructing the craft and then using the five themes through the three sessions of question framing, question answering,and solution forming could highlight new and creative methods of creating opportunities, methods, and plans for economic viability for indigo-culture practitioners. Communities like the pottery community of Seagrove, North Carolina, could be interesting models for communities of indigo or natural dye practitioners. Existing artists' or craft cooperatives may also be useful models for indigo practitioners. Both the community and the cooperative models offer strength in numbers and the opportunity to collaborate and support

each other. With these models there would also be the possibility of having a community shop where all members help with the management and provide merchandise. A similar opportunity could be managed online with a virtual cooperative where the shop is a website, and the members need not live in the same area.

If indigo revival is to be successful, there may need to be a mark of quality and perhaps even authenticity. This mark could be managed by an organization like the ICIC and would offer some customer confidence in historically informed products of an agreed quality. Organizations like the Society of Animal Artists maintain a standard of excellence determined by a twice yearly jury to determine quality of workmanship before membership is approved.[320] A similar system could be applied to indigo practitioners with associate, apprentice, and master practitioner memberships.

Partnerships between practitioners, institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government bodies would be useful. These partnerships could aid the location and acquisition of funding for projects concerning indigo-culture and be a Source expertise to increase the chances of success of those projects. The textile departments and museums of southern universities would be uniquely placed to partner with practitioners of indigo-culture where partnership could include training opportunities for students and exhibition opportunities for practitioners. Other university departments could be included in such partnerships with indigo-culture practitioners such as agriculture, geography, ecology, art history, history, preservation, fine art, and archaeology. The National Park Service would be a logical body to initiate the search, recording, and preservation of tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture.

[320] "How to Apply to Join or Support the Society of Animal Artists," Society of Animal Artists, https://www.societyofanimalartists.com/how-to-join-the-society-of-animal-artists/.

Priorities

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the first priority is to use the framework and test it. This will highlight any changes that may need to be made to the system and streamline the process. An inventory of tangible cultural heritage associated with indigo-culture must be started to ensure the recording and preservation of such heritage. Simultaneously, there should be a program of raising awareness, beginning with organizations that might make suitable partnerships with practitioners. This awareness raising could help secure the funding required for an extensive search for tangible remnants of indigo-culture in the South. It would also be useful to gather a list of all practitioners, researchers, and professionals with expertise in aspects of indigo-culture. This list could be used to organize an annual framework session to assess the success of the craft revival, and locate and raise awareness of historical tangible and intangible cultural heritage associated with indigo-culture in the South that may require preservation. It could also be used to plan the successful revival of indigo-culture.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Indigo was once one of the major cash crops of the southern colonies during the 1700s. The success of this crop was due to the collaboration of several cultures, including West Africans via slavery, British and French via colonialism, and Moravians and Huguenots who settled in the South after fleeing religious persecution in Europe. Native Americans may also have contributed to this southern indigo-culture, but more research is required to confirm this.

Indigo-culture in the southern states has undergone a series of revivals from the early European experiments to the present day. Indigo-culture has meant something different to each generation since the European settlement of the United States. The possibility of a Native American indigo-culture roots indigo in the precolonial past. During the 1620s, indigo-culture in North America was experiment. During the 1700s, it was commodity gained through human suffering but also African skill and expertise. During the early 1800s, indigo in the South transitioned to become a domestic industry and, on a commercial level, to indigo dyeing in cotton mills rather than cultivation.[321] By the late 1800s indigo-culture symbolized transition from the natural to the man-made. The 1900s signaled two revival phases, the Arts and Crafts movement and the craft revival of the 1960s and 1970s. These two revivals called for a return to human-centered handmaking and respect for skilled process. The 2000s have brought a focus on

[321] Sharrer, "The Indigo Bonanza, 447–55.

sustainability, ecology, and green ethics, the slow-food movement and the farm-to-fiber movement that has yet again revived indigo-culture. During the 2010s, Wrangler and a host of smaller companies such as Naked and Famous, Iron Heart, and Studio D'artisan have begun to use natural indigo for certain lines of their blue jeans. Levi Strauss & Co uses natural indigo, from vats with a twenty-five-year-old mother in their Eureka Lab, as inspiration for authentic new shades of indigo.[322]

Revival is preservation in action. Revival in the case of indigo-culture is cyclical, an ebb and flow in the making and practice of the craft, changing focus with every generation of indigo growers, processors, and dyers. The craft has never really disappeared or died but it has experienced peaks and troughs, its conspicuous periods of fashionability and periods of being less fashionable, less obvious. We are presently in a period where indigo-culture is becoming a more prominent craft, with greater numbers of people taking an interest in its history.

To help guide this twenty-first-century indigo revival, this thesis proposes a framework for the revival of indigo-culture in the South. This framework is a two-step process. The first step is to deconstruct the craft into its basic elements of memory, voice, action, and product. This highlights what the craft *is*, what is of value, and what exists to be preserved and revived. The second step helps define *how to* preserve and revive the craft. This part requires three sessions focusing on question asking, answer finding, and solution generation based on five themes that represent challenges to revival. These challenges are the maintenance of meaning, ensuring quality of transmission, preservation of surviving tangible and intangible cultural heritage grounded in place, and environmental and economic sustainability. The themes of meaning,

[322] "The Blue in Blue Jeans," Wrangler, 2018, https://www.wrangler.com/sustainability/industry/natural-indigo.html, accessed June 2019; Charlie, "Natural Indigo Selvedge Jeans – Five Plus One," Heddels, 2017, https://www.heddels.com/2017/05/natural-indigo-selvedge-jeans-five-plus-one/; and Matthew Schneier, "The Mad Scientist of Levi's," *New York Times*, November 6, 2015.

transmission, preservation, place, and sustainability are used as foci to corral discussion to effectively and efficiently come to resolve challenges, and to plan for the successful revival of indigo-culture.

This framework is simple enough to be accessible to diverse groups and can be used by individuals, in-person groups, or virtual groups via Google Docs or Zoom. By focusing attention on one specific challenge at a time and by concentrating on questions, then answers, and then solutions and plans, the process is more manageable and less intimidating. This framework is designed to be used and reused to focus and refocus revival and preservation activities in a cycle where the meaning of the craft leads to interest in training, and the transmission of the craft leads to its preservation and its grounding in place. The grounding in place raises awareness of the environmental impact, or lack thereof, of the craft that leads to environmental sustainability, which is an essential part of most heritage crafts and one reason for their revival. All of these aspects help make the craft viable, which translates as economic sustainability for the practitioners of the craft. Such viability adds new meaning and encourages transmission, and the virtuous cycle repeats.

Indigo-culture was once a larger part of southern life than is presently acknowledged. The craft was also a larger part of the culture of southern states other than South Carolina, the state credited as being the center for indigo-culture in the South. A greater awareness and further research are required to fully understand the extent of indigo-culture in the South, and it is necessary to identify and preserve any surviving physical remnants of that culture. What is clear is that indigo-culture was a vital part of southern life in the 1700s and, with successful revival, has the potential to be an important part of southern culture into the twenty-first century.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Full Description of an Indigo Workshop: Ossabaw Island, Summer – 2019

Figure AA.1. Robin Gunn explaining the history of Ossabaw Island and indigo-culture on the island to participants on an indigo workshop with Donna Hardy and Heather Powers.

Ossabaw Island has a long history of human occupation, seasonal occupation by migratory Native American tribes dates to approximately 5,000 years ago. These tribes left large shell middens that European colonists later mined to produce tabby (shell and lime construction) structures. A period of more permanent occupation occurred during the Woodland Period (3,000 years ago) which was, in turn, followed by large permanent Native American settlements focused on agricultural production during the Mississippian Period (1,500 years ago). The years between 1568 and 1680 mark a period of contact with the Spanish. At first there was cooperation, where the Guale tribes grew food purchased by the Spanish This was followed by a

period of persecution by the Spanish until their withdrawal from the Georgia coast in 1680. During the 1730s, Ossabaw and the neighboring barrier islands were set aside by colonial governing bodies as a hunting and fishing reserve for the Creek Indians. By 1763, Ossabaw Island was sold to John Morel, who purchased slaves from Augusta to work the land, focusing on beef, pork, poultry, and timber. Indigo was introduced in 1770 when Morel advertised for a specialist carpenter to make his indigo vats. Production of indigo continued until around 1800, when sea island cotton replaced indigo as the main cash crop of the island. A community of freedmen lived on the island after 1866. The South End Plantation was purchased by Archibald Rogers in 1883, and the North End was sold to James Waterbury, who built the hunting lodge now called The Clubhouse. The island was bought by the Torrey family in 1924, and in 1961 Eleanor "Sandy" West founded the Ossabaw Island Foundation that still manages the island.[323]

Georgia's third largest barrier island, Ossabaw is now a 26,000-acre heritage preserve as designated by executive order from the government of Georgia. *Indigofera suffruticosa* was found to have survived from its plantation days on the island when island manager Jim Bitler recognized several plants growing near the Clubhouse in 2007. These plants are thought to be survivors from the indigo grown on the island during the 1700s. One plant was visible on my visit to Ossabaw and still grows beside a tree to the side of the Clubhouse.[324] More plants have been cultivated with seeds from the "mother plants" by the Ossabaw Island Foundation in beds behind the Clubhouse. These plants are being maintained for preservation and use for educational workshops. Indigo expert Donna Hardy has worked with Brian Ward at Clemson

[323] Ossabaw Island Foundation website, "Ossabaw Island Timeline," accessed August 20, 2019, http://ossabawisland.org/island/history-timeline2/

[324] Ben Goggins, "Looking for Pearls: Discovering the Magic of Indigo at Ossabaw," *Savanna Morning News*, October 8, 2015.

University's Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) in Charleston to cultivate Ossabaw Island indigo with the hope of reviving commercial production of indigo. Ward works to reintroduce heritage plants and conducts studies to assess their viability as commercial crops.[325]

I had the benefit of assisting on two of the Ossabaw Island indigo workshops where participants were given a brief history of world indigo-culture and a more in-depth history of indigo-culture in the South. Hardy led the workshop with Heather Powers, fiber artist and textile and carpet designer.

The Chemical Vat

The indigo vats, large black bins containing the blue dye, were lined up alongside the Clubhouse. For there to be sufficient dye for the anticipated group of fifteen to twenty workshop participants, it was necessary for these vats to be chemical, rather than fermented. The fermented vat is often weaker, requires more time, and is more temperamental than a chemical vat. These qualities make it unsuitable for the dyeing needs of a large group with limited time. The vats on Ossabaw are used twice a year for workshops, so they already contain some dye. However,the solution is not strong enough after a workshop to dye a quantity of fiber or textile with any strength. When the vat is "exhausted" it must be "revived," which means that the vat requires strengthening with the addition of more indigo powder.

These chemical vats are made by mixing a quantity of indigo powder with water to hydrate the indigo. It is necessary to make sure the indigo powder is properly hydrated before

[325] "An Ossabaw Indigo Revival Grows in South Carolina," *Ossabaw Oracle: A Publication of the Ossabaw Island Foundation*, July 2016, 7.

poring the indigo liquid into the vats and gently stirring it in. This starts a vat or, in this case, strengthens the vats so that the liquor can impart a deep blue color into textile or fiber.

Figure A.A2. Heather Powers checking the vats and stirring in sodium hydrosulphite to ‘”reduce,” or remove the oxygen from the vat.

Once the hydrated indigo powder was mixed into the vat, sodium hydroxide was added to the vat to remove the oxygen (Figure AA.2). At this stage, the dye liquor changes color from blue to green. When the liquor color is fully green, the vat is ready for dyeing (Figure AA.3).

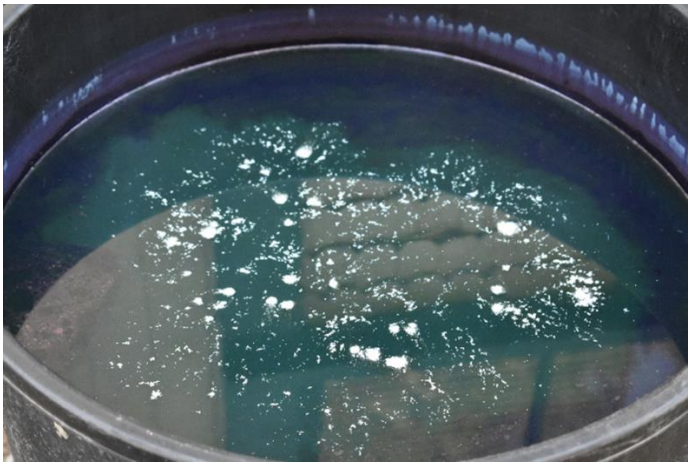

Figure AA.3. Sodium hydrosulphite is added to the indigo vat to remove the oxygen. The oxygen has been sufficiently removed once the dye liquor turns from blue to green.

Figure AA.4. Calcium hydroxide to increase alkalinity in the vat and litmus papers to test pH.

Figure AA.5. Heather Powers demonstrating the proper dyeing technique to keep the oxygen as low as possible in the vat.

It is important to add as little oxygen to the vat as possible when introducing the textile of fiber to the dye liquor. The proper technique for achieving this is to introduce the textile to the vat slowly and gently until all of the area to be dyed is beneath the surface. The fabric is then gently agitated for four to five minutes to ensure the indigo penetrates fully. Then it is slowly and gently removed so as to create as few bubbles as possible. The dyed piece is taken to a container of clean water and rinsed. The rinsing process begins to reoxygenate the indigo and the cloth turns from green to blue. The dyed piece is then hung on a washing line to gain full contact with the air, which binds the indigo to the fibers making the color fast. For darker colors the fabric must be dipped and redipped until the desired strength of color is achieved.

Figure AA.6. Dyed pieces oxygenating on the washing line.

The Fermentation Vat

Figure AA.7. *Indigofera suffruticosa* grown from the seeds produced by the plant discovered by Jim Bitler.

Two small vats made from the fermented leaves of *Indigofera suffruticosa* had been prepared at the previous workshop and left on the back porch for several months of the Clubhouse to ferment in water heated by the sun. This solar-infusion process is similar to that sometimes employed in the processing of herbs for medicinal tinctures. These vats contained

only indigo leaves and water. To prepare for the demonstration of how a fermentation vat is produced, Heather and I trimmed the top six inches of growth off the indigo bushes (Figure AA.8) and placed them on the demonstration table for Donna Hardy.

Figure AA.8. Heather Powers trimming the indigo bushes. The already fermented vats are in the foreground.

Figure A.A9. The fresh-cut indigo waiting for the demonstration.

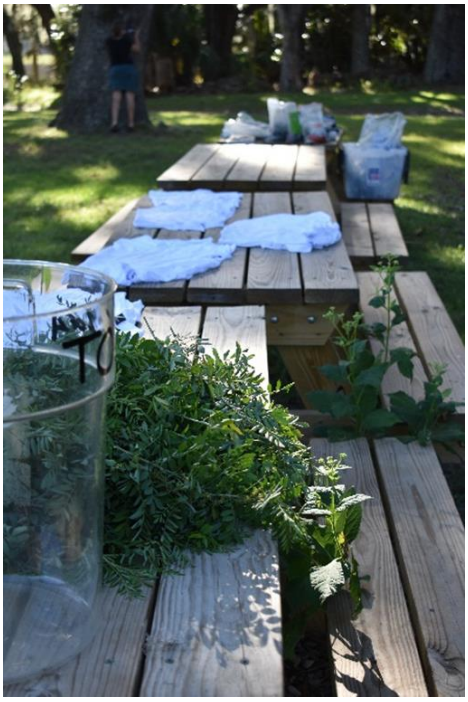

Figure AA.10. The tables set up for demonstration and dyeing.

Hardy demonstrated how the freshly cut leaves were stripped from the stems (fig. AA.10), submersed in clean water, and held under the water with a brick. The leaves are left to macerate which begins the fermentation process. Heather and I brought forward an older, already fermented vat that was used for the second phase of the demonstration. The liquid was poured from one bin into another to oxygenate it as it frothed bright blue, indicating the presence of indigotin (Figure AA.11 and AA.12). The pH was tested, and hydrated lime (calcium hydroxide) was added to increase the alkalinity. Indigo has to be alkaline, with the proper pH for cotton being 11–11.5 and 9–9.5 for wool. This solution was then heated to stop the fermentation.

Figure AA.11. The blue froth on the top of the fermented indigo liquid.

Figure AA.12. Donna Hardy demonstrating the blue color of the agitated fermented indigo liquid.

The heated liquid begins to gain a coppery film over the surface which indicates it is ready to be “reduced,” to have the oxygen removed (Figure AA.13). Maintaining an even temperature during the heating stage is important. A solution that is too hot can result in a higher level of indirubin which is not always desirable.

Figure AA.13. The coppery film on the surface of the vat indicating the readiness of the vat for reduction.

On the day of the first workshop, I misunderstood Hardy’s instructions and poured the fermented liquid into the cauldron. Temperature control was challenging due to a breeze and a lack of ability to control the strength of the gas flame. We accidently overheated the liquid and produced indirubin, a red color present in natural indigo (Figure AA.14). Technically the dye was a failure as we did not produce a blue dye, but indirubin is notoriously difficult to produce and so it was an interesting and unusual result. In order to dye with this liquor a more acid pH is required, and we added every acid we could find to reduce the level of alkalinity. Lemon juice and vinegar were added, but the necessary acidity was not produced. The resulting dye was a pale purple. Although this was not the desired effect, it was an

exciting experiment and indicative of why the indigo vat can be tricky even where skill and knowledge are present. This vat was a demonstration vat but, if we had been relying on this vat for dyeing, it would have been necessary to start again with a fresh vat.

Figure AA.14. The red color of the dye liquor indicates the presence of indirubin, a red indigoid colorant present in indigo.

The second day's attempt was far more successful, and good blue dye was produced. To achieve this, we immersed the bin containing the fermented indigo liquid in hot water and more gently heated the vat to 50°C (122°F). All other steps were the same between the first and the second workshop.

Resist dyeing techniques were also taught during these workshops, which either developed participants' skills or taught them new skills. Over all, the participants expressed great satisfaction with the demonstrations, historical context, and skills transmission. All participants expressed the added benefit of learning about indigo-culture in a setting with deep historical connections with this subject.

Appendix B

Historical Markers Connected to Indigo-Culture: Organized by State

Historical markers indicate where tangible cultural heritage of indigo-culture once existed in the landscape. They are useful as guides for further research in certain locations. This list of historical markers was too long to be included in the main body of the thesis but gathered together they illustrate the extent of indigo-culture in the South.

Alabama

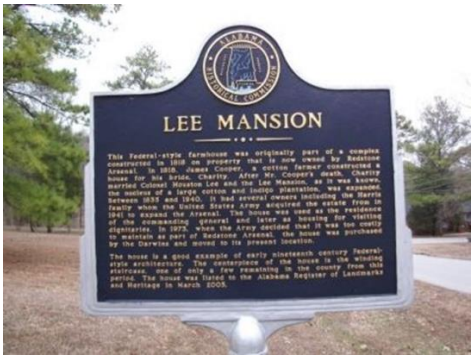

Figure AB.1. Historical marker for the Lee Mansion, Madison, Alabama. Source "Le Mansion" historical marker, Madison, Alabama, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=40167.

Florida

Figure AB.2. Historical marker indicating Governor James Grant's Plantations, Florida. Source "Governor Grant's Plantations," historical marker, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=80967.

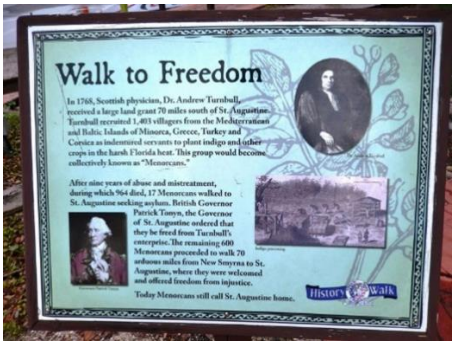

Figure AB.3. Walk to Freedom historical marker, which commemorates the escape and seeking of asylum of seventeen European indentured servants tasked to grow indigo in 1768, St. Augustine, Florida. Source "Walk to Freedom" historical marker, St. Augustine, Florida, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=134498.

Figure AB.4. The historical plantation crops marker at the Kingsley Plantation, near Jacksonville, Florida. Source "Plantation Crops" historical marker, Kingsley Plantation, Jacksonville, Florida, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=40143.

Figure AB.5. Turnbull Grand Canal historical marker commemorating the building of a canal system or three canals for the drainage of farmland to grow rice, hemp, cotton, and indigo. New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Source "Turnbull Grand Canal" historical marker, New Smyrna Beach, Florida, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=131383.

Figure AB.6. Historical marker depicting the use of water power for the grinding of corn and the milling of indigo into pigment, St. Augustine, Florida. Source "Water Power!" historical marker, St. Augustine, Florida, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=143892.

Figure AB.7. Historical marker for the plantation of William Bartram, royal botanist for America, near Green Cove Springs, Florida. Source "William Bartram's Plantation" historical marker, Green Cove Springs, Florida, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=48683.

Georgia

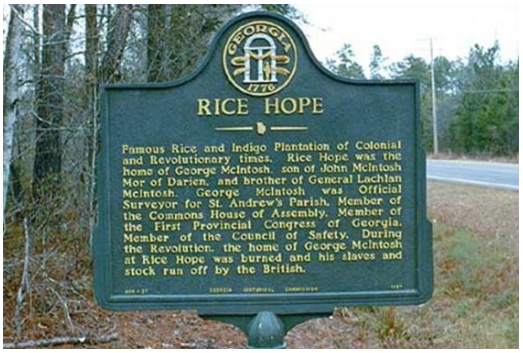

Figure AB.8. Rice Hope Marker, near Eulonia, Georgia. Source Ed Jackson, Rice Hope Marker, GeorgiaInfo, https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/historical_markers/county/mcintosh/rice-hope.

Figure AB.9. Historical marker from the Trustees Garden in Savannah, Georgia. Source historical marker from the Trustees Garden in Savannah, Georgia, Georgia Historical Society, https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/historical-markers/hidden-histories/the-trustees-garden/.

Figure AB.10. Historical marker commemorating the Gullah-Geechee contribution to the economy and culture of the South, St. Marys, Georgia. Source "Enduring Gullah: Geechee Culture" historical marker, St. Marys, Georgia, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=145195.

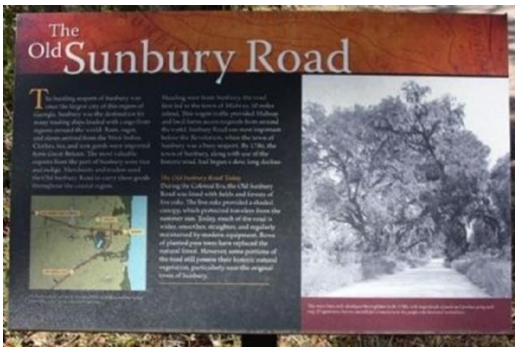

Figure AB.11. Historical marker for the Old Sunbury Road on which rice and indigo were transported for export, Sunbury, Georgia. Source "The Old Sunbury Road" historical marker, Sunbury, Georgia, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=17242.

Louisiana

Figure AB.12. Historical marker for Beau Bassin House, Lafayette, Louisiana. Source "Beau Bassin House" historical marker, Lafayette, Louisiana, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=131270.

Figure AB.13. Historical marker for Le Pavillon Hotel, later an indigo-producing plantation, New Orleans, Louisiana. Source "Le Pavillon Hotel" historical marker, New Orleans, Louisiana, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=117319.

Mississippi

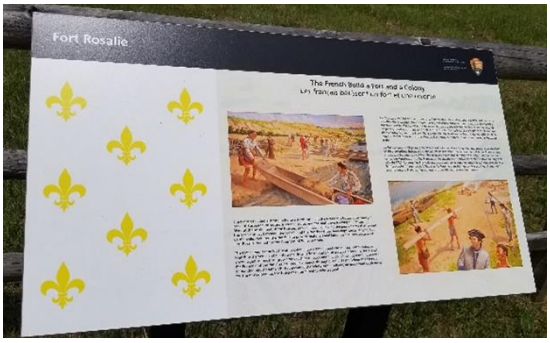

Figure AB.14. Historical crop marker at Fort Rosalie, Natchez, Mississippi. Source "The French Build a Fort and a Colony," Historical marker at Fort Rosalie, Natchez, Mississippi, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=137711.

North Carolina

Figure AB.15. Historical marker for the Alamance Cotton Mill, Burlington, North Carolina. Source "Alamance Cotton Mill" historical marker, Burlington, North Carolina, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=28695.

South Carolina

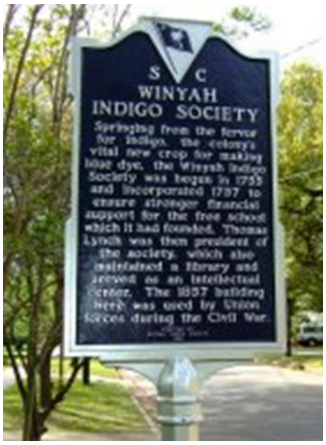

Figure AB.16. Winyah Indigo Society historical marker on Prince St., Georgetown, South Carolina. Source Historical marker commemorating a society founded to provide financial support and free schooling with the profits from indigo cultivation and production, Mitchells Publications, https://www.mitchellspublications.com/guides/sc/georgetown/markers/indigo/.

Figure AB.17. Historical marker indicating the remains of an indigo-processing tank on what was the Otranto Plantation, South Carolina. Source Otranto Indigo Vat historical marker, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=29485.

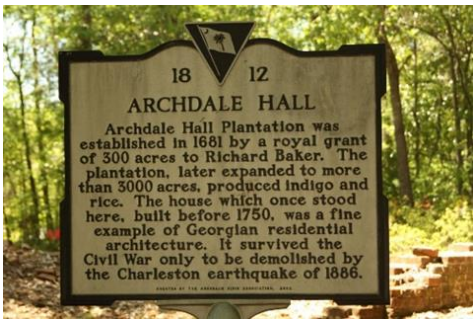

Figure AB.18. Historical marker for Archdale Hall, Archdale, South Carolina. Source "Archdale Hall" historical marker, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=29914.

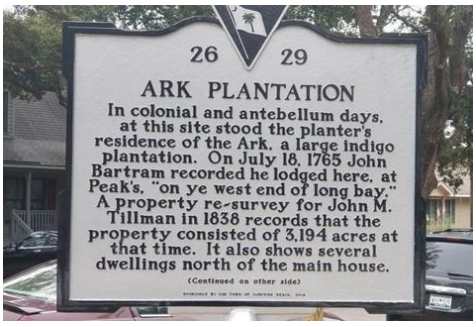

Figure AB.19. Ark Plantation historical marker, Surfside Beach, South Carolina. Source "Archdale Hall" historical marker, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=29914.

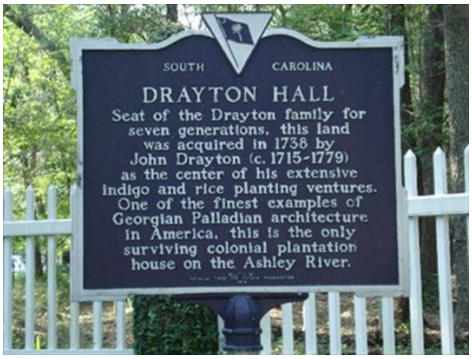

Figure AB.20. Drayton Hall historical marker, Charleston, South Carolina. Source Drayton Hall historical marker, Waymarking, https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM4CNB.

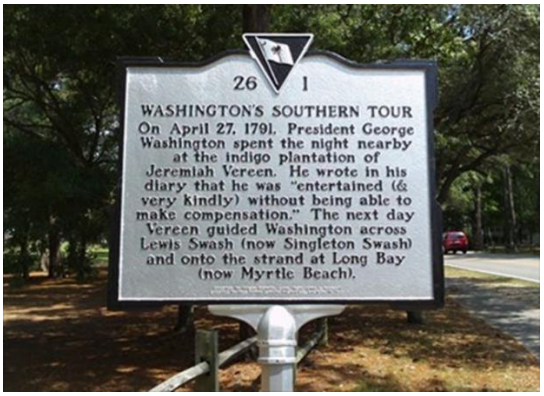

Figure AB.21. Historical marker commemorating President George Washington's Southern Tour. Source historical marker, Washington's Southern Tour, Waymarking, https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM77JV_26_1_Washingtons_Southern_Tour.

Tennessee

Figure AB.22. Historical marker for Jesuits Bend indicating that the Jesuits helped introduce indigo-culture to this area, Memphis, Tennessee. Source "Junior Crevasse/Poverty Point, Louisiana/Jesuits Bend: Panel #5 Mississippi Riverwalk" historical marker, Memphis, Tennessee, Historical Marker Database, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=114920.

Appendix C

List of Conferences and Symposia on Indigo-Culture

Conferences show a level of interest in a given area, and below is a sample of conferences between 2000 and 2020 that have either focused on or included indigo-culture.

- Natural Dyes in Northeast America: Challenges, Opportunities and Future Directions at the Centre for Fashion Diversity and Social Change at Ryerson University and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, April 2020 – Includes indigo experts Kathy Hattori, Rowland Ricketts, and Dominique Cardon
- International Conference on Natural Dyes for Textiles, Sydney, Australia, 2020Indigo Symposium, Flagler College, Florida, 2019
- 38th Annual Dyes in History and Archaeology Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2019
- Indigo SUTRA – celebration of indigo-culture at the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Kolkata, in 2017
- Natural Dye Conference, Fibershed Melbourne and the Australian Fashion Council at RMIT University, Brunswick, Australia, 2018 – included indigo
- Waide – Beyond the Blue – Woad Symposium at the University of Brighton, 2014
- International Symposium and Exhibition for Natural Dyes, La Rochelle, France, 2011
- 1st World Conference on Biomass for Energy and Industry, 2000 – included a talk on the "Extraction and Analysis of Plant Dyes for Industrial Use" (Vilarem et al)