

# EDITORIAL PORTFOLIO:

Developmental, Academic &  
Content Translation,  
Source Analysis  
Structured Writing

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# Developmental Line Edit

## Original Excerpt

### **Chapter 3: The Importance of Consistency**

Consistency is one of the most important aspects of personal growth, and it is something that many people struggle with on a daily basis. When we think about consistency, we often think about doing the same thing over and over again, but it is actually much more than that. It is about showing up for yourself in a way that aligns with your goals and values, even when you don't feel motivated.

Many people believe that motivation is the key to success, but motivation is unreliable and often fleeting. This is why consistency matters more than motivation, because consistency allows you to continue making progress even when motivation is absent. At the same time, it is important to recognize that consistency can look different depending on the person and the situation, which means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

One of the challenges with consistency is that people often set unrealistic expectations for themselves, which leads to burnout and frustration. When expectations are too high, it becomes difficult to maintain the level of effort required, and this can create a cycle of starting and stopping. This cycle is something that many people experience, and it can be discouraging.

In order to be consistent, it is important to build habits that are sustainable over time. However, sustainability is often misunderstood, and people may think that it means doing less, when in reality it means doing what is appropriate for your current capacity. This is why it is important to understand your limits and adjust your expectations accordingly.

Ultimately, consistency is about balance. It is about knowing when to push forward and when to rest, and it is about creating a system that supports long-term growth. When you can do this, consistency becomes less about discipline and more about alignment with your life as a whole.

## Edited Version (with comments)

### Chapter 3: The Importance of Consistency

Consistency is **more than just doing the same thing over and over again. It is about showing up for yourself in a way that aligns with your goals and values, even when you don't feel motivated.** Many people believe that motivation is the key to success, but motivation is unreliable and often fleeting. This is why consistency matters more than motivation – it allows you to continue making progress even when motivation is absent.

One of the challenges with consistency is that people often set unrealistic expectations for themselves, which leads to burnout and frustration. When expectations are too high, it becomes difficult to maintain the level of effort required, and this can create a **discouraging** cycle of starting and stopping. **At the same time, it is important to recognize that consistency can look different depending on the person and the situation, which means that there is no one size-fits-all approach.**

**Consistency requires us to build sustainable habits** over time. **Sustainability doesn't means** doing less; it means doing what is appropriate for your current capacity. This is why it is important to understand your limits and adjust your expectations accordingly.

Ultimately, consistency is about balance. It is about knowing when to push forward and when to rest. **It is about creating a system that supports long-term growth.** When you can do this, consistency becomes less about discipline and more about alignment with your life as a whole.

## Structural Notes

- The central idea—consistency as the throughline—is strong, but repetition in early paragraphs dilutes its impact
- Key concepts (motivation, consistency, discipline) are introduced unevenly; tightening their relationship would strengthen cohesion
- Several sections restate the relationship between consistency and motivation without developing it further
- Transitions between paragraphs could more clearly signal progression (not just continuation)
- The conclusion introduces a valuable idea (discipline vs. alignment) that would benefit from earlier framing

**Commented [JH1]:** I've streamlined the opening to bring your core idea forward more quickly without changing your language.

**Deleted:** one of the most important aspects of personal growth, and it is something that many people struggle with on a daily basis. When we think about consistency, we often think about doing the same thing over and over again, but it is actually much more than that. It is about showing up for yourself in a way that aligns with your goals and values, even when you don't feel motivated.¶

**Deleted:** ,

**Deleted:** because consistency

**Moved down [1]:** At the same time, it is important to recognize that consistency can look different depending on the person and the situation, which means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

**Moved (insertion) [1]**

**Deleted:** This cycle is something that many people experience, and it can be discouraging.

**Deleted:** In order to be consistent, it is important to

**Deleted:** habits that are

**Deleted:** However, sustainability

**Deleted:** is often misunderstood, and people may think that it

**Deleted:** when in reality

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**Comment [JH2]:**This is the first time you use the word discipline. This is an excellent point, and I don't want it to get buried. Is there another place to share this thought?

## Original Excerpt

### Chapter 3: The Importance of Consistency

Consistency is one of the most important aspects of personal growth, and it is something that many people struggle with on a daily basis. When we think about consistency, we often think about doing the same thing over and over again, but it is actually much more than that. It is about showing up for yourself in a way that aligns with your goals and values, even when you don't feel motivated.

Many people believe that motivation is the key to success, but motivation is unreliable and often fleeting. This is why consistency matters more than motivation, because consistency allows you to continue making progress even when motivation is absent. At the same time, it is important to recognize that consistency can look different depending on the person and the situation, which means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

One of the challenges with consistency is that people often set unrealistic expectations for themselves, which leads to burnout and frustration. When expectations are too high, it becomes difficult to maintain the level of effort required, and this can create a cycle of starting and stopping. This cycle is something that many people experience, and it can be discouraging.

In order to be consistent, it is important to build habits that are sustainable over time. However, sustainability is often misunderstood, and people may think that it means doing less, when in reality it means doing what is appropriate for your current capacity. This is why it is important to understand your limits and adjust your expectations accordingly.

Ultimately, consistency is about balance. It is about knowing when to push forward and when to rest, and it is about creating a system that supports long-term growth. When you can do this, consistency becomes less about discipline and more about alignment with your life as a whole.

## Potential Rewrite

### Chapter 3: The Importance of Consistency

Many people think of motivation as the key to success; but motivation is unreliable and often fleeting. The real key is consistency. Consistency is more than just doing the same thing over again. It's about showing up for yourself in a way that aligns with your goals and values, even if you don't feel motivated. Consistency allows you to continue making progress even when motivation is absent. Consistency is more than just discipline: it's sustainability.

One of the common challenges with consistency is that people often set unrealistic expectations for themselves, which leads to burnout and frustration. When expectations are too high, it becomes difficult to maintain the level of effort you started with. This can lead to a discouraging cycle of starting and stopping. At the same time, it is important to recognize that consistency can look different depending on the person and the situation, which means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Consistency requires us to build sustainable habits. Sustainability doesn't mean doing less; it means doing what is appropriate for your current capacity. It means understanding your limits and adjusting your expectations accordingly.

Ultimately, consistency is about balance. It is about knowing when to push forward and when to rest. It is about creating a system that supports long-term growth. When you can do this, consistency becomes less about discipline and more about alignment with your life as a whole.

# Academic-to-Public Translation

## Approach

This edit focuses on translating academic language into accessible, reader-facing prose while preserving the integrity of the original argument. The goal is to maintain intellectual rigor while improving clarity, flow, and engagement for a broader audience.

## Original (Academic Style)

The construction of historical memory is neither neutral nor incidental; rather, it is an active process shaped by prevailing ideological frameworks and institutional priorities. In this sense, the archive functions not merely as a repository of the past but as a site of selective preservation, wherein certain narratives are amplified while others are systematically marginalized or rendered invisible.

This dynamic is particularly evident in the historiography of marginalized communities, where the absence of documentation has often been misinterpreted as an absence of experience. Such interpretations fail to account for the structural conditions under which records are produced, preserved, and accessed. Consequently, historians are tasked not only with analyzing available sources but also with interrogating the silences within them.

## Revised

Our construction of historical memory is never neutral. It is an active process shaped by our worldviews, by dominant cultural narratives, and by the priorities of the institutions that shape our understandings of the past. If we recognize this, the archive is no longer an unbiased record of the past, but evidence of selective preservation. Because of the implicit biases of our institutions, certain narratives are amplified while others are rendered invisible.

This dynamic is particularly evident when we seek to understand the history of marginalized communities. The absence of documentation has often been misinterpreted as an absence of historical record. But such interpretations fail to account for the fact that these archives exist within systems that routinely prioritize certain narratives over others. As a result, historians are tasked not only with analyzing available sources but with interrogating the silences that those sources contain.

# Academic Argument & Synthesis Editing

## Approach

This edit focuses on strengthening synthesis by clarifying relationships between sources, tightening the central claim, and reducing conceptual drift. The goal is to shape multiple ideas into a clear, coherent argument while maintaining an academic register.

## Original (Over-Extended Academic Draft)

In Hunter's estimation, the conflict of the Civil War propels what can be understood as a broader societal shift of Black southerners from an enslaved class to a working class, though the substance of their labor does not necessarily change in ways that are immediately visible or materially distinct in the short term. Instead, Hunter suggests that the meaning of that labor shifts in more subtle but significant ways, becoming a kind of mechanism through which newly freed Black women attempt to access, or at least approximate, the promises of their freedom, even as those promises remain unstable, unevenly distributed, and deeply contested. For example, Black laundry women across the South organized strikes in the years following emancipation, which can be read not only as labor actions in the traditional sense but also as early, and perhaps still emerging, expressions of civic participation and resistance within a nation that had not yet fully recognized their citizenship in either legal or social terms.

Historians such as Thavolia Glymph and Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh have also pointed, in somewhat different ways, to the presence of resistance among enslaved women prior to emancipation, often in forms that might appear small, quotidian, or even incidental at first glance, such as slowing their labor, negotiating the terms of their work, or maintaining religious practices despite surveillance and punishment. When placed alongside Hunter's analysis, these examples seem to suggest a kind of continuity of resistance that complicates any clean or straightforward distinction between enslavement and freedom, while also raising broader questions about how historians define, categorize, and ultimately recognize acts of resistance across these periods. At the same time, however, Hunter argues that emancipation marks a shift not necessarily in the presence of resistance itself, but rather in the language available to describe it, as formerly enslaved women begin to operate, at least nominally and often unevenly, within a framework of citizenship rather than bondage.

## Over-Extended Academic Draft Revision

Hunter argues that the Civil War marks a shift in the social position of Black southerners from an enslaved class to a working class. Although the substance of their work did not significantly change, Hunter argues that the work has taken on new meaning: it is now a means to access the promises of their newfound freedom. Black laundry women across the south, for instance, went on strike just a couple of years after the close of the Civil War, exercising new muscles of civic resistance. Even in a nation founded on resistance, Black resistance continued to be treated as a threat to white wealth and control – whether that resistance be from slave uprisings or from laundrywomen advocating for fair wages.

This newly granted freedom is not the cause of their discontent, however. They have always been discontented – yet, now, as citizens, at least in name, they can utilize the same language of resistance as their white counterparts. Historians Thavolia Glymph, Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh, and others have highlighted the seemingly small, everyday acts of resistance among enslaved women – from moving too slowly when doing a task to worshipping in spite of constant reprimands from their enslavers over their religious lives. Like Glymph and others, Hunter points to some of the resistance that occurred before enslavement ended. However, she shows that while resistance persists, the language used to describe it shifts as Black women move from bondage to pseudo-citizenship.

# Sensitivity Read

## Approach

My goal with a sensitivity read is always to assume the best intentions of the writer that I'm working with. I flag things, not as an indictment, but in an effort to 1) show respect to each potential reader of the manuscript and 2) remove all possible barriers for readers who want to engage the author's content.

## Chapter Two: Leaving the Land

For generations, farming had been the backbone of Southern life. But for Black Southerners in the early twentieth century, it was an opportunity many simply chose to leave behind. As the boll weevil devastated cotton crops and industrial wages beckoned from Northern cities, Black families packed their belongings and headed north in search of something better.

The Great Migration, as historians would come to call it, reshaped American cities from Chicago to Detroit. It was not just an economic movement — it was a declaration. As one observer noted at the time, "The Indians and the Negroes had both been pushed off their land, but only one group found a way to reinvent themselves in the city."

By 1920, the movement northward was accelerating. Nobody was seriously discussing the fact when it came to education, separate was not, in fact, equal — that conversation was still decades away. The energy was elsewhere: in the factories, in the churches, in the rent parties and jazz clubs that gave Northern Black life its texture and its sound.

The men who left the South were looking for wages. The women who left were looking for something harder to name — dignity, perhaps, or at least distance from a system that had defined their worth by the weight of what they could carry.

**Commented [JH1]:** You might spend more time here to highlight how often farming was limited for Black southerners because of barriers to land ownership (like unjust property taxes) and the viscous cycle of sharecropping

**Commented [JH2]:** I would name the person who said this and avoid "as" because it might seem as though you aren't acknowledging that this language is outdated and potentially offensive.

**Commented [JH3]:** There were so many Black teachers talking about educational equity. I would either mention them or center this statement on the legislative silence.

**Commented [JH4]:** I hesitate here, not because church, parties, and jazz clubs didn't give Northern Black life texture, but because only pointing to the entertainment aspects of Black culture could play into a minstrelsy stereotype.

**Commented [JH5]:** This is an oversimplification that might take readers out of the narrative you're weaving. Black men were in search of dignity and impacted by an unjust system as well.

## Writing Sample

# "Emptying Her Master's Pockets: The WPA Narratives and a New Archival Practice"

Legislated illiteracy functioned as an act of epistemic violence, systematically erasing Black history by establishing literacy as a standard for historical documentation while simultaneously withholding that literacy from the formerly enslaved. This violence has succeeded in erasing firsthand accounts of most enslaved individuals in the United States, leaving historians to reconstruct Black life from fragmentary mentions in white primary sources. Even the rare sources from enslaved perspectives have historically been met with suspicion. The Works Progress Administration Ex-Slave Narratives are no exception to this suspicion.

However, through two WPA Narratives—Vinnie Busby and Hannah Chapman’s Mississippi testimonies—this study seeks to chart a path towards allowing the owners of these stories to reclaim their narratives. They offer us an opportunity not just to delve into fascinating genealogical research to locate these women but, more deeply, to make the verification of their histories a secondary function of reading their narratives, and the autobiographical aspect of their stories a primary function. This approach is still reliant upon verifiable primary sources, but it is rooted in the respect of these first person narratives.

By centering their voices, we shift the narrative focus from the enslaver to the enslaved, allowing these women to tell their own stories and offering insight into both their individual experiences and the collective realities of formerly enslaved people. The WPA Ex-Slave Narratives have long amplified this collective witness, but this study employs them to recover individual histories—an approach not yet widely embraced in scholarship on these narratives.

The earliest enslaved ancestor whom I can name is my great-great-great-great-great grandmother, Jane Nelson. In our family tree, her mother is listed as a “Chattel Slave Unknown.” Her father’s name is also unknown. Besides the census documents where her name appears next to her children, the only other document about Jane is a deed. Little is known about Jane’s life after the emancipation, but she lived in Alcorn County, Mississippi, and died there in 1917.<sup>[1]</sup>

There are several other family connections on that deed—my ancestor, Evaline, Jane’s daughter. My great-great-great-great aunts—Laura and Minerva—and uncle—Sanders. The document also gives the name of my great-great-great-great-great grandfather, Thomas Nelson. Rather than being listed among the human chattel being bequeathed in the deed, Thomas is listed as the bequeather—their enslaver.

Unlike the cold case of Jane Nelson’s lineage, Thomas’s line of ancestry can be traced back to William Dandridge of Norfolk in Worcester, England, and Euphan Wallace of Goochland, Virginia. The couple married August 17, 1715, in Hampton, Virginia, when they were both eighteen years old. The Dandridges even make an appearance in a seven-volume history series published in the early twentieth century called *Colonial Families of the United States of America: In Which Is Given the History, Genealogy and Armorial Bearings of Colonial Families Who Settled in the American Colonies from the Time of the Settlement of Jamestown, 13th May, 1607, to the Battle of Lexington, 19th April, 1775.*<sup>[2]</sup>

Jane’s line of known ancestry begins with her. This is not an uncommon story, of course. Women like Jane existed all over Mississippi. Two specific women—Vinnie Busby and Hannah Chapman—were a bit younger than my ancestor, but were also enslaved in the state. Like Jane, I have not been able to locate the names of their parents. Like Jane, it is much easier to track their descendants than it is to track the names of their ancestors. And like Jane, I know so much more about their enslaver than I know about these two women themselves. This study aims to use the stories of Vinnie Busby and Hannah Chapman—as told by themselves in the WPA Ex-Slave Narratives—to demonstrate what I cannot with Jane’s story: that a robust archive does, in fact, exist, full of firsthand accounts from women like Jane. We need only to begin to systematize it.

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[1] Jasmine L. Holmes, *Yonder Come Day: Exploring the Collective Witness of the Formerly Enslaved* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2024), 89.

[2] Mackenzie, George Norbury. *Colonial Families of the United States of America: In Which Is Given the History, Genealogy and Armorial Bearings of Colonial Families Who Settled in the American Colonies from the Time of the Settlement of Jamestown, 13th May, 1607, to the Battle of Lexington, 19th April, 1775.* (Baltimore, MD: The Seaforth Press, 1917).

## Source Analysis: Annotated Bibliography Sample

"Emptying Her Master's Pockets: The WPA Narratives and a New Archival Practice"

[Excerpt]

**Blassingame, John W. "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems." *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 4 (1975): 473–92.**

Blassingame evaluates the reliability of ex-slave narratives, emphasizing issues of memory, interviewer bias, and editorial distortion. His work represents a foundational skeptical position within the historiography. This source is useful for framing early methodological concerns and establishing the critical lens through which WPA narratives must be read.

**Glymph, Thavolia. *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.**

Glymph reconstructs the violent and complex dynamics of plantation households, centering enslaved women's experiences. She uses WPA narratives alongside other sources to challenge paternalistic interpretations of slavery. This text provides a model for integrating narrative testimony into rigorous historical analysis.

**Jones-Rogers, Stephanie E. *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020.**

Jones-Rogers uses WPA narratives and legal records to argue for the active role of white women in slave ownership and violence. Her work challenges longstanding historiographical assumptions about gender and power in slavery. This source is useful for demonstrating how narrative evidence can reshape dominant historical interpretations.

**Wells-Oghoghomeh, Alexis. *The Souls of Womenfolk: The Religious Cultures of Enslaved Women in the Lower South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.**

Wells-Oghoghomeh challenges Western archival frameworks by emphasizing communal memory and interpretive layering. She argues for the legitimacy of oral histories as collective knowledge systems. This work is central for supporting methodological approaches that prioritize patterns across narratives rather than isolated verification.

**Rawick, George P., Jan Hillegas, and Ken Lawrence. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography: Supplemental Series*. Greenwood Press, 1978.**

Rawick's compilation of WPA narratives marked a turning point in their accessibility and scholarly use. He advocates for methodological engagement rather than dismissal, encouraging historians to filter distortion while preserving narrative value. This source is foundational for understanding the shift toward broader acceptance of WPA materials.