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**Publication Date**

2024

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Valley of Coffee and Slavery:  
Heritage Tourism and the Memory of Slavery  
at Two Plantations in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in Latin American Studies

by

Theresa Sophia Edwards

2024

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Valley of Coffee and Slavery:  
Heritage Tourism and the Memory of Slavery  
at Two Plantations in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro

by

Theresa Sophia Edwards

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Stephen Andrew Bell, Chair

Abstract: This study looks at the intersection of tourism and historical memory in the eastern Paraíba Valley of Brazil. Once the world's leading producer of coffee, the region known as the Vale do Café (“Valley of Coffee”) is now a hub for heritage tourism based on preserved *fazendas* (plantations) and other sites related to the 19th-century coffee boom. Inspired by existing scholarship on plantation tourism in the United States, this study seeks to understand whether and how slavery is represented to visitors at historical coffee plantations in Rio de Janeiro state. Specifically, to what extent are stories about slavery and the enslaved present in the narration of history at these sites? Which/whose stories are reflected in the landscapes and material culture of these sites, and which/whose have been hidden or erased? To answer these questions, I employ a mix of ethnographically-informed research methods to document and analyze my experiences of

participating in the guided tours of two fazendas in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro. I examine how three major elements of the plantation tour—the physical landscape, the material culture, and the tour guide—interact to present a romanticized narrative of the “Coffee cycle” era that highlights the wealth and achievements of the planter class while rendering invisible the lives and labor of the enslaved. Building on the work of previous scholarship in social memory and heritage tourism, this research seeks to contribute to broader discussions regarding the public memory of slavery and possibilities for reparative justice at plantation tourism sites.

The thesis of Theresa Sophia Edwards is approved.

Nohora A. Arrieta Fernández

Jessica W Lynch

Wendy Kurtz

Stephen Andrew Bell, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2024

**Dedication**

*To Grandma Betty*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	viii
Glossary	xii
Acknowledgements	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Uncovering History in Rio de Janeiro	1
Plantation Tourism and the Memory of Slavery in the Vale do Café	8
Chapter 2: Historical Background	16
Sugar, Slavery and the Spread of the Plantation System: 1500s to 1800s	16
The Coffee Cycle: 1800s to 1880s	18
Tourism in the Vale do Café: 1980s to Present	26
Chapter 3: Methodology	33
Introduction	33
Project Background	35
Research Strategy	38
Site Selection	39
Data Collection and Analysis	43
Chapter 4: Findings	46
Site Histories	46
Tour Guides and Tourists	50
Tour #1: Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	52



Tour #2: Fazenda Cachoeira Grande	65
Chapter 5: Discussion	76
Pacified Landscapes: The Erasure and Marginalization of Enslaved Labor	78
“Faithful Slaves” and “Good Masters”: Trivialization and Deflection inside the Casa Grande	81
Chapter 6: Conclusion	88
Who Were They? Recovering the Memory of the Enslaved at Santa Eufrásia and Cachoeira Grande	89
Memory Work: Transforming Historical Narratives at the Plantation	96
Bibliography	100

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of Brazil highlighting Rio de Janeiro state	4
Figure 2. Map of Rio de Janeiro in 1820	4
Figure 3. The Cais de Valongo (Valongo Wharf) archaeological site in 2023	8
Figure 4. Map highlighting the Vale do Café tourism region	11
Figure 5. Free and Enslaved Populations by Municipality, 1850	21
Figure 6. Slaveholding Plantations in Vassouras 1821-1880	22
Figure 7. Logo for the Projeto Tour da Experiência - Caminhos do Brasil Imperial (Experience Tour Project - Roads of Imperial Brazil)	28
Figure 8. Map highlighting five municipalities participating in the Projeto Tour da Experiência - Caminhos do Brasil Imperial	28
Figure 9. Facebook post advertising Vassouras	28
Figure 10. Praça Barão do Campo Belo, historical center of Vassouras.	29
Figure 11. Screenshot from the webpage “Tour da Experiência no Vale do Café”	30
Figure 12. Table listing experiential activities available for booking	31
Figure 13. Map of Circuit of Fazendas of the Vale do Café	36
Figure 14. Screenshot of an interactive ArcGIS StoryMap	37
Figure 15. Aerial map showing locations of the two fazendas	41
Figure 16. Selection Criteria for Plantation Sites in the Vale do Café	42
Figure 17. The front of the <i>casa grande</i> at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	49

Figure 18. The front of the <i>casa grande</i> at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande	49
Figure 19. The tour guide and group at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	51
Figure 20. Map of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, annotated by author	53
Figure 21. Aerial map of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia with labels	54
Figure 22. The <i>terreiro</i> in front of the <i>casa grande</i>	54
Figure 23. Stone ruins of the stable next to the <i>casa grande</i>	54
Figure 24. The <i>cafezal</i> at Santa Eufrásia	55
Figure 25. Coffee berries ( <i>coffea arabica</i> )	55
Figure 26. The fountain in the courtyard	58
Figure 27. The Peugeot and one of the carriages	58
Figure 28. A wooden cart	58
Figure 29. The <i>liteira</i> (litter)	58
Figure 30. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Litière pour voyager dans l’intérieur” (“Litter for traveling in the interior”)	59
Figure 31. Antique table and mirror	60
Figure 32. Silver utensils	60
Figure 33. Photos of previous generations of the tour guide’s family, with names	61
Figure 34. Silver service with eight framed prints by Jean-Baptiste Debret in the background	61
Figure 35. The kitchen at Santa Eufrásia	62
Figure 36. A wooden mortar and pestle	62

Figure 37. Sacks of dried grains and coffee beans	63
Figure 38. Cotton, dried leaves, and coffee beans on a tray	63
Figure 39. Floor plan of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, annotated by author	64
Figure 40. The view from just inside the gates at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande	65
Figure 41. The lake	65
Figure 42. The view from the top of the waterfall	67
Figure 43. The waterfall from the other side	67
Figure 44. Aerial map of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande with labels	68
Figure 45. The main entrance to the casa grande, showing the letters T and X	69
Figure 46. Detail of the windows	69
Figure 47. Floor plan of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, annotated by author	70
Figure 48. One of the <i>quadras cusqueñas</i>	72
Figure 49. The chapel	72
Figure 50. The reception room	74
Figure 51. The dining room	74
Figure 52. Coffee at the end of the tour	75
Figure 53. The view of the patio at sunset	75
Figure 54. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Vendeurs de lait et de capim” (“Vendors of milk and grass”)	82
Figure 55. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Boutique de barbiers” (“Barbershop”)	83

Figure 56. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Marchand de tabac” (“Tobacco shop”)	83
Figure 57. Müller, Augusto, “Retrato da Baronesa de Vassouras” (“Portrait of the Baroness of Vassouras”), 1861-1864	86
Figure 58. Framed photographs inside the casa grande at Santa Eufrásia	87
Figure 59. The sign explaining the history at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	91
Figure 60. English translation of the sign at Santa Eufrásia	92
Figure 61. Life-sized dolls of Manoel Congo and Mariana Crioula at the Museu Casa da Hera	97
Figure 62. Cooking fire and pots	97
Figure 63. Sign telling the story of Manoel Congo and Mariana Crioula	98
Figure 64. English translation of the sign at the Museu Casa da Hera	98

## Glossary

*alforria (carta de alforria)*: A letter of manumission, or signed legal document granting freedom to an enslaved person. There were several different types of these documents: some were “given” by the master while others had to be purchased. *Alforrias* were frequently conditional (for example, freedom would only be granted after the master’s death, and/or the freed person had the obligation to provide services to the former master’s family). They could also be revoked.<sup>1</sup>

*batuque*: A type of dance performed inside a circle of drums, originating in enslaved Bantu-speaking communities in the Paraíba Valley.<sup>2</sup> Also called *jongo*.

*cafezal*: A field or patch of coffee bushes.

*casa grande*: Literally, the “big house,” the residence occupied by the plantation owner and his family on the Brazilian plantation.

*fazenda*: A farm, plantation or large slaveholding estate centered on the production of coffee, sugarcane, rice, and/or other crops.<sup>3</sup>

*fazendeiro*: The owner of a large coffee plantation.

*jongo*: A cultural practice developed by enslaved Africans on the coffee and sugar plantations of

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<sup>1</sup> Jair Messias Ferreira Junior, “Carta de alforria,” Brasil Escola, accessed June 5, 2024, <https://brasilecola.uol.com.br/historiab/carta-de-alforria.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> According to Aguiar (2019), in the present day, *batuque* is “a generic term that refers to a variety of cultural expressions currently known as *jongo*, *umbigada*, *batuque*, *candombe*, *zambê*, *tambor de crioula*, *carimbó*, etc. These practices feature a common dance performance inside a circle, punctuated by the sound of drums.” (132)

<sup>3</sup> The Portuguese word “fazenda” is typically translated into English as “farm” or “ranch”. Similarly, its Spanish equivalent, “hacienda,” is generally translated as “ranch” or “estate”. However, I have purposely chosen to translate “fazenda” as “plantation” throughout my text. As a native speaker of English who grew up in the United States, these words have vastly different connotations to me. In my mind, a farm, ranch, or estate could be any agricultural property, while “plantation” immediately brings to mind the cotton, tobacco, and rice plantations of the antebellum U.S. South. My decision has also been shaped by my exposure to the concept of the “plantation” as developed by Black intellectuals such as Sylvia Wynter, Édouard Glissant, and Sophie Sapp Moore.

southeastern Brazil. *Jongo* combines chanted or sung verses with collective dancing, clapping, drumming, and magical elements. During the time of slavery, *jongo* served as a strategic means of communication among the enslaved. The verses contained encrypted messages that enabled the participants to share information, build relationships, and organize actions such as escapes without being understood by the masters or overseers. A *ponto (de jongo)* is a verse chanted or sung by the leader; *jongueiro* can refer to the leader or any participant.<sup>4</sup> *Jongo* remains an important cultural practice for Afro-Brazilian communities, and has been recognized as immaterial heritage by IPHAN (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, or National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute).<sup>5</sup>

*roça*: A garden plot or “provision ground” where the enslaved grew food crops for their own subsistence. They were often able to sell some of the surplus produce, transforming the garden plot into a significant site of resistance.<sup>6</sup>

*senzala*: The living quarters of the enslaved, typically a long, one-story building divided into rooms.

*terreiro*: A “coffee yard” or large, flat paved area used for drying coffee beans after harvest.

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<sup>4</sup> Maria Livia de Sa Roriz Aguiar, “Cidade Jongueira: Rio de Janeiro e os territórios do Jongo” (Tesis, Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, 2018), 15, [https://sucupira.capes.gov.br/sucupira/public/consultas/coleta/trabalhoConclusao/viewTrabalhoConclusao.jsf?popup=true&id\\_trabalho=6525926](https://sucupira.capes.gov.br/sucupira/public/consultas/coleta/trabalhoConclusao/viewTrabalhoConclusao.jsf?popup=true&id_trabalho=6525926).

<sup>5</sup> “Patrimônio Imaterial,” Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, accessed June 12, 2024, <https://www.gov.br/iphan/pt-br/superintendencias/rio-de-janeiro/patrimonio-imaterial>.

<sup>6</sup> Defined by Barickman (1994) as: “the small plots of land where, working in their ‘free’ time, slaves grew food crops for their own use [...] slaves frequently gained by custom the ‘right’ to gardens or provision grounds and to the time needed to work in them. Slaves in some regions not only obtained a large share of their daily diet from their provision grounds, but also managed to harvest sizable surpluses for sale in local markets. Even where planters relied chiefly on rations rather than on provision grounds to feed their bondsmen, slaves often succeeded in selling produce from their plots. Thus, in several plantation regions, provision grounds and gardens allowed slaves to develop an extensive and even impressive range of independent production and marketing activities.” (649)

## Acknowledgements

In early 2023, I started working on a data storytelling project for a Digital Humanities class at UCLA. Little did I know that I was about to embark on a journey that would lead me to travel to Brazil, become fluent in Portuguese, and stay in graduate school another year to develop this interdisciplinary research project into a thesis. While I hope to be able to continue this research in the future, I feel immensely grateful for the opportunity and for all of the people who have been a part of this journey.

Before sharing this thesis, which I consider to be a work-in-progress, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the following individuals who have helped me bring this project to life thus far:

To my parents, Lisa and Karl, for modeling a deep curiosity, openness, and appreciation of other languages and cultures. Thank you for always encouraging me to follow my curiosity, even when it has taken me far from home.

To my partner, family, and friends, for their unconditional love and support. Thank you for being my cheerleaders in grad school and in life. I love and appreciate you more than words can express.

To Gloria Orozco, my brilliant Spanish professor, mentor, and friend. Thank you for introducing me to the rich world of Latin American literature and visual culture. Your teaching has been life-changing for me and so many others. *Mil gracias.*

To my Portuguese teachers, Icaro Carvalho and Luhema Ueti Santos, without whom this research would not have been possible. Thank you for believing in me and helping me get from zero Portuguese to being able to navigate the Brazilian countryside on my own. *Muito obrigada.*



To the 2023 CET Summer in Brazil program faculty and staff, especially Megwen Loveless, Sulia Folli, Vanessa Miranda, Leandro Tardin, Fhoutine Marie Reis Souto, Luiz Filipe da Silva Correia, and Vinícius Amaral. Thank you for providing an unforgettable study abroad experience in Brazil.

To all of the people from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Vassouras who helped me throughout the course of this research. Thank you for welcoming me to Brazil and sharing your knowledge with me. I am especially thankful to Maria das Graças, Leonardo Antonio Santin Gardenal, Keyla Passos Pimental, the Centro de Memória Fluminense (CEMEF), Silvana Nunes Moraes, Andréia Pity, Arilson Lourenço, and the staff of BomTempo Turismo, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande.

To Brianna Simmons, for generously sharing your experience and research materials from your fieldwork in Vassouras.

To the faculty and staff of the UCLA Latin American Studies and International Institute, for their guidance and support throughout the past three years, and especially for helping me to secure two FLAS Fellowships to study Brazilian Portuguese.

To my writing mentor from the UCLA Graduate Writing Center, Thomas Jacobson, for helping me put my ideas into words and believing in me.

To all of my UCLA professors and colleagues who have supported this thesis from start to finish. Thank you to Miriam Posner, William Summerhill, and Gabriel Witzel de Souza, for encouraging me to develop my original plantation mapping project into something larger.

And finally, to my committee members, Stephen Bell, Jessica Lynch, Nohora Arrieta Fernandez, and Wendy Kurtz, each of whom has provided me with invaluable expertise from

their respective fields as both professors and thesis advisors. Thank you all for your feedback, encouragement, and patience.

To my committee chair, Stephen Bell (Geography), thank you for sharing your passion for historical geography, for always lending me useful books, and for your encouragement throughout the past three years.

To Jessica Lynch (Anthropology), thank you for being a mentor since my first quarter at UCLA and for inspiring me to pursue research in Brazil.

To Nohora Arrieta Fernandez (Spanish and Portuguese), thank you for facilitating an incredible class on Plantation Worlds and for your insightful feedback at every stage of this paper.

To Wendy Kurtz (Digital Humanities), thank you for sharing your knowledge of mapping, text analysis, and other research methods in digital humanities, and for supporting the technical aspects of my research on plantation websites.

Thank you for all the ways you have contributed to this project and to my academic journey.

Los Angeles, September 2024.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Uncovering History in Rio de Janeiro

When a nation is built on twin genocides, the first logistical problem is where to bury the dead. –*Sadakne Baroudi, public historian and creator of the Afro Rio Walking Tour*<sup>7</sup>

In January of 1996, Merced Guimarães dos Anjos, a resident of Rio de Janeiro’s old port neighborhood, made an unsettling discovery. Construction workers beginning a remodel of her house had unearthed dozens of human bone fragments. Initially believing that they had uncovered a crime scene, Guimarães alerted the authorities and city government. But after consulting some historical maps of the city, she quickly realized that the scale—and historical significance—of the burial ground was much greater than her backyard. The workers had accidentally come across the largest known mass grave of enslaved individuals in the Americas.<sup>8</sup>

Guimarães learned that her neighborhood had been built on top of the *Cemitério dos Pretos Novos* (Cemetery of the New Blacks). *Pretos Novos* or “New Blacks” was a term given to Africans who had recently arrived in Brazil. Of those who survived the horrendous conditions of the Middle Passage, countless individuals died shortly upon arrival in Brazil due to disease and abuse. The original slave market and cemetery were located in the Largo de Santa Rita, in the city center. In 1769, both were relocated to Valongo Street, at the time on the margins of the city. Archaeological excavations suggest that “cemetery” is a generous term. In reality, the bodies of

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<sup>7</sup>Sadakne Baroudi, “The Cemetery - Institute for the Research and Preservation of the Memory of the New Blacks,” Afro-Rio Walking Tour, 2019, <https://www.afroriowalkingtour.com/items/show/19>.

<sup>8</sup>Anna Jean Kaiser, “The Mass Grave in the Garden,” *Roads & Kingdoms* (blog), July 25, 2017, <https://roadsandkingdoms.com/2017/the-mass-grave-in-the-garden/>.

those who died before they could be sold were not given a proper burial; they were burned and piled into mass graves.<sup>9</sup>

In 2010, another archaeological discovery was made in Rio's port zone: the remains of the *Cais de Valongo* (Valongo Wharf).<sup>10</sup> Constructed in 1811 to accommodate the burgeoning slave trade, the stone quay was the landing point for hundreds of thousands of captive Africans.<sup>11</sup> Arrivals peaked between 1821 and 1830, during the first decade of the newly established Empire of Brazil.<sup>12</sup> Writing in 1827 during a brief stopover in Rio de Janeiro, English traveler Charles Brand described the horrors of the Valongo "meat houses," market buildings where recent arrivals were held captive before being sold:

The first flesh-shop we entered contained about three hundred children, male and female; the eldest might have been twelve or thirteen years old, and the youngest not more than six or seven. The poor little things were all squatted down in an immense wareroom, girls on one side, and boys on the other, for the better inspection of the purchasers; [...] It was a novel, but painful sight to see so many children torn from their homes and parents for such a purpose. Poor things!<sup>13</sup>

High mortality rates became both a driver and a consequence of the intensifying slave trade. Official records indicate that around 6,000 Africans were buried at the Cemitério dos

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<sup>9</sup> Júlio César Medeiros da Silva Pereira, "As duas evidências: as implicações acerca da redescoberta do cemitério dos Pretos Novos," *Revista do arquivo geral da cidade do Rio de Janeiro* 8 (June 27, 2014): 331–43, [http://wpro.rio.rj.gov.br/revistaagcrj/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/e08\\_a20.pdf](http://wpro.rio.rj.gov.br/revistaagcrj/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/e08_a20.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Medeiros da Silva Pereira, 332.

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO, "Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1548/>.

<sup>12</sup> Rafael De Bivar Marquese, "Coffee and the Formation of Modern Brazil, 1860–1914," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, by Rafael De Bivar Marquese (Oxford University Press, 2020), 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.818>.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Brand, *Journal of a Voyage to Peru: A Passage Across the Cordillera of the Andes, in the Winter of 1827, Performed on Foot in the Snow and a Journey Across the Pampas* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 13, [https://books.google.com/books?id=rxtMAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.com/books?id=rxtMAAAAYAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s).

Pretos Novos between the years of 1824 and 1830 alone. The Cais de Valongo officially imported slaves until 1831, at which point a ban on international trafficking took effect.<sup>14</sup> However, in practice, an extensive illicit slave trade continued for decades. Between 1835 and 1850, an estimated 315,000 Africans captured on illegal expeditions were brought to smaller ports along the coast of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.<sup>15</sup> Domestic trafficking, where enslaved people were resold and shipped to other areas of Brazil, persisted into the 1880s.<sup>16</sup>

An estimated 900,000 enslaved people disembarked at the Cais de Valongo.<sup>17</sup> For many of them, Valongo was merely a waystation. Due to increasing demand for slave labor in the 1830s and 1840s, the majority of recent arrivals were immediately brought to the coffee-growing areas of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo. After being purchased by slave traders in Rio de Janeiro, the enslaved—often weak with illness and exhaustion from the Middle Passage—were forced to make the long journey inland on foot. Their destination was the coffee plantations of the Paraíba Valley, where they ultimately lived and worked.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Medeiros da Silva Pereira, “As duas evidências: as implicações acerca da redescoberta do cemitério dos Pretos Novos,” 332.

<sup>15</sup> Rafael de Bivar Marquese, “African Diaspora, Slavery, and the Paraíba Valley Coffee Plantation Landscape: Nineteenth-Century Brazil,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 31, no. 2 (2008): 195, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241714>.

<sup>16</sup> José Flávio Motta and Renato Leite Marcondes, “O comércio de escravos no Vale do Paraíba paulista: Guaratinguetá e Silveiras na década de 1870,” *Estudos Econômicos (São Paulo)* 30, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 267, <https://www.revistas.usp.br/ee/article/view/117645>.

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO, “Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site.”

<sup>18</sup> Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro (1808-1850)* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 57.



Figure 1. Map of Brazil highlighting Rio de Janeiro state.  
Map by author.

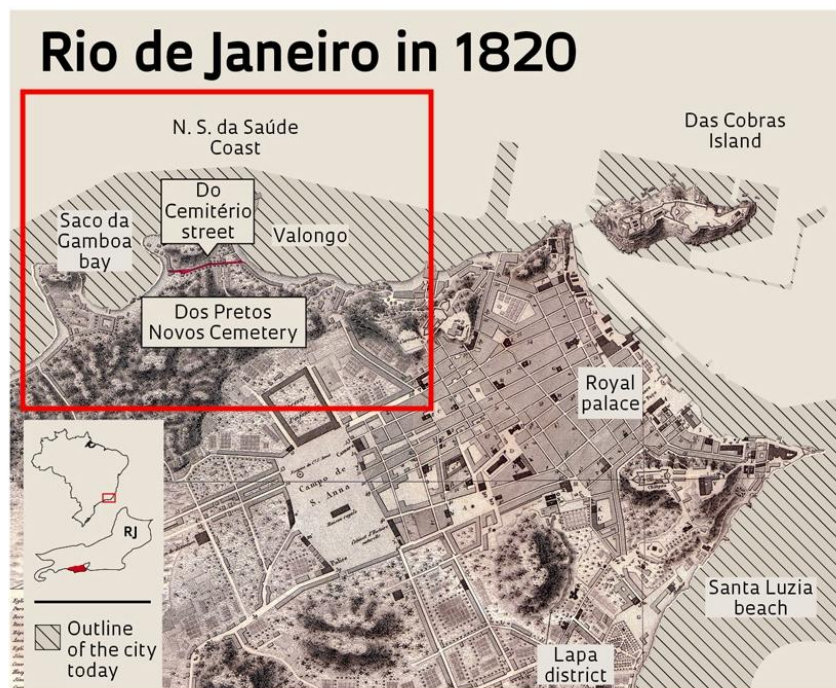


Figure 2. Map of Rio de Janeiro in 1820. A red rectangle has been added to highlight the location of the port zone, including the neighborhoods of Saúde and Gamboa.  
Source: Revista Pesquisa Fapesp.

In 1843, the Cais de Valongo was paved over and renamed the *Cais da Imperatriz* (Empress Wharf) to commemorate the arrival of the soon-to-be Empress Teresa Cristina. It would remain buried for more than 150 years. Tânia Andrade Lima, a Brazilian archaeologist who led the excavation of the site, characterizes this as a deliberate act of erasure by the local government: “There were other places, but Valongo was chosen to delete the stains of past slavery.”<sup>19</sup> A 2023 report published by the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) states, “The construction of the Empress Wharf over Valongo Wharf marked the beginning of Rio de Janeiro’s attempt to sanitize the region’s history of slavery and African heritage with European veneers.”<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the following decades, large numbers of white Portuguese immigrants moved into the port neighborhood. As the population increased, the former slave market and Cemitério dos Pretos Novos were gradually surrounded by houses.<sup>21</sup> The site of the Valongo Wharf, which had already been covered by the Empress Wharf, was turned into a landfill in 1911. The Cemitério dos Pretos Novos, like the wharf, similarly “fell into oblivion and was eventually covered over by the city,” remaining hidden from the public for over a century.<sup>22</sup>

The rediscovery of the Valongo Wharf, the Cemitério dos Pretos Novos, and other sites associated with the slave trade has helped to bring this chapter of Brazil’s history out of the

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<sup>19</sup> Carlos Haag, “Bones That Talk: Excavations in the Port Area of the City of Rio de Janeiro Reveal Hitherto Ill-Known Aspects of Slavery,” *Revista Pesquisa Fapesp*, no. Issue #90 (December 2011), <https://revistapesquisa.fapesp.br/en/bones-that-talk/>.

<sup>20</sup> “Valongo Wharf in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Contested Histories Case Study #329” (The Contested Histories Initiative, n.d.), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Júlio César de Medeiros, “Germinal: Morte e Sepultamento de Pretos Novos no Rio de Janeiro do Século XIX,” *Revista Habitus - Revista do Instituto Goiano de Pré-História e Antropologia* 10, no. 2 (2012): 178, <https://doi.org/10.18224/hab.v10.2.2012.173-185>.

<sup>22</sup> Haag, “Bones That Talk: Excavations in the Port Area of the City of Rio de Janeiro Reveal Hitherto Ill-Known Aspects of Slavery.”

darkness. Excavations of Rio's port neighborhood have enabled researchers to construct a clearer picture of the scale and nature of slavery in Brazil (*see* Machado, 2006; Honorato, 2008; de Medeiros, 2012; Medeiros da Silva Pereira, 2014). Marco Antonio Teobaldo, a curator at the Cemitério archaeological site, describes the cemetery as "incontestable and material proof" of the barbarity of Brazilian slavery, arguing that after its rediscovery, "there is no longer any way to accept a mistaken and romanticized view" of this history.<sup>23</sup> However, the question of how the history of slavery should be commemorated in Rio's public spaces has been the subject of intense debate.

Afro-Brazilian community organizations, academics, and other advocates have pushed for the Brazilian government to invest in the preservation of these places as sites of conscience. According to Merced Guimarães, the owner of the property where the Cemitério was discovered, the Rio city government participated in an initial excavation of the site but then never returned. Disappointed by the lack of follow-through, the Guimarães family opened a small museum in 2001 with the goal of educating the public about the atrocities that happened there. In collaboration with historians, archaeologists, and other supporters, they founded the Instituto de Pesquisa e Memória Pretos Novos (New Blacks Institute for Research and Memory) in 2005.<sup>24</sup>

As for Valongo, the site was given federal protection as an archaeological site by IPHAN (Institute for National Historical and Artistic Patrimony) in 2012. Valongo Wharf was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2017 after years of advocacy. Described by UNESCO as "the most important physical trace of the arrival of African slaves on the American continent," Valongo was categorized as a sensitive memory site, the same level of recognition as Auschwitz,

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<sup>23</sup> Translation by author. "Museu Memorial – IPN," accessed August 2, 2024, <https://pretosnovos.com.br/museu-memorial/>.

<sup>24</sup> Kaiser, "The Mass Grave in the Garden."



Hiroshima, and other former atrocity sites.<sup>25</sup> But efforts to construct a larger memorial or an educational museum at Valongo have been stalled by disagreements and setbacks, including unfulfilled promises on the part of the local and national government (Andrade Lima, 2020; and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, 2021).

Rebranded in 2016 as the “Porto Maravilha” (“Marvelous Port”), Rio de Janeiro’s port zone is a place of many contrasts. A few blocks from Valongo, a long, futuristic-looking building extends from the Rio waterfront into Guanabara Bay: the Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow). The Museu do Amanhã aims to educate the public about science and sustainability, inviting visitors on a journey through different exhibits that explore “where we came from” and “where we are going.” The museum was constructed in 2015 for about \$54 million USD (\$R296 million Brazilian *reais*) as part of a broader effort to revitalize Rio’s port zone in preparation for the 2016 Olympics.<sup>26</sup> The striking, all-white building stands out in the waterfront landscape, symbolizing a desire to turn towards the future.

Meanwhile, more than a decade after its rediscovery in 2011, little has changed at the Valongo Wharf archaeological site (*Fig. 3*). Located about a meter below the present-day street, the exposed layers of the original and Empress Wharf are barely visible to passersby. The only source of information for visitors is a single sign written in Portuguese. In recent years, the open-air site has flooded several times, prompting accusations of neglect by the government. As McCoy (2022) described in a Washington Post article: “The wharf has been unearthed but is still ignored. Even people who live nearby, whose ancestry leads back to this point, don’t know of its

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<sup>25</sup> “Valongo Wharf in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,” The Contested Histories Initiative (IHJR-EuroClio, July 2023), 9, [https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/Brazil\\_-Valongo-Wharf-in-Rio-de-Janeiro-Published-1.pdf](https://contestedhistories.org/wp-content/uploads/Brazil_-Valongo-Wharf-in-Rio-de-Janeiro-Published-1.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Dom Phillips, “Rio’s Flashy New Museum of Tomorrow Overlooks a Big Problem of Today,” *Washington Post*, December 21, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/19/rios-flashy-new-museum-of-tomorrow-overlooks-a-big-problem-of-today/>.

existence.<sup>27</sup> In comparison to the newly reconstructed Rio waterfront, the old Valongo Wharf is like an afterthought, its partially-excavated stones an uncomfortable reminder of what Almeida and Viana (2018) refer to as a “preferably forgotten” past.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 3. The Cais de Valongo (Valongo Wharf) archaeological site, Rio de Janeiro, in July 2023. The only source of information at the site is a single sign written in Portuguese, barely visible on the bottom right of the photo.

### **Plantation Tourism and the Memory of Slavery in the Vale do Café**

Numerous scholars have investigated how the public engages with the memory of slavery at diverse locations associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. These “difficult heritage sites”

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<sup>27</sup> Terrence McCoy, “Brazilian Port Tied to Arrival of Enslaved Africans to Americas,” *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/17/brazil-slavery-valongo-wharf/>.

<sup>28</sup> Juniele Rabêlo De Almeida and Larissa Moreira Viana, “Public History in Movement – *Present Pasts: The Memory of Slavery in Brazil*,” *International Public History* 1, no. 1 (August 28, 2018): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1515/iph-2018-0008>.

(Logan and Reeves, 2009) include slave castles along the West African coast, museums in Europe, and plantations in the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America (Abaka and Xorse Kumasenu, 2021; Araujo, 2021a and 2021b; Giovannetti, 2009).<sup>29</sup> Robb (2009) describes these sites of former violence and suffering as places “where discourses about historical memory and identity are grappled with, either through the construction of a monument or through the erasure of evidence” from the landscape.<sup>30</sup>

Plantations, in particular, play a key role in what Modlin (2008) calls “the social process of remembering and forgetting slavery” in the Americas.<sup>31</sup> Millions of enslaved Africans lived, worked, and died at plantations, the central institution of the slave economy for centuries. In recent decades, some former plantations have opened their doors to the public as tourist attractions, hotels, and event venues. These plantation tourism sites represent an emerging topic in historical memory and tourism research. Butler et al. (2008) explain that

as a memorial landscape and museum space, tourist plantations play a central role in directing how the public values, interacts with, debates, and experiences the past (Alderman 2003). There is perhaps no better place to study how the public, in the form of tourists, interacts with (or fails to interact with) the memory of slavery than historic plantations, sites built upon the labor and sweat of the enslaved.<sup>32</sup>

Many tourist plantations function as museums, even if not explicitly marketed as such. These museums are highly controlled displays, both in their physical arrangements and the narratives

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<sup>29</sup> William Stewart Logan and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with “Difficult Heritage,”* Key Issues in Cultural Heritage (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Erika M. Robb, “Violence and Recreation: Vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 34, no. 1 (June 2009): 54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1409.2009.01023.x>.

<sup>31</sup> E. Arnold Modlin, “Tales Told on the Tour: Mythic Representations of Slavery by Docents at North Carolina Plantation Museums,” *Southeastern Geographer* 48, no. 3 (2008): 269, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26225533>.

<sup>32</sup> David L. Butler, Perry L. Carter, and Owen J. Dwyer, “Imagining Plantations: Slavery, Dominant Narratives, and the Foreign Born,” *Southeastern Geographer* 48, no. 3 (2008): 289, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sgo.0.0026>.

presented by interpretive descriptions and docents.<sup>33</sup> According to Carter et al. (2014), historical museums “do not simply present the past; they endeavor to reconstruct and legitimize narratives that define what and whom is historically important.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, plantation sites are not neutral. Rather, they are highly political spaces in which narratives about the past are constructed and contested.<sup>35</sup>

This study examines how the history of slavery is remembered or forgotten in the Vale do Café (“Valley of Coffee” or “Coffee Valley”), a tourism region in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Fig. 4) Over the past forty years, a thriving tourism industry has developed in the eastern Paraíba Valley based on historical places related to the 19th-century “*Ciclo do Café*” (“Coffee Cycle”). The Paraíba Valley was the epicenter of Brazil’s first coffee boom, occurring from roughly the 1830s to the 1880s.<sup>36</sup> At its peak, the region produced an estimated 50 to 75 percent of the world’s coffee. This production relied on the labor of enslaved men, women, and children until 1888, when Brazil became the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Modlin, “Tales Told on the Tour,” 268.

<sup>34</sup> Perry Carter, David L. Butler, and Derek H. Alderman, “The House That Story Built: The Place of Slavery in Plantation Museum Narratives,” *The Professional Geographer* 66, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 547, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2014.921016>.

<sup>35</sup> Christine N. Buzinde and Carla Almeida Santos, “Representations of Slavery,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 35, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 469–88, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2008.01.003>.

<sup>36</sup> The Paraíba do Sul river basin stretches across the eastern part of São Paulo state, a small southern part of Minas Gerais state, and the western part of Rio de Janeiro state. This entire region is known as the Paraíba Valley. The geographic focus of this paper is a subregion of the Valley located in Rio de Janeiro state, or the Vale do Paraíba Fluminense.

<sup>37</sup> “Slavery in Brazil | Wilson Center,” accessed August 12, 2024, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/slavery-brazil>.

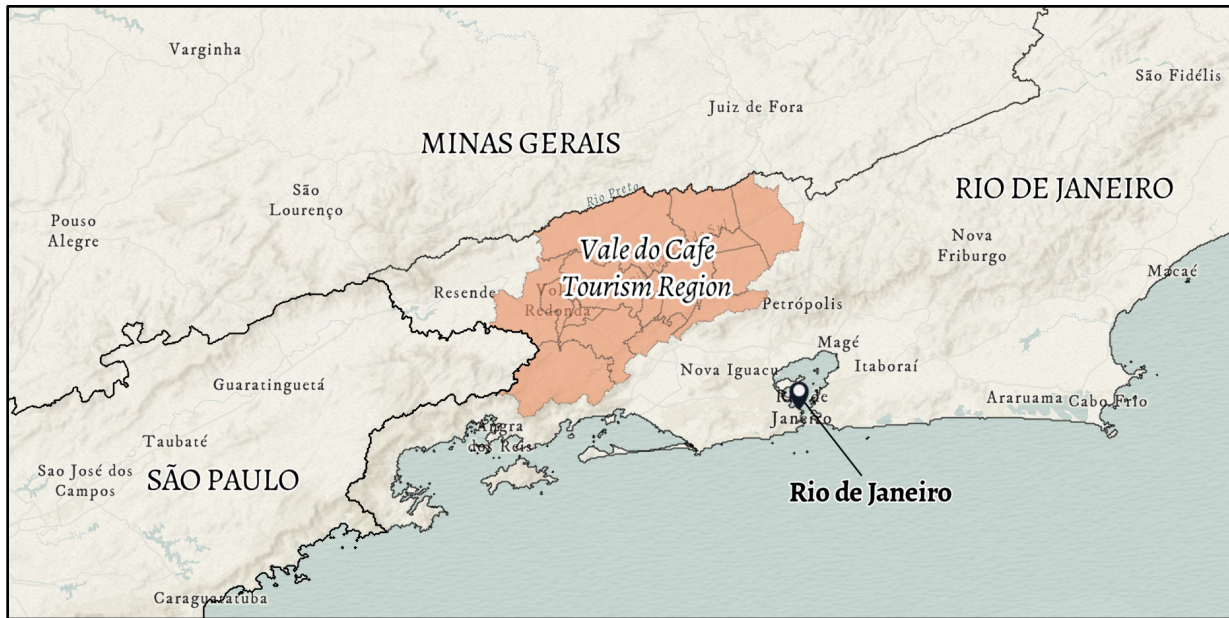


Figure 4. Map highlighting the Vale do Café, a tourism region comprising 15 municipalities in Rio de Janeiro state. Map by author.

Today, the Vale do Café markets itself as a heritage tourism destination where visitors can “dive into Brazilian history”<sup>38</sup> and take “a trip back in time.”<sup>39</sup> For example, a 2022 blog post published by the Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Hotéis (Brazilian Hotel Industry Association) contains the following description:

The Valley of Coffee (RJ) offers its visitors a real walk through the history of the state of Rio de Janeiro through its municipalities. The rural architecture of the time is impressive, since this region produced the coffee that dominated the national economy. Perfect for those who want to enjoy the tranquility of the plantations or take ecological tours. A region to explore the coffee cycle era, in a beautiful place full of preserved constructions

<sup>38</sup> “Vale do Café: um mergulho na história brasileira,” *Portal Sesc RJ* (blog), October 2, 2020, <https://www.sescrj.org.br/noticias/turismo-social/vale-do-cafe-um-mergulho-na-historia-brasileira/>.

<sup>39</sup> *Vale do Café: uma viagem no tempo*, 2018, <https://youtu.be/Xto0LJWbj4?si=pWCbu8CkY6W9pMma>.

from that time. The plantations where the large houses of the coffee barons and the slave quarters were located are a true historical and cultural heritage.<sup>40</sup>

The description above paints a picture of the Valley as a “beautiful place” where tourists can “enjoy the tranquility of the plantations” and take in Brazil’s “historical and cultural heritage.” But for whom are the plantations a place of tranquility? And which parts of the country’s history and culture are being represented?

In recent years, tourist plantations throughout the Americas have been criticized for presenting a whitewashed version of history that erases or minimizes the fact of slavery. In a seminal study, Butler (2001) found that the promotional brochures of over 100 plantations in the southeastern United States often contained more information about themes such as architecture, furniture, grounds, gardens, and owners than about slavery or the enslaved.<sup>41</sup> In another groundbreaking study, Eichstedt and Small (2002) analyzed the language used by tour guides at more than 100 plantations in three U.S. states. In 25% of the tours, slavery was not mentioned at all; in another 30%, slavery was mentioned less than four times. The researchers concluded that museum docents, by failing to discuss slavery in a combined 55% of tours, engaged in the “symbolic annihilation” of the memory and identities of enslaved people.<sup>42</sup>

Dozens of subsequent researchers have studied how the topic of slavery is remembered or forgotten at plantation tourism sites throughout the Western Hemisphere. While the bulk of the existing scholarship on plantation tourism is based on the United States, research has also been

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<sup>40</sup> Translation by author. Marília Silva, “VALE DO CAFÉ (RJ): Confira o guia completo da região!,” *ABIH-RJ* (blog), April 17, 2022, <https://abihrij.com.br/destinos/vale-do-cafe-rj-confira-o-guia-completo-da-regiao/>.

<sup>41</sup> David L. Butler, “Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification of a Slave-Free Antebellum South,” *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2, no. 3–4 (October 23, 2001): 163–75, [https://doi.org/10.1300/J149v02n03\\_07](https://doi.org/10.1300/J149v02n03_07).

<sup>42</sup> Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean. Researchers have used a variety of methods to study the historical narratives presented by plantation tourism sites, as well as what tourists take away from their experiences. Some studies have examined textual materials such as brochures, websites, and traveler reviews posted on platforms such as TripAdvisor and Google (Alderman and Modlin, 2008; Buzinde and Santos, 2008; Carter, 2016). Other scholars have examined curatorial practices, or how certain spaces, structures, and artifacts are presented to tell a particular story through exhibits and guided tours (Rose, 2004; Modlin, 2011; Small, 2013; Rapson, 2020). Still others have focused on the roles of various social actors, such as plantation owners, tour guides, and tourists themselves, in the creation of historical narratives at plantations (Butler et al. 2008; Modlin, 2008; Giovannetti, 2009; Modlin, 2011; Modlin et al., 2011; Modlin, 2014; Bright and Carter, 2016; Bright et al., 2018).

Many of these studies have reached a similar conclusion: slavery and formerly enslaved people are frequently relegated to a footnote in the historical narratives that plantations convey to tourists. At most plantation sites, the focal point of visitors' experience is the "big house," the home once inhabited by a white slave-owning family. In contrast, the spaces, objects, and experiences of the Black people who they enslaved are either marginalized or omitted altogether (Rose, 2004; Small, 2013; Carter et al., 2014; Adamkiewicz, 2016; Modlin et al., 2018; Cook et al., 2022). Buzinde and Santos (2008) argued that many plantation tours involve the use of "selective representational strategies" that highlight some aspects of the past but obscure others. By focusing on the opulence and economic achievements of the elite plantation owners, while failing to address the fact that they owned slaves, tour guides frequently promote mythical narratives of an "unproblematic plantation past."<sup>43</sup> While a few tourist plantations have revised

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<sup>43</sup> Buzinde and Santos, "Representations of Slavery," 484.

their exhibits and tours in order to convey more truthful histories, educate the public about slavery, and memorialize the formerly enslaved, recent studies suggest that the omission and minimization of slavery at plantations is still widespread (Halifax, 2018; Modlin et al., 2018; Eldar and Jansson, 2021; Cook et al., 2022; Harnay, 2022; Marshall, 2022).

Voluminous literature exists on the history of slavery in Brazil. However, the representation of this history in tourism landscapes, and more specifically at plantations, has been relatively under-studied. In comparison to the United States, where plantation tourism has been widely studied since the early 2000s, few studies had been conducted on Brazilian tourist plantations until recently. In recent years, however, a small but growing number of Brazilian scholars have begun to investigate the production of historical narratives at *fazendas* and other tourist sites in the Paraíba Valley (*see* Branco Reis, 2015; Gomes, 2016; Silveira and Rejowski, 2016; Gomes and Mendonça, 2017; Brito de Freitas, 2017; Gagliardi and Bignami, 2017; Moraes, 2019; D’Onofre and Portilho, 2019; Pereira da Silva, 2022).

Building upon previous scholarship on heritage tourism in the United States and Brazil, this thesis seeks to understand the representation of slavery at tourist plantations in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro. Broadly speaking, this thesis considers the following question: To what extent are the topics of slavery and the enslaved a part of the historical narratives presented by coffee plantations in the Vale do Café? To explore this question, I analyze three elements that build the historical narrative:

- 1) The physical landscape of the plantation sites;
- 2) The material culture of the sites, specifically the physical structures and objects that are preserved and displayed; and



- 3) The interpretation of the sites' histories, as provided by tour guides' narration, printed materials, signs, and other forms of contextualization.

The organization of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 (Background) establishes context for this study by providing a brief historical overview of slavery, coffee production, and the development of tourism in the eastern Paraíba Valley. Chapter 3 (Methodology) explains the project background, site selection, and research methods. Chapter 4 (Findings) presents a detailed description of the two plantation tours, which is followed by Chapter 5 (Discussion). Finally, Chapter 6 (Conclusion) concludes with reflections and recommendations.

## Chapter 2: Historical Background

O Império é o café, e o café é o Vale. (“The Empire is coffee, and coffee is the Valley.”)

–19th-century Brazilian saying, referring to the Paraíba Valley<sup>44</sup>

This chapter aims to equip the reader with a basic historical and geographical context of the study area, the Vale do Café.<sup>45</sup> This chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive history, but rather a broad overview of three major time periods. The first section briefly explains the origin of the plantation system in Brazil, its spread to the southeast, and the introduction of coffee to Rio de Janeiro. The second section outlines the rise and fall of the coffee economy in the Vale do Paraíba Fluminense during the 19th century. The third section skips ahead to the late 20th century, describing the development of the Vale do Café tourism region, the experiential tourism activities offered to tourists and the demographics of contemporary visitors.

### **Sugar, Slavery and the Spread of the Plantation System: 1500s to 1800s**

Similar to the United States and other countries in the Americas, Brazil was built upon indigenous and African slavery. Shortly after arriving on the south-Atlantic coast in 1500, Portuguese colonizers began to exploit *pau-brasil* (Brazilwood) trees, valued in Europe for their red wood. They enslaved the native Tupi population as their labor force. In the northeast region

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<sup>44</sup> “Desvendando o Vale do Paraíba, do Café... e do Escravo,” accessed August 23, 2024, <http://revistavaledocafe.com.br/desvendando-o-vale-do-paraiba-do-cafe-e-do-escravo>.

<sup>45</sup> A number of excellent resources exist for those wishing to learn more about the history of Brazilian slavery, coffee production, and the Paraíba Valley. Stanley Stein’s classic book, “Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900,” (1957) is a good place to start. For readers of English, I also recommend the works of Mary Karasch, Ana Lucia Araújo, Rafael de Bivar Marquese, Dale Tomich et al., and Jean Hébrard, listed in the bibliography.

of Pernambuco, Portuguese colonists introduced the first *engenhos*, or sugar mills, in the 1530s.<sup>46</sup>

Initially, sugar production initially relied on the labor of enslaved indigenous peoples. Beginning in 1549, Jesuit missionaries established the *aldeia* system, where the native population was forcibly settled into villages, converted to Christianity, and enslaved. However, the Jesuit monopoly on indigenous labor, combined with the decimation of the native population due to exploitation and disease, led the Portuguese to seek a new source of labor: the trans-Atlantic slave trade.<sup>47</sup> While the exact date of the arrival of the first slave ship to Brazil is unknown, a continuous slave trade was established by 1570.<sup>48</sup>

Starting in the 1530s, sugar was the basis of the Brazilian economy and territorial expansion for three centuries. The *engenho*, or large slaveholding sugar estate, provided the blueprint for the plantation system that would spread from the northeastern coast to other parts of Brazil. In the 18th century, sugar production expanded into the southern areas of Campos de Goytacazes, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. This marked the beginning of a major shift in the economic and demographic center of Brazil from the northeast to the southeast.<sup>49</sup>

The coffee plant, *coffea arabica*, was first introduced to Brazil in 1727 in the Amazonian province of Pará. Coffee cultivation slowly spread over the next few decades, reaching Rio de Janeiro by the 1770s.<sup>50</sup> Initially, coffee was of little interest to the owners of existing sugar *engenhos* in the southeast, but some began to plant coffee on a small scale for domestic

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<sup>46</sup> “Brazil: Five Centuries of Change,” accessed August 17, 2024, <https://library.brown.edu/create/fivecenturiesofchange/>.

<sup>47</sup> “Brazil: Five Centuries of Change.”

<sup>48</sup> “Slave Voyages,” accessed August 14, 2024, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/chNjLw4A>.

<sup>49</sup> Vera Lucia Amaral Ferlini, “Sugar and the Formation of Colonial Brazil,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.729>.

<sup>50</sup> John P. Dickenson, *Brazil, World’s Landscapes* (London ; New York: Longman, 1982), 56.

consumption. The first large coffee *fazendas* were founded in the coastal lowlands and hills surrounding Rio de Janeiro, today comprising the municipalities of Mangaratiba, Resende, Barra do Piraí and Vassouras.<sup>51</sup> Planters found that the topography, soil, and climate of the highlands formed ideal conditions for coffee, and cultivation spread rapidly into the region known as the Paraíba Valley.<sup>52</sup>

Preceding what became known as the *Ciclo do Café* (“coffee cycle”) in Brazil was the *Ciclo de Ouro* (“gold cycle”), when gold mining boomed in Minas Gerais. In the early 1700s, a new road was constructed to transport gold from Minas Gerais to Rio de Janeiro. The *Caminho Novo* (New Road) brought road-builders into the Paraíba Valley, who established towns and waystations along the route. Among these were the parish of Paty do Alferes, founded in 1726, and of Sacra Família do Caminho Novo do Tinguá, in 1750.<sup>53</sup> The small settlement that would later become the village and city of Vassouras was founded in 1782.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Coffee Cycle: 1800s to 1880s**

De Souza Lima (2008) presented the Brazilian coffee cycle in three main phases: growth, from 1800 to 1840; peak, from 1840 to 1875, and decline, from 1875 to 1900.<sup>55</sup> Alternatively, Salles (2008) proposed that the period could be loosely divided into four 15-year increments, beginning with the foundation of the Empire of Brazil (1822-1889). These are: 1) Introduction,

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<sup>51</sup> Dan Gabriel D’Onofre and Fátima Portilho, “Do café no vale ao Vale do Café: antinomias na produção e no consumo da bebida em cenários de hospitalidade,” *Revista Iberoamericana de Turismo- RITUR*, Penedo, 9, no. Numero Especial (March 2019): 159, <https://doi.org/10.2436/20.8070.01.123>.

<sup>52</sup> Stanley Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), 4.

<sup>53</sup> Paty do Alferes, the first parish of Vassouras, is now its own municipality. Sacra Família do Caminho Novo do Tinguá is located in the present-day municipality of Engenheiro Paulo de Frontin.

<sup>54</sup> “Página - IPHAN - Instituto Do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional,” accessed August 28, 2024, <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/1516/>.

<sup>55</sup> Roberto Guião de Souza Lima, “O Ciclo do Café Vale-paraibano” (Instituto Cidade Viva, June 2008), [http://www.institutocidadeviva.org.br/inventarios/sistema/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/ciclo-do-cafe\\_pg-13-a-39.pdf](http://www.institutocidadeviva.org.br/inventarios/sistema/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/ciclo-do-cafe_pg-13-a-39.pdf).

from 1821 to 1835; 2) Expansion of coffee production and slave-holding plantations, from 1836 to 1850; 3) Apogee, from 1851 to 1865, and 3) Grandeur, from 1866 to 1880.<sup>56</sup> Regardless of how the period is divided, historians widely agree on the significance of Rio de Janeiro, and more specifically Vassouras, as the geographical center of the 19th-century Brazilian coffee economy. Or, in the words of Salles (2008), “The Empire was coffee, coffee was the Valley, and nowhere was the Valley more Valley than in Vassouras.”<sup>57</sup>

Stein (1957) identified three factors that contributed to the settlement of Vassouras during the late 1700s and early 1800s: the exhaustion of mines to the north, the spread of coffee cultivation into the hills of the Serra Acima, and the forced removal of the indigenous Coroado people from their lands along the Paraíba River. Former mining families from Minas Gerais, “dominated by the speculative background and get-rich-quick psychology of a mining economy, saw great opportunities in the Vassouras area.”<sup>58</sup> Following the arrival of the Portuguese royal family to Rio de Janeiro in 1808, the government incentivized the colonization of the interior by awarding *sesmarias*, or land grants, to individuals who helped to build the roads. These settlers, in turn, established *fazendas* following the existing plantation model. Two new roads brought even more settlers to the region: the Estrada do Comercio, completed in 1813, and the Estrada da Policia, in 1820. The villages of Valença and Vassouras were founded along the Estrada da Policia in 1819 and 1833, respectively.<sup>59</sup>

Coffee agriculture rapidly expanded during the first half of the 19th century, transforming the Vale do Paraíba Fluminense into the “Vale do Café” (“Valley of Coffee”). In the early 1830s,

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<sup>56</sup> Ricardo Salles, *E o Vale Era o Escravo: Vassouras, Século XIX: Senhores e Escravos No Coração Do Império* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2008), 150.

<sup>57</sup> Salles, 149.

<sup>58</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Salles, *E o Vale Era o Escravo*, 140.

coffee replaced the colonial-era commodities of sugar and cotton as Brazil's primary export. Brazilian coffee exports grew from 13,000 tons per year in 1823 to 118,000 tons per year in 1850.<sup>60</sup> In 1830, coffee represented 40% of Brazil's total export value; by 1850, this reached 79%. (Salles, 2008, 141). As the coffee economy took off, Brazil's involvement in the slave trade intensified. Between 1800 and 1856, more than 2.4 million Africans were enslaved and trafficked across the Atlantic to Brazil.<sup>61</sup> The majority of those who disembarked were sent to the coffee plantations of the Paraíba Valley.<sup>62</sup> The enslaved population of Rio de Janeiro province grew from 145,000 in 1819 to more than 220,000 in 1840.<sup>63</sup> The municipalities of Pirai, Vassouras, and Valença had the highest concentrations of enslaved people in the Valley.<sup>64</sup> (Fig. 5)

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<sup>60</sup> Marquese, "Coffee and the Formation of Modern Brazil, 1860–1914."

<sup>61</sup> "Slave Voyages." Total embarked: 2,403,449. Total disembarked: 2,087,026. (Query details: Time frame: 1800 to 1856, Flag: all, Embarkation regions: Africa, Disembarkation regions: Brazil.)

<sup>62</sup> According to Marquese (2020), data from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database shows that from 1821 to 1830, 64.44% of arriving slaves disembarked in Rio de Janeiro or other southeastern ports. Between 1831 and 1850, this number increased to 78%.

<sup>63</sup> "Período Regencial: Expansão cafeeira no Vale do Paraíba, Política Saquarema e escravidão," MultiRio História do Brasil, 2024, <https://multirio.rio.rj.gov.br/index.php/historia-do-brasil/brasil-monarquico/8941-a-%C3%A1frica-civiliza,-a-pol%C3%ADtica-saquarema,-a-escravid%C3%A3o-e-a-expans%C3%A3o-cafeeira-no-vale-do-para%C3%ADba>.

<sup>64</sup> In 1850, the municipality of Vassouras encompassed several other present-day municipalities: Japeri (Belém), part of Paracambi, Paulo de Frontin, Mendes, Morsing, part of Barra do Pirai, Pati do Alferes, and Miguel Pereira.

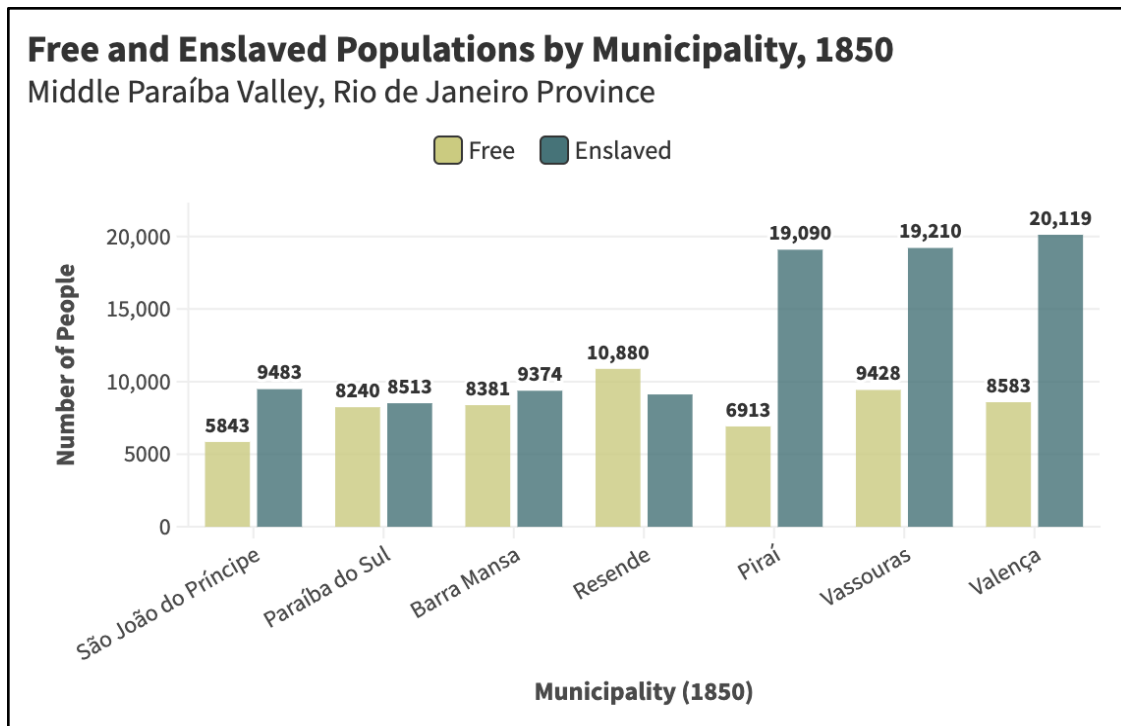


Figure 5. Free and Enslaved Populations by Municipality, 1850. Graph by author. Adapted from Muniz, 2005. Original data source: General Census of the Empire: Report of the Vice-President of the Province, May 5, 1851.

Coffee, produced with the labor of African slaves, generated massive fortunes for the plantation owners. Land and wealth became concentrated in the hands of a small number of fazendeiros. A study of post-mortem inventories from 1821 to 1880 by Salles (2008) found that about 12 percent of Vassouras landowners had large plantations (defined as having 50 to 99 slaves), while 9 percent had mega-plantations (100 or more slaves). Together, these large and mega- property owners, while comprising just 20 percent of landowners, owned 70 percent of the slaves in the municipality<sup>65</sup>(Fig. 6). The majority of fazendas belonged to one of the following elite families: the Correa e Castro, Werneck, Ribeiro de Avellar, Paes Leme, Avellar e Almeida,

<sup>65</sup> Salles, *E o Vale Era o Escravo*, 155–57.

Araujo Padilha, or Teixeira Leite.<sup>66</sup> Many of these families first established themselves in the Vassouras area thanks to vast land grants from the Portuguese crown.

Figure 6. Slaveholding plantations in Vassouras, 1821-1880.

Plantation category (# of slaves)	% of Vassouras landowners	% of Vassouras enslaved population
Micro-plantation (1-4 slaves)	16	1
Small (5-19 slaves)	39	11
Medium (20-49 slaves)	22	18
Large (50-99 slaves)	12	22
Mega-plantation (100 or more slaves)	9	48
Without slaves (0 slaves)	3	0

In the municipality of Vassouras, large and mega property owners made up 20% of property owners, but held captive 70% of the total enslaved population. Adapted from Salles (2008), p. 155-157.

The *fazendeiros* of the Paraíba Valley ardently defended slavery, upon which their profits relied. By the mid-1830s, the Empire became financially dependent on these profits.<sup>67</sup> The growing political influence of coffee planters and exporters led to the reopening of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1835, even after it had been legally banned in 1831. Marquese (2020) highlighted the close relationship between the *fazendeiros* and the conservative *saquarema* party, which controlled the Empire's political agenda from 1837 onward. Stein (1957) showed that the slave trade benefitted both the *fazendeiros* and the imperial government: in 1848, about 60% of Vassouras' tax contribution to Rio province came from a tax on the sale of slaves.<sup>68</sup> Between

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<sup>66</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 121.

<sup>67</sup> Stein, 64.

<sup>68</sup> Stein, 64.



1840 and 1889, Emperor Dom Pedro II granted many prominent *fazendeiros* the non-hereditary title of *Barão* (Baron), further solidifying their social, political and economic hegemony.<sup>69</sup>

The 1850s to 1860s represented the “golden age” of coffee for the rural aristocracy of the Paraíba Valley.<sup>70</sup> The end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1850 posed little obstacle for the *fazendeiros*, who immediately saw their assets (slaves and coffee) increase in value.<sup>71</sup> During this time of prosperity, *fazendeiros* expanded their original properties, often constructing larger main residences with reception rooms and chapels. Interiors became more elaborate, with the addition of wooden furniture carved by local artisans and I imported from Europe. The rapid accumulation of wealth by these elite families is evidenced by the changing content of estate inventories, with an increase in expensive items such as English porcelain and French silver.<sup>72</sup> The Vassouras planters engaged in what Stein (1957) termed “conspicuous consumption,” showing off their new wealth through ostentatious purchases and excessive hospitality.<sup>73</sup>

The opulent lifestyles of the planter class were made possible through the intensive exploitation of slave labor and land. According to Tomich et al. (2021), the Paraíba Valley represented one of the commodity frontiers of the “second slavery,” a new period distinct from the previous era of Atlantic slavery due to the scale and intensity of production. In addition to the unprecedented size of the plantations, “the pressures of the world market and the scale of production put the emphasis on productivity—increased output per acre, increased output per

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<sup>69</sup> Stein, 120–22.

<sup>70</sup> Stein, 29.

<sup>71</sup> In the 1850s, the price of coffee rose on the world market, benefitting Brazilian planters and exporters (Marquese, 2020, p. 3). Slaves came to represent a much larger share of plantation wealth in comparison to land, coffee groves, machinery, and other assets, rising from 30% of plantation wealth in 1850 to 73% in 1857 (Stein, 1957, p. 226).

<sup>72</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 39–45.

<sup>73</sup> Stein, 122.

slave—and intensified the labor of the enslaved population.”<sup>74</sup> Plantation owners viewed their slaves as “little more than ‘an animated object, a tool, an instrument, a machine.’”<sup>75</sup> Enslaved people worked a grueling daily routine of fifteen to eighteen hours a day.<sup>76</sup> The harsh living and working conditions, which included “excessive labor, inadequate nourishment, poor hygiene, and much physical brutality,” resulted in tragically high mortality rates, especially of those working in the fields.<sup>77</sup>

The techniques used for coffee cultivation were labor-intensive, inefficient, and highly destructive to the environment. First, enslaved workers cleared the *Mata Atlantica* (Atlantic Forest) with axes, fire and hoes. Then, they planted coffee bushes in widely spaced vertical rows up and down the hillsides. With a seemingly unending supply of uncultivated land, *fazendeiros* had little concern for sustainability. Initial productivity was high, but the soil became quickly exhausted. With proper care, coffee bushes can produce for up to 40 years; in Vassouras, their productive lifespans were often a fraction of this.<sup>78</sup> As yields declined, *fazendeiros* simply moved on into new areas of uncleared forest, continuing what Dickenson (1982) called “the restless cycle of transient coffee.”<sup>79</sup>

Beginning in the late 1860s to 1870s, the coffee economy started to crumble. Historians attribute the decline of coffee in the Vale do Paraíba Fluminense to a combination of economic, environmental, and political factors. Even during the prosperous 1850s and 1860s, several signs

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<sup>74</sup> Dale Tomich, “The Second Slavery and World Capitalism: A Perspective for Historical Inquiry,” *International Review of Social History* 63, no. 3 (December 2018): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859018000536>.

<sup>75</sup> A.E. Zaluar, *O Vassourense*, November 19, 1882. Cited by Stein, 1957, 134.

<sup>76</sup> Salles, *E o Vale Era o Escravo*, 179.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Edgar Conrad, ed., *Children of God’s Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 77, 86–96.

<sup>78</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 46, 220.

<sup>79</sup> Dickenson, *Brazil*, 56.

of trouble had begun to appear: the aging slave labor force, the diminishing productivity of coffee plants, and the rapidly disappearing forest.<sup>80</sup> Stein (1957) argued that through their careless agricultural practices and stubborn attachment to slavery, Vassouras planters had sown the seeds of their own destruction. Planters who had purchased slaves and equipment using high-interest loans began to accumulate massive debts that they could not repay. The 1870s and 1880s were a period of gradual decline for the fazendas. Labor shortages and declining productivity led many planters to mortgage or abandon their properties.<sup>81</sup>

Salles (2019) also highlighted the role of the Brazilian abolitionist movement, which was gaining momentum at this time. In 1871, the Free-Womb Law declared that all children of slaves born after the law's enactment would be free once they came of age. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, "acts of slave resistance, a constant during slavery, now skyrocketed and gained new meaning in the context of the abolitionist struggle."<sup>82</sup> Enslaved people increasingly disobeyed their masters, organized collective escapes, and formed communities known as *quilombolas*. In 1885, the Sexagenarian Law declared free all slaves over 60 years of age. On May 13, 1888, the Golden Law officially abolished slavery in Brazil.<sup>83</sup>

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the coffee cycle had passed through Rio de Janeiro. Summarizing the end of the coffee era, Stein (1957) wrote:

In one century, the municipio of Vassouras and the major portion of the extensive

Parahyba Valley were the scene of a complete economic cycle which started with tropical

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<sup>80</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 213.

<sup>81</sup> Stein, 218–22, 230, 238–49.

<sup>82</sup> Ricardo Salles, "The Abolition of Brazilian Slavery, 1864–1888," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, by Ricardo Salles (Oxford University Press, 2019), 15, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.733>.

<sup>83</sup> Salles, "The Abolition of Brazilian Slavery, 1864–1888."

forest and ended with denuded, eroded slopes. Once exploited, the lands of an internal frontier were abandoned to grass, weeds and cattle.<sup>84</sup>

In the years after abolition, the center of Brazilian coffee production shifted to the western part of São Paulo. The once-prosperous plantations of the Vale do Café faded into relative insignificance, where they would remain until the rise of tourism nearly 100 years later.

### **Tourism in the Vale do Café: 1980s to Present**

During Brazil's most recent military dictatorship (1964-1985), the Brazilian government sought to develop former colonial and imperial-era towns into tourist destinations as part of a larger effort to foster nationalism.<sup>85</sup> In 1984, the city of Vassouras was recognized as a "touristic center" by the state government of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>86</sup> Following the return to civilian rule in 1985, Brazil saw a general rise in tourism among the middle class.<sup>87</sup> Owners of historic properties in the Paraíba Valley saw an opportunity to capitalize on this and began opening their doors to tourists. Instituto Preservale, an organization dedicated to promoting cultural tourism in the region, was founded in 1994. According to the Institute's website:

Preservale was born as a way of bringing together the various managers of historic properties, who saw cultural tourism as an innovative way of adding value to rural

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<sup>84</sup> Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, 289.

<sup>85</sup> Pedro Paulo A. Funari, Fabiana Manzato, and Louise Prado Alfonso, "Tourism and Archaeology in Brazil: Postmodern Epistemology in Two Case Studies," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 17, no. 2 (2013): 263, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24572356>.

<sup>86</sup> Carolina Mara Teixeira, "'Levanta meu povo, o cativo acabou': Uma análise sobre as narrativas reproduzidas no Tour da Experiência na cidade de Vassouras-RJ" (Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro, 2019), 21, <https://tede.ufrirj.br/jspui/handle/jspui/5274>.

<sup>87</sup> Funari, Manzato, and Alfonso, "Tourism and Archaeology in Brazil."

heritage, supplementing the farms' current income through lodging and guided tours for educational, historical and cultural purposes.<sup>88</sup>

In 2006, the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with SEBRAE and Instituto Marca Brasil,<sup>89</sup> established the Projeto Tour da Experiência – Caminhos do Brasil Imperial (Experience Tour Project – Roads of Imperial Brazil).<sup>90</sup> (Fig. 7) Five municipalities were part of this original tourism circuit. Since then, a total of 15 municipalities have been designated as an official tourism region called the “Vale do Café” (“Valley of Coffee”).<sup>91</sup> These include Vassouras, Valença, Rio das Flores, Piraí, Engenheiro Paulo de Frontin, Paty do Alferes, Paracambi, Miguel Pereira, Mendes, Barra do Piraí, Pinheiral, Barra Mansa, Rio Claro, Paraíba do Sul, and Volta Redonda.<sup>92</sup> (Fig. 8)

Tourism in the Vale do Café is largely centered on its historical *fazendas*, or coffee plantations. A 2008 inventory, the Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense, registered 182 preserved *fazendas* in the region.<sup>93</sup> The main experience marketed to tourists is the plantation tour, typically consisting of a guided one- or two-hour walk through the property and costing about R\$60 to R\$150 (approximately \$12 to \$30 USD).

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<sup>88</sup> Translation by author. Histórico – Instituto Preservale,” accessed June 9, 2024, <https://institutopreservale.com.br/historico/>.

<sup>89</sup> SEBRAE (Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas), or Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprises, is an autonomous institution that “aims to foster entrepreneurship in Brazil by helping small businesses and individual micro-entrepreneurs.” (<https://sebrae.com.br/sites/PortalSebrae/>) Instituto Marca Brasil (IMB) is a civil society organization whose work focuses on “the development, management and execution of innovative and sustainable research and projects for the development of the tourism, culture and social sectors.” (<https://b2brazil.com.br/hotsite/institutomarcab>)

<sup>90</sup> “Tour Da Experiência - Portal Vale Do Café Turismo - O Portal de Informações Turísticas Da Região Do Vale Do Café,” accessed June 5, 2024, <https://www.portalvaledocafe.com.br/tourdaexperiencia.asp>.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>91</sup> The name “Vale do Café” has long been used to refer to the coffee-growing region of the Paraíba Valley in general. The focus of this study is on the tourism region located within the Rio de Janeiro portion of the Paraíba Valley (the Vale do Paraíba Fluminense).

<sup>92</sup> “Vale do Café: um mergulho na história brasileira,” *Portal Sesc RJ* (blog), October 2, 2020, <https://www.sescrj.org.br/noticias/turismo-social/vale-do-cafe-um-mergulho-na-historia-brasileira/>.

<sup>93</sup> “Fazendas,” Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense, Maio 2008, <https://www.institutocidadeviva.org.br/inventarios/>.

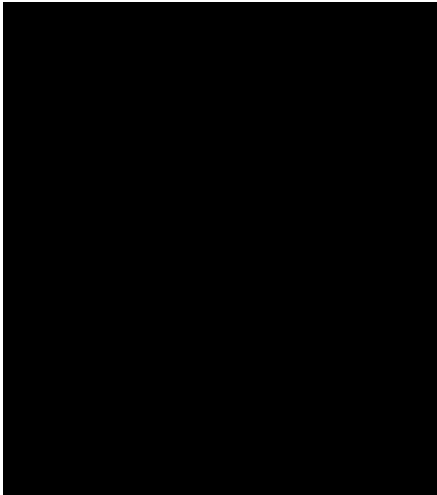


Figure 7. The logo for the Projeto Tour da Experiência – Caminhos do Brasil Imperial (Experience Tour Project – Roads of Imperial Brazil). Source: Projeto Tour da Experiência (2024).

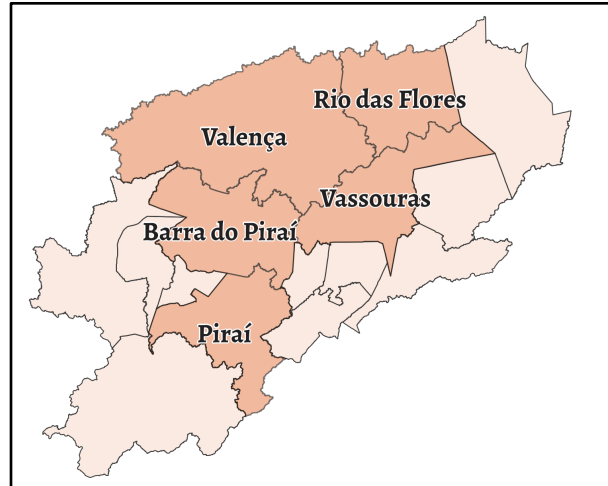


Figure 8. Map highlighting the five municipalities in the Vale do Café that are participants in the Projeto Tour da Experiência – Caminhos do Brasil Imperial: Valença, Vassouras, Rio das Flores, Barra do Pirai, and Pirai. Map by author.



Figure 9. Facebook post advertising Vassouras with the following text: “Come to Vassouras, come enjoy a weekend and discover the art and beauty of the Historical Fazendas.” Source: Secretaria de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Turismo de Vassouras (2024).

In addition to guided tours, some plantations offer experiences such as classical music performances and picnic lunches for an added cost. The Portal Vale do Café website advertises a variety of experiential tourism activities offered by 18 establishments in five municipalities as part of the Projeto Tour da Experiência (Fig. 11). These include, among others, a “brunch with the Viscount” (Fazenda Vista Alegre, Valença), a “colonial breakfast” (Pousada Brisa do Vale, Barra do Pirai), a “tea with Eufrásia Teixeira Leite” (Mara Palace Hotel, Vassouras), and an event entitled “from the *senzala* (slave quarters) to the *casa grande* (main house) soirée and candlelight dinner” (Fazenda União, Rio das Flores).<sup>94</sup>(Fig. 12) Additional tourist attractions in Vassouras and the surrounding area include the Museu Casa da Hera, the Centro Cultural Cazuya, and the Jardim Ecológico Uaná Etê.

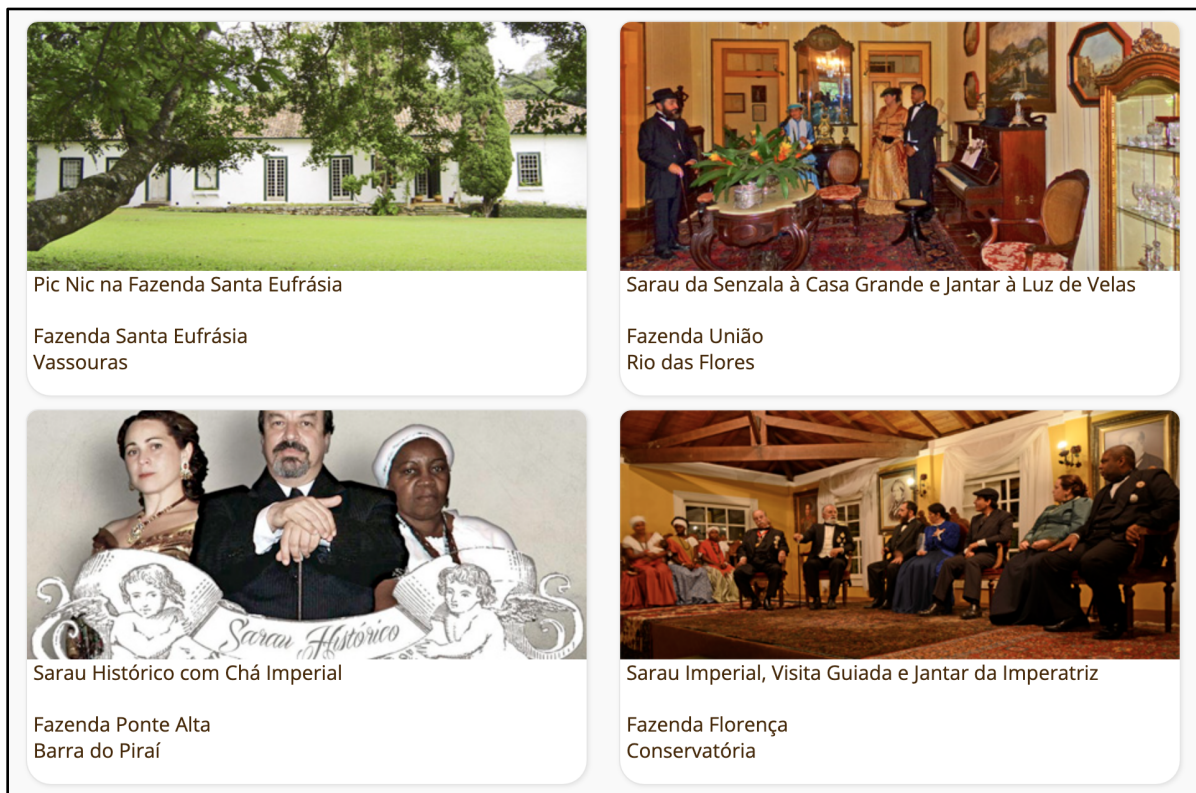


Figure 10. Praça Barão do Campo Belo, historical center of Vassouras.

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<sup>94</sup> “Tour Da Experiência - Portal Vale Do Café Turismo - O Portal de Informações Turísticas Da Região Do Vale Do Café.” <https://www.portalvaledocafe.com.br/tourdaexperiencia.asp>

Figure 11. Screenshot from the webpage “Tour da Experiência no Vale do Café” (Experiential Tourism in the Vale do Café) showing four of the activities available for tourists to book.



Clockwise from top left: Picnic at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, Soiree from the *Senzala* (slave quarters) to the *Casa Grande* (main house) and Candlelight Dinner, Historical Soiree with Imperial Tea; Imperial Soiree, Guided Tour and Empress Dinner. Source: Portal Vale do Café (2024).<sup>95</sup> Translation by author.

<sup>95</sup> “Tour Da Experiência - Portal Vale Do Café Turismo - O Portal de Informações Turísticas Da Região Do Vale Do Café.” <https://www.portalvaledocafe.com.br/tourdaexperiencia.asp>



Figure 12. Table listing the experiential activities available for booking as part of the Tour da Experiência Caminhos do Brasil Imperial (Roads of Imperial Brazil Experience Tour).

Portuguese Original	English Translation	Establishment	Location
Brunch do Visconde – História, Gastronomia e Música	Viscount’s Brunch – History, Gastronomy and Music	Fazenda Vista Alegre	Valença
Café – O Ouro Verde – Visita Histórica pela Produção do Café no Século XIX	Coffee – The Green Gold – Historical Tour of Coffee Production in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	Fazenda da Taquara	Barra do Piraí
Pic Nic na Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	Picnic at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	Fazenda Santa Eufrásia	Vassouras
Sarau da Senzala à Casa Grande e Jantar à Luz de Velas	Soiree from the <i>Senzala</i> (slave quarters) to the <i>Casa Grande</i> (main house) and Candlelight Dinner	Fazenda União	Rio das Flores
Sarau Histórico com Chá Imperial	Historical Soiree with Imperial Tea	Fazenda Ponte Alta	Barra do Piraí
Sarau Imperial, Visita Guiada e Jantar da Imperatriz	Imperial Soiree, Guided Tour and Empress Dinner	Fazenda Florença	Conservatória
Visita Guiada à Casa Sede e Banquete Imperial	Guided Tour of the Main House and Imperial Banquet	Fazenda Aliança	Barra do Piraí
Visita Guiada à Casa Sede e Tributo aos Negros Vindos da África	Guided Tour of the Main House and Tribute to Blacks from Africa	Fazenda São João da Prosperidade	Barra do Piraí
Visita Guiada e Lanche no Antigo Engenho do Visconde de Rio Preto	Guided Tour and Snack at the Old Mill of the Viscount of Rio Preto	Fazenda do Paraíso	Rio das Flores
Visita Histórica e Visita ao Museu de Carros Antigos	Historical Tour and Visit to the Antique Car Museum	Fazenda Cachoeira Grande	Vassouras
A Cozinha da Baronesa e Batuque do Quilombo Raízes do Brasil Imperial	The Baroness’ Kitchen and Quilombo Drumming Roots of Imperial Brazil	Hotel Santa Amália	Vassouras
Café da Manhã Colonial	Colonial Breakfast	Pousada Brisa do Vale	Ipiabas (Barra do Piraí)
Chá com Eufrásia Teixeira Leite	Tea with Eufrásia Teixeira Leite	Mara Palace Hotel	Vassouras
Do Feijão à Feijoada – Uma História Comestível!	From Beans to Feijoada – An Edible History!	Casa do Manequinho	Piraí
O Fornecedor Oficial da Casa Imperial	The Official Supplier to the Imperial House	Empório dos Arcos	Ipiabas (Barra do Piraí)
Oficina de Barro-Peixe	Clay Fish Workshop	Condomínio da Arte	Piraí
Oficina de Bordados à Moda das Baronesas	Embroidery Workshop in the Style of the Baronesses	Florart	Rio das Flores
Raízes e Viagens por um Brasil Imperial	Roots and Journeys through Imperial Brazil	Botequim por Acaso	Vassouras

Source: Portal Vale do Café (2024).<sup>96</sup> Translation by author.

<sup>96</sup> “Tour Da Experiência - Portal Vale Do Café Turismo - O Portal de Informações Turísticas Da Região Do Vale Do Café.” <https://www.portalvaledocafe.com.br/tourdaexperiencia.asp>

In recent years, the Vale do Café has emerged as an increasingly popular destination for cultural and historical tourism in Brazil. This is evidenced by the growth in the number of tourism-oriented establishments and visitors. In 2005, 22 fazendas in five municipalities were associated with Instituto Preservale as local tourism partners. By 2015, this had grown to 27 fazendas in six municipalities.<sup>97</sup> Some of these offer guided tours, while others function as hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, farms, or event venues. As of 2024, about 30 fazendas were open to the public for tours and/or other services.

The vast majority of visitors to the Vale do Café are from Brazil. According to the Mapa do Turismo Brasileiro, an estimated 248,766 tourists visited the region in 2017. Of these, 243,060 were Brazilian nationals (97.7%) and 5,706 were foreigners (2.3%). Vassouras is among the top destinations for visitors to the Valley. In 2017, Vassouras municipality had a local population of 37,262 and received 36,325 visitors, of which 35,714 were national (98.3%) and 611 were international (1.7%).<sup>98</sup> The city of Vassouras hosts the annual Festival Vale do Café as well as several other events centered on music, food, and culture. In 2023, Vassouras was voted the “best tourism destination in Rio de Janeiro” in a statewide contest.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Adalgiso Silva Silveira, “Turismo nas fazendas imperiais do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense: apontamentos para uma pesquisa futura,” 2015, 4–5, <https://www.anptur.org.br/anais/anais/files/12/15.pdf>.

<sup>98</sup> Ministerio de Turismo do Brasil, “Painel SISMAPA - Detalhamento - Regiao Turistica Vale do Café,” Mapa de Turismo Brasileira, November 8, 2023, <https://paineis.turismo.gov.br/sense/app/6114ffd5-73b7-4bd6-9361-f3c1e68ed6d2/sheet/1475c954-c0a2-4611-b989-4226da3f3d4b/state/analysis>.

<sup>99</sup> “Vale do Café: um mergulho na história brasileira,” *Portal Sesc RJ* (blog), October 2, 2020, <https://www.sescrj.org.br/noticias/turismo-social/vale-do-cafe-um-mergulho-na-historia-brasileira/>.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

So what do you do as a critical researcher...? You have to start somewhere and there is no better place than with the observation, concern, frustration or doubt that provoked the enquiry. Ask yourself why things are as they appear to be. But frame the question, not in terms of ‘what are the causes?’ or ‘what does this mean?’ but rather as ‘how come this situation exists?’ and ‘how does it persist?’. Ask ‘how come nothing is done about this?’ or ‘how come no one notices?’ –*Lee Harvey, Critical Social Research (1990)*<sup>100</sup>

### Introduction

This research is grounded in critical tourism studies, a research field situated at the intersection of critical inquiry and cultural geography. Influenced by social theories such as Marxism, feminism, and critical theory, critical inquiry is characterized by a commitment to uncovering and challenging oppressive structures. Mair (2018) explains that “critical approaches to research are radical; they are concerned with identifying power relationships, uncovering vested interests, and ultimately are concerned about the role of research in fostering social change.”<sup>101</sup> Importantly, critical social research is not motivated by a desire to criticize for the mere sake of being critical. Far from being cynical, critical inquiry is frequently guided by hope and a genuine belief in the possibility for change.

A central aspect of critical research is reflexivity, which Willig (2013) defines as the practice of reflecting “upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs,

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<sup>100</sup> Lee Harvey, *Critical Social Research*, Contemporary Social Research Series 21 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

<sup>101</sup> Heather Mair, “Ethical Issues in Tourism and Hospitality Research,” in *Handbook of Research Methods for Tourism and Hospitality Management*, ed. Robin Nunkoo (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), 55.

political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research.”<sup>102</sup> Altejevic et al. (2005) explain that reflexive practice counters the positivist notion that researchers can represent “the object of their inquiry from an objective and value-free position.”<sup>103</sup> It has become fairly standard for researchers to include a reflexivity statement in their methodology sections. However, critical tourism scholars advocate for a more expansive approach to reflexivity that involves conscious reflection at each stage of the research process.<sup>104</sup> Crossley (2021) demonstrated that such “deep reflexivity” can even include reflections on the researcher’s emotions, thoughts, and embodied experience while conducting the research.<sup>105</sup> Inspired by the recent ethnographies published by Farkic (2021) and other scholars, I have endeavored to weave personal reflexivity into this thesis—beginning with the following reflection on my positionality as a researcher and continuing throughout the first-person narration of my research process.

I am a white woman of European descent, a native English speaker, and a U.S. citizen born and raised in Seattle, Washington. I am coming to this research as a person who does not have lived experience of racial oppression or the generational trauma of enslavement. I also come from a place of economic and educational privilege, factors that made it possible for me to pursue higher education and become a researcher. I grew up in a middle-class family with access to generational wealth and parents who encouraged me to follow my interests in lieu of a more “practical” career. I attended a mix of public and private schools that provided me with an

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<sup>102</sup> Carla Willig, *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3rd ed, McGraw-Hill Education (Maidenhead, Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Open University Press, 2013), 10.

<sup>103</sup> Irena Altejevic et al., “Getting ‘Entangled’: Reflexivity and the ‘Critical Turn’ in Tourism Studies,” *Tourism Recreation Research* 30, no. 2 (January 2005): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2005.11081469>.

<sup>104</sup> Jelena Farkic, “Challenges in Outdoor Tourism Explorations: An Embodied Approach,” *Tourism Geographies* 23, no. 1–2 (February 10, 2021): 228–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1745267>.

<sup>105</sup> Émilie Crossley, “Deep Reflexivity in Tourism Research,” *Tourism Geographies* 23, no. 1–2 (February 10, 2021): 206–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2019.1571098>.

excellent education, including opportunities to travel internationally and study four foreign languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Quechua, and Nahuatl). I have lived, worked, studied, and traveled in nine Latin American countries, but I am geographically based in the United States. I am completing my Masters degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, a large academic institution in the Global North. All of these life experiences and aspects of my identity shape the way that I move through the world and the perspective that I bring to this research.

### **Project Background**

My research about the history of coffee and slavery in Brazil began with a data storytelling project for a graduate class in Digital Humanities. As part of this project, I created a series of graphs visualizing historical coffee exports and slave arrivals to Brazil using statistical data from Samper Kutschbach (2019) and the Slave Voyages Consortium (2021). Next, I adapted a geographical dataset from Sauls (2020) to compile a gazetteer of places from Brazil's first coffee boom. This led me to research the eastern Paraíba Valley, including the present-day municipalities that comprise the Vale do Café. The only maps I could find of the fazendas in the region weren't very detailed, so I decided to make my own.<sup>106</sup> (*Fig. 13*)

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<sup>106</sup> To learn more, please see my project website, entitled "The Valley of Coffee and Slavery: Mapping 19th-century plantations in the eastern Paraíba Valley," available at <https://arcg.is/198CPX>.



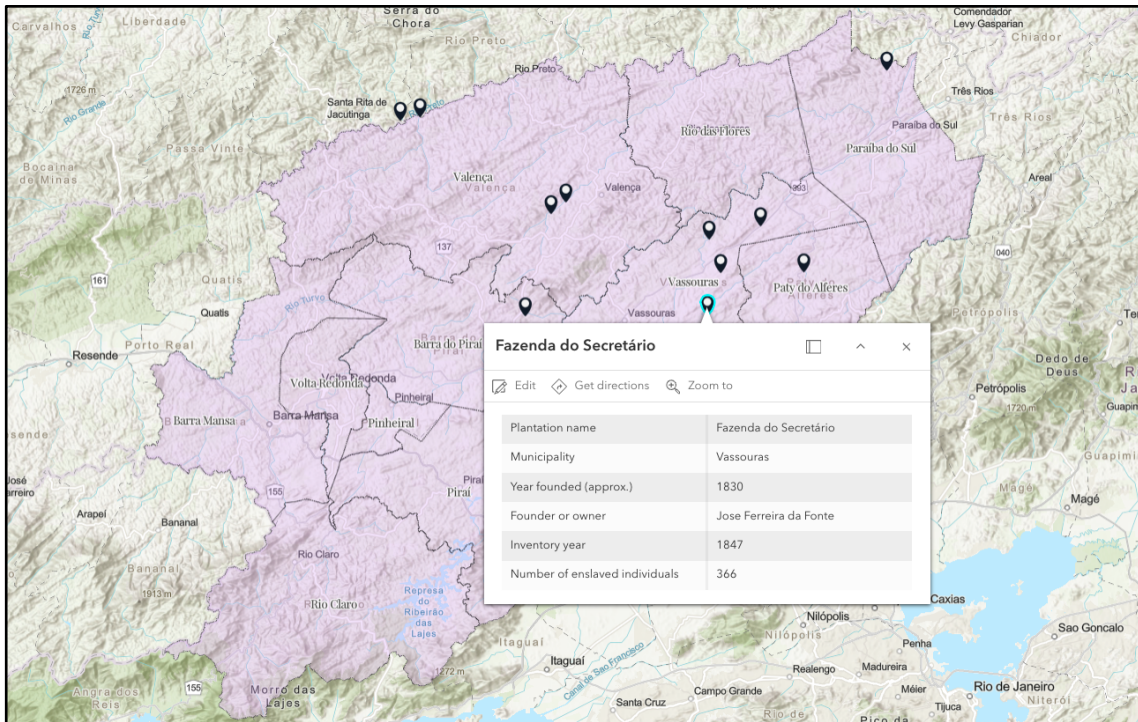


Figure 14. Screenshot of an interactive ArcGIS StoryMap displaying information about some of the plantations in the Vale do Café. Map by author.

As I reviewed the plantation websites, I started to notice a pattern. There was abundant information about topics like the fazendas' art, architecture, and the experiences offered to visitors, such as coffee tastings and musical performances. The "History" pages or sections, while varying in their degree of detail, generally included some mention of the original founders, past owners, and/or coffee production. But, information was notably lacking about one topic in particular: slavery. Specifically, the majority of the websites mentioned little to nothing about slavery or the enslaved. It was as if slavery had never existed in the Valley.

I finished my maps and turned in the project, but I was left with a burning curiosity about the representation of slavery in the Vale do Café. It seemed that slavery was barely a part of the historical narratives presented by plantation websites. But what if things were completely different on the ground, at the physical plantation sites? Maybe the plantations just didn't have

very detailed websites. I decided that the best way to learn about how plantations in the Vale do Café portrayed their histories was to go on a tour myself.

## Research Strategy

This research aims to analyze the construction of historical narratives at plantation tourism sites in the Vale do Café, Brazil. To accomplish this objective, I engage in a multi-site case study of two specific plantations. Yin (2018) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.”<sup>109</sup>

According to Yin (2018), a case study approach is ideal when “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which a researcher has little or no control.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, it is particularly suitable for this research, which examines the question: How are historical narratives constructed at two contemporary Brazilian plantations?

Under Yin’s typology, a case study may be descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory in nature. The purpose of the present multi-site case study is primarily descriptive. I aim to use the technique of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) to portray my subjective experience of participating in two plantation tours.<sup>111112</sup> My research is also exploratory, in that I aim to identify additional research questions that could be investigated in future studies.

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<sup>109</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sixth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 1–13.

<sup>110</sup> Yin (2018) contrasts case study with two other possible research designs: experimental and (purely) historical. Here, I am simply observing the tours, not conducting an experiment, and while this study involves historical subject matter, the tours are a present-day phenomenon.

<sup>111</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 6.

<sup>112</sup> According to QDAcity (2018), “Thick description goes beyond mere description of facts or events, and provides a deeper interpretation of the meanings, contexts, and implications of the phenomenon. Thick description is not only a way of writing, but also a way of thinking and analyzing qualitative data. It involves a careful and systematic observation of the phenomenon, a reflexive and critical examination of the researcher's own assumptions and biases, and a creative and empathetic engagement with the participants' perspectives and experiences.”  
<https://qdacity.com/thick-description/>



One common concern associated with case studies is the question of generalizability. However, VanWynsberghe & Khan (2007) clarify that case study research does not share the positivist objective of generalizing to a population.<sup>113</sup> According to Stake (2005), “the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization.”<sup>114</sup> Yin (2018) explains that a case study is “an opportunity to shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts or principles.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, a case study can be used to illustrate an idea, build on existing hypotheses, or generate new ones. Indeed, one of my goals is to examine how the insights from previous studies in the United States may be built upon in a new context, the Vale do Café.

Although generalizability is not usually an explicit goal of case studies, Simons (2009) argues that through examining the uniqueness of a particular case, a researcher can discover ideas of universal significance.<sup>116</sup> With that in mind, this thesis will consider what stands out as particularly unique or interesting about these two sites and how they might compare to others in the area. Given that these sites are among the most popular tourist destinations in the Vale do Café, they arguably represent good examples of the typical plantation tourism experience that an average visitor is likely to take away.

## Site Selection

The data was primarily collected at two plantations, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande. These were chosen from a list of 25 fazendas in the Vale do Café that I had compiled as part of my original mapping project. Prior to visiting the Vale do Café, I attempted

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<sup>113</sup> Rob VanWynsberghe and Samia Khan, “Redefining Case Study,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 6, no. 2 (June 2007): 80–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690700600208>.

<sup>114</sup> Robert E. Stake, “Qualitative Case Studies,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 3rd ed (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 443–66.

<sup>115</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications*, 38.

<sup>116</sup> Helen Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice* (1 Oliver’s Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268322>.

to identify some of the fazendas that were most heavily advertised to—and thus, most likely to be visited by—tourists. First, I consulted the Portal Vale do Café (Valley of Coffee Portal) website, a major source of tourist information for the region, to see which fazendas were listed as part of the coffee tourism circuit. Second, I checked the website of BomTempo Turismo, a local tourism agency based in Vassouras, to see which fazendas were among their tour offerings.

Of the 22 fazendas listed on the Portal website, four of these stated that they were not open to visits from the public, so these were excluded from the possible sites. 15 fazendas were listed on the tourism agency website. A total of 12 fazendas met all three criteria: open to visitation, listed on the Portal Vale do Café website, and listed on the BomTempo Turismo website.*(Fig. 16)* The final selection of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande from this subset of 12 potential sites was based on their availability for tours during my travel dates.

In addition to appearing on the websites above, both fazendas are listed among TripAdvisor’s “Top 15 Things to do in Vassouras” (Fazenda Cachoeira Grande is number one and Fazenda Santa Eufrásia is number thirteen). Each fazenda is located just a short distance from the historical center of Vassouras—Santa Eufrásia at 10.1 kilometers (6.3 miles) and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande at 8.7 kilometers (5.4 miles)—or about 20 minutes by car.*(Fig. 15)* Together, these factors suggest that Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande are among the plantations most frequently visited by tourists to the Vale do Café.



Figure 15. Aerial map showing the locations of the fazendas relative to the city of Vassouras. From the Praça Barão de Campo Belo, in the historical center, the driving distance to Fazenda Santa Eufrásia is approximately 10.1 km (6.3 miles) and to Fazenda Cachoeira Grande is 8.7 km (5.4 miles). Map by author.

Figure 16. Selection Criteria for Plantation Sites in the Vale do Café.

	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Fazenda</b>	<b>Listed on BomTempo Turismo website? X = yes, - = no</b>	<b>Listed on Portal Vale do Café website?</b>	<b>Open to tourists?</b>
1	Barra do Piraí	Aliança	X	X	X
2	Barra do Piraí	da Bocaina	-	X	-
3	Barra do Piraí	da Taquara	X	X	X
4	Barra do Piraí	Ponte Alta	-	X	X
5	Barra do Piraí	São João da Prosperidade	X	X	X
6	Miguel Pereira	Santa Cecília	-	X	X
7	Miguel Pereira	São João da Barra	-	X	X
8	Paraíba do Sul	Boa Vista	-	X	-
9	Paty do Alferes	Boa Esperança	-	X	X
10	Paty do Alferes	Monte Alegre	-	X	-
11	Paty do Alferes	Pau Grande	-	X	-
12	Rio das Flores	do Paraíso	X	X	X
13	Rio das Flores	União	-	X	X
14	Valença	Chacrinha	X	X	X
15	Valença	Florença	X	X	X
16	Valença	Santo Antônio do Paiol	X	-	X
17	Valença	Vista Alegre	X	X	X
18	Vassouras	Cachoeira do Mato Dentro	-	X	X
19	Vassouras	Cachoeira Grande	X	X	X
20	Vassouras	das Palmas	X	-	X
21	Vassouras	do Secretário	X	X	X
22	Vassouras	Mulungu Vermelho	X	X	X
23	Vassouras	Santa Eufrásia	X	X	X
24	Vassouras	São Luiz da Boa Sorte	X	X	X
25	Vassouras	São Roque	X	-	X

Table by author. Sources: BomTempo Turismo, Portal Vale do Café.

## Data Collection and Analysis

During my three days in Vassouras, I engaged in “intensive short-term ethnographically informed research” (Farkic, 2021) with the goal of learning about plantation tourism within the specific social and geographical context of the Vale do Café.<sup>117</sup> In addition to visiting the two plantations, I spent several hours walking around the historical center of Vassouras. Two sites in particular stood out to me: the Museu Casa da Hera and the Memorial Manuel Congo.<sup>118</sup> Throughout my time in Vassouras, I had several casual conversations with local tour guides, taxi drivers, and others who worked in the tourism industry. These experiences helped me to better understand the context of Vassouras as a historical place and a contemporary tourist destination.

Prior to visiting the plantation sites, my knowledge about fazendas in the Vale do Café was limited to what I had gathered from the datasets and secondary sources used for my plantation mapping project: a general idea of the significant people, places, numbers, and dates related to coffee plantations in the area. Perhaps helpfully for the purpose of my investigation, I had not yet reviewed any literature about plantation tourism in the United States. In hindsight, I view my ignorance as methodologically advantageous because it allowed me to participate in the tours without many preconceived notions about these specific plantations.<sup>119</sup>

The bulk of my data was collected at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande. I spent two and a half hours at each plantation. The objective of my “mini-ethnography” (Simons, 2009) at each site was twofold: first, to experience the fazenda in the present moment,

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<sup>117</sup> Farkic, “Challenges in Outdoor Tourism Explorations,” 269.

<sup>118</sup> The Museu Casa da Hera is an estate-turned-museum that is marketed as one of Vassouras’ main attractions. Here, I spent a total of two hours participating in a tour of the main house, walking the grounds, and conversing with a tour guide. The Memorial Manuel Congo is a small shrine dedicated to Manuel Congo, one of the leaders of the largest slave rebellion in the Vale do Paraíba.

<sup>119</sup> Here, I am specifically thinking about how my perceptions of both Santa Eufrasiá and Cachoeira Grande might have been quite different if I had done more research beforehand, particularly regarding the tours and tour guides. The discussion section will elaborate on this in greater detail.

as a tourist, and second, to gather as much information as possible for later analysis, as a researcher. In my role as “tourist-as-researcher” (Farkic, 2021) the focus of my data collection was both external and internal. In other words, I aimed to record not just what I saw and heard, but also what I thought and felt. Before, during, and after each tour, I engaged in unstructured observation of the physical landscape, structures, and artifacts, as well as of the tour guide and other visitors. I had informal conversations, but I did not conduct interviews or surveys.<sup>120</sup> I documented my experience at each site through photographs and notes.

Later, I used these materials to draft a detailed account of my time at each fazenda. I used the digital timestamps of my photos to reconstruct the timing of each tour. Following this initial writeup, I identified any areas that needed further clarification or context. Then, I consulted external sources to fill in or verify information where possible. For example, the documentation contained in the Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense, which includes a basic map of each property and floor plans for the main house, helped in recalling the spatial layout of each site and tour. Websites such as YouTube, TripAdvisor, and Google Maps were also valuable sources of complementary information.

Before and after my visit to Vassouras, I conducted extensive bibliographic research in both English and Portuguese. This included an in-depth review of the literature on plantation tourism in the United States, which forms the theoretical and methodological basis of my own study. I also consulted a variety of primary and secondary sources, mostly from Brazilian archives and publications, as part of my historical research on the Paraíba Valley. All of this information helped to add context and depth to my understanding of the research topic.

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<sup>120</sup> This was primarily due to time constraints. In the future, I believe it would be extremely valuable to conduct more in-depth research using other methods of museum ethnography (interviews and participant observation) at these plantation sites.

After organizing and verifying the data collected during the site visits, I engaged in a process of content analysis.<sup>121</sup> The content being evaluated was primarily visual (i.e. the plantation landscapes and artifacts) and textual (i.e. the tour guide's narration and any other texts at the site). The data also included a spatial and temporal aspect (i.e. the layout, order and timing of stops on the tour). My interpretive framework draws inspiration from the work of various scholars in geography, public history, museum studies, and other fields. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of Rose (2004), Modlin (2008), Giovannetti (2009), Simmons (2017), Araujo (2021), and Tomich et al. (2021) in shaping my approach to analyzing the spatial, visual, and textual narratives at each plantation.

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<sup>121</sup> Content analysis is defined by Grincheva (2018) as “[A] qualitative research technique based on interpreting and coding textual, visual, or audio material through a systematic evaluation [which] aims to interpret raw qualitative data to produce meaningful knowledge about a specific social or cultural phenomenon.” (120)

## Chapter 4: Findings

As we read what is written on the land, finding accounts of the past, predictions of the future, and comments on the present, we discover that there are many interwoven strands to each story, offering several possible interpretations.

– *May Theilgaard Watts, Reading the Landscape: An Adventure in Ecology (1962)*<sup>122</sup>

This chapter details the findings of my research on the historical narratives presented by two coffee plantations in the Vale do Café. Before delving into the description of the tours, I provide a brief overview of each plantation's location, early history, and other relevant contextual information. This was compiled based on the site visits and secondary research. The remainder of the chapter describes my experience participating in each of the plantation tours. First, I highlight some of my initial observations about each of the tour guides, as well as the other tourists. Next, I present a basic overview of each tour from start to finish, making note of the locations, timing, and content. Specific attention is paid to the three aspects of my analysis: physical landscape, material culture, and narration by the tour guide. At certain points, I also include some of my thoughts and feelings while I was on the tour. I elaborate on the significance of these observations in the next chapter.

### Site Histories

Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was founded in about 1830 by Commander Ezequiel de Araújo Padilha and his brother Pedro Petra Padilha, both from the municipality of Barbacena, Minas

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<sup>122</sup> May Theilgaard Watts, *Reading the Landscape: An Adventure in Ecology* (Macmillan, 1962), <https://books.google.com/books?id=UxUjyQEACAAJ>.



Gerais.<sup>123</sup> Described as “a prominent farmer and knight of the Order of the Rose,” Ezequiel was a member of the Municipal Chamber of Vassouras between the years of 1849-1852 and 1861-1864. The extended Araujo Padilha clan became one of the most prominent plantation-owning families of Vassouras.<sup>124</sup>

The principal crop grown at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was coffee, supplemented by sugarcane.<sup>125</sup> The website of the company that supervised the restoration of the site states that

The farm experienced long periods of development and stagnation in its history.

Production peaked between 1850 and 1870, when Padilha invested massively in production and the farm's infrastructure. After his death, the family struggled to keep up with production and expenses, even mortgaging the farm in 1885, a process that coincided with the bankruptcy of the Vale do Café.<sup>126</sup>

Fazenda Santa Eufrásia had several owners until it was ultimately purchased by Colonel Horácio José de Lemos, also of Minas Gerais, in 1905. The fazenda was designated as a heritage site by the Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN, or the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute) in 1970. The current property owner—the great-granddaughter of Colonel Lemos—assumed responsibility for the property in 2001. The property was completely restored between 2018 and 2019, a process documented in the book “Fazenda Santa Eufrásia: A restauração de um patrimônio” (“Fazenda Santa Eufrásia: The restoration of a heritage”).<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> “Fazenda Santa Eufrásia,” Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense, Maio 2008, <https://www.institutocidadeviva.org.br/inventarios/?p=537>.

<sup>124</sup> Stanley Stein, *Vassouras: A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850-1900: The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society*, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957), 16, 121.

<sup>125</sup> Roselene de Cássia Coelho Martins, “Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, Vassouras,” in *Dicionário histórico do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense*, by Irenilda Cavalcanti and Neusa Fernandes, Vassouras: espaço e tempo (Ihgv, 2016).

<sup>126</sup> “FAZENDA SANTA EUFRÁSIA.,” Urbanacon, 2019, <https://www.urbanacon.com/copia-crab-1>.

<sup>127</sup> “Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.”

Similar to Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, Fazenda Cachoeira Grande was established by an elite family from Minas Gerais in the first decades of the 19th century. The lands that would become the fazenda were first occupied in 1820 by Coronel Custódio Ferreira Leite, who migrated from the municipality of São João del-Rei, Minas Gerais. The Leite Ribeiros were one of the wealthiest and most influential families of Minas Gerais, and they continued this legacy by occupying massive tracts of land in Rio de Janeiro beginning in the early 19th century. Custódio, along with his brother Joaquim Leite Ribeiro, was among the primary benefactors of the Estrada da Policia, a new road linking Minas Gerais with the ports of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>128</sup>

In 1830, the lands of the future Fazenda Cachoeira Grande were given to Custódio's nephew, Francisco José Teixeira Leite, upon Francisco's marriage to his cousin, Maria Esméria Leite Ribeiro. According to the Cachoeira Grande website, "It wasn't the largest fazenda in the region, occupying only 1.125 hectares, but it was the beginning of the immense fortune of the future Baron of Vassouras."<sup>129</sup> The Teixeira Leites became the most powerful family in Vassouras during the coffee era, a fact widely noted by historians such as Stanley Stein (1957).

During its first decades of operation, Fazenda Cachoeira Grande mainly produced coffee. However, this was replaced by other crops, primarily rice, following the death of Maria Esméria Leite Ribeiro in 1850. The fazenda became known for "arroz de cachoeira" ("waterfall rice") processed with hydraulic machines powered by the property's waterfall. In 1851, Francisco married another cousin, Ana Alexandrina Teixeira Leite. The Teixeira Leites moved their primary residence to the urban center of Vassouras, coming to Fazenda Cachoeira Grande on the weekends.

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<sup>128</sup> "História. Fazenda Cachoeira Grande," Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.fazendacachoeiragrande.com.br/Fazenda/Historia.html>.

<sup>129</sup> Translation by author. "História. Fazenda Cachoeira Grande."

Similar to Santa Eufrásia and other fazendas in the region, Cachoeira Grande suffered the effects of the collapse of the coffee economy at the end of the 19th century. In 1940, the fazenda was acquired by Mário Mondovo, a Jewish Italian refugee fleeing persecution during World War II. In 1987, Mondovo sold the property to Francesco Vergara Caffarelli, a businessman and art collector from Rome. Fazenda Cachoeira Grande underwent extensive restoration between 1988 and 1992, and opened to the public for tours in 1996. The current owner, Caffarelli's wife, resides on the property.<sup>130</sup>



Figure 17. The front of the *casa grande* at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.



Figure 18. The front of the *casa grande* at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande.

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<sup>130</sup> “História. Fazenda Cachoeira Grande.”

## Tour Guides and Tourists

Upon arriving at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, I introduced myself to the tour guide, who was also the property owner. I explained that I was conducting research about tourism and the representation of slavery at fazendas in the Vale do Café. I chatted with her and some of the other tourists as we waited for the rest of the group to arrive. Our conversation was primarily in Portuguese, although the tour guide also spoke some English. She shared that she had spent 21 years in the United States, during which she worked in the hospitality and tourism industry. She inherited the fazenda in 2001 and has given tours ever since.

The tour guide at Santa Eufrásia was an older, white woman of European descent. She was wearing period clothing from the mid-1800s, specifically an outfit that would have been typical for a woman of the slave-owning class. In other words, the tour guide was dressed as a *sinhá*—in colloquial Brazilian Portuguese, a term used by slaves to refer to their masters.<sup>131</sup>

At Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, I introduced myself to the tour guide and explained my research, as I had done at the previous site. I had the opportunity to converse in Portuguese with the tour guide and some of the other tourists while waiting for the tour to begin. In contrast to Santa Eufrásia, the tour guide at Cachoeira Grande was not the property owner or manager. The tour guide explained that she was a historian and teacher by profession, and has been working as a tour guide in Vassouras since 2000. She gives tours of several fazendas and the historical center of Vassouras.

At Cachoeira Grande, the tour guide was a middle-aged Afro-Brazilian woman. While on this particular day, she was not in costume, I later learned that she often dresses up in period clothing while giving tours of the fazendas and the historical center of Vassouras. Specifically,

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<sup>131</sup> “Sinhás,” Dicio, Dicionário Online de Português, accessed June 6, 2024, <https://www.dicio.com.br/sinhas/>.

she dresses as one of two real historical characters: Laura do Congo or Marianna Crioula, two Black women protagonists in the resistance to slavery during the 19th century.

At Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, there were seven people on the tour including myself. The group at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande was slightly larger, with 18 people total. All of the people who had been on the Santa Eufrásia tour were also at the Cachoeira Grande tour.<sup>132</sup> Based on my observations and brief conversations, I was able to get a general sense of the other tourists' demographics. Most were couples or families, and appeared to be of predominantly white or mixed ancestry. Besides me, all of the tourists were from Brazil. The majority were visiting from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo states, with a few from other parts of the country.



Figure 19. The tour guide (center) and group at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.

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<sup>132</sup> I also saw some of the tourists from both tours at the Museu Casa da Hera and around the historical center of Vassouras. While this reflects both the small size of the city and the availability of tours for that particular weekend, it also suggests that a typical weekend trip to Vassouras might involve visiting one to two fazendas as well as the main sites in the historical center.

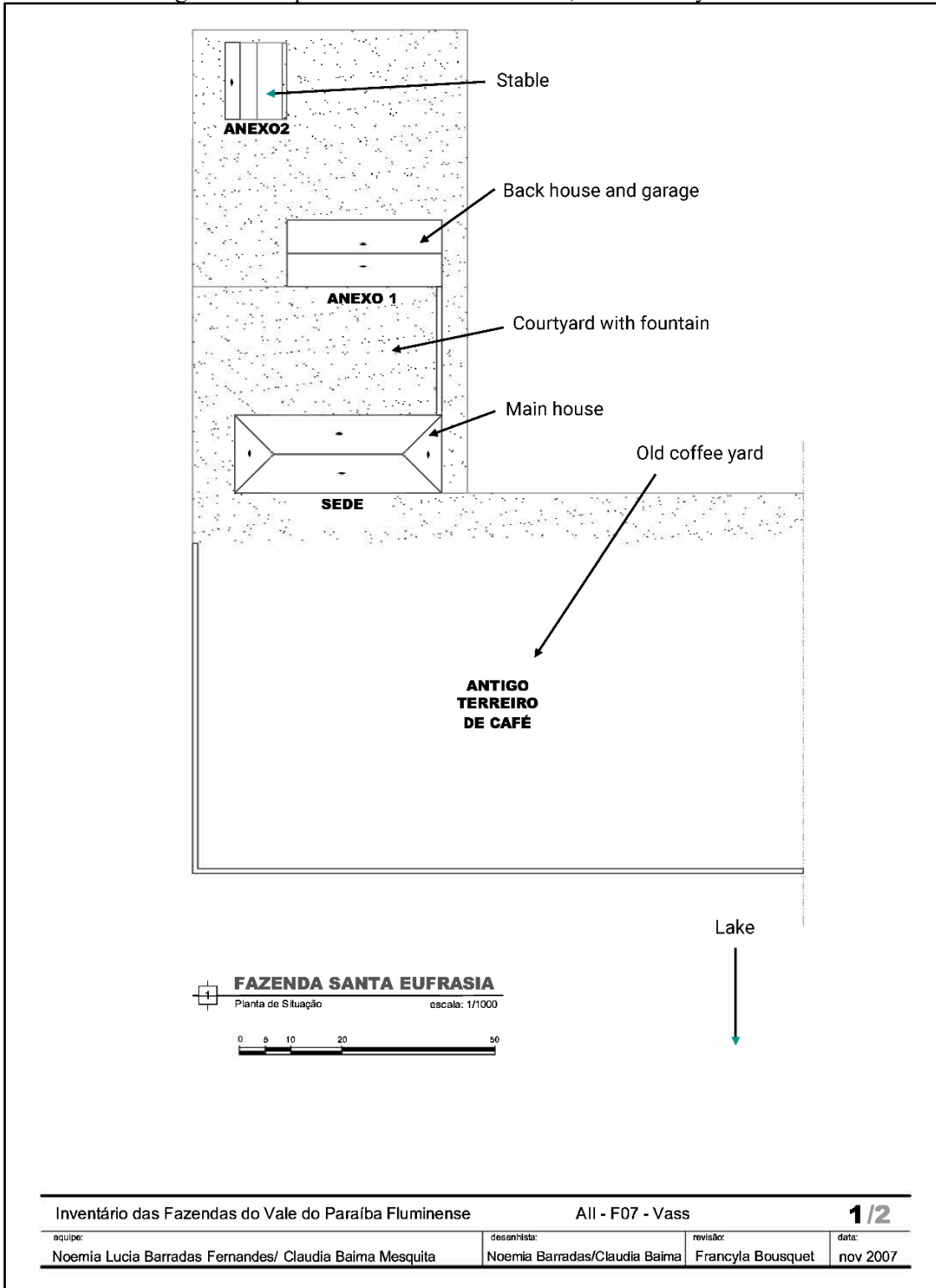
## **Tour #1: Fazenda Santa Eufrásia**

The tour of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia began on the lawn outside of the big house at 10:15 am next to the *terreiro*. (Fig. 22) The tour guide started with a brief overview of the fazenda's early history, summarized at the beginning of this chapter. From here, she led the group along a path toward a small lake. As we walked, the tour guide shared some stories about the founder and original owner of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, Commander Ezequiel de Araujo Padilha. Pausing at the water's edge, the tour guide mentioned that Padilha was a man of extravagant taste; he once had gondolas imported from Venice for outings on the lake.

Most of the narration during the outdoor portion of the tour was focused on the tour guide's own family, who acquired the property more than a hundred years ago. The tour guide stated that her great-grandfather purchased the property in 1905, and by 1928, he owned 42 fazendas in the region. He had eight grandchildren and gave a fazenda to each of them. This is how Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was passed to the tour guide's aunt and father. The tour guide shared some more family lore, the details of which I do not fully recall, although I do remember a note of pride in the tour guide's voice when mentioning that her aunt spoke French and her father spoke English.

From the lake, the group proceeded to the *cafezal*, a small grove of coffee bushes. (Fig. 24) The tour guide explained that the property had once been almost completely covered in coffee plants, but by the time her great-grandfather bought it, coffee was no longer profitable. He decided to burn everything and convert the property into a cattle ranch, producing meat for export to Europe. The tour guide planted these coffee bushes after taking responsibility for the property about 20 years ago. Today the fazenda produces coffee on a relatively small scale, with around 9,000 coffee plants that are harvested annually.

Figure 20. Map of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, annotated by author.



Source: Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense (2007).



Figure 21. Aerial map of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia labeled with the *casa grande*, *terreiro*, *cafezal*, and lake. Map by author.



Figure 22. The *terreiro* in front of the *casa grande*. The tour started at the house and followed the path on the right.



Figure 23. Stone ruins of the stable near the *casa grande*.



It was about 30 minutes into the tour and, thus far, the tour guide had not mentioned slavery. We wove between the towering bushes, dried leaves crunching beneath our feet. Pausing, the tour guide invited visitors to touch and pick the coffee berries. I snapped a small sprig off one of the bushes and twirled it in my hand. (Fig. 25) Here, among the coffee bushes, seemed like an appropriate time and place for the tour guide to bring up the topic of slavery.

Rolling a bright red coffee berry between my thumb and forefinger, I thought about the people who had once planted and harvested this coffee–enslaved African laborers. I waited expectantly, hoping the tour guide would share more information. But all that I heard was the sound of birds and crickets. The tour guide did not mention anything about slavery or the enslaved. We turned back toward the casa grande.



Figure 24. The *cafezal* at Santa Eufrásia.



Figure 25. Coffee berries (*coffea arabica*).

On our way to the house, I noticed a large sign with six paragraphs of text in Portuguese. (Figs. 59-60) I didn't have time to read much of it, but I saw that it said something about slavery and took a photo to look at later. The sign began with the following sentences:

In the 19th century, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was the scene of what is now considered a crime against humanity: the enslavement of Africans, many of whom were kidnapped as children. It is estimated that around one million Africans who survived the crossing went up into the mountains to work in the coffee plantations of the Paraíba Valley.<sup>133</sup>

We walked past the sign, but the tour guide did not stop or provide any explanation. Notably, this was the only occasion during the tour where the words “enslaved” or “slavery” were explicitly used. These were mentioned in the text of the sign, not by the tour guide.

In fact, the only indication that enslaved people had ever existed at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was a comment made in passing, somewhere between the lake and the casa grande.<sup>134</sup> At one point, the tour guide gestured vaguely with her hand, stating something along the lines of, “there was a structure [here], I can't call it a house, it was a *senzala* and *tulha*” (slave quarters and a barn).<sup>135</sup> (Fig. 23) Exactly *where* she was referring to was not clear to me at that moment (or later), but since she volunteered no further information, I declined to ask.

At about 11:00 am, 45 minutes into the tour, we reached the outside of the big house, where we stopped at a courtyard area between the back of the house and another building.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> My translation. Original Portuguese: “A Fazenda Santa Eufrásia foi palco, no século XIX, do que hoje é considerado crime contra a humanidade: a escravização de africanos, muitos sequestrados ainda crianças. Estima-se que cerca de um milhão de africanos sobreviventes da travessia tenham subido para a serra para o trabalho forçado nas fazendas de café do Vale do Paraíba.”

<sup>134</sup> This brief mention was so unmemorable that I could not recall the exact moment or place where the reference was made, even shortly after the tour.

<sup>135</sup> My translation. Original Portuguese: “tinha uma construção, não posso chamar de casa, era senzala e tulha”.

<sup>136</sup> According to the Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense, this building is the residence of the property owner.

Here, pausing for dramatic effect, the tour guide turned on a spigot that connected to a stone fountain. To the delight of the group, water sprayed into the air. As I watched the reactions of the tourists and tour guide, it occurred to me that perhaps we all had different expectations for the tour. The demonstration of the fountain was clearly a moment meant to entertain us. But to me it felt like a distraction, drawing our attention towards certain parts of the plantation's history and away from others. Still pondering the excerpt from the sign we had passed just minutes earlier, I wondered why this fountain had received more attention.

The next stop was a covered garage area which housed a variety of artifacts, including agricultural tools, carts, and machines for processing coffee. (Figs. 26-29) Along with the farm equipment there were several antique vehicles from distinct time periods: a *liteira* (litter, or wooden seat mounted on two poles, also known as a sedan chair), a couple of black carriages, and an old light blue Peugeot. Here was another moment where I hoped to learn more about the historical context of these objects. The wooden carts and metal tools looked incredibly heavy; I tried to imagine the enslaved laborers who would have used them. What kinds of tasks were involved in planting, harvesting, and processing the coffee at the plantation? I was also curious about the *liteira*, which would have been carried by slaves. (Fig. 30) Who did it belong to? The tour guide briefly demonstrated one of the machines and mentioned that the Peugeot belonged to her late aunt. Beyond this, she did not elaborate further on the artifacts. The tour continued.



Figure 26. The fountain in the courtyard.



Figure 27. The Peugeot and one of the carriages.



Figure 28. A wooden cart.



Figure 29. The *liteira* (litter).

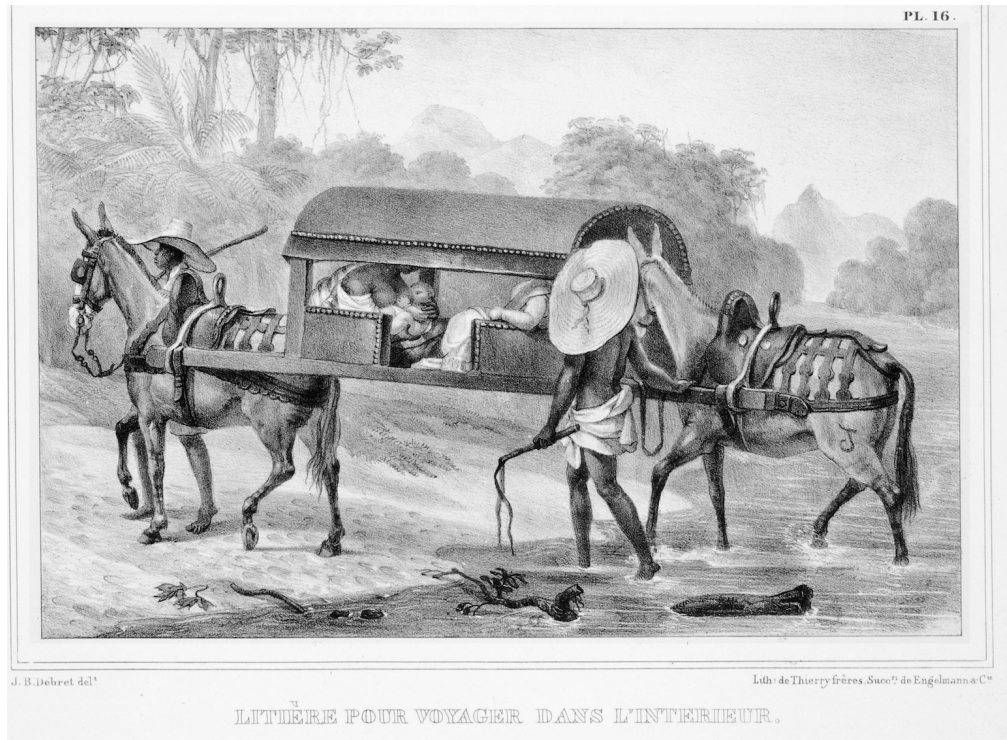


Figure 30. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Litière pour voyager dans l’intérieur” (“Litter for traveling in the interior”).<sup>137</sup>

We entered the main house at about 11:30 am, an hour and fifteen minutes into the tour. The first stops inside the house were the living rooms, bedrooms, and dining room.<sup>138</sup> Here, the focus of the tour was interpreting the material culture of the spaces and objects that would have been used by the plantation owner and his family. Particular attention was given to the materials and provenance of the furnishings: the original hardwood floors; a large, ornate mirror from a wealthy estate in Rio de Janeiro; an imposing wardrobe made of solid jacaranda wood. (Fig. 31) The tour guide explained that most of the furniture pieces were authentic to the 19th century, but some had come from other estates in the region. Each of these rooms also contained smaller

<sup>137</sup> In *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil* (1834-1839). Public domain. <https://artvee.com/dl/retour-a-la-ville-dun-propietaire-de-chacara-litiere-pour-voayer-dans-linterieur#00>

<sup>138</sup> The floor plan for the main house includes several living spaces that I have grouped together here as “living rooms”, including the largest “quarto” (“main room”) and the “sala de música” (“music room”). Similarly, the multiple “offices” and “rooms” in the floor plan are grouped in my description as “bedrooms”.

objects, ranging from everyday items (e.g. clothing, books, writing utensils) to those reserved for special occasions (e.g. silver, crystal, jewelry). At several points, the tour guide stopped to comment on these in detail. For example, slipping on a pair of silk gloves, she picked up a small beaded purse and showed us how it would have been used to hold a dance card. In the dining room, a small table held about a dozen silver utensils. (Fig. 32) The tour guide picked these up one by one, explaining the unique function of each piece of cutlery.



Figure 31. Antique table and mirror.



Figure 32. Silver utensils.

The walls and surfaces of the rooms inside the casa grande were largely absent of decoration, with two major exceptions. First, I noticed numerous images of the previous property owners. These black-and-white photographs of different sizes were displayed in frames throughout the living room, dining room, and bedrooms. (Fig. 33; 58) Second, in the dining room, I observed a series of eight framed art prints. I immediately recognized these as reproductions of the lithographs of Jean-Baptiste Debret, a French artist known for his depictions of slave life in Rio de Janeiro. The tour guide pointed out some of the family photos, but said nothing about the Debret prints. (Figs. 34; 54-56)



Figure 33. Photos showing previous generations of the tour guide's family, labeled with names.



Figure 34. Silver service with eight framed prints by Jean-Baptiste Debret in the background.

One of the final stops inside the big house was the kitchen. (Fig. 35-38) In contrast to the artifacts in the living and entertaining areas of the house, the objects in the kitchen alluded to the labor that was once performed there. These included crockery, cooking utensils, baskets, brooms, and a large mortar and pestle carved out of wood. Small details, such as the logs inside the wood-fired oven and the pots on the stove, almost created the impression of a moment frozen in time. Again, I thought about the enslaved individuals who would have worked in the kitchen, preparing all of the food for the residents and visitors. This was another moment when I hoped that the tour guide might provide more information. However, there was no narration of the objects or personal details about the people who would have used them.



Figure 35. The kitchen at Santa Eufrásia.



Figure 36. A wooden mortar and pestle.





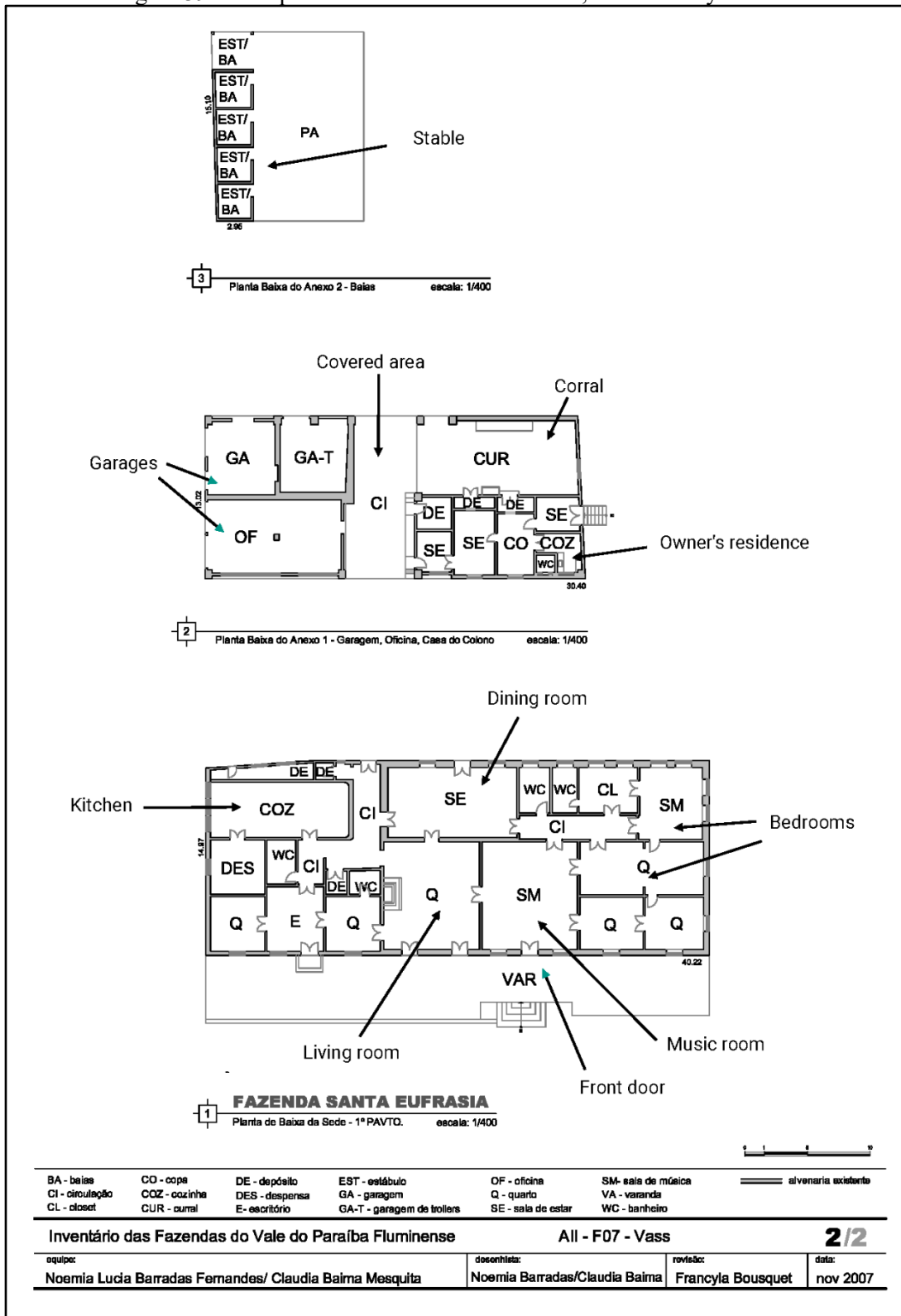
Figure 37. Sacks of dried grains and coffee beans.



Figure 38. Cotton, dried leaves, and coffee beans on a tray.

The tour of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia ended at 12:00 pm with a coffee reception in the sitting room of the big house. The lit fireplace, antique servingware, and classical music playing in the background helped to create an “authentic” atmosphere, perhaps intended to transport visitors back in time to an earlier era. I took this opportunity to peruse the impressive collection of books and pamphlets on the table, most of them focusing on the history, art, architecture, and gastronomy of the Paraíba Valley. At 12:30 pm, I departed for Vassouras.

Figure 39. Floor plan of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, annotated by author.



Source: Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense (2007).

## Tour #2: Fazenda Cachoeira Grande

My first impression of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, the second plantation, began with the enormous metal gates at the edge of the property. From this, I quickly got the feeling that this estate would be more opulent than Santa Eufrásia. Just inside the gates, I stopped to observe the view. To my right, there was a lush ravine filled with trees. In front of me, there was a long cobblestone driveway lined with palm trees and green metal lamps. Straight ahead, the casa grande was unmistakable—a pale pink, rectangular building perched strategically in the center of the property. In the distance was a brown grassy hill, its nearly bald surface contrasting with the rest of the thick tree cover. (Fig. 40)



Figure 40. The view from just inside the gates at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande.



Figure 41. The lake.

The meeting spot for the tour was next to a small lake, similar to the one at Santa Eufrásia. (Fig. 41) The clear blue sky and green trees were reflected almost perfectly on the glassy water. It was a tranquil scene, but I felt a sense of unease thinking about what might be hidden beneath the peaceful surface (both figuratively and literally). My experience at Santa Eufrásia had only confirmed the suspicion I had first felt when reading the plantation websites

months earlier: there was little acknowledgement that slavery had ever existed there. I wondered what information about slavery, if any, would be provided at Cachoeira Grande.

The tour of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande started at 3:00 pm. We met under a covered area by the lake and sat in a circle while the tour guide provided an overview of the fazenda's early history. During this introduction, the tour guide adopted the persona of a historical character, going around the circle and interacting with each of the visitors as if we were guests in the 19th century. For example, she invited one of the visitors to dance, and conversed with others about their journey to the fazenda. In this aspect, the tour at Cachoeira Grande began similarly to the tour at Santa Eufrásia. Both tour guides included an element of performance in their introductions and presented information about the fazendas' founders. The first notable point of divergence, however, was that the tour guide at Cachoeira Grande explicitly acknowledged that the fazenda had relied on the labor of enslaved people.

At about 3:45 pm, we began walking from the lake toward the casa grande. The paved driveway became a bridge. On the left side was the lake; on the right, a channel of water spilled over a series of stone terraces, forming a waterfall.<sup>139</sup> (Fig. 42) The pool at the bottom gave way to a relatively flat area covered in grass and bushes, forming a small valley with the hill on the opposite side. I observed what looked like ruins of some stone structures poking out of the overgrown grass below. The tour guide explained that these were the remains of the old *engenho* (mill), which was used to produce "arroz de cachoeira" ("waterfall rice").

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<sup>139</sup> This is also the estate's namesake (Cachoeira Grande translates literally to "Big Waterfall"). Stein (1957, p. 22) explains that many fazendas were located near streams and waterfalls in order to take advantage of water power for machinery. Most fazendas were named after a type of tree (e.g. Pau Grande), a patron saint of the founder (e.g. São Fernando), or a topographical feature, such as "Cachoeira" ("waterfall") or "Riberão" ("stream").



Figure 42. The view from the top of the waterfall. The ruins of the *engenho* are below on the left.

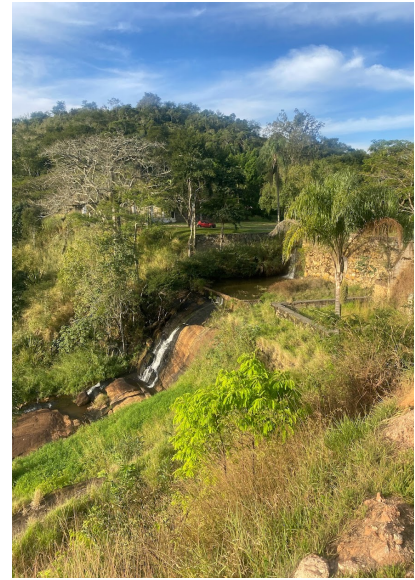


Figure 43. The waterfall from the other side.

We stopped at a viewpoint on the other side of the waterfall, near the *casa grande*. (Fig. 43) The tour guide pointed out how the strategic layout of the property enabled the plantation owner and overseers to keep a close eye on the enslaved laborers. From here, there was a nearly unobstructed view of the valley, the *engenho*, and the surrounding hills. In addition to explaining this strategy of control, the tour guide highlighted various forms of resistance on the part of the enslaved. Singing and clapping, she performed for us a *ponto de jongo*—a short song meant to accompany a *jongo*, a rhythmic dance practiced by Afro-descendant communities in southeastern Brazil.<sup>140</sup> The last two verses went something like this: “...*E avisa na casa grande / Que vai ter jongo no terreiro!*” (English translation: “...*And tell the big house / there’s going to be jongo in the yard!*”)

<sup>140</sup> Suzel Ana Reily, *Review of Memória do Jongo: As Gravações Históricas de Stanley J. Stein: Vassouras 1949*, by Silvia Hunold Lara and Gustavo Pacheco, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009): 377–79, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27744135>.



Figure 44. Aerial map of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande labeled with the lake, waterfall, old *engenho*, and *casa grande*.

Approaching the *casa grande*, the tour guide pointed out a few interesting visual details. The main house was constructed in the shape of a T, and each side of the driveway was lined with darker paving stones forming a pattern of repeated X shapes. Both letters, T and X, could also be seen in the grilles of the windows. She explained that these were all allusions to the plantation owner's surname, Teixeira. The windows—all 70 of them—were also an expression of the owner's high economic status due to the high cost of glass. (*Fig. 45-46*)



Figure 45. The main entrance to the casa grande. The letters T and X (for Teixeira) can be seen in the pavingstones, windows, and shape of the house.

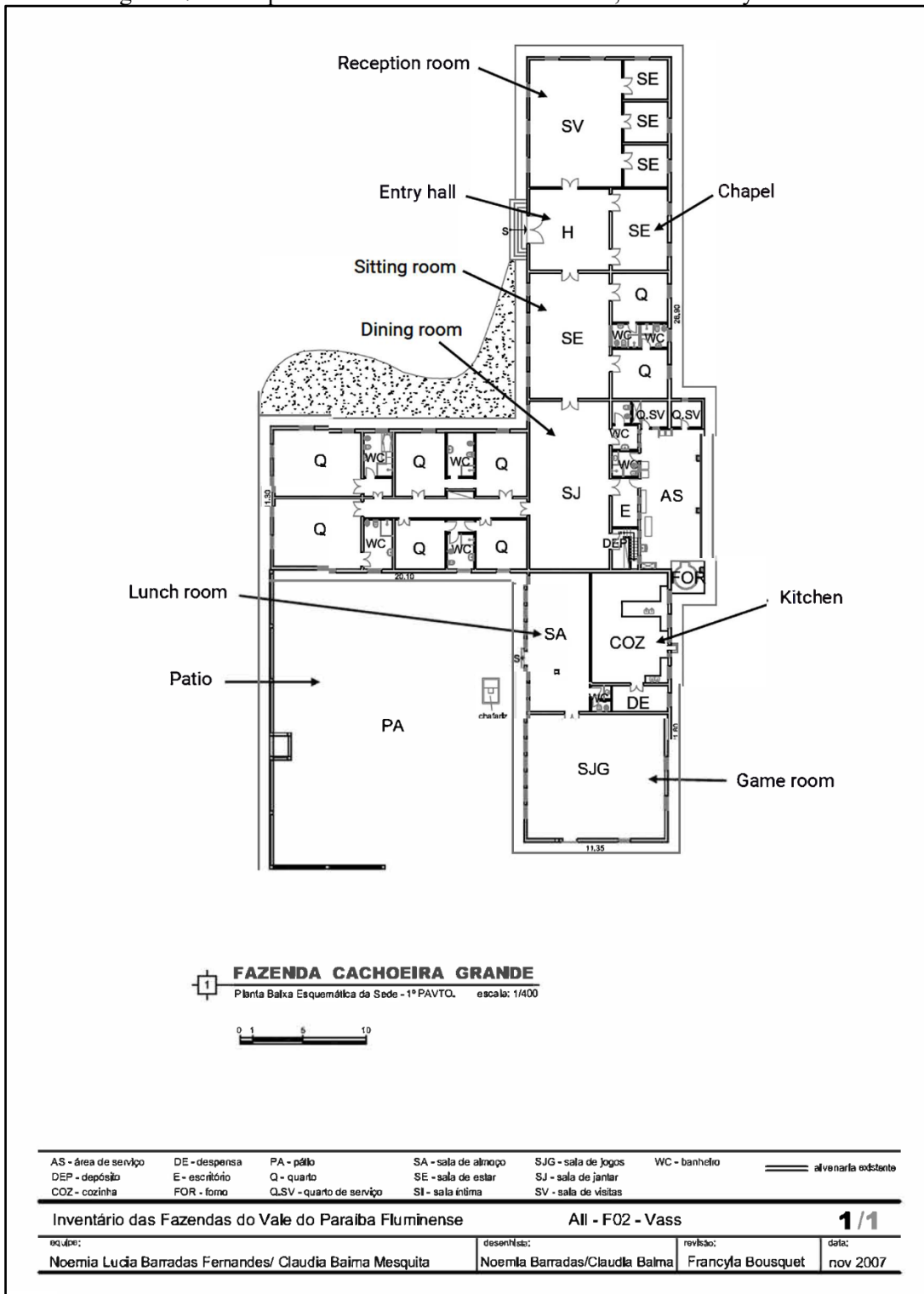


Figure 46. Detail of the windows.

At 4:10, just over an hour into the tour, we reached the tall burgundy doors of the casa grande. The tour guide and tourists waited expectantly for the property manager, who appeared to be a middle-aged white man, to make his way to the front of the group. We all watched as he pulled out an enormous key, turned the lock, and pushed the doors open. The dramatic unlocking of the doors reminded me of the moment at Santa Eufrásia when the tour guide turned on the water fountain.

Once we arrived at the casa grande, the remainder of the tour at Cachoeira Grande was similar to that of Santa Eufrásia in several aspects. The time spent inside the house was relatively short, just thirty minutes out of the two-hour-long tour. Inside the casa grande, the tour narrative was almost exclusively focused on the artwork, furniture, and former plantation owners. There was no further mention of slavery or the enslaved once we had entered the big house.

Figure 47. Floor plan of Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, annotated by author.



Source: Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense (2007).



Just inside the door, the tour guide explained that during the coffee era, the level of access that visitors had to the *casa grande* depended on their social status and relationship to the Baron. Strangers or acquaintances who came to do business were directed to the left wing of the house, which was the reception area. If a visitor needed to stay overnight, they would stay in one of the small, sparse windowless rooms, locked inside until morning for security purposes. In contrast, family and close friends were allowed into the more intimate areas of the house, such as the bedrooms, lunch room, and game room.

The first stops inside the *casa grande* of Cachoeira Grande were the entryway and chapel, where the tour guide pointed out several *quadras cusqueñas* (colonial-era paintings from the Cuzco school). (Fig. 48-49) One was of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, the patron saint of Vassouras and of Portugal; the other was of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. Inside the chapel were several pieces of wooden furniture, including a prayer rail, lectern, bench, and an intricately carved Baroque-style altarpiece with matching candleholders. Looking around the chapel, I was reminded of the historical role of the Catholic Church in early Brazil. Beginning with the enslavement of indigenous peoples in the 16th century, numerous Catholic clergy members participated in slavery, defended the slave trade, and/or were silent on the issue of slavery for more than three centuries.<sup>141</sup> This was not mentioned by the tour guide.

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<sup>141</sup> Conrad, *Children of God's Fire*, 152–53.



Figure 48. One of the *quadras cusqueñas*.



Figure 49. The chapel inside the house.

The next stop was the so-called *sala dos homens* (“men’s room”) or reception room, where the Baron would meet with important visitors. (Fig. 50) This was the most lavishly decorated space inside the *casa grande*, besides perhaps the dining room. A strong European influence was evident in every detail of the decor, from the elaborately carved wooden furniture to the sparkling crystal chandelier. Like the tour guide had at Santa Eufrásia, the tour guide explained the origin of several of the items in the room. These included a woven rug imported from China, a pianoforte from Hamburg, Germany, and a crystal chandelier originally from Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Austria.

Adjacent to the reception room were three smaller rooms. These had all been set up with various objects and pieces of furniture, such as a writing desk, another German piano, and a grandfather clock. The tour guide pointed out a chair made of out jacaranda wood, which she said had belonged to Dom Pedro II, the emperor of Brazil from 1831 to 1889.

In comparison to the casa grande at Santa Eufrásia, where the walls were largely bare, most of the walls at Cachoeira Grande were adorned with artwork. The majority of works that I observed were religious, still life, or landscape paintings. There were also a few images of the various former owners, including the Baron Francisco José Teixeira Leite (1804-1884) and the Baroness Ana Alexandrina Teixeira Leite (1834-1880), as well as several framed photographs, presumably of the current owner's family.

The next stop was the dining room. (*Fig. 51*) This was another elegantly decorated space, with a long dining table covered in candlesticks and an enormous crystal chandelier. Here, the tour guide recounted the story of a very important day for Fazenda Cachoeira Grande: September 18, 1884, when the fazenda hosted a banquet for Dona Isabel, the Conde D'Eu, and other members of the imperial nobility.<sup>142</sup> By this time, the fazenda had been passed down to Maria Esméria Teixeira, the daughter of Francisco José Teixeira Leite.<sup>143</sup> The tour guide showed us an original menu from the dinner, which was clearly a great source of pride for Fazenda Cachoeira Grande. In addition to being part of the tour, the dinner was mentioned in a framed poster in another room of the house and on the fazenda's website. Today, the fazenda occasionally hosts candlelight dinners and other events.

Before leaving the dining room, the tour guide had us gather around an antique wooden phonograph in the corner. The tour guide demonstrated the adjustable volume by opening the top, then each of the sides, filling the room with an operatic aria. Reflecting back on this part of the tour, the demonstration of the phonograph felt like another moment of "performance" meant

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<sup>142</sup> Dona Isabel (official title: Princess Imperial of Brazil and Countess of Eu) was the daughter of Emperor Pedro II. Her husband was the Conde D'Eu (Prince Gaston of Orleans and Count of Eu). Princess Isabel is best known for signing the *Lei Aurea* (Golden Law), emancipating all slaves in Brazil.

<sup>143</sup> Maria's husband, Antonio Lazzarini, happened to be Princess Isabel's physician.

to entertain the tourists with an object that had no relevance to the historical period that the fazenda represents.<sup>144</sup>



Figure 50. The reception room.



Figure 51. The dining room.

The final stop on the tour was the kitchen, which used to be the pantry. Similar to the kitchen at Santa Eufrásia, I hoped that the tour guide would share more information about the enslaved people who would have worked inside the casa grande. However, the narration was focused on the function and furnishings of the kitchen, not the people who prepared the food. The tour guide explained that the huge floor-to-ceiling cabinets had been restored from the original building. The lower part of the cabinets once held large quantities of grains (450 kilograms or 992 pounds in each container) including rice, beans, and corn. The tour guide demonstrated a mechanism to dispense the grains from the bottom of each container. The upper

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<sup>144</sup> When I later researched this phonograph, I was surprised to find out that it was made by the Victor Talking Machine Company, an American recording company and phonograph manufacturer. This standing floor model was likely manufactured between 1913 and 1925, long after the “golden age” of coffee in the Vale do Café.

part of the cabinet was divided vertically into seven sections: one set of dishes for each day of the week. There was no mention of the slaves who would have worked in this space.

The tour of Cachoeira Grande ended in the game room, which was originally the kitchen. Measuring 144 square meters (1,550 square feet), the space is now used as a reception area for hosting musical performances and other events. We were greeted by the property owner, an elegantly dressed older woman, who performed a piece of classical music for us on the piano. The tour concluded with coffee and cake at about 4:45 pm. I lingered inside the house and chatted for a few minutes with the tour guide and other guests. Outside on the patio, I paused to look around one more time, taking in the last moments of daylight. (Fig. 52-53) The scene was hauntingly beautiful. I watched the sun slip behind the clouds as I walked back toward the front gates. I left for Vassouras at 5:15 pm.



Figure 52. Coffee at the end of the tour.



Figure 53. The view of the patio at sunset.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

As important as what museums help us remember is what they help us forget—how they marginalize or even omit historical narratives (Harris 1995). The relative prominence of certain narrative themes at museums instruct the visitor in what (and who) is historically important. – *E. Arnold Modlin Jr., Tales Told on the Tour: Mythic Representations of Slavery by Docents at North Carolina Plantation Museums (2008)*<sup>145</sup>

In this section, I aim to critically analyze the historical narratives that are presented to tourists at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande. Specifically, the following questions will be addressed: To what extent are the lives and labor of the enslaved present in these historical narratives? Which stories are conveyed through the landscapes, material culture, and narration of these sites, and which have been hidden or erased? And finally, what are the ideological effects of these narratives?

Eichstedt and Small (2002) proposed three categories to describe the varying degrees to which plantation museums incorporated slavery into their narratives. The first and lowest level of representation is “symbolic annihilation,” referring to a near-total erasure of slavery from the plantation. This occurs at plantations that “ignore the institution and experience of slavery altogether or treat them in a perfunctory way” and “where slavery and the enslaved are either completely absent or where mention of them is negligible, formalistic, fleeting or perfunctory.”<sup>146</sup> Eichstedt and Small’s criteria for “symbolic annihilation” is when slavery

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<sup>145</sup> Modlin, “Tales Told on the Tour,” 268.

<sup>146</sup> Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery*, 108.

(including the words “slavery,” “enslaved,” “slave,” and its variants) is mentioned three or less times during the plantation tour.<sup>147</sup>

The second level of representation is “marginalization,” where enslavement and enslaved people are mentioned during the tour, but these are not a central part of the site or tour narrative. Eichstedt and Small identified several narrative strategies used by plantations to marginalize the spaces and stories associated with slavery. These include minimization, trivialization and deflection, and segregation. For example, a tour guide might make some references to slavery, but downplay the suffering of the enslaved. A plantation site that has the remains of former slave quarters, but does not include them in the tour (or offers a visit as a separate, optional “add-on” to the regular tour) exemplifies the narrative strategy of segregation.

The third level of representation is “relative incorporation,” which occurs when “the topics of enslavement and those who were enslaved are discussed throughout the tour.”<sup>148</sup> Plantations in this category explicitly and systematically address the institution of slavery, providing detailed information via their exhibits, written materials, and tours.<sup>149</sup>

To what degree has slavery been incorporated into the historical narratives presented to tourists at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande? At Santa Eufrásia, slavery and the enslaved were almost completely missing from the tour narrative, exemplifying the phenomenon of “symbolic annihilation” as defined by Eichstedt and Small (2002). The tour guide made a single, indirect reference to slavery during the two-hour tour when she pointed out the former location of the senzala somewhere near the main house. The only explicit mention of

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<sup>147</sup> Eichstedt and Small, 10.

<sup>148</sup> Eichstedt and Small, 10.

<sup>149</sup> Stephen Small, “Social Mobilization and the Public History of Slavery in the United States,” in *Eurocentrism, Racism and Knowledge: Debates on History and Power in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Marta Araújo and Silvia Rodríguez Maeso (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 236, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137292896\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137292896_13).

slavery was in the text of the sign—which, notably, the tour guide did not acknowledge. At Cachoeira Grande, slavery was incorporated into the tour narrative to a slightly greater degree—but discussion of the topic was still limited, and only occurred during the outside portion of the tour. Once we had entered the *casa grande*, there was no further mention of slavery or the enslaved. Thus, the representation of slavery at Cachoeira Grande is best described as “marginalization” under the typology of Eichstedt and Small (2002).

### **Pacified Landscapes: The Erasure and Marginalization of Enslaved Labor**

Both plantations contained subtle visual evidence of the labor once performed there. But the tour guides varied in the degree to which they presented these features and objects within the historical context of enslavement. At Santa Eufrásia, we met at the *terreiro* (coffee yard), stopped at the *cafezal* (coffee bushes), and we were served cups of coffee inside the *casa grande*. The tour guide talked about the different types of coffee, the large number of coffee plants that once grew there, and the enormous fortune that they had generated. However, she did not make a single mention of the people who actually planted, harvested, dried, and processed all of this coffee.

The tour guide’s silence regarding enslaved labor was particularly striking when we passed the collection of agricultural tools and machinery. The materiality of these objects, which we could see and touch, made it easier to imagine the plantation’s coffee-growing past. But without any narration about the enslaved workers, the tools appeared disembodied and disconnected from the context of their former use. It was as if the coffee had picked and processed itself.

The erasure of enslaved labor is a common theme in the representation of plantation landscapes (Simmons, 2017; Muaze, 2017; Tomich et al., 2021). For example, in an 1850s



painting of a fazenda in Bananal, São Paulo, the artist Jose María Villaronga portrays the plantation as a peaceful country landscape without any slaves. Through the artist's omission of the slaves who worked in the coffee fields, Tomich et al. (2021) explain that

the activity that transformed the natural environment and made possible the wealth of the Paraíba Valley is eliminated from view. Villaronga's plantation landscape thus appears not as produced but as a finished product—a part of the natural order.<sup>150</sup>

In a similar way, the tour guide omitted slavery from her narration of the landscape at Santa Eufrásia, effectively erasing from history the brutal exploitation of land and labor that occurred there. She instead told us stories of outings on the lake, and pointed out natural features such as the centuries-old ficus trees. In doing so, the tour guide presented the fazenda not as a former working landscape, but as a “naturalized, aestheticized, and pacified” landscape devoid of both labor and violence.<sup>151</sup>

The omission of enslaved labor at Santa Eufrásia continued inside the casa grande, where the primary space of work was the kitchen. Here, the objects had clearly been carefully arranged like props in a scene: pots and pans on the stove, a tray filled with dried leaves, coffee beans, and cotton. It seemed that we, the tourists, were meant to use our imaginations to fill in the actors. Without the tour guide connecting the dots for us, however, it was simply another domestic scene, further contributing to the representation of the fazenda as an “idyllic country home absent of laboring bodies.”<sup>152</sup> The tour guide's failure to mention enslaved labor both outside and

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<sup>150</sup> Dale W. Tomich et al., *Reconstructing the Landscapes of Slavery: A Visual History of the Plantation in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 5.

<sup>151</sup> Tomich et al., 11.

<sup>152</sup> Briana Simmons, “Planters and the Enslaved: The Contested Landscapes of Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Coffee Fazendas” (Dissertation, UC Santa Barbara, 2017), 144.

inside the big house exemplifies two of the common plantation myths identified by Modlin (2008): “Silence about the enslaved and slavery,” and “Slavery did not happen here.”<sup>153</sup>

In contrast to the total silence regarding slavery at Santa Eufrásia, the tour guide at Cachoeira Grande acknowledged the labor of enslaved people at several points. At Cachoeira Grande, the outside spaces associated with labor were the waterfall, the *engenho* (mill), and the fields. Without any additional information, these would have seemed insignificant, even aesthetically pleasing parts of the landscape. Unlike at the previous site, however, the tour guide at Cachoeira Grande contextualized these features within the history of slavery at the fazenda. First, at the beginning of the tour, she explicitly introduced the fazenda as a former slaveholding plantation. Later, at the viewpoint by the waterfall, she pointed out the ruins of the *engenho* and explained how the layout of the property enabled the surveillance of enslaved workers. She also sang the *ponto de jongo*, a type of song that the slaves would have sung in the fields. Importantly, by including an example of both exploitation and of resistance, the tour guide did not present the enslaved as passive victims.

Enslaved people were incorporated into the tour of Cachoeira Grande to a greater extent than at Santa Eufrásia. However, this representation did not rise to the level of “relative incorporation” as defined by Eichstedt and Small (2002). Rather than being fully integrated into the tour narrative, the enslaved were mentioned only a few times—and only outside of the *casa grande*, in the spaces associated with agricultural labor. For these reasons, I argue that the tour narrative at Cachoeira Grande exemplified Eichstedt and Small’s second level of representation, “marginalization.” Once we entered the *casa grande*, there were no direct mentions of slavery or the enslaved, similar to the tour at Santa Eufrásia.

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<sup>153</sup> Modlin, “Tales Told on the Tour,” 227.

## **“Faithful Slaves” and “Good Masters”: Trivialization and Deflection inside the Casa Grande**

With the exception of the outside portion of the tour at Cachoeira Grande, both tours used the narrative strategies of “trivialization and deflection” (Eichstedt and Small, 2002) to marginalize slavery within the broader historical narrative of the plantation. According to Eichstedt and Small, trivialization and deflection occur when slavery and the enslaved are mentioned to some extent, “but primarily through mechanisms, phrasing, and images that minimize and distort them,” for example by highlighting “faithful slaves” and “the benevolence of plantation owners.”<sup>154</sup> This can be seen in the narrative constructed for tourists through the displays inside of the casa grande at each fazenda.

First, a powerful visual example of trivialization can be seen in the dining room of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, where there are a series of prints by Jean-Baptiste Debret depicting various scenes of slave labor in Rio de Janeiro. (*Fig. 54-56*) While some of Debret’s other illustrations clearly portray the violence perpetrated against enslaved people (e.g. one entitled “Overseers punishing slaves on a rural estate”), the selected works displayed at Santa Eufrásia show more peaceful scenes, such as “Vendors of milk and grass” and “Barbershop.” With the exception of one scene that shows a group of slaves in chains (“Tobacco shop”), these images represent what Muaze (2017) calls a “‘pacified slavery,’ in which the marks of coercion and violence carved on the bodies of the individuals enslaved are purposefully imperceptible.”<sup>155</sup>

Remarking on the visual representation of slavery in 19th-century paintings and photographs, Tomich et al. (2021) observed that if the theme of labor appears at all, “the scale of

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<sup>154</sup> Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery*, 10.

<sup>155</sup> Mariana De Aguiar Ferreira Muaze, “Violência Apaziguada: Escravidão e Cultivo Do Café Nas Fotografias de Marc Ferrez (1882-1885),” *Revista Brasileira de História* 37, no. 74 (April 27, 2017): 18, <https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-93472017v37n74-02>.

activity is typically reduced, and the scenes appear to be almost pastoral.” Other images of the enslaved are “domesticated and portray an unequal but harmonious community under the benevolent care of the master.”<sup>156</sup> In the Debret prints at Santa Eufrásia, the Black subjects appear as contented laborers who obediently serve their white masters. This visual discourse serves to minimize the violence perpetrated against enslaved people. Furthermore, the images reinforce three more of Modlin’s plantation myths (2008): “[The enslaved] were not slaves; they were ‘servants,’ ‘workers,’ or ‘craftsmen,’” “The faithful slave,” and “The good master.”<sup>157</sup>



Figure 54. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Vendeurs de lait et de capim” (“Vendors of milk and grass”).

<sup>156</sup> Tomich et al., *Reconstructing the Landscapes of Slavery*, 11.

<sup>157</sup> Modlin, “Tales Told on the Tour,” 277.



Figure 55. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Boutique de barbiers” (“Barbershop”).



Figure 56. Debret, Jean-Baptiste, “Marchand de tabac” (“Tobacco shop”), 1834-1839.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>158</sup> In *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil* (1834-1839). Public domain. <https://artvee.com/dl/vendeurs-de-lait-et-de-capim#00>

<https://artvee.com/dl/les-barbiers-ambulants-boutique-de-barbiers#00>

<https://artvee.com/dl/marchand-de-tabac-laveugle-chanteur-marchande-de-pandelos#00>

Throughout the *casa grande* at each plantation, the rooms were filled with visual representations of the *fazendeiros* who brought prosperity to Vassouras. Together with the narration of the tour guide, these objects and images constructed “a discourse of reverence for the Anglo slave owners” (Buzinde and Santos, 2008).<sup>159</sup> At Cachoeira Grande, the more opulent of the two estates, the tour guide pointed out luxury items such as the Baroque paintings, the crystal chandeliers, and the chair that had belonged to Dom Pedro II—all prominent visual markers of the Teixeira Leite family’s wealth and power. At Santa Eufrásia, the tour guide highlighted the silver service, hand-carved furniture, and other items symbolizing the gentility and refinement of the former owners.

At no point did either of the tour guides acknowledge that the *fazendeiros*’ fortunes had been built upon slavery. Instead, they talked about the architecture and furnishings of the *casa grande* in great detail, and entertained tourists with demonstrations like activating the water fountain and playing music on the phonograph. These moments of “performance” served to direct tourists’ attention toward the wealthy lifestyles of the *fazendeiros*, and away from the slavery that made these lifestyles possible. Through these deflective strategies, the tour guides created a narrative of both “admiration and distance,” (Buzinde and Santos, 2008) fostering “a profound sense of respect for the enslavers that amassed great wealth” while simultaneously creating “distance from the reality of oppression through which the riches were obtained.”<sup>160</sup>

This discourse of admiration and distance was subtly reinforced through the images of the *fazendeiros* displayed at each plantation. During the peak of the coffee era, the wealthy *fazendeiros* of Vassouras hired European artists to paint landscapes and portraits for their homes.

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<sup>159</sup> Buzinde and Santos, “Representations of Slavery,” 481.

<sup>160</sup> Buzinde and Santos, “Representations of Slavery,” 481.

Ferraro (2017) explained that such portraits, which “mixed rural and imperial elements in the midst of imagined landscapes,” were an important means by which the fazendeiros constructed their self-image.<sup>161</sup> In addition to landscapes by Facchinetti and Grimm, the walls of Cachoeira Grande featured two framed pictures of the fazenda’s founders (both small, black-and-white reproductions of original portraits). One of these was a painting of Baroness Ana Alexandrina Teixeira Leite by the artist Augusto Müller. (*Fig. 57*) In this portrait, the Baroness appears next to a vase of flowers, with the church and hospital funded by the Teixeira Leites visible in the left background. Rather than one of Vassouras’ most prominent slaveholders, she is represented as a sophisticated and generous benefactor of the municipality.

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<sup>161</sup> Marcelo Rosanova Ferraro, “A arquitetura da escravidão nas cidades do café, vassouras, século XIX” (Mestrado em História Social, São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2017), 189–91, <https://doi.org/10.11606/D.8.2017.tde-14082017-125752>.



Figure 57. Müller, Augusto, “Retrato da Baronesa de Vassouras” (“Portrait of the Baroness of Vassouras”), 1861-1864.<sup>162</sup>

At Santa Eufrásia, the bulk of the pictures inside the casa grande were not of the fazenda’s original founders, but of the tour guide’s own family (who acquired the fazenda in 1905). These, too, convey a dual rhetoric of admiration and distance, albeit in a different way. Some of the photographs were formal portraits labeled with the subjects’ names. Others showed bucolic scenes of country life: a man on a horse, a baby in a wash basin, a little girl in a white dress playing with a lamb. (*Fig. 58*) Together, these images convey a “nostalgic view of life on

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<sup>162</sup> Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augusto\\_Muller\\_-\\_A\\_baronesa\\_de\\_Vassouras.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Augusto_Muller_-_A_baronesa_de_Vassouras.jpg)



the plantation,” transporting visitors back to “a moment in time when things were somehow different, fairer, simpler, and better.” The photographs of children, in particular, evoke a sense of innocence. Through this visual discourse, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia is represented as a pleasant country home inhabited by multiple generations of the tour guide’s own family—wiped clean of its history as a former slaveholding plantation.



Figure 58. Framed photographs inside the casa grande at Santa Eufrásia.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth.

– *W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880 (1935)*<sup>163</sup>

The primary objective of this research was to examine the degree of representation of slavery at two tourist plantations in the Vale do Café. Based on my experience at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia and Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, I discovered that the memory of slavery has been largely erased from the historical narratives presented to tourists at these sites. During both of the plantation tours, the only references—implicit or explicit—made to enslaved people were through the lens of labor: the agricultural and kitchen tools, the coffee fields and the *engenho*, the Debret prints. There were no articles of clothing, no personal belongings, no photographs of the enslaved. With the exception of the sign at Santa Eufrásia, there was not a single visible or tangible artifact attesting to the fact that Black Brazilians were born, lived, and died at these plantations. Hundreds of unique individuals—each with their own families, cultural practices, and community roles—were thus reduced to anonymous laborers, a mere footnote in the story of the Vale do Café.

My experience at these two fazendas led me to conduct additional research to find the missing histories of the enslaved individuals who were only briefly mentioned or completely ignored during the tour of each site. In this section, I share some of these findings and a few

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<sup>163</sup> Du Bois, William E. B. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860 – 1880* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1998).

recommendations for how plantations might revise their tour narratives to more truthfully portray the history of slavery.

### **Who Were They? Recovering the Memory of the Enslaved at Santa Eufrásia and Cachoeira Grande**

At Santa Eufrásia, the only mention of the people once enslaved there was in the sign outside, which stated that there were 162 slaves at the fazenda in 1880. It was not until after my visit that I learned more about this sign and how it came to be there. In 2016, an article with the title, “Tourists can be slave owners for a day at a plantation ‘without racism,’” was published in *The Intercept Brasil*.<sup>164</sup> In it, the Brazilian journalist Cecília Olliveira described events at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia where the tourists were served by Black people dressed as slaves—one of the “experiential tourism” activities mentioned in Chapter 2. Following the publication of this article, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was the subject of an investigation by the Brazilian Federal Public Prosecutor (Ministério Público Federal, or MPF).

In 2017, the plantation was issued a Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) ordering the owner to comply with a series of reparative measures, summarized in the following excerpt from a May 2017 article entitled “MPF bans fazenda from staging slavery reenactment”:

In the agreement that will be signed, it is forbidden for black or white people to perform or wear clothing that characterizes them as “mucamas” (slave women), an order that also extends to visitors. The prohibitions apply both to content published on site and on the internet (the fazenda’s website and social networks).

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<sup>164</sup> Olliveira, Cecília. “Turistas podem ser escravocratas por um dia em fazenda ‘sem racismo.’” *Intercept Brasil*, December 6, 2016. <https://www.intercept.com.br/2016/12/06/turistas-podem-ser-escravocratas-por-um-dia-em-fazenda-sem-racismo/>.

Among other obligations, those responsible for the farm have undertaken to pay for and install *two plaques outside the house, within a maximum of 60 days, in a place that is easy to access and visit, one explaining the history of the site and the other with the names of the 162 people enslaved on the farm in 1880, as a duty of remembrance and homage.*

Another measure will be the production of 500 educational leaflets on the history of the captive community of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, with the content also being published on the website. To ensure that there is no recurrence of the episode, the manager and all the people responsible for receiving visitors must, within 60 days, undergo a 12-hour training process. In the event of non-compliance with the agreement, the daily fine is R\$5,000.<sup>165</sup>

When I visited Fazenda Santa Eufrásia in July 2023, I saw one of the two signs described above, which includes a brief history of the site and the number of slaves. (*Fig. 59-60*) However, if the second sign with “the names of the 162 people enslaved” was present at the site, I did not see it. The tour guide, who was dressed in period clothing as a *sinha* (slave owner), did not mention either of these signs, nor anything about the events described above.

At Cachoeira Grande, the tour guide briefly mentioned the enslaved during the first part of the tour, but there were no signs or written materials providing the numbers or names of the slaves. In response to a traveler review posted on TripAdvisor in 2022, a comment (presumably made by the site manager or owner) mentioned the total number of enslaved people as 250: “We are still conducting research to identify by name the 250 enslaved people who worked here at

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<sup>165</sup> <https://www.geledes.org.br/fazenda-e-proibida-por-mpf-de-fazer-encenacao-sobre-escravidao/>

Cachoeira Grande during the period of slavery to give them the homage they deserve.” Yet, at the time of my visit in 2023, I saw no evidence of progress made toward this pledge.

Figure 59. The sign explaining the history of Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.



Photo by author. Source: Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.

Figure 60. English translation of the sign at Santa Eufrásia.

In the 19th century, Fazenda Santa Eufrásia was the scene of what is now considered a crime against humanity: the enslavement of Africans, many of whom were kidnapped as children. It is estimated that around one million Africans who survived the crossing went up into the mountains to work in the coffee plantations of the Paraíba Valley.

A representative example of the complex of production and domination organized to make coffee exports viable, Santa Eufrásia was a large farm: according to its owner's inventory, there were 162 enslaved people there in 1880. Africans and their descendants took part in all the stages of building the wealth generated by coffee with their forced labor: planting, harvesting, drying, storage, domestic services and transportation.

Faced with the violence of domination, they always sought to transform the terrible living and working conditions through the organization of a community that made possible the daily struggle for the conquest of *alforria* (manumission) and the right of access to the *roça* (garden plot), the organization of families, and the commemoration of their saints and ancestors.

In the 1880s, a period of mobilization for the abolition of slavery in Brazil, the Vale do Café was rattled by the insubordination and threats of runaways by the enslaved. On May 13, 1888, the day of abolition, *batuques* and *jongos* were heard throughout the farms in the region.

While the old mansions still show part of this slave-owning past, the residences of the enslaved, the *senzalas*, located close to the masters' house and the coffee drying yard, have generally not been preserved. The descendants of Africans left for future generations a valuable cultural heritage - expressed in verses, *jongos* and *sambas* - and many stories of struggle and resistance that mark the trajectory and pride of their families throughout the region.

For other places to remember the history of African descendants in the Paraíba Valley, we recommend visiting the following sites:

- Memorial Manoel Congo in Vassouras (Rua da Pedreira, s/nº, no Centro Histórico de Vassouras)
- Quilombo São Jose da Serra – Valença (Associação do Quilombo, contato com Toninho Canecão, toninhocanecao@yahoo.com.br)
- Memorial do Jongo in Pinheiral (CREASF - Centro de Referência de Estudo Afro do Sul Fluminense - contato com Fatinha, creasfjongopinheiral@ig.com.br)

Translation by author. Source: Fazenda Santa Eufrásia.

I was able to find data about those enslaved at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, and other plantations in Vassouras through a relatively quick internet search. One source was website “Enslaved: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade,” a publicly accessible database that allows users to perform detailed queries using the name of the enslaver, the location, or other search terms. While each represents just a snapshot in time, documents such as postmortem estate inventories can provide a glimpse into the demographics of the slaves owned as property. My own research yielded the following details about the people enslaved at each of the two fazendas.

For Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, the 1880 postmortem estate inventory of Ezequiel de Araujo Padilha (the fazenda’s founder) lists 162 slaves as property, including 89 women and 73 men. Of the 162 individuals, 28 were children (defined as between the ages of two and fourteen).<sup>166</sup> For Fazenda Cachoeira Grande, the 1850 estate inventory of Maria Esméria Leite Ribeiro (the first wife of Francisco José Teixeira Leite) lists 156 slaves as property, including 36 women, 118 men, and 2 individuals whose sex was not recorded. Of the 156 people, 18 were children and five were infants (between birth and two years of age). The 1866 estate inventory of Maria Esméria Teixeira (the daughter of Maria and Francisco) lists 184 slaves, including 47 women and 137 men. Among the 184 individuals there were 17 children and 1 infant.<sup>167</sup> Further information about the enslaved at Fazenda Cachoeira Grande can be found in the postmortem estate inventories of numerous members of the Teixeira Leite family, including Joaquim José Teixeira

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<sup>166</sup> “Enslaved: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade.” Enslaved Peoples of Historical Slave Trade. Accessed September 1, 2024. <https://enslaved.dev.matrix.msu.edu/search/people?event=Q930248> and <https://enslaved.dev.matrix.msu.edu/record/person/Q928200>

<sup>167</sup> From a cursory look at this data, there are about 83 individuals that overlap between the inventory of Maria Esméria Teixeira Leite (1850) and that of her daughter, Maria Esméria Teixeira (1866).

(1858), Francisco José Teixeira (1880), João Nepomoceno Teixeira (1885) and others. The names and ages of those enslaved at both plantations can be found in these inventories.

Where were the enslaved housed at each of the plantations? At Santa Eufrásia, the tour guide made a vague acknowledgment that there used to be a *senzala* somewhere near the main house, but it was unclear exactly where she was referring to. The only information that I was able to find through my own research was the following excerpt from the 2008 Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense:

According to information found in the Caminhos Singulares survey, supervised by INEPAC in 2003, *in the back were the buildings of the engenho, tulha and senzala, the location of which is demarcated by a small section of stone* (emphasis added).<sup>168</sup>

I was unable to locate the 2003 study, but this document suggests that the location of the *senzala* at Santa Eufrásia has been known to researchers for over 20 years.

At Cachoeira Grande, the tour guide did not mention anything about the former slave quarters. In another response to a TripAdvisor review from 2022, the plantation owner or manager provided the following explanation:

We haven't shown the slave quarters because one of them is not only difficult to access, but is completely in ruins. The other, near the main house, we also found 38 years ago in ruins, but we restored it to become a storage room.<sup>169</sup>

I also learned of other former slave living quarters inside the main house, which were not mentioned during the tour of Cachoeira Grande. A 2007 floor plan shows two *quartos de*

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<sup>168</sup> Inventário das Fazendas do Vale do Paraíba Fluminense. "Fazendas," Maio 2008. <https://www.institutocidadeviva.org.br/inventarios/>.

<sup>169</sup> My translation. Original Portuguese: "Não mostramos as senzalas porque, uma delas além de difícil acesso, está totalmente em ruínas, a outra, próxima da sede, encontramos há 38 anos atrás também em ruínas, mas recuperamos para se transformar num depósito/armazém."



*serviço*, a term used in Brazil to describe small rooms occupied by live-in domestic workers.

According to Giovannetti (2009), these were not a part of the tour that the author took in 2007:

“The tour guide noted apologetically that the *senzalas* had been turned into apartment rooms due to an initial lack of awareness of their importance to the plantation’s history.”<sup>170</sup>

In 2022, the owner or manager stated in another TripAdvisor comment that “one day we intend to put the slave quarters inside the casa grande to good use.” In the same post, the author emphasized the cost and effort required for both restoration and maintenance, highlighting the “passion, dedication, and millions of *reais* in investments” that private fazenda owners have put into their properties.<sup>171</sup>

In addition to plantation tours, Cachoeira Grande offers overnight accommodations. For between R\$1,429 to R\$1,905 per night (\$252 to \$337 USD), visitors can stay in one of two rooms inside the casa grande or in a separate, two-bedroom guest house.<sup>172</sup> To put this cost into perspective, the 2023 federal minimum wage in Brazil was R\$1,320 per month (\$266 USD). In Rio de Janeiro, the average monthly salary was R\$2,836 nationwide and R\$3,445 (\$570 and

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<sup>170</sup> Giovannetti, Jorge L. “Subverting the Master’s Narrative: Public Histories of Slavery in Plantation America.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 76 (2009): 105–26. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40648516>.

<sup>171</sup> My translation. Original Portuguese: “Todas casas de fazenda hoje, ou estão vazias, decadentes, em ruínas ou simplesmente já não existem mais ou, por muita paixão, dedicação e milhões de reais em investimentos, foram ou estão sendo recuperadas pela iniciativa privada para que possam ser contempladas pelas gerações futuras. Pretendemos um dia dar uma utilização a senzala dos escravizados domésticos que você mencionou. Ela foi encontrada também em ruínas e serviu de almoxarifado de obra durante os longos 4 anos e pouco de duração da mesma.”

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g1598517-d2425967-Reviews-Fazenda\\_Cachoeira\\_Grande-Vassouras\\_State\\_of\\_Rio\\_de\\_Janeiro.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g1598517-d2425967-Reviews-Fazenda_Cachoeira_Grande-Vassouras_State_of_Rio_de_Janeiro.html)

<sup>172</sup> Prices as of September 2024, <https://www.booking.com/Share-xnXLede>.  
<https://www.bedandbreakfast.eu/en/a/1xxjRUgNMYhE/fazenda-cachoeira-grande>

\$693 USD per month, respectively).<sup>173</sup><sup>174</sup> This information alone suggests that the plantation owners likely have sufficient financial resources to restore the *senzalas*—if they choose to do so.

### **Memory Work: Transforming Historical Narratives at the Plantation**

There are several ways that these plantations, and others, can begin to address the erasure of enslaved lives from their historical narratives. At the most basic level, plantations must explicitly acknowledge the existence of slaves and answer the following questions in their spoken and written narratives. Who were the enslaved? Where did they come from? How many men, women, and children were enslaved at the plantation?

Beyond providing this basic information, plantations could share more humanizing details about the slaves who lived there. What kinds of foods did they eat? What clothes did they wear? What languages did they speak? What were their rhythms of daily life? Outside of their roles as plantation laborers, what other activities did they engage in? What were some of their religious and cultural practices? I am confident after my own research that these questions can be reasonably answered with the rich amount of historical information available on Vassouras and the surrounding region.

In addition to adding these types of details to the tour narrative, there are other ways that the lives of formerly enslaved people could be made more visible at plantation sites. At a bare minimum, the locations of the former slave living quarters could be identified with signs, plaques, or some other type of physical marker, and pointed out during the tour. These could be augmented with maps, brochures, or other interpretive materials provided to visitors.

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<sup>173</sup> Mendes, Diego. “Salário Do Brasileiro Deve Crescer 3,9% Na Média Até o Fim de 2023, Aponta Estudo.” CNN Brasil. Accessed May 30, 2024. <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/economia/salario-do-brasileiro-deve-crescer-39-na-media-ate-o-fim-de-2023-aponta-estudo/>.

<sup>174</sup> For comparison, the 2023 average monthly salary in the United States was \$4,949 nationwide (USA Today, 2024).

Another way to make the memory of slavery more tangible for visitors at the plantation is to display physical objects that reflect the life experiences of the enslaved, such as clothing. If original artifacts are not available, exhibits could be created with replicas or photographs. An example of this can be found at the Museu Casa da Hera, located in the historical center of Vassouras. Outside of the main house there is an exhibit featuring two life-sized dolls of Manoel Congo and Mariana Crioula, important protagonists in the local Black resistance against slavery. A sign educates visitors about their leadership of the 1838 slave rebellion that took place in the Vale do Café. (Fig. 61-64)



Figure 61. Life-sized dolls of Manoel Congo and Mariana Crioula at the Museu Casa da Hera.



Figure 62. Cooking fire and pots.

Figure 63. Sign telling the story of Manoel Congo and Mariana Crioula.



Figure 64. English translation of the sign at the Museu Casa da Hera.

In 1838, initially motivated by a revolt against the death of a slave, there was a mass escape that reportedly involved between 300 and 400 Black people from various fazendas in the Paty do Alferes-RJ region. Manoel Congo was the main leader of this escape. He and his companion, Mariana Crioula, are important symbols of Black resistance against slavery, as this was the largest slave rebellion ever to take place in the Vale do Café region. The dolls are a tribute, not only to these two characters, but to all the slaves who helped build our history.

Translation by author. Source: Museu Casa da Hera.

One of the most impactful actions that plantations could take is to allocate resources toward researching the location of the former *senzalas* and burial grounds of the enslaved. They could invite archaeologists to explore and excavate their properties in search of historical

artifacts related to the slave experience. Some research has been conducted at other fazendas in the area, resulting in discoveries such as the slave cemetery uncovered at the nearby Fazenda do Secretário. Importantly, this work must be done with great sensitivity and in consultation with local Afro-descendant communities. Ideally, plantation owners can invest in the creation of permanent structures to memorialize the enslaved, as well as spaces dedicated to public education.

Modlin et al. (2018) assert that “heritage tourism—when developed in socially responsible ways—can be a vehicle for addressing rather than denying social justice.”<sup>175</sup> As demonstrated by this research, tourist plantations are a space where dominant historical narratives can either be confirmed or challenged. Each of the steps described above will require time, money, expertise, and perhaps most importantly, a willingness to face uncomfortable truths. Fazendas that choose to take steps towards telling more truthful histories can look to the example of other sites, such as the Whitney Plantation, that have worked to incorporate the memory of slavery and the enslaved into their tour narratives. Plantation owners have the responsibility to acknowledge and address the tragedy of slavery on the properties they possess. By bringing to light the parts of history that were previously forgotten, distorted, or skimmed over, they honor the memory of the thousands of enslaved men, women and children whose labor transformed the landscape of the Paraíba Valley into the Valé do Café.

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<sup>175</sup> Modlin, E. Arnold, Stephen P. Hanna, Perry L. Carter, Amy E. Potter, Candace Forbes Bright, and Derek H. Alderman. “Can Plantation Museums Do Full Justice to the Story of the Enslaved? A Discussion of Problems, Possibilities, and the Place of Memory.” *GeoHumanities* 4, no. 2 (July 3, 2018): 335–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2018.1486723>.

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