



A Sense of Place: How African-American/African Diaspora Arts & Culture and A Rare Farm Are Improving Mental Health and Community Well-Being in Vermont



Place



African-American Land Ownership

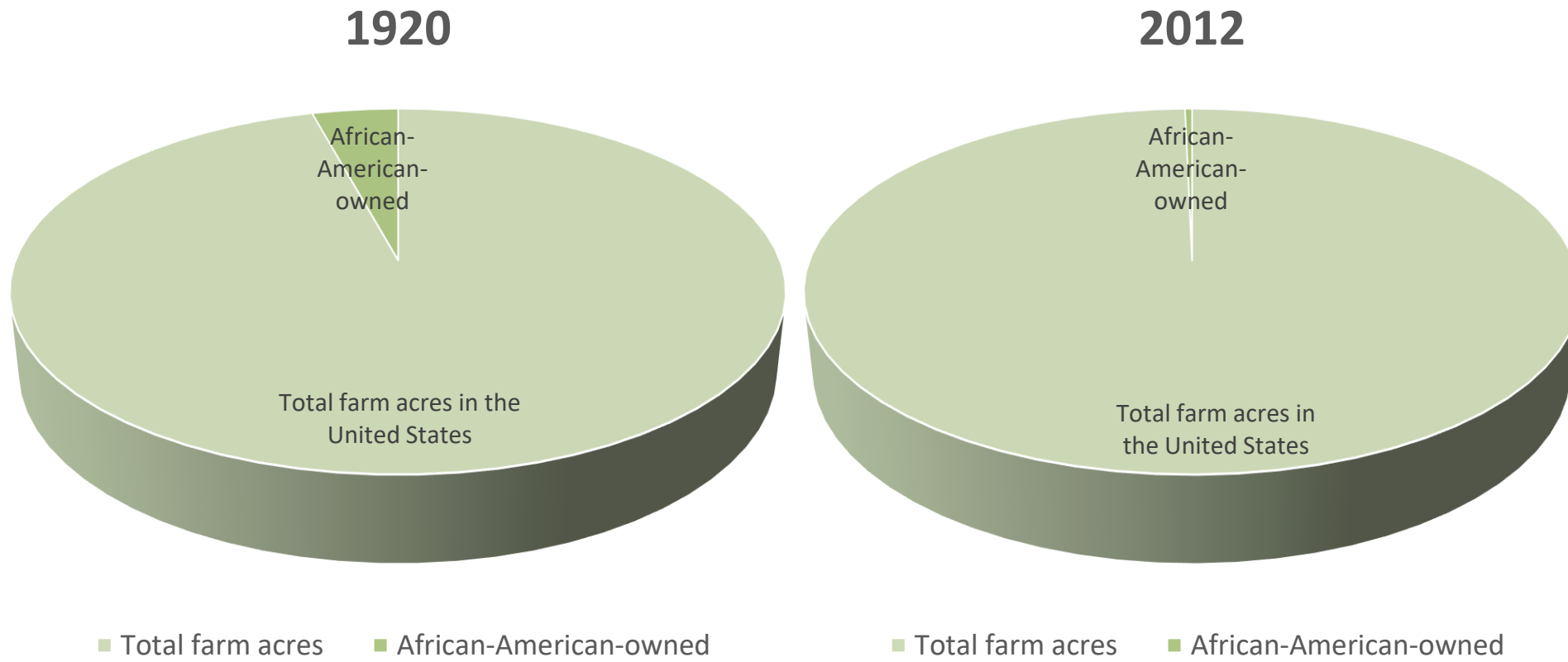
In the early 1920's, when Jack and Lydia Clemmons were infants, African-American land ownership equaled roughly **44 million acres**.

Most of this land was in the south-eastern United States.

- Today, African Americans own a combined total of roughly **3.5 million acres nation-wide**
- **less than half of one percent (0.4%)** of all farms in the U.S.



African-American Land Ownership in the United States

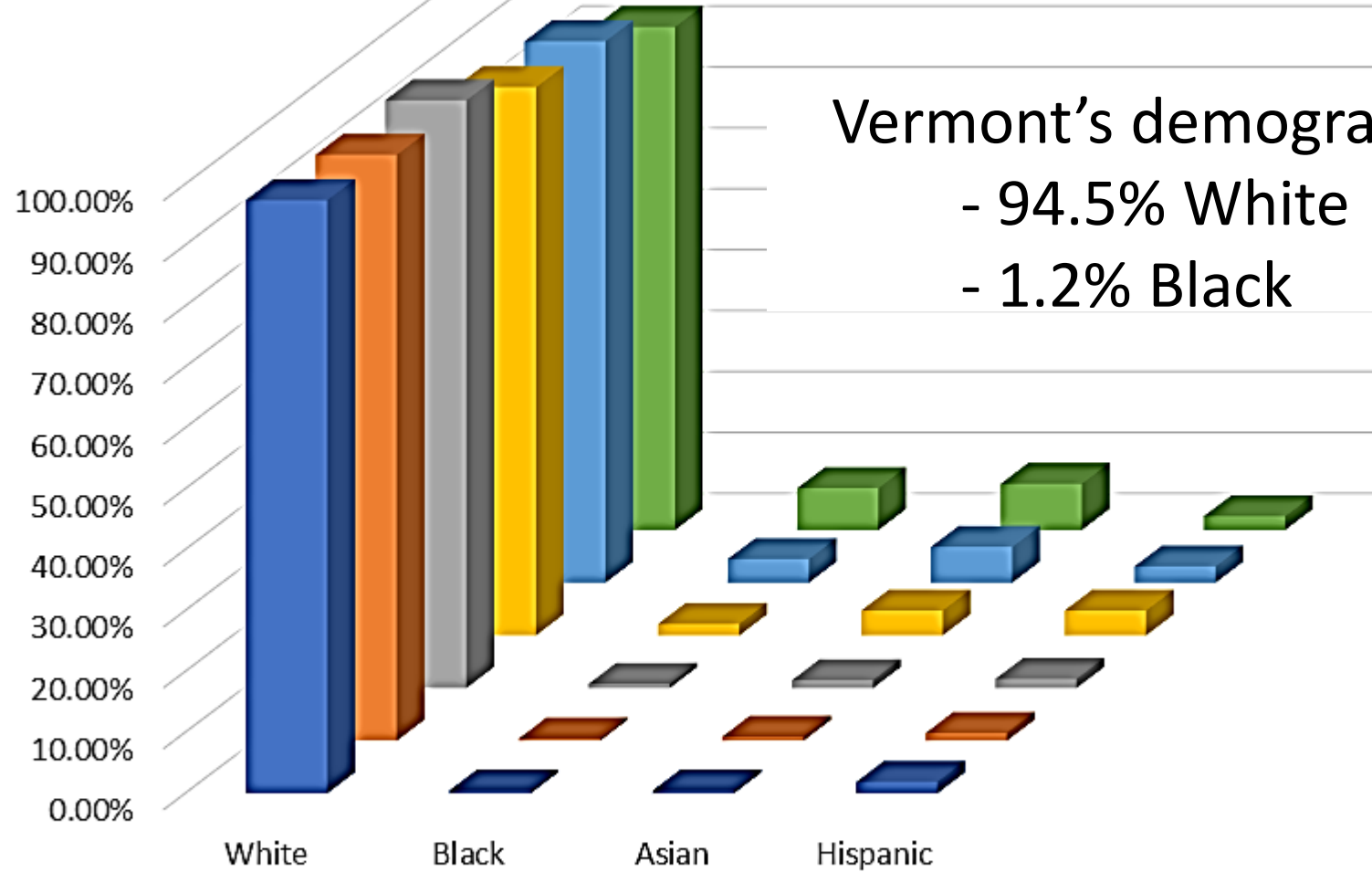




Clemmons Family Farm

- One of the rare African-American owned historic farms in Vermont
- One of the 23 historic landmarks on Vermont's African-American Heritage Trail
- Offering African-American arts and culture programming to the Vermont community since 1962

People



■ Charlotte ■ Hinesburg ■ Shelburne ■ South Burlington ■ Burlington ■ Winooski



Goal: Improve community mental health and social well-being in Vermont



Foster emotional attachment to a place

Examples:

- Storytelling about the place before each event
- Place-making design charette at the Big Barn
- Mentoring session in barn architecture for girls
- Place-based arts and culture K-8 field trips



Goal: Improve community mental health and social well-being in Vermont



Social inclusion and affirmation:

- Reduce social isolation among people of African descent
- Positively reflect and promote African diaspora cultures, identities and role models



Goal: Improve community mental health and social well-being in Vermont



Address white fragility, step by step...

- First step: interpersonal connection through shared creative experiences led by collaborating artists of African descent



Goal: Improve community mental health and social well-being in Vermont



Community engagements emphasize:

- quality interactions with artists, art and each other
- intimate settings
- small groups (20-40 people maximum)



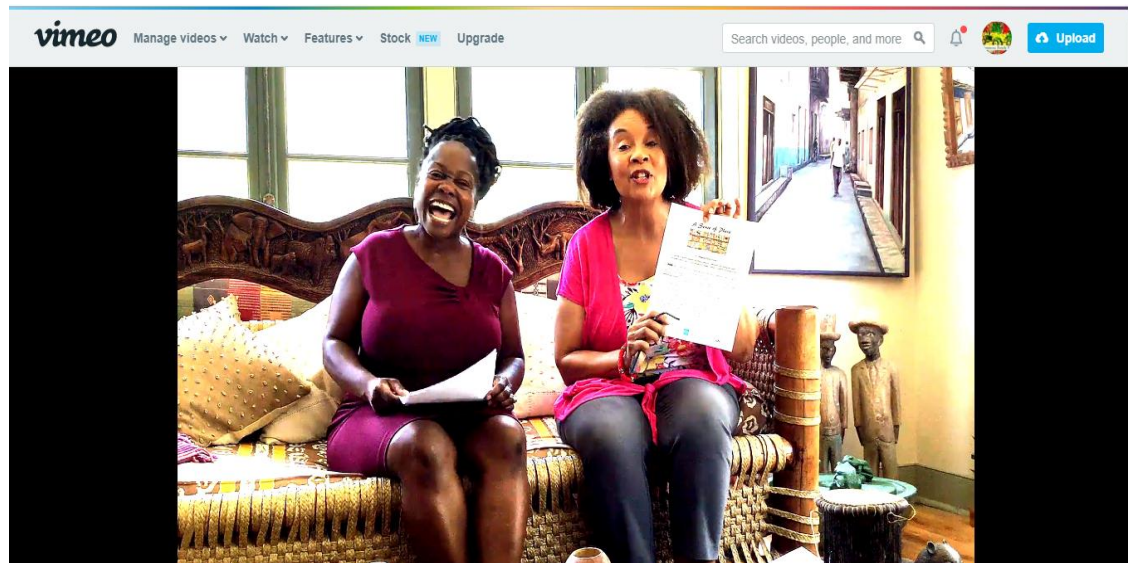
Specifics

- Find champions- VIPs at national level and local level
- Repeatedly emphasize the importance of the place and its connection to heritage, art, culture and community
- Storytelling is an integral part of all project activities to build connections, deepen empathy and promote learning history



Specifics

- Invest in building relationships of trust and respect with collaborating artists
- A Call for Proposals was a great way to “see and be seen” in the “hidden” artist community



Call for Artist Proposals

CALL FOR ARTIST PROPOSALS FOR OUR FALL 2018 PROGRAM!
Creative Placemaking and Multicultural Community Building through African-American/African Diaspora Visual, Culinary, and Performing Arts
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Monday, August 13, 11:59 p.m.

ARTS & CULTURE PROPOSAL CATEGORIES:

- Category #1: African-American or African diaspora culinary heritage/culinary arts
- Category #2: African-American or African diaspora outdoor performing arts
- Category #3: African-American or African diaspora visual arts
- Category #4: African-American or African diaspora traditions or cultural arts

ELIGIBILITY:

- All artists or proposals must meet requirements to be eligible:
1. Individual artists or at least 50% of the artists if applying as a group- must be current residents who have lived for at least 12 consecutive months in either Charlotte, Shelburne, Hinesburg, South Burlington, Burlington or Winooski.
 2. Proposals must focus on African-American or African diaspora arts, heritage or culture.
 3. Proposals must include a community-building component with the art taking place on the Clemmons Family Farm. Awards will range from \$200 to \$1500 to include artist fees and materials. We will be awarding up to a total of \$10,000 in grant awards for 2018.

HOW TO APPLY:

Read the full Call to Artists with the full Application and additional details on this opportunity at

<http://bit.ly/CallForArtistsCFF>

DROP BOX: <http://bit.ly/SoPCall2Artists>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VIDEO:

Watch the video walk-through of this Call for Artist Proposals by swiping your digital device with a QR code reader on the QR codes to the right!



Specifics



- Engage artists in early brainstorming and planning



Specifics



- Involve artists and community members in telling the story of the project and their own role in “Making History, Creating Place”



Obstacles

- **Socio-political context** in the US and Vermont
 - dramatic increase in hate crimes
 - increased fear and reticence in the Black artist community
- Limited transportation infrastructure in Vermont
- While all artists are paid, a primarily **volunteer-run** project management team constrains the pace and the amount of heavy-lifting possible
- **Long-standing inequities** in the arts and culture arena and in philanthropy in general
- Preserving an **African American-owned** land and cultural heritage asset in Vermont does not “fit” into the usual boxes for donors, historic preservation societies and land trusts



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Reported hate crime incidents reach 23-year high in Vermont

By Kit Norton
Nov 13 2018 | no reader footnotes

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Tactics to overcome obstacles

- Seek strategic partnerships
 - Social justice
 - Mental health and public health
 - Agriculture
 - Creative economy: tourism & marketing
 - African American Heritage Trail
- Build alliances at state and national level
 - Agency of Transportation
 - Corporate Social Responsibility- private transportation sector
- Develop careful strategic communications to increase visibility and support in “safe” spaces and audiences



Impact

June and October 2018 programming (Year 1)

On-farm programs reached 409 visitors:

- 209 visitors attended small and intimate family-style events
- 120 visitors attended guided tours
- 80 K-12 students and teachers engaged in structured field trips at the farm.



Outreach programs were conducted in high-volume locations:

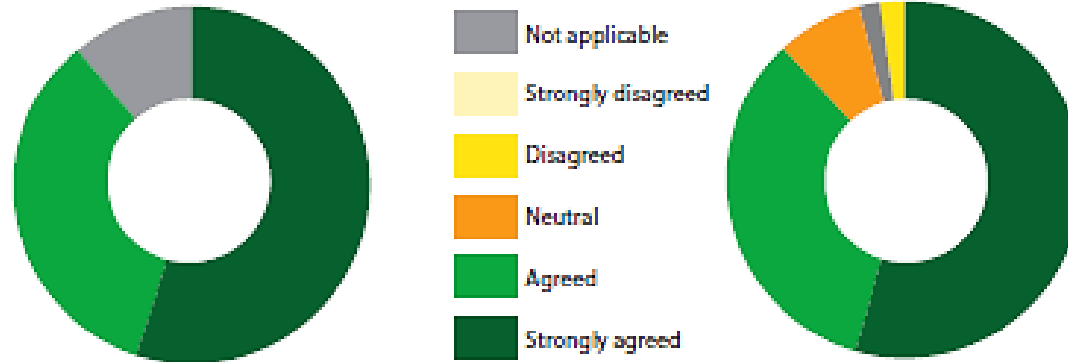
- The ECHO Center and the Flynn Theater of the Performing Arts' Amy Tarrant gallery in Burlington
- Talks and presentations at the Shelburne Community School, the Rokeby Museum in Burlington and the USDA/NRCS Diversity Conference in Richmond.



A place to learn about other cultures...

About 90% of visitors reported that, as a result of this experience they:

- Want to learn more about people of races and cultures different from their own
- Intend to learn more about African-American and/or African history, art or culture



Want to learn more

Intend to learn more

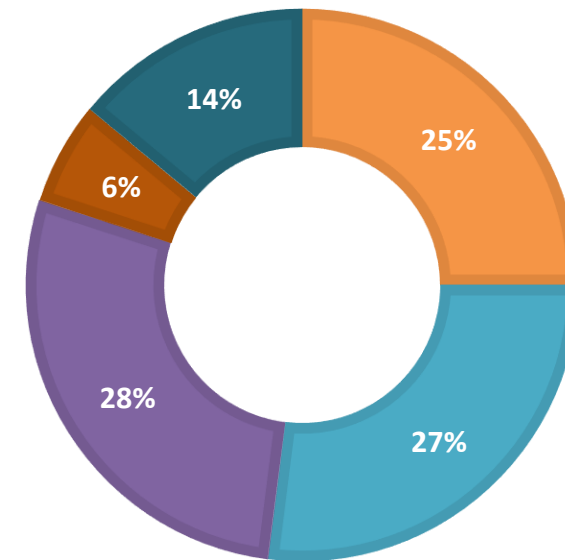
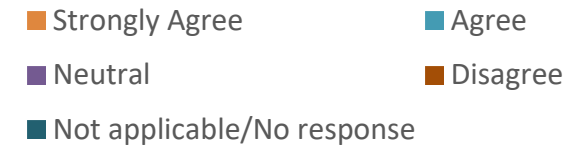
n = 60 individuals responding



A place to become more comfortable talking to people across differences of race, ethnicity and religion...

"[Because I visited the Farm] I am more comfortable talking to people who are from different races, ethnicities, and religions than mine."

- The majority of visitors agree (52%): 25% strongly agree and 27% agree
- More than a quarter (28%) of people were neutral in response to the statement, with a few reporting that they already were comfortable doing this
- 6% disagreed.



A place to connect with people of African descent and their arts and cultures...

“I connected with another Black/African-American person outside of my family.”

- Nearly two thirds (62%) of respondents agreed: 35% strongly agreed, 27% agreed
- 30% said this statement did not apply to them.

“I connected with someone that is of a race or ethnicity different than my own.”

- 61% agreed: 26% strongly agreed, 35% agreed
- 24% said this statement did not apply to them.



A place to connect with people of African descent and their arts and cultures...

“As a black person, I felt connected with African American and/or African arts and culture.”

- Among the 5% who felt this statement was applicable to their experience, all either strongly agreed or agreed.

“I interacted with Black/African-Americans who I believe set a positive example for me.”

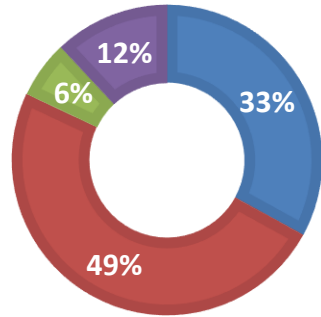
- 64% agreed: 30% strongly agreed, 34% agreed
- 34% said this statement was not applicable.



A place to feel at ease...

FELT UNCOMFORTABLE

■ Strongly Disagreed ■ Disagreed
■ Agreed ■ Neutral/No Response



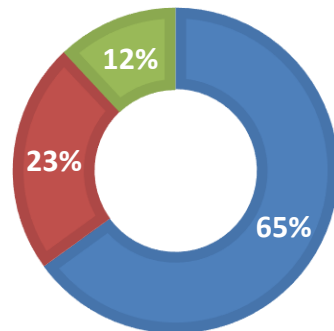
“I felt uncomfortable.”

– 82% disagreed

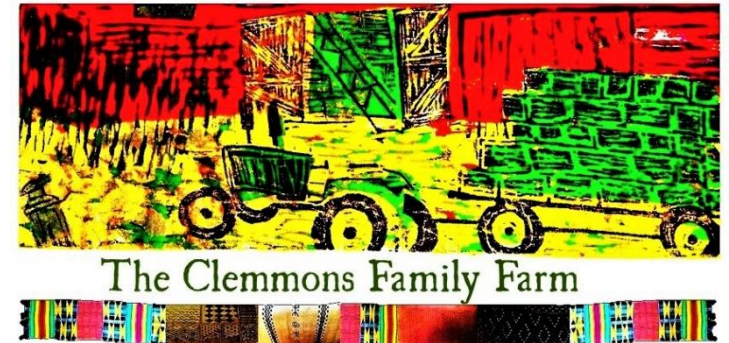
– 6% agreed

FELT INSPIRED

■ Strongly Agreed ■ Agreed ■ Neutral ■



Thank You



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