

RE-PACKAGING HISTORY IN METRO-ATLANTA: MYTH, MEMORY, AND
TOURISM, 1958-1996

by

KAYLYNN LEE WASHNOCK

(Under the Direction of Akela Reason)

ABSTRACT

For over a century, civic leaders, businessmen, and city boosters sought to promote a united and harmonious image of Atlanta. Carefully thought-out slogans and long-range development plans have promoted Atlanta as a relic of the oft-romanticized Old South past, the birthplace of the New South, an icon of southern hospitality, and a model of racial “moderation” during the Civil Rights Movement. Yet this has frequently entailed a heavy dose of historical forgetfulness, if not downright amnesia. This dissertation explores the use of the history in metro-Atlanta’s public landscape, by examining key events, marketing campaigns, and tourism endeavors, which in turn, have contributed to the continual reinvention of the city.

Utilizing private correspondence, master development plans, newspaper articles, tourist travel studies, and oral history transcripts, this dissertation explores the use of the past to develop a “historical South” in metro-Atlanta during the mid-late twentieth-century. It examines how human actors—including politicians, boosters, community leaders, and prominent businessmen along with a variety of organizations shaped the public landscape of history and to what effects. It traces how issues came to a head time

and again as both concerned local observers and elected officials grappled with the ongoing changes: during the Civil War centennial; in the purchase and development of Stone Mountain; the establishment of Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site; and in preparations for the 1996 Olympics. Ultimately, this dissertation underscores how these groups and individuals re-packaged metro-Atlanta as a booming paradise for both businesses and tourists all while capitalizing on the city's Confederate past and birthplace of "human rights" in the post-civil rights South.

INDEX WORDS: Metro-Atlanta, heritage tourism, historical memory, Stone Mountain, Civil War centennial, Olympics, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site

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KAYLYNN LEE WASHNOCK

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MA, Western Carolina University, 2012

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KAYLYNN LEE WASHNOCK

Major Professor:	Akela Reason
Committee:	Stephen Berry
	Kathleen Clark
	Shane Hamilton

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

To grandpa, Harold Lee Thomas.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AACBDC	Auburn Avenue Community Based Development Corporation
AARC	Auburn Avenue Revitalization Committee
CAP	Central Atlanta Progress
CODA	Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta
CSCC	Confederate States Centennial Conference
GAAF	Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation
GCWCC	Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission
HDDC	Historic District Development Corporation
HFE	Herschend Family Entertainment Company
IOC	International Olympic Committee
MAOG	Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority
MARTA	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
MLKNHS	Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site and Preservation District
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NPS	National Park Service
NPU	Neighborhood Planning Units
RACA	Robert and Associates
SCV	Sons of Confederate Veterans
SMMA	Stone Mountain Memorial Association
USCWCC	U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission
USOC	United States Olympics Committee
UDC	United Daughters of the Confederacy

INTRODUCTION

Since 1983, a light and sound spectacular has captivated nighttime crowds at Stone Mountain. Colorful laser beams are projected onto the Confederate carving animating the side of the mountain. Lights cavort across the visage of Robert E. Lee, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson and Jefferson Davis, frolicking to the tune of the nineteenth-century anthem of the Confederacy, “Dixie,” and more recent musical tributes to the state, including “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” and “Georgia on My Mind.” Running for approximately 45 minutes nightly from May through October, the Lasershow Spectacular remains one of the park’s most popular events. As of 2008, park officials estimated over 20 million visitors have seen the program.¹

While the stone carving and original laser show highlighted Confederate heroes, another visage was added to the display in 1996. Mindful of the international spotlight cast by the upcoming Olympics, Stone Mountain Park created a special program that projected Atlanta civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr. on top of the Confederate carving. The result was striking and one journalist remarked, “The city has superimposed King over the soldiers of the Confederacy, allowing both parts of the past to form the myth of a tolerant, biracial metropolis.”² Thirty-three years earlier, in his “I Have a Dream” speech, King had famously proclaimed, “Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain

¹ Stone Mountain Public Relations, Press Room “Park Celebrates,” 26 Feb 2008 (Accessed 3 May 2015);

² Matthew Cooper *The New Republic* quoted in David Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History*. Updated Edition. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2002), 305.

of Georgia.”³ In an ironic twist of fate, his icon illuminated that very piece of granite during the Olympics spectacular.

The juxtaposed imagery of Confederate war heroes and a civil rights icon at Stone Mountain epitomizes the sometimes-torturous efforts of Atlanta’s civic and business leaders to market a unifying historical memory in late-twentieth-century Atlanta. While park and city boosters promoted an image of a united, harmonious “biracial metropolis” by projecting King’s image alongside Lee, Jackson, and Davis, such unlikely pairing also hinted at the challenges Atlantans faced in their efforts to define a collective—and profitable—past as well as an undivided future. Although civic leaders and commercial interests collaborated to create and sustain a system of Jim Crow and promoted the city as both an icon of the New South and a site of Confederate heritage, the City of Atlanta also proudly adopted the moniker of “the city too busy to hate” during the Civil Rights Movement. A complicated relationship with the Confederacy, along with, racial division and inequality—from the white supremacist campaigns of the early 1900s through the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement, and resulting white flight and shifting political dynamics—complicated efforts to project an image of racial harmony and tolerance in post-World War II Atlanta.

A Historical Survey of Atlanta Boosters

This dissertation explores precisely these struggles over the development of a “historical South” in metro-Atlanta, from the mid-late twentieth-century to the 1996

³ Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream” (Speech, Washington DC, 28 August 1963), American Rhetoric, <http://www.Americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>.

Olympics.⁴ As Fitzhugh Brundage argued, the “historical South” that exists today in Atlanta and elsewhere in the region “is the consequence not of some innate regional properties but of decades of investment, labor, and conscious design of individuals and groups of individuals.”⁵ In spite—and at times—because of, its position as a leader of the *New South*, post-World War II Atlanta has been the site of significant efforts to define, portray, and erect a historical South, particularly in reference to the antebellum, Civil War, and New South periods. These efforts to establish Atlanta’s history have been linked to a variety of sometimes conflicting goals and interests, including desires to monetize the city’s past through heritage tourism, secure the city’s Civil War bona fides, and establish Atlanta’s identity as a forward-looking southern city, one that would welcome new businesses and become a worthy Olympics host to boot.

Of course, establishing Atlanta’s identity as a moderate southern city has frequently entailed a heavy dose of historical forgetfulness, if not downright amnesia. The 1906 Atlanta Riot, the Ku Klux Klan burning crosses on Stone Mountain in the 1910s and 20s, Ernest Vandiver Jr.’s 1958 campaign slogan “No, Not One” in response to desegregation, and Lester Maddox—who was elected governor just two years later—wielded an ax handle in 1964 to prevent black customers from entering his Atlanta restaurant are just a few of the historical events that do not fit Atlanta’s self-styled reputation for peacefulness and moderation. Even a cursory survey of Atlanta’s racial history reveals the extensive labor and “conscious design” that has been necessary to

⁴ For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the phrase “metropolitan Atlanta,” or “metro Atlanta” for short, in accordance with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) which it defines as the City of Atlanta and a ten-county area including: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties.

⁵ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2-3.

portray the city as racially harmonious and progressive. Moreover, efforts to secure a broadly palatable and economically viable historical memory for Atlanta after World War II had to navigate a very fine line between a desire to capitalize on the city's role in the Confederacy and efforts to define the city as a beacon of the South's future, along with those who sought to resist the Civil Rights Movement and others who sought to embrace—or at least accommodate—change.

As individuals and groups struggled over the future direction of Atlanta in the midst of significant social and political transformation, they sought to formulate a civic identity that would secure Atlanta's position as a preeminent southern city, prepared to lead the region into the twentieth-first century. In particular, public officials and business leaders faced the problem of whether—and how—to continue promoting the city's previously celebrated role as a Confederate railroad hub, a point that city boosters had long embraced as a source of not only civic pride but also economic gain. Could the city's Civil War history somehow be incorporated into Atlanta's post-civil rights identity as a racially progressive and inclusive city, as the laser show at Stone Mountain seemed to imply? Or was the city's relationship to the Confederacy inherently problematic, an expression of white supremacist attitudes and policies that Atlanta needed to refute unequivocally in order to move forward as a leading urban center—and economic engine—on the regional, national, and international stage? As the well-established standard-bearer for the “New South,” Atlanta's struggles with these and other questions shed light not only on the city's efforts to renegotiate its historical and emergent identities in the second half of the twentieth-century but also on the broader challenges facing the South more generally. Moreover, these issues came to a head most clearly in metro-

Atlanta where individuals and groups in both the private and public sector endeavored to define—and profit from—the city’s past while asserting control over the direction of its future.

While the need to renegotiate Atlanta’s relationship to its past is particularly evident in the mid-late twentieth-century, with the onset of the modern Civil Rights Movement, the city has a long history of boosterism relying on carefully manipulated historical narratives. With economic growth always on the forefront, Atlanta city leaders have long worked to craft and control the city’s image. In 1886, *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry Grady announced the arrival of the New South, by which he meant a South characterized by industry, in contrast to an old South defined by plantation agriculture. Although not everyone in Georgia eagerly supported this development, the “Atlanta Ring,” a loose alliance of powerful urbanites and businessman, was dedicated to advancing the city and expanding the economy. Advocates consciously championed the New South identity in order to appeal to northern business interests hoping to expand the southern economy through diversification and industrialization.⁶

The city’s rise from the ashes after General Tecumseh Sherman’s infamous March to the Sea became an important story boosters told about Atlanta’s resurgence and transformation in the wake of the Civil War. With city leaders eager to foster an image of

⁶ Darren Grem, “Henry W. Grady (1850-1889).” New Georgia Encyclopedia. 13 July 2015. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/henry-w-grady-1850-1889> (Accessed 12 October 2015). For more on the New South and Henry Grady see: Raymond B. Nixon, *Henry W. Grady: Spokesman of the New South* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1943); Harold E. Davis, *Henry Grady’s New South: Atlanta, a Brave and Beautiful City* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1990); Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston and Mobile 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2002 reprint); Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); Georgina Hickey, *Hope and Danger in the New South City: Working Class Women and Urban Development in Atlanta, 1890-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003).

Atlanta as the icon of the New South, the inspirational phoenix, stressing Atlanta's path to renewal was quickly adopted. In 1887, leaders moved to have the city's official seal depict the phoenix rising from the ashes, along with the dates 1847 and 1865—representing the city's incorporation and rebirth after the Civil War—and the Latin phrase “Resurgens,” meaning to rise again. During the twentieth-century, officials evoked the image of the phoenix when needed to demonstrate the city's perseverance.⁷

Instrumental to shaping Atlanta's burgeoning New South identity was six-term Mayor William Hartsfield (1937-41, 1942-61), who believed wholeheartedly that there was no contradiction between celebrating Atlanta's Civil War past and promoting the city as the leader of the New South. Prior to his first term as mayor, Hartsfield served as a city alderman in the 1920s. He sought to expand on the city's reputation as the “Gate City”—a nickname originally coined in reference to the rail line running through Atlanta and connecting Memphis and Charleston. In 1925, Hartsfield helped found what would eventually become the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on an abandoned racetrack in Clayton County. In Hartsfield's estimation, increasing Atlanta's national prominence as a transportation hub with the addition of an airport was critical to securing the city's place as the model New South city.⁸

⁷ “The Phoenix Rises—It's Atlanta's Flag,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 16 Feb 1965, 13; Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs, A Chronicle of its People and Events, 1st edition* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, Inc., 1954). For more about General Sherman's March to the Sea, see: Noah Andre Trudeau, *Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea* (New York: Harper, 2008).

⁸ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 432; Louis Williams, “William Berry Hartsfield and Atlanta Politics: The Formative Years of an Urban Reformer, 1920-1936,” Vol. 84, No. 4, *Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Winter 2000): 656. For more on the early period of growth in Atlanta see: Thomas H. Martin, *Atlanta and Its Builders: A Comprehensive History of the Gate City of the South*. Vol. 2. (Boston: Century Memorial Publishing Company, 1902); John R. Hornady, *Atlanta: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Atlanta: American Cities Book Company, 1922); Ivan Allen, *The Atlanta Spirit: Altitude + Attitude* (Atlanta: Ivan Allen-Marshall Company, 1948); Eleanor Williams, *Ivan Allen: A Resourceful Citizen* (Atlanta: Ivan Allen-Marshall Company, 1950). For more about the airport see: Betsy Braden and Paul Hagen, *A Dream Takes Flight: Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport and Aviation in Atlanta* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

Slogans abounded as Atlanta boosters sought to propel the city forward. Also in 1925, Louie Newton, editor of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce bulletin, pioneered the business determinism phrase the “Atlanta Spirit,” or rather, what he called the “pervasive belief that whatever was good for business was good for Atlanta and all Atlantans.” From 1926 to 1929, a generation of young business leaders and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce embraced the tenets of the New South by sponsoring the “Forward Atlanta” national advertising campaign. With ads for the city appearing in publications including *Business Week* and the *Wall Street Journal*, over a thousand businesses pledged monetary support.⁹

For all the talk of Atlanta as the icon of New South, the memory of the Civil War remained close at hand. The city’s acquisition of the *Battle of Atlanta* Cyclorama in the 1890s was indicative of the city’s struggle to capitalize on Civil War memory. Former Union General and Senator John A. Logan’s commissioned the painting, initially known as *Logan’s Great Battle*, to boost his 1884 bid for the vice-presidency on the ticket with James G. Blaine. The Cyclorama captures a dramatic historical moment: the fighting that occurred on July 22, 1864 when John Bell Hood’s Confederate forces met Union troops under the command of James B. McPherson in modern-day Decatur. But by the early twentieth-century, the Cyclorama as an emblem of Atlanta’s noble defenders fighting for their homeland replaced the memory of General Logan’s leadership. The *Atlanta Constitution* considered the Cyclorama’s opening in Atlanta “a Confederate victory.” Drenched in Lost Cause rhetoric, the newspaper proclaimed the Cyclorama “gives justice

⁹ Louie Newton in *City Builder* (Atlanta: Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 1925) on microfiche at UGA Libraries; Michael Foster Turnell, “In Retrospect: An Analysis of the “Forward Atlanta” Public Relations Campaign 1926-1929,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 1979), 1-10; David Andrew Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Right Movement and Race Relations: Atlanta, Georgia, 1946-1981* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 71-73, 96-97.

to the southern valor that was shown in the face of the enemy.” Despite the devastating military loss at the Battle of Atlanta, the Cyclorama came to represent Confederate bravery in the face of overwhelming odds.¹⁰

The marketability of Atlanta’s Confederate heritage only grew with the national appeal of Margaret Mitchell’s legendary *Gone With The Wind*. When the cinematic adaption premiered at the Loew’s Grand Theater on Peachtree Street in December 1939, Mayor Hartsfield declared a citywide holiday complete with a parade down streets adorned in Confederate flags. At the private viewing, Clark Gable reportedly stated, “The only thing missing to make the Cyclorama perfect is Rhett Butler.” Seeking to capitalize on the connection between these two icons of Atlanta’s Civil War era history, Hartsfield made the Cyclorama his “pet project” and ordered the creation of a diorama soldier resembling Rhett Butler. With the publication of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind*, the revamped Cyclorama, and the start of the memorial carving project at Stone Mountain in the 1920s, city boosters solidified identification between Atlanta and Confederate mythology as they sought to develop tourism rooted in history.¹¹

¹⁰ Wilbur Kurtz, *The Atlanta Cyclorama: The Story of the Famed Battle of Atlanta* (Atlanta: The City of Atlanta, 1954), 11 & 24; 1924 Pamphlet, Battle of Atlanta *Cyclorama* collection, 1886-1980, undated, MSS#1023, Battle of Atlanta Cyclorama collection, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center; “Cyclorama Belongs to the City: Formal Transfer of the Property Made Yesterday,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 16 April 1898; “Right at Home: The “Battle of Atlanta” Being ReEnacted Here,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 23 Feb 1892; “The Atlanta Cyclorama,” City of Atlanta. Office of Cultural Affairs. 2013. (Accessed 3 December 2013) <http://www.oaatlanta.com/programs/the-atlanta-cyclorama/>; “History,” Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum. Accessed 3 December 2013.

¹¹ William Pratt, *Scarlett Fever: The Ultimate Pictorial Treasure of Gone with the Wind* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, Co., Inc., 1977), 215-220; Molly Haskell, *Frankly My Dear: Gone with the Wind Revisited* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 147-149; “Cinema 1939: Stars Attend GONE WITH THE WIND Premier in Atlanta” *Times*, 5 October 1983; Herb Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999); Johnny and Bonnie McKay, *Insider’s Guide: Atlanta*, 8th Edition (Guilford, CT: Morris Publishing Inc., 2008), 139; “City Would ‘Paint’ Cyclorama in Light: Hartsfield Reveals Development of Plan,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 29 October 1937.

While city leaders' simultaneous promotion of Lost Cause memory and New South ideology might seem contradictory, there was one clear point of agreement between past and future: a devotion to white supremacy and black subordination. Although city leaders were relentless in their quest to identify Atlanta as a heart of the region's future, proponents of Henry Grady's New South envisioned Atlanta as a place that maintained a strict racial caste system, with rigid segregation, disenfranchisement, and limited opportunities for black education and employment. As Grady remarked in 1888, "the whites and blacks must walk in separate paths in the South." The 1895 Cotton States Exposition, held at Atlanta's Piedmont Park, showcased the ideals of the New South and its role in the new modern world. Exposition officials depicted African Americans as the South's biggest problem and "promoted segregation as the foundation of racial harmony."¹²

At the 1895 Cotton States Exposition, Booker T. Washington delivered his infamous "Atlanta Compromise" speech noting, "We can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." The suggestion Washington put forth embodied the vision white leaders had for the New South—a world in which white supremacy provided a link between past and present and racial segregation was the answer to the problem of black freedom. With paternalism glorifying this vision of race relations, African Americans were to be relegated to a permanent servant class in the "New South," just as they were fondly recalled as loyal slaves and beloved mammies in the past. Thus, when white leaders in the 1920s insisted that Atlanta

¹² Gunnar Myrdal, *Black and African-American Studies: American Dilemma, the Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009, reprint), 581; Theda Perdue, *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 3.

must “capitalize on its growing reputation for racial moderation” in order to attract new industries and create a harmonious atmosphere, what they meant was that black resistance to white supremacy needed to be kept in check. Racial paternalism needed to maintain white control and minimize the threat of violence.¹³

Of course, most African Americans did not embrace a white supremacist view of Atlanta’s past or vision for the city’s future. Immediately after the Civil War, African Americans crafted an “emancipationist vision” of the Civil War viewing the conflict as an opportunity to uphold the promise of equality by reinventing the republic and notions of freedom. Although reconciliation sentiment overwhelmed the nation and by World War I essentially suppressed this vision, the black community would uphold the emancipation narrative. African Americans used “public celebrations” such as historical pageants, speeches, and holidays like Emancipation Day to challenge white memory. As historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage argued, “African Americans created their own understanding of the past, but whereas white memory filled public spaces and made universal claims, the black countermemory was either ignored by whites or was largely invisible to them.”¹⁴

While African Americans asserted their own interpretations of Atlanta’s past and vision for the future, outbreaks of white-on-black violence—the other side to white paternalism—challenged officials’ assurances that their “harmonious” city was devoid of

¹³ “Atlanta Compromise Speech” in Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 3, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 583–587; Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Right Movement and Race Relations*, 97.

¹⁴ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 300-319; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Amherst, MI: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 10 & Chapter 4. For full discussion of three visions of Civil War in memory, the subscribers and chronology, see *Race and Reunion*. For more on African American “freedom festivals” see: Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration in the American South*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

racial strife. Most obviously, on September 22, 1906, the Atlanta Race Riot left dozens of African Americans dead and hundreds injured. Historian David Goldshalk argued this devastating set of events “stymied the forging of the sorts of intraracial alliances that might have strengthened the position of the entire black population in relation to whites.” At the same time, the riot tarnished the prominence of Washington’s vision of interracial cooperation, leaving many African Americans to support the vision advanced by W. E. B. Du Bois stressing the importance of higher education and demanding equal rights. This was not an isolated incident of violence though. Between 1880 and 1930, southern whites committed a “frenzy” of heinous lynchings across the South.¹⁵

Although the riot and other manifestation of violence helped solidify segregation, inequality and white supremacy as the foundation of the New South, this segregation ironically allowed Auburn Avenue to become the vibrant epicenter of the black community. Aside from the churches like Big Bethel AME and clubs such as the Royal Peacock Theatre, three pillars of African American commerce called Sweet Auburn home: Citizens Trust Bank, Mutual Federal Savings and Loan, and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. In 1928, William Alexander Scott II founded the black-owned *Atlanta Daily World* on Auburn Avenue, and throughout the twentieth-century, the newspaper remained an important voice for the African American community.¹⁶

Through the first half of the twentieth-century, Atlanta embodied “New South” efforts to capitalize on Lost Cause memory and racial ideologies that bound together the

¹⁵ David Fort Goldshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 161. For full discussion see Stewart Emory Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois, 1995).

¹⁶ Joshua F.J. Inwood, “Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of the Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park,” *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 16 (2009): 92. For a complete account of the Sweet Auburn community, see: Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Street Meets Auburn Avenue: A Saga of Race and Family* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997).

past and present—the New South might be different from the old in terms of economics but it would be reassuringly familiar in terms of race. There would be no contradiction between celebrating the cause that defended slavery and promoting a “new” system of southern industry. Throughout this period, African Americans challenged white supremacist accounts but this primarily occurred in the separate spaces of their schools, churches, newspapers, and community centers. It was the emergence of the modern Civil Rights Movement after World War II that upset this uneasy peace. With the movement well underway in the 1950s and 1960s, the clear opposition between white supremacist and civil rights visions of past and future forced city officials to renegotiate. How was the city going to navigate a way forward—could it still capitalize on Lost Cause mythology and sites like Stone Mountain? Or would such efforts compromise Atlanta’s reputation as a racially progressive New South city? African Americans’ rising political power linked with King’s legacy also added a new dimension to historic tourism. Could Stone Mountain and the King memorial co-exist? Would visitors climb Stone Mountain one day, and visit the King memorial the next?

The Civil Rights Movement blew the lid off the tenuous balance between New and Old South Atlanta. In fact, as the movement took hold in Atlanta and elsewhere in the South, many individuals and groups who sought to resist the movement brandished weapons of the pasts. They sought to control the meaning of the Civil War at centennial celebrations, secure a Confederate emblem in the Georgia state flag, and promote the completion of the Lee, Stonewall, and Davis carving at Stone Mountain. At the same time, these issues came to a head time and again as Atlantans grappled with the ongoing changes set in motion by the Civil Rights Movement: in the early 1960s, the Civil War

centennial; in the purchase and development of Stone Mountain in the 1960s-70s; the recognition of Atlanta as a “black mecca” in the 1970s and the establishment of Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site; and in preparations for the Olympics. These events are important steps along the road in an attempt to re-package Atlanta to the rest of the nation as a business paradise and booming tourist destination, while simultaneously capitalizing on the city’s Confederate past and birthplace of “human rights” in the post-civil rights South.

Historiography

This dissertation engages many different disciplines. It draws on the work of urban historians, sociologists, political scientists, geographers, public policy experts, and most especially, scholars of memory. Aside from contributing to the historiography concerning Atlanta, this dissertation adds to the larger studies of heritage tourism, historical memory, southern culture, and growing scholarship concerning monuments and memorials.

Two important scholars of Atlanta’s governance inform this dissertation. In 1953, trained sociologist Floyd Hunter pioneered the community study with an examination of the “Regional City,” though everyone knew it was Atlanta. In his 1980 work, *Community Power Succession: Atlanta’s Policy Makers*, Hunter revisited “institutional policy-making decisions,” and sought to discover whether or not the “powerful elite” still controlled Atlanta. He examined how both black and white “power structures” of the 1950s evolved during the many social, economic, and political transitions during the 1960s and 1970s. Although some of the corporations and individual actors changed, he

determined that policy decisions were “gravely imbalanced, skewed in favor of economic institutional values.” Decisions largely reinforced the desire for urban growth and economic development within the city. Despite criticism that Hunter favored economic determinism and overlooked a pluralist model for power in American cities, his account remains a cornerstone for understanding power dynamics and policy-making in Atlanta.¹⁷

In another community power study, Clarence Stone’s 1989 work *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* engaged the same themes Hunter had previously examined. Stone’s most important contribution remains the concept of the “urban regime,” or rather, the “informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions.”¹⁸ Spanning the “post-war era” from 1946 to 1988, Stone explored three central questions: Who composed the regime? How did it coalesce? And to what consequences? Although Atlanta faced many changes, “negotiated settlements” and economic structural realities—like the dependence on the business elite—allowed the bi-racial governing coalition to maintain control. These two texts provide a framework for this dissertation. Many of the individuals, civic organizations, and corporations that appear in these accounts are major players in this dissertation whether serving on committees or having a role in the actual decision-making process.

¹⁷ Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), xiii. For a critical analysis of Hunter’s work see: Michael Jones-Correa and Diane Wong, “Whose Politics? Reflections on Clarence Stone’s *Regime Politics*.” *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2015): 161-170; Clarence Stone, “Regime Analysis and the Study of Urban Politics, A Rejoinder,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1998): 249-260; Clarence N. Stone, “Looking Back to Look Forward: Reflections on Urban Regime Analysis,” *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (January 2005): 309-341; Robert A. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

¹⁸ Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Topeka: University of Kansas, 1989), 6.

This dissertation also speaks to the well-established historiography concerning race in twentieth-century Atlanta. Despite the efforts of boosters and slogans, historian Ronald H. Bayor's *Race and the Shaping of the Twentieth-century Atlanta* illuminated how white supremacy guided the city's physical development and public policy throughout the twentieth-century. Although Bayor briefly began with a survey of the late nineteenth-century, he organized his work topically. For instance, Bayor devoted a chapter to the "Atlanta Wall," which demonstrated how roads and highways served as a physical racial divide between the white and black community. Even after Maynard Jackson became mayor in 1973, Bayor determined "white economic forces" limited the ability of the city to address African American needs. As such, "class divisions," Bayor asserted, "became sharply evident in the black community." In closing, Bayor investigated how the preparation and construction of new facilities for the 1996 Olympics hurt many inner-city poor black communities. Although Bayor did not consider Atlanta entirely unique, the city's complex race relations are useful for understanding urban development within the city.¹⁹

In his popular account, *Where Peachtree Street Meets Auburn Avenue*, former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter, Gary Pomerantz also examined the city's race relations. Pomerantz chronicled Atlanta from the antebellum period through the 1980s from the vantage point of two prominent political families: the Dobbsses and the Allens, one black and one white, respectively. Though the family history style prose sometimes

¹⁹ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of the Twentieth-century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 83. For recent studies of race in Atlanta see: Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); David Andrew Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Right Movement and Race Relations: Atlanta, Georgia, 1946-1981* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996); and Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

romanticized the actors, Pomerantz argued these families “built dynasties of power and influence in their parallel worlds.” To begin, Pomerantz posits the question “how can blacks truly be free within white southern society?” He argued that whites and blacks in Atlanta negotiated a truce that was “small in terms of tolerance and understanding,” in order to achieve “profits in business and politics.” The underlying assumption of the book remained, “any understanding of the co-existence of the two Atlantas must begin with an understanding of the people who built the city.” The expansive text—over 500 pages long—provides extensive details about the city’s history and leadership that proves useful to any scholar of Atlanta.²⁰

In *Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City 1946-1996*, another former reporter, Frederick Allen, explored the city’s growth post-World War II. Allen began his informal account with the contentious 1946 congressional election and closed with the 1996 Olympics. Throughout the text, Allen focused on politics and economic development in the effort to construct an “international” city. Allen argued the City of Atlanta finally achieved status as an international metropolis due to the Olympics. Allen often juxtaposed the actions of the mayor’s office and forward-thinking downtown business elites with more reactionary, rural constituency around the state. Although not an academic account, Allen’s work still demonstrated how racial bias shaped the highly image-conscious city in spite of a desire for social and political stability.²¹

Anthropologist Charles Rutheiser also explored the transformation of Atlanta during the twentieth-century in *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of*

²⁰ Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Street Meets Auburn Avenue: A Saga of Race and Family* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 19 & 20.

²¹ Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City 1946-1996* (Marietta, GA: Longstreet Publishing, 1996).

Dreams. The chapters skip around chronologically; he opened with a discussion of the “imaginary city” constructed for the Olympics before examining Cobb County, the establishment of Atlanta in 1837, and plans for “plugging the whole in the [downtown] center” during the 1970s. Rutheiser called the city’s “new metropolitan geography” reminiscent of “a CAT scan of cancerous tissue—a value-laden cliché to be sure and burdened by all sorts of mixed metaphorical entailments.” This statement offers a glimpse of the snarky disdain evident throughout his account. In his final chapter on the 1996 Olympics, Rutheiser confirmed that city leaders ignored “the more deep-rooted and intractable issues of poverty, unemployment, crime, and racism.” Although Rutheiser’s account offers some important insights, the overtly negative tone and nonlinear chronology proves difficult to follow at times.²²

In another study of Atlanta, Harvey Newman, a scholar of public policy and urban development, traced the legacy of hospitality and its “commercial application” on the city’s tourism industry. *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta* began in the 1840s when the city was still an important regional railroad hub and concluded with the 1996 Olympics. He explored topics such as the “cultural value” and commercial importance of southern hospitality and the city’s long history of boosterism. One particular form of tourism—the convention business—was of special interest to Newman. He focused heavily on the expansion of the city’s hotel and service-industry sector to accommodate conventioners along with the unexpected perception of the city as violent and crime-ridden by the attendees. While African Americans provided most of the labor for the tourism industry, and in turn, helped secure the city’s reputation for southern

²² Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (New York: Verso, 1996), 78 & 6.

hospitality, Newman argued they reaped an unequal portion of the benefits. Newman determined the “cultural norm of Southern hospitality” allowed Atlanta to become a renowned metropolitan area “known around the world as a place to visit and do business.” In closing Newman posited, “What role will Southern hospitality play in Atlanta’s future?” Newman also considered the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta but he focused on the implications of the service-industry and public policy, not so much on the use of historical memory. Nevertheless, Newman’s judicious investigation of Atlanta’s tourism industry—including many statistics—provides a useful framework to ground this dissertation.²³

Finally, this dissertation engages the expansive scholarship concerning memory. Since the 1990s, scholars have formally recognized the subsequent explosion of the “memory industry.”²⁴ Historian Michael Kammen’s magnum opus on all matters of American history and memory remains an utmost authority. At nearly 900 pages, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* explored what

²³ Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 2, 301, 10 & 305. Newman also has an article: “Atlanta’s Olympics and the Business of Tourism” in Richard Starnes, editor. *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003) that will be addressed in more detail in the Olympics chapter.

²⁴ Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse” *Representations*, No. 69. Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering (Winter, 2000): 127-150. Klein opens by coining the phrase “memory industry” and traces the evolution of memory studies from other disciplines in Europe and eventually to the United States. For more theory based accounts about the start of the “memory industry” and its uses see: Pierre Nora, (Translated by Marc Roudebush). “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*.” *Representations*, Vol. 26 (Spring 1989), 7-25; Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse” *Representations*, No. 69. Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering (Winter, 2000), 127-150; David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Jan. 1975), 1-36; David Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” *The Public Historian*. Vol. 18, No.2 (Spring 1996), 7-23; David Glassberg, *Sense of Past: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); David Lowenthal, *Heritage Crusades and the Spoils of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); Alison Landsberg. *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University, 2004); Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

has shaped American traditions, how remembering the past has affected the nation and the importance of collective memory as an unconscious historical process. Kammen argued, “Societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind—manipulating the past in order to mold the present.” In many ways, Kammen’s ideas about reconstructing the past guides this entire dissertation and plays an important part in each chapter.²⁵

In continuing many of the same connections between memory and national identity, John Bodnar’s *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth-century* analyzes the struggles between vernacular culture, and official government sanctioned depictions of history. Bodnar viewed public memory as a “kind of civic glue” that has unified the country through patriotism. While Kammen traced the breadth of American history, Bodnar limited his focus to just the twentieth-century. He illuminated more recent controversies surrounding the public memory, commemoration, and reconciliation of the Civil Rights Movement, World War II, and the Vietnam War. Bodnar claimed public memory—which he divided into communal, regional, and national—often “emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions.” Ultimately, Bodnar argued that historical memory and commemoration not only preserve the past but also address current political discussions. The use of historical memory addressed in this dissertation adds to such discussions.

This dissertation also engages the extensive scholarship concerning Civil War memory.²⁶ Renowned historian of memory David Blight has examined how Americans

²⁵ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Press, 1991), 3.

²⁶ For scholarship on Civil War memory see: Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); David Blight, *Race and*

remembered the legacy of the Civil War. In *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* offered three different models of remembrance summarized as: reconciliation, white supremacy, and emancipation. Ultimately, Blight argued, “The forces of reconciliation overwhelmed the emancipationist vision in the national culture,” and the “the inexorable drive for reunion both used and trumped race.” Also in 2002, Blight’s *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* examined the intersection of history and memory through case studies such as the Shaw Memorial, Frederick Douglass’ autobiography, and Ken Burns films. More recently, *American Oracle: The Civil War In the Civil Rights Era* (2011) examined the war’s legacy through the lens of legendary writers Robert Penn Warren, Bruce Catton, Edmund Wilson, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison. Blight argued the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement will be “forever intertwined in American history and mythology.”²⁷ This dissertation further

Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002); David Blight, *American Oracle: the Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge: Belknap for Harvard University Press, 2011); David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and The American Civil War* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations* (Amherst, MI: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Amherst, MI: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, editor. *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Waugh, Joan and Gary Gallagher. *Wars within a War: Controversy and Conflict over the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); David Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History*. Updated Edition. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2002); Tony Horowitz, *Confederate’s in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998); Ann Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman’s March and American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of Chapel Hill, 2014); Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, editors. *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013).

²⁷ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap for Harvard University Press, 2002), 2; David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002). David Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War In the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge: Belknap for Harvard University Press, 2011).

proves Blight's point as the chapters highlight key moments when the legacy of the Civil War did, in fact, intersect that of the Civil Rights Movement.

As a subset of the historiography concerning memory, scholars have also increasingly focused on the intersection of southern culture and tourism.²⁸ The essays in *Dixie Emporium: Tourism, Foodways, and Consumer Culture in the American South*, edited by Anthony Stanonis, examined the South through tourism attractions, souvenirs, and foodways. The essays examined a variety of subjects and times including Reconstruction-era advertising depicting the South as an "exotic" travel destination, the creation of the "Ozark Trickster" hillbilly image in Branson, Missouri, the "South of the Border" attraction off I-95 in South Carolina, and the rise of the Krispy Kreme donut chain. Since the nineteenth-century, the South represents a preconceived set of symbols and images to visitors that have been greatly influenced by consumerism. Stanonis argued, "Over the course of the twentieth-century, tourism and consumerism emerged as social and economic crutches as well as facilitators of positive publicity." Other recent studies have recently examined the evolution of heritage tourism in other southern cities and connected the development of tourism initiatives with attempts to forge a regional

²⁸ There is extensive literature on heritage tourism, public history, and the commodification of the South: Richard Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Big Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Richard Starnes, editor, *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); Stephanie Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Anthony J. Stanonis, *Creating the Big Easy: New Orleans and the Emergence of Modern Tourism, 1915-1940*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006); Patricia Mooney-Melvin, "Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism and History," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Spring 1991); Karen Cox, editor, *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Rebecca Cawood McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South: Northern Tourism and Southern Mythology* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Anthony J. Stanonis, editor, *Dixie Emporium: Tourism, Foodways, and Consumer Culture in the American South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008); J. Mark Souther, *New Orleans on Parade: Tourism and the Transformation of the Crescent City* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

²⁸ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap for Harvard University Press, 2002), 2; David Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 3.

identity. The intersection of tourism and consumerism highlighted in this collection of essays appears throughout this dissertation as various individuals, organizations, and corporations sought to market metro-Atlanta's historical identity. Regardless of these tensions, capitalizing on metro-Atlanta's potential for heritage tourism fits within the vision for the future advances by city leaders and boosters.²⁹

Overall, this dissertation builds on the extensive scholarship regarding Civil War—and later Civil Rights—memory, heritage tourism, and memorialization. While other scholars have explored the connection between regional identity and tourism endeavors, the controversies surrounding the development of both Stone Mountain Park and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site shed light on the unsettled nature of the public landscape. In this regard, the dissertation relies upon historian and architect Dolores Hayden, who has argued, “Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories.” As noted in the subtitle of her book, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscape as Public History*, Hayden considered the “urban landscape” a mode of “public history” worthy of thorough investigation. These ideas about what Hayden has called the “politics of place construction” have guided this dissertation. Although metro-Atlanta has exhibited a long pattern of lauding Lost Cause imagery, the 1970s set in motion a series of changes that left ordinary citizens along with city and state officials to consider native-Georgian Martin Luther King, Jr. and the historic site in his honor a point of civic pride worth promoting. While “southern heritage” had by no means been removed from the public landscape, by the time of the 1996 Olympics, boosters touted the city as home to

²⁹ Stanonis, ed., *Dixie Emporium*, 5.

both icons of the Confederate past with site attractions such as Stone Mountain and the Cyclorama along with a substantial civil rights legacy in its own right.³⁰

Myth, Memory and Tourism in Metro-Atlanta

Renowned cultural historian Michael Kammen argued that since the 1920s and 1930s American heritage had become “increasingly intertwined with entrepreneurial opportunities.” Although domestic tourism greatly expanded in the post-World War II era due in part to the formation of the National Highway System, “heritage tourism” is a much more recent phenomenon dating to the 1990s. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, heritage tourism “create[s] a sense of place rooted in the local landscape, architecture, people, artifacts, traditions and stories that make a particular place unique.” In the latter half of the twentieth-century, questions about nostalgia and how to balance authenticity, historical interpretation, and economic development animated heritage tourism enterprises. Yet could emphasizing “heritage” ever do more than glorify the selective memories of the privileged? In Atlanta—as in many other places—this has meant simplifying or avoiding complicated questions of power, race, class, and gender. Historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage has addressed the unwillingness of many southerners to grapple with unpleasant memories. He argued the only way to

³⁰ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscape as Public History* (Cambridge and London: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1997), 9. For more on monument and memorials see: Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Richard Schein, ed. *Landscape and Race in the United States* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006); Cynthia Mills and Pamela Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003); Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory, and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2014); Paul A. Schakel, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (Landford, MD and London: AltaMira Press, 2003); Joshua F.J. Inwood, “Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of the Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park,” *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 16 (2009): 87-109.

represent a pluralistic South at heritage tourism sites is through oft-contentious public dialogue. This dissertation illuminates these debates and their complexities as individuals and groups attempted to commercialize southern historical memory—and myth—and maintain stewardship over the past for their own agenda.³¹

As the home to both Martin Luther King Jr. and Margaret Mitchell’s iconic Tara, metro-Atlanta is an ideal place to examine the process of recasting historic memory—how groups and individuals collectively remember the past—and its role in tourism during the latter half of the twentieth-century. By expanding the study of historical memory to post-World War II metro-Atlanta, this dissertation demonstrates how some forward-thinking leaders—from both the business and African American community—countered ideas which white southerners had fought to normalize and maintain within the public landscape. The series of events examined in this dissertation span a crucial period when fervent romanticized views of the Confederacy devoid of unpleasanties and consideration of race clashed with the mounting Civil Rights Movement.

This dissertation considers how Atlanta’s complicated past has shaped historical memory and tourism enterprises during the latter half of the twentieth-century, and in turn, contributed to booster’s continual reinvention of the city. It examines how human actors—including elected officials, city boosters, community leaders, and prominent businessmen along with organizations such as the Metro Chamber of Commerce, Atlanta Visitor and Convention Bureau, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Neighborhood

³¹ *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 13 & 621-628; National Trust for Historic Preservation, “Authenticity in Cultural Heritage Tourism,” (Accessed 9 Dec 2015) <https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/authenticity-in-cultural-heritage-t>; Amy Jordan Webb, “A Decade of Heritage Tourism,” *Preservation Leadership Forum*, Vol. 13. Issue 4 (Summer 1999), National Trust for Historic Preservation, <https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/a-decade-of-heritage-tourism>; Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow*, Conclusion.

Planning Units—shaped the public landscape of history of metro-Atlanta in the mid-to-late twentieth-century. Included among these actors are prominent African American religious officials, businessmen, and community activists with the likes of Coretta Scott King, Hosea Williams, Maynard Jackson, and Andrew Young. Both public and private interests consciously remembered, repackaged, and even overlooked elements of the past in order to highlight narratives that attracted both businesses and tourists all while capitalizing on the city's Confederate past and birthplace of “human rights” in the post-civil rights South.

Despite the attempts to craft carefully thought-out slogans and long-range development plans, Atlanta has struggled to define a coherent identity for the city. The historical narratives and imagery presented in each of the chapters of this dissertation reflected what individuals and organizations actively sought to remember, and represented the accepted cultural and political norms of those with power at that particular time. As historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage stated, “The historical South that exists today is the consequence not of some innate regional properties but of decades of investment, labor, and conscious design of individuals and groups of individuals.”³² Central to this dissertation is the confrontation between the “past”—events that have already happened—and “history”—the process of interpreting the past. Elected officials, city boosters, and business leaders continually used “history” to highlight selective elements of “the past” in slogans, marketing campaigns, promotional materials, and opportunities for tourism. Throughout this process, leaders utilized history in ways that effectively erased and glorified parts of the past. The discrepancies in the presentation of history, especially in regards to race, challenged the progressive national image Atlanta

³² Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow*, 3.

boosters put forward and highlighted unresolved tensions within society that persist even today.

Over the course of the mid-to-late twentieth-century, metro-Atlanta tourists encountered a variety of interpretations of the past. Although “tourist attractions may not seem to be the best resource when investigating “official” history,” historian Tara McPherson argued, these sites “hint at ways in which history lives on in the present via popular reconstructions.”³³ To promote tourism, various public and private interests have created and marketed a mythologized past drawing on the romance of the Civil War Era, the economic boosterism of the New South, and—at least by the 1970s—the Civil Rights Movement. Defining that history and its entanglement with race and the legacy of segregation has proved problematic. Furthermore, the efforts to capitalize on the State of Georgia’s growing tourism industry often created a fraught relationship with locals who worried about the consequences such as the displacement or costs accrued by residents along with the rise in “kitsch” or the inappropriate allocation of history in the name of profit. This can best be seen with an examination of the Civil War centennial, Stone Mountain Park, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, and preparations for the 1996 Olympics.

Chapter Overviews

This dissertation’s organization is primarily thematic but also loosely chronological. The dissertation spans the late-1950s through 1996 with the Epilogue looking towards current events. Although there is some chronological overlap, each

³³ Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 99.

chapter opens with a detailed account of an event that is symbolic of the larger issues under discussion within the chapter. The first and last chapters examine events while those in the middle follow the development of specific sites within metro-Atlanta. The first three chapters show how white used Atlanta's relationship with the Confederacy to resist the Civil Rights Movement, while the last two chapters demonstrate how countervailing pressures from the African American community and burgeoning tourism industry ushered in some change—even though the long-term effects remain to be seen.

The first chapter examines how local, city, and state officials managed the Civil War centennial while navigating the tenuous relationship between the state and federal organizations. The 100th anniversary of the Civil War reignited sectional fervor and inspired celebratory Lost Cause events at a moment when white segregationists were up in arms and massive resistance to civil rights was well underway. Although spokesmen had repeatedly embraced a New South vision for Atlanta, as they had for many decades, the allure of Lost Cause ideology gained new ground during the centenary. Despite the national commission's reconciliationist sentiment, the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission favored themes that glorified the sacrifices of white Georgians and the Confederate cause.

Chapter 1 analyzes the Civil War centennial from the vantage point of the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission based in Atlanta. It examines the intersection of public versus private interests and historical interpretations in programming, promotional materials, and programming activities. Although consideration of African American Civil War memory was negligible in Georgia's commemoration efforts, like elsewhere in the South, many critics sought to challenge to the white-dominated

memories of the Civil War. Eventually, the national commission planned an observation of the Emancipation Proclamation at the Lincoln Memorial to which the state commission expressed opposition. Although the Georgia commission expressed a desire to avoid commercialization, reporters often critiqued the pageantry of events. By investigating these debates over tourism and commercialization, this chapter illuminates how the search for profits, Lost Cause sympathy, and historical fact collided with the interests of individuals, centenary supporters, and the commission.

The next two chapters both address Stone Mountain Park located less than thirty miles from downtown Atlanta. Chapter 2 begins in 1958 when the state purchased Stone Mountain. Although a desire to defend white supremacy initially guided Governor Marvin Griffin, the development of Stone Mountain quickly became more complicated as public and private interests—which were often at odds—came together to create an appealing yet profitable tourist enterprise. The chapter examines debates over the options at hand: would the carving remain central to the park’s concept as a memorial to the Lost Cause or would it expand its focus to incorporate a romanticized message of national reconciliation? Would a desire for profitability require the state to somehow soften or moderate the park’s association with the Confederacy and the defense of white supremacy? Or would the iconic Confederate carving and its related associations be the key selling point? The contested visions of the park and the Confederate carving that would emerge simultaneously represent the popularity of heritage tourism enterprises celebrating the Old South and the boosters’ desire to market Atlanta as a forward-looking city of the New South.

While the first chapter on Stone Mountain examines the purchase, original master plan, and development in the 1960s, Chapter 3 picks up with the completion of the carving. On Saturday, May 9, 1970, Senator Herman Talmadge presided over the dedication of the granite carving of three-famed Confederates General Robert E. Lee, General “Stonewall” Jackson and President Jefferson Davis after over half a century of work. After President Nixon canceled his highly anticipated trip to Georgia, Vice President Spiro Agnew delivered a speech riddled with “southern strategy” rhetoric, and consequently, became a forum for larger debates concerning race relations. Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, who also spoke, evoked Lost Cause themes. By the 1980s, the park had expanded into a theme park-like attraction, yet it still continued to boast elements of “southern heritage.” The chapter ends with debates over privatization when the Herschend Family Entertainment Company assumed management in 1998.

Chapter 4 traces demographic and electoral changes in the city that coalesced with the 1973 mayoral election of Maynard Jackson. Despite black political leadership, the city’s once vibrant African American commercial district—affectionately known as Sweet Auburn—was in decline. Amidst this context, the chapter examines the struggle to revitalize Auburn Avenue and recognize important structures associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. The conflict between local residents and neighborhood groups, along with federal and city actors continually delayed projects. On October 10, 1980, Congress passed a law establishing the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site and Preservation District, and with that, solidified African American history within the city’s public landscape. Yet even after the formation of the site, conflict ensued over interpretative programming and appropriate types of development that would not compromise the

character of the larger neighborhood. The chapter closes with an investigation of how the city's African American history—mainly at destinations such as the King Center, Sweet Auburn, and national historic district—was promoted during Olympic preparations.

Chapter 5 examines how strands of Atlanta's conflicted historical identity came together during the 1996 Summer Olympics. Throughout the bidding process, politicians, business leaders, Olympic planners, and city officials sought to capitalize on Atlanta's reputation for Old South charm and southern hospitality along with the New South's legacy for business and commerce. Yet with this vision, they also eliminated uncomfortable issues of race and class that might detract from the promotion of the city to an international audience. After the IOC announced Atlanta would host the games in September 1990, tensions increased as some criticized the attempts to “sanitize” metro-Atlanta's history and allure an unprecedented number of tourists to the city. Although business leaders, Olympic boosters, and even some scholars, saw the 1996 Summer Olympics as a defining moment when Atlanta finally “made it” at the international level, in reality, little had changed as the city simultaneously capitalized on the legacy of both the Confederate past and the post-Civil Rights South.³⁴

³⁴ For more on the Olympics as a shining moment when Atlanta became an “international city” see Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising*.

CHAPTER 1

“GEORGIANS ARE THE SOIL FOR THE ROOTS OF COMMEMORATION”: THE
CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL

To kick off Civil War centennial festivities in downtown Atlanta, the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission (GCWCC) held a charity costume ball on March 9, 1961, at the Biltmore Hotel on Peachtree Street. The commission considered the ball “an outstanding success” with *Gone With the Wind* actresses Vivian Leigh and Olivia de Havilland, who played Scarlett O’Hara and Melanie Hamilton, respectively, along with director David Selznick in attendance. Following the costume ball, the commission hosted a “benefit performance of the filmization of the late Margaret Mitchell’s great novel.” In jubilant anticipation, the Loew’s Grand Theater once again transformed into an Old South mansion complete with white columns—just as it had for the original 1939 movie premiere. All events benefitted the GCWCC in hopes the publicity would help raise substantial funding for additional events. The growing industrial center’s continued embrace of the epic film showcasing romanticized Lost Cause ideology revealed firsthand the highly contested nature of historical memory within metro-Atlanta. When the news broke that officials planned to move the original movie set back to the city as a reconfigured museum with a replica to be constructed at Stone Mountain, *Atlanta Constitution* contributor Frank Wells mocked the plans, speculating “2 Taras Should Be

Enough for Atlanta.” These events clearly did not embody the iconic “too busy to hate” image of Atlanta but instead echoed earlier Lost Cause themes.³⁵

Also in 1961, Georgia native Harold H. Martin, a journalist and writer, noted, “Atlanta has seceded from the Confederacy” arguing “Rebel flags and Civil War relics came off the office walls years ago.” The anniversary of the Civil War seemed to contradict Martin’s optimistic pronouncement though by reigniting sectional fervor and inspiring celebratory Lost Cause events at a moment when white segregationists were up in arms over integration and many white southerners embraced massive resistance as a means to deter civil rights efforts. That same year *Time Magazine* published “Meditations on the Centennial” by the famed poet and Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Penn Warren. “The Civil War is, for the American imagination, the great single event of our history,” Warren wrote, it “is our only ‘felt’ history—history lived in the national imagination.” Given its status as the nation’s “felt history,” the Civil War has continued to capture the imagination of many. Though city spokesmen repeatedly embraced a New South vision for Atlanta as they had for many decades, the allure of Lost Cause ideology gained new ground in light of civil rights—a fact the centennial clearly exposed. As one *New York*

³⁵ File Unit: State Commission - Georgia, 1958-65 (2 files), Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service, 1785 - 2006, Record Group 79, National Archives at College Park (NACP), College Park, MD; “Civil War Centennial, ‘GWTW’ Quarters Opened,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 Jan 1961, pg. 36; Frank Wells, “Not So Deep: 2 Taras Should Be Enough for Atlanta,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 May 1959, 13.

For details of the premiere at the Lowes’ Grand Theater see: William Pratt, *Scarlett Fever: The Ultimate Pictorial Treasure of Gone with the Wind* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, Co., Inc., 1977), 215-220; Molly Haskell, *Frankly My Dear: Gone with the Wind Revisited* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 147-149; “Cinema 1939: Stars Attend Gone With the Wind Premier in Atlanta,” *Times*, 5 Oct 1983; Herb Bridges, *Gone with the Wind: Three-Day Premiere in Atlanta* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999).

Times critic more aptly remarked, “If the South has lost the Civil War, it is determined to win the centennial.”³⁶

Despite countervailing pressure from African Americans, many southern whites resisted the Civil Rights Movement by reinforcing Atlanta’s relationship with the Confederacy. Historian David Goldfield argued, “The centennial became a second Lost Cause for southern white supremacists.” In metro-Atlanta, this often meant capitalizing on the anniversary’s Confederate connections to enhance the state’s growing tourism industry. City and state officials managed local Civil War centennial events while navigating the uneasy relationship between the state and national commission. Commemorative events across the state took place against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement.³⁷

The overarching political climate and inherent conflict between public and private interests shaped the local programs, public response to centenary events, black community engagement, and the state’s centennial commission. Although state officials showed concern for “authenticity” and expressed a desire to avoid commercialization, reporters still criticized the spectacle. As one ordinary citizen, Thomas Furgron of Brooklyn, acutely remarked, “Pageantry is fun; crinolines and mock battles are very well in their place and they have their place. But the transcendent importance of the Civil War lies in its real advancement of the American dream of freedom.” Nevertheless, the debates within Georgia over how best to “sell” the centennial as an event through tourism

³⁶ Harold Martin, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of its People and Events*, Vol. III (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 331 & 4; Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditations on the Centennial*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961); C. Vann Woodward, “Reflections on a Centennial: the American Civil War,” *Yale Review*. Vol. 50, No. 4 (June 1961): 48-490; *New York Times* quoted in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 237.

³⁷ Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War*, 324.

and commercial ventures illuminated the struggle between local, state, and national leaders who all sought to champion the anniversary for their own agenda.³⁸

The foremost authority on the Civil War Centennial remains Robert Cook, whose full-length examination *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial* argued the U.S. CWCC “planned commemoration [as] a weapon of the cultural cold war—a popular heritage bonanza.” Cook also noted the centennial was “de-centralized by design and enjoyed far more success in scattered localities.” Cook, however, asserted that localized study “merits extended consideration.” This chapter will do just that—examine the Civil War centennial on a local level, emphasizing the critical role of collective historical memory and economic opportunity in Atlanta.³⁹

Several scholars have examined the Civil War centennial against the backdrop of the Cold War. In the edited series *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, Jon Wiener’s article “Civil War, Cold War, Civil Rights: The Civil War Centennial in Context, 1960-1965” examined the centennial on the national level. Wiener remarked, “Civil War commemoration became a political battlefield, an opportunity for supporters and opponents of civil rights, and for the president and others uncommitted on the issues,

³⁸ *Manual for Georgians: A Guide for Local Committees* (Atlanta: Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, 1959), 12; Letter Thomas Furgron to the commission 18 November 1961, File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

³⁹ Robert Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 15 & 12. Cook also has two chapters on how the centennial intersected the Civil Rights Movement: Robert Cook, “From Shiloh to Selma: The Impact of the Civil War Centennial on the Black Freedom Struggle in the United States, 1961-65 Civil rights and race relations,” in Anthony Bager and Tony Ward, editors. *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Robert Cook, “The Unfinished Business: African Americans in the Civil War Centennial,” in Susan-Mary Grant and Peter Parish, ed. *Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

to reconsider and redefine the meaning of the Civil War, to find heroes, and villains.”⁴⁰

Finally, historian Richard Fried also explored the centennial against the context of the Cold War—including events such as the Bay of Pigs, the building of the Berlin Wall, and threats against Alaska. Fried deemed the centennial “the last gasp, of ‘high’ cold-war era celebration.”⁴¹ While historians have considered the centennial in relation to the Cold War, this chapter expands on local motives, the usage of historical myth and memory, and economic opportunism during the centennial in and around metro-Atlanta.

Establishing the Governing Agencies

For decades, groups known as Civil War Round Tables had become popular in large cities across the country such as Chicago, New York City, and Atlanta. These Civil War Round Tables and history enthusiasts used their popularity to pressure politicians to introduce several measures during the 85th session of Congress to commemorate the upcoming Civil War centennial. In February 1957, Virginia Representative William M. Tuck, a Democrat and militant segregationist, introduced Joint Resolution H.J. #253 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Civil War. Tuck’s proposal named the National Park Service (NPS) as the “administrative agent” for the proposed Civil War Centennial Commission and called for collaboration with the Park Service to expand tourist facilities at Civil War battlefields and historic sites. The \$100,000 earmarked for a preliminary report caused some disagreement, however, as many lawmakers saw it as too costly. The outlined purpose of the resolution was threefold: to create and strengthen

⁴⁰ Jon Wiener, “Civil War, Cold War, Civil Rights: The Civil War Centennial in Context, 1960-1965” in Fahs and Waugh, editors, *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, 237.

⁴¹ Richard Fried, *Russians Are Coming! Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 122.

patriotic feeling, increase knowledge of the history and events of the Civil War, and establish long-lasting monuments to the critical period of the nation's growth. Iowa Representative Fred Schwengel, a Republican and avid collector of Abraham Lincoln artifacts, introduced a separate bill H.R. Res #336 calling for an Assembly of Historians to manage the commemoration. While this supervision might have prevented issues concerning historical accuracy, it never panned out as lawmakers built off Tuck's proposal.⁴²

Though the Civil Rights Movement had begun making strides across the country, many felt the need to memorialize the bloody conflict that left in its wake a failed promise of equality for African Americans. For some, this was no paradox, but rather yet a calculated ploy to resist civil rights. As images of soldiers accompanying black students integrating schools frequented the nightly news, Congress passed legislation to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Civil War. On September 7, 1957, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 85-305 creating the Civil War Centennial Commission (USCWCC).⁴³ President Eisenhower issued a proclamation declaring, "[the Civil] war was America's most tragic experience... [and] it carries with it an enduring lesson and a

⁴² "H.J. Res. 253, 85th Congress, 1st Session," Box 181, Folder 48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; Letter Carl Havelin to CWRT board notes that \$100,000 is an "undesirabl[y]" large sum for a report Box 181, Folder 48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; "Purpose and Proposed Plan," Box 181, F48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; "H.J. Res. 336, 85th Congress, 1st Session," Box 181, F48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers.

Founded in 1949, the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta included: Civil War historian Richard B. Harwell; Wilbur Kurtz Sr., known for his work on the film adaption of *Gone with the Wind* and the Georgia Historical Commission; Wilbur Kurtz Jr., of the Coca-Cola Corporation; Dr. Phininy Calhoun Jr., an ophthalmologist at Emory University; Margaret Mitchell's widow John Marsh; famed Atlanta chronicler Franklin Garrett; businessman and longtime president of the Atlanta Historical Society Beverly DuBose Jr.; and Emory professor of history Bell Wiley.

⁴³ Government sources are inconsistent regarding the terminology. Both the National Civil War Centennial Commission and U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission are used interchangeably in sources. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will refer to this entity as the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission (USCWCC), or for short, the national commission.

profound inspiration.” Desiree Franklin, chairman of the UDC Centennial Commission, praised Congress for creating the USCWCC arguing “it promised the opportunity to acclaim the transcendent courage, integrity of purpose, idealism, heroism and vale [*sic*] of tears identified with the Sons and Daughters of the Southland.” Yet in contrast, Joel Rogers of the *Pittsburgh Courier* argued, “the Centennial would allow the common lyncher to become the defender of Southern traditions; and any rabble-rouser the gallant leader of a thin, gray line of heroes.”⁴⁴

The U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission legislation named the president, vice-president and speaker of the House of Representatives to honorary ex-officio positions. Other members included: four appointees each from the Senate and the House of Representatives, and twelve appointments made by the president including the director of the NPS as a representative of the Department of Interior, two members from the Department of Defense and one member from the Library of Congress. Though only three southerners were appointed, including Georgian Bell Wiley, historian Robert Cook noted the commission members were “broadly sympathetic to southern concerns.”⁴⁵

Despite the perceived victory for Civil War enthusiasts, not everyone viewed the occasion as a cause for celebration. People from both sides of the Mason Dixon line expressed reservations about the Civil War centennial. The Alabama Division Commander for the Sons of Confederate Veterans promptly noted, “We of course resent the misleading term ‘Civil War’ being used to designate the Centennial Commission.” Presumably, the organization preferred the term War of Northern Aggression. Virginia

⁴⁴ “Proclamation #3882,” *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: US Civil War Centennial Commission, 1968), 11; Desiree L. Franklin, “The Centennial,” *UDC Magazine*, August 1963, 12; Joel A. Rogers, “History Shows,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 June 1961.

⁴⁵ Clipping in File Unit: Georgia, 1958-61, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 31.

Senator Harry Byrd, a Democrat and hardline segregationist, remarked: “Why do you and I want to call attention to the Civil War? The South got the hell beat out of it.” An Atlanta couple, the Chapmans—who identified themselves as “Born-and-bred” southerners—wrote to officials in Washington D.C.: “why celebrate a total defeat?” Ester Magle, of Pennsylvania, feared the Civil War Centennial Commission “will re-open wounds that have not been entirely healed.” Charles O’Neill, of Connecticut, vividly wrote, “There of course has been too much magnolia thrown over the Civil War, and too little light on the bloody, grinding large scale fight it was for the principles of freedom.” Despite this array of opinions, national commission officials expected “isolated criticism” as “neither this effort nor any other which is conceivable will attract 100% support.”⁴⁶

President Eisenhower named D.C. businessman Karl Betts executive director in charge of daily operations and made grandson of Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant, Ulysses S. Grant III, chairman, or rather, the symbolic figurehead of the national commission. Howard Meyer, of the *Negro Digest*, sternly criticized Chairman Grant noting he “is eighty years old, and apparently still accepts the ideology that prevailed during his turn-of-the-century youth: that North-South reconciliation is more important than the human rights of the Negro.” In contrast, Betts “took a Madison Avenue approach to his job,” and as some historians claim, tried to make “people feel good about the Civil War.” Bell Wiley expressed concern about both men noting that northern Republicans held the highest leadership positions. He penned, “I am a Union Democrat...If the Civil War Centennial Commission is to be a partisan group, rather than a nation[al] body, I

⁴⁶ Letter from Ira West, Alabama SCV to U. S. Grant 19 April 1959, File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Fried, *Russians Are Coming!* 122; Letter dated 3 June 1960, Box 185 Folder 1: Europe Publicity Trip, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Letter Karl Betts to Sidney Brinckerhoff 23 February 1961 File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966; Records of the National Park Service.

have no interest in being a member of it.” Wiley reflected a common concern: whether or not the federally appointed commission represented *all* Americans. Other ordinary citizens claimed the centennial was really a “multi-million dollar expense” in order to “brainwash the South and Americans into Negro-Nordic integration.”⁴⁷

The U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission purportedly advanced the theme of unity. Citing America’s “devotion to principle which endures any imaginable strain,” White House Press Secretary James C. Hagerty stated, “no event in our history ever tested that devotion, that understanding and that determination more profoundly than did the American Civil War.” He continued, explaining, “It is the magnificent unity of spirit that came out of it [the Civil War]—and the realization that every man is made for freedom and accountable for the freedom of his neighbor—that should be most clearly remembered.” The national commission also assisted state authorities with local events, oversaw commemorative programs, preserved and recorded historic letters and manuscripts, and sometimes promoted controversial reenactments. Aware that “the embers of sectional emotionalism could easily burst into flames,” Chairman Grant tried to convey an atmosphere of patriotism and mutual understanding. Executive Director Betts also tried to quell antagonisms stating, “there is nothing in this heroic episode of our past that we want to *celebrate* during the centennial. We desire, rather to *commemorate*.” However, individual state commissions had a great deal of leeway. The

⁴⁷ Howard N. Meyer, “Did the South Win the Civil War?” *Negro Digest* (November 1961), 4; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 594; Letter Bell Wiley to Haverlin 25 Sept 1957, Box 181, Folder 48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Mrs. Elton Chapman to U.S. Grant 7 January 1960 File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

national commission served merely as “a clearinghouse for information, and a coordinating agency for assisting localities.”⁴⁸

The state of Georgia followed the lead of states such as Virginia and expressed a sympathetic tone for the Confederate cause. Governor Ernest Vandiver created the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission (GCWCC) on April 10, 1959, by executive order. Georgia would be one of many states to do so that year. Vandiver named his own executive secretary Peter Zack Geer and head of the Department of Commerce Abit Massey, chairman and vice-chairman, respectively.⁴⁹ Governor Vandiver expressed the need “to recognize and pay tribute to the greatness demonstrated by Georgia people during the crisis.” Exuding enthusiasm, Chairman Geer stated, “The roots of the Civil War...or the War Between the States...run deep in Georgia.... Georgians are the soil for the roots of commemoration and the sincere devotion of Georgians to commemoration is an ideal climate.” Even the Georgia UDC Centennial chairman wrote to Governor Vandiver expressing “congratulations and esteem ... for the notable commemoration of our Boys in Gray.”⁵⁰

The Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, run out of the state capital in Atlanta, mimicked the organization of the national commission. State officials named members to an Honorary Advisory Committee “representing big business” as well as top executives in industries such as television, radio, and public relations. These include:

⁴⁸ Statement by the President for Immediate Release 5 January 1961 File Unit: White House, 1957-66, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Fried, *The Russians are Coming!*, 133 & 126; Victor Gondos Jr., “Karl S. Betts and the Civil War Centennial Commission,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 1963), 57.

⁴⁹ Greer served on GA House of Reps, Demo and Lieutenant Governor under Carl Sanders from 1963-1967.

⁵⁰ Civil War Round Table members, Box 181 Folder 42, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Speech by Governor Vandiver, Civil War Centennial Commission, Folder- Speech Text 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550 Folder- UDC 1960-1964, Georgia Archives.

Ivan Allen Sr., founder of the Atlanta Rotary Club and longtime president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; Robert “Bob” Woodruff and Harrison Jones of Coca-Cola; Walter Crawford of the Atlanta Convention Bureau; Jack McDonough of Georgia Power; Howard and Fuller Callaway Jr. of Callaway Mills; and Mills B. Lane president of Citizens and Southern National Bank, among others. The seventeen-person GCWCC divided into nine committees that would direct projects across the state. In 1960, Stanley Rowland Smith assumed the role of administrative director, in charge of the day-to-day activities. By the end of the anniversary, Governor Sanders appointed the former president of the Atlanta Historical Society, Beverly DuBose Jr., to the position of chairman once Peter Zack Greer resigned in 1964 after being elected state lieutenant governor. The commission largely relied on men of commerce and industry as opposed to professional historians.⁵¹

The Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission’s Executive Committee included two women: Doris Lyle, president of the Georgia Division of the UDC and member of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association; and Mary Givens Bryan, director of the Department of Archives and History. Both women openly expressed loyalty to the southern cause. In an especially illuminating statement, Bryan wrote, “We have a rich heritage and a glorious history to tell the nation. It is necessary to preserve our permanently valuable records to prove we are white! Our golden hour has arrived as we approach the event of commemorating the great sacrifices made by Georgians during the Civil War.” While rarely this explicit, the urgency in Bryan’s call to action reflected how

⁵¹ Honorary Advisory Commission, Folder- Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, Civil War Centennial Commission – Chairman – Information Inquiries Correspondence, 1963-1965, DOC1732, Georgia Archives.

many white southerners in Georgia and elsewhere in the South felt under siege from the Civil Rights Movement.⁵²

Lost Cause themes glorifying the sacrifices of white Georgians and the Confederate cause appeared throughout literature produced by the state commission though. In 1959, the GCWCC distributed a 36-page booklet entitled *Civil War Centennial Manual for Georgians: A Guide For Local Committees* to encourage participation. The booklet stressed the importance of leadership firmly stating, “Every county and city is expected to appoint an active Centennial committee.” The *Manual for Georgians* also used the loaded term the “War Between the States” and maintained the centennial would “honor our Confederate heroes.” The booklet did not consider the possibility that some Georgians might have supported the Union; instead, it implied the Confederate cause was the states’ official heritage, and in turn, the commemoration celebrated white southerners. The manual even offered additional “purposes” for the Georgia commission including “to honor the valor and sacrifice of Georgians who fought and died for the principles which they believed eternal” and “to perpetuate a knowledge of the deeds and traditions of a valiant people.” Although the booklet does not specify what “principles” or “traditions” it meant, one can reasonably assume that white supremacy remained one. With these types of blatant statements supporting the Confederacy, it is easy to see how critics argued that state sponsored events across the South seemed at odds with the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission that sought to “strengthen both the unity of the Nation and

⁵² Mary Givens Bryan to Vandiver, 26 Jan 1959, Records of Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, Record Group 079-02-004, Georgia Archives.

popular devotion to the highest purpose of the Republic.” Highlighting this irony, Howard Meyer, of the *Negro Digest*, asked: “Did the South Win the Civil War?”⁵³

The impassioned women of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) hereditary organization saw the impending centenary as a moment of opportunity to draw attention to their cause. The UDC affirmed, “the Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy are the responsible representatives of the South for clarification of the issues, events and deeds during the War.” One member urged fellow Daughters to “keep the home fires burning.” Asserting “our Southern history has had this funeral” because many had “bur[ied] it and forg[o]t to mark the grave.” She implied that the “noble southern cause” had been diminished and overlooked in memory. These women confirm historian Karen Cox’s assertion that the UDC sought more than just memorialization and wanted to train the next generation to seek vindication.

The UDC women used the Civil War centennial to assert their sacred duty, preserving “Confederate culture,” and for some members, this was likely something learned from their mothers and grandmothers before them. The *UDC Magazine* praised the centennial as a moment to “bring forward the truths of history, extolling the heroes of that particular state; the important battles or events, if possible, on the anniversaries...the heroic women, etc.” Desiree Franklin, chairman of the UDC Centennial Commission, saw the centennial as a chance “to bury forever falsities directed against the South for more than a century.” Franklin’s statement demonstrated a feeling that the South had been victimized or wronged by history. These goals aligned with statements from the

⁵³ *Civil War Centennial. Manual for Georgians: A Guide for Local Committees* (Atlanta: Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, 1959); *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: US Civil War Centennial Commission, 1968), 3; Howard N. Meyer, “Did the South Win the Civil War?” *Negro Digest* (November 1961), 4.

GCWCC that sought “to make as many contributions of a permanent nature as we can and, at the same time, to educate and re-ignite interest in our history.” Both the UDC and GCWCC espoused Lost Cause ideology.⁵⁴

Commission Politics: Sectionalism, Patriotism & Race

The initial appointments to both the national and state commissions occurred nearly simultaneously. The Advisory Council to the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission had 650 federally appointed members who served without monetary compensation. Although the official duties of the Advisory Council were vaguely defined, Chairman Ulysses S. Grant III asked patriotic groups, members of veterans’ organizations, historical societies, learned associations, and a variety of civic or service-minded organizations to participate. Originally, twenty Georgians were invited to join the Advisory Council. Although the vast majority of those asked to serve were white civic-minded men, three women and one African American were also included. Judge John Sammons Bell forewarned Grant, “my education learned at my grandparents’ knees... is based on the premise the South was never defeated but it simply wore itself out whipping the Yankees.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Desiree L. Franklin, “The Centennial,” *UDC Magazine*, January 1963, 6; Mrs. John L. Woodbury, “Our Heritage,” *UDC Magazine* (March 1959), 4; Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University of FL Press, 2003), xii; Desire L. Franklin, “Message of Centennial Chm.,” *UDC Magazine* (May 1959), 10; Desiree L. Franklin, “The Centennial,” *UDC Magazine*, August 1963, 12; Georgia CWCC Report, 5 May 1964, Philosophy of the Commission File Unit: State Commissions (FL-GA), Folder: Georgia State Commission, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

⁵⁵ Letter John Sammons Bell to U.S. Grant Unit File: Advisory Council - General Correspondence, 1955-60, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

Membership on the Advisory Council fluctuated over the duration of the centennial. During the initial round of invitations in 1958-1959, members from Georgia included: Mary Given Bryan, director of Georgia State Department of Archives; Murphey Candler Jr., retired DeKalb County Juvenile Court Judge; Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University; E. Merton Coulter, Department of History, University of

The attempt to diversify the Georgia appointees to the Advisory Council met harsh criticism. Executive Director Karl Betts informed Allen Julian, Director of the Atlanta Historical Society, that the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission's Executive Committee "felt that Negroes should be given some representation... otherwise, it was felt that we might come under criticism for discrimination." While this likely explained the appointment of African American Rufus Clement, President of Clark University in Atlanta, this did not mean that other Georgia appointees accepted it. Valuing race over an appointee's qualifications, Allen Julian expressed displeasure with the appointment of Clement. Julian wrote to Executive Director Betts, "The choice of Clement was particularly unfortunate...the appointment of a Negro to advise a Georgia commission is a serious blunder." Julian continued, "We had hoped to have a strong commission here in

Georgia; Ben Fortson Jr., Georgia Secretary of State; Charles Gowen, attorney at King & Spalding and former Georgia House of Representatives; C. E. Gregory, director of the Georgia Historical Commission and former political editor for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Willis Neal Harden, Georgia Senator and member State Highway Board; Allen Julian, director of the Atlanta Historical Society; Dr. A. R. Kelly, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia; Alexander A. Lawrence, district judge, Savannah; Marie McGhee, of Macon; B. F. Merritt, Jr., Mayor of Macon; Abit Nix, attorney and twice failed Georgia gubernatorial candidate; Eugene Patterson, vice president of Atlanta Newspapers Inc.; Homer Ray Jr., National Peanut Council; Walter D. Sanders, attorney; Orville Tyler Schaefer, Georgia Society for Crippled Children & Adults Inc. and three-time DNC delegate; Jack Travers, Associate Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*; John M. Ware, M.D. in Rome; and Allen M. Woodall, president of Radio Columbus, Inc.

Additional other Georgians were added at a later date: John Sammons Bell, Georgia Court of Appeals; Lindsey J. Henderson, Jr., Army Captain, Office of the Chief of Staff, Fort Stewart; Scott Candler, Georgia Department of Commerce and Stone Mountain Memorial Association; Doris Walker Lyle, President of the Georgia Division of the U.D.C.; James L. Bentley Jr., Comptroller of the State of Georgia and former Executive Secretary to Governor Herman Talmadge; William P. Corley, president of Executive Counselors public relations firm; Lilla W. Hawes, director of Georgia Historical Society; Jere N. Moore, *The Union Recorder* newspaper; James C. Booner, Department of History, Georgia State College for Women; Robert W. Grove, board of directors, Savannah Brank and Trust Company; Beverly M. DuBose, Jr., charter member of the Civil War Roundtable of Atlanta and member of Capital City and Piedmont Driving Clubs; W. J. Cousins, women's' clubs including Daughters of the American Revolutions; Wilbur Kurtz, technical advisor for *Gone With the Wind* and historical collector of the Civil War; Quimby Melton Jr., editor of the *Griffin Daily News*.

Georgia... few, if any, of these under consideration would be willing to work with ‘advisers’ of lesser stature—certainly not with a Negro.”⁵⁶

Although Julian pledged to “continue to lend whatever support” to the commission, he wrote “[I] cannot, conscientiously, appear before civic groups...to ask them to support a program in which interactionism and Negro politics appear.” In closing, Julia wrote, “if the integrationists and Negrophiles have already seized so dominant a place in the Commission... [it] will damage irreparably the whole, splendidly-conceived program.” Despite the national commission’s calls for unity and American patriotism, Allen Julian’s personal letters expose a level of overt racism not typically exhibited so openly between members of the commission. Furthermore, he clearly demonstrates how the anniversary of the Civil War could not be separated from ongoing civil rights and national racial tensions. Despite these criticisms, the appointment of Clement stood. This appointment was just one of many controversies during the time.⁵⁷

Georgia was not the only state to have controversy over the racial composition of its nominees though, as a similar controversy occurred with submissions to the Advisory Council from other states. Troubled by the lack of minority representation on the Advisory Council list, James T. Williams Jr. of Sperry Rand Corporation of New York wrote a letter to Executive Director Karl Betts expressing his concerns. Williams had submitted the names of Dr. Luther Hilton Foster, President of the Tuskegee Institute, and Charles Lee Lewis, former Professor of History at Annapolis, to the Advisory Council

⁵⁶ Letter Betts to Julian 18 July 1958 and letter Julian to Betts 10 July 1958, File Unit: Georgia, 1958-61, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

⁵⁷ Letter Betts to Julian 18 July 1958 and letter Julian to Betts 10 July 1958, File Unit: Georgia, 1958-61, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

but received no word. William wrote, "I am wondering whether this request failed of delivery, was overlooked, or whether the names were ever submitted for consideration of the Council." Betts had indeed received the letter and wrote to Chairman Grant the recommendation "is similar to the problem we had in Georgia. I think we should talk to this over...a letter of invitation has not, of course, been sent." One can reasonably assume the "problem in Georgia" referred to the uproar over the appointment of African American Rufus Clement to the Advisory Council.

After Williams persisted, a note was sent nearly a year after his original endorsement, explaining Professor Lewis would be granted an invitation but not Professor Foster. Though never mentioning race, Betts justified his decision by citing a requirement that any committee appointments had to have been made within ninety days; however, he promised to keep Professor Lewis in mind if a vacancy appeared. Ultimately, a "vacancy" never appeared and only the white nominee, Charles Lee Lewis, made the Advisory Council.

The lack of African American appointees to the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission and its many committees did not go unnoticed. During the summer of 1959, Pauline Myers, Public Relations Director for the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, expressed concern asking Executive Director Betts "why after more than one year of operations has been no Negro member appointed...no Negro participation?" Internal memos suggest that Betts was aware of the clout Myers held within the African American community and prompted commission leaders to pay attention to her demands. After meeting with USCWCC officials, she concluded, "there is no serious intention on the part of the Commission to by-pass the Negro...The

Commission, without any malice whatever, has simply neglected to approach the period with the Negro in mind.” Though Myer’s suggested “without any malice” others would interpret the events differently given the escalating tensions over civil rights sweeping the country.⁵⁸

The larger African American community remained hesitant about the impending centennial and less willing to view the commission as without malice. Citing white southerner’s campaign of massive resistance, Joel Rogers, of the historically black newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier*, remarked, “signs are multiplying that the always politically shrewd South is planning to fight another anti-America, another anti-Negro vilification campaign.” Rogers argued the centennial, “is really a uniting of white people only, and could turn into a formidable weapon against the Negro.” Furthermore, “the anti-Negro forces in the South...are planning to turn the Civil War Centennial (1961-65) into a huge justification of the Confederacy in its fight to uphold slavery.” The official magazine of the NAACP, *The Crisis*, depicted the centennial as a moment to “propagandize the South’s point of view both on the Civil War and the second-class citizenship of Negroes.” One article even encouraged local NAACP branches to draft statements of defiance “mak[ing] it clear that the Civil War was fought to preserve a union conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Many black periodicals did not hesitate to criticize not only the commission but also the entire Civil War centenary.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Statement of Miss E. Pauline Myers regarding “negro American” participation, File Unit: Colored Organizations, 1959-64, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

⁵⁹ Joel A. Rogers, “Civil War Centennial, Myth and Reality,” *Freedomways*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1963); Joel A. Rogers, “History Shows,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 January 1961; Rogers, J. A. “History Shows,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 Nov. 1960; “Civil War Centennial,” *The Crisis*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (April 1961), 226-7.

The U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission's 1961 annual meeting, held in Charleston, South Carolina, only confirmed many fears. The conference hotel barred New Jersey delegate Madaline A. Williams from entering on account of her race. Despite tense negotiations between the conference organizers and state delegates, South Carolina's segregation statutes were upheld. In a *New York Times* editorial, Frank G. Dawson, of New Haven, wrote, "the discrimination in Charleston, in itself heinous, is but an exterior manifestation of a national malaise inherent in the method by which the centennial of a peculiarly terrible war is being celebrated." Parson's critical account articulated an irrefutable connection between the Civil Rights Movement's struggle for equality and the unfinished promise of freedom derived from the Civil War. Dr. Charles Wesley, member of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, argued the national commission relegated African Americans to "another separate – but-equal role." After considerable negative media attention, newly elected President John F. Kennedy purged the national commission of its leadership in December 1961. President Kennedy appointed history professors Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. and Dr. Allan Nevins as executive director and chairman, respectively.⁶⁰

Despite the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission's assertion of "a Centennial for *all* Americans," race relations frequently made headlines alongside commemorative events. According to *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress*, "the Negro had every right to share in the Centennial on equal terms with the white man." Officials

⁶⁰ Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 92-94; Frank G. Dawson, "Civil War's Centennial: Factors Impelling Resurrection of Conflict Are Explored," *The New York Times*, 9 April 1961, E12; Joel A. Rogers, "Historians Blast Centennial Celebration Charge South 'Taking Over' Observance," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 4 November 1961, 7; James I. Robertson, Jr., "U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, 1957-65," Virginia Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the American Civil War http://www.viriniacivilwar.org/meetinginfo/doc/robertson_110906.pdf

affirmed that “[the] Commission has from the very beginning been non-political, non-sectarian, non-sectional and non-profit... everyone, regardless of race, color and creed, is welcome to join with us in this splendid effort.” Nevertheless, many used the centennial to point out the paradox that the promise of freedom that had been extended to African Americans by emancipation had still not been achieved. Alternatively, as Joel Rogers, of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, poignantly wrote, “it is foolish to commemorate a ‘war’ while it is still being waged.” Others such as Howard University professor Elsie Lewis argued the centennial should direct focus on the “yet unfulfilled freedom and democracy for all Americans.” Both men highlighted the irony of such statements of inclusion amidst escalating battles over civil rights.⁶¹

“Let’s don’t fight no mo”: Marketing the Civil War in the Twentieth-century

In the post-World War II era, the tourism industry saw expansive growth and professionalization in which the interests of locals often clashed with the intentions of outside capital. In 1959, Governor Ernest Vandiver (1959-1963) appointed William “Bill” Hardman, nicknamed “Mr. Tourism,” director of the state’s newly created Tourism Division within the Department of Commerce. The Tourist Division worked with William Keeling of University of Georgia Business Administration to conduct studies of both in-state and out-of-state travelers to improve the state’s tourism industry. Tourism quickly became big business in Georgia, and consequently, the attempt to cash in on the

⁶¹ Victor Gondos Jr., “Karl S. Betts and the Civil War Centennial Commission,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 1963), 56; *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: US Civil War Centennial Commission, 1968), 6; Letter Karl Betts to Charles Wesley 9 February 1961, File Unit: Colored Organizations, 1959-64, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Joel A. Rogers, “History Shows,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 April 1961; Telegram from Elsie Lewis to the president, File Unit: Colored Organizations, 1959-64, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

centennial made financial sense. Between September 1960 and August 1961, the total sales for businesses serving travelers topped \$821 million, while total tourism related travel expenditures in the state reached \$415 million. In 1960-1961, reported “vacation-recreation” travelers spent \$297 million. For comparison purposes, the total value of livestock and poultry sales for Georgia in 1959 totaled over \$326 million and the total value of crops harvested—including corn, grain, legumes, and forestry products—reported at over \$362 million. Promotion of the Civil War centennial as an entrepreneurial opportunity to maximize tourism falls in line with the general trend in the latter half of the twentieth-century to promote tourism as an important industry in Georgia (and the South generally) at a time of decreasing significance of agriculture in the overall economy.⁶²

Throughout the four years of the centennial, the question of how best to sell the 100th anniversary of the Civil War to historically inclined consumers amidst a changing world remained a foremost concern at both the state and national level. With budget woes troubling Congress, lawmakers debated how much, if any, funding the USCWCC should receive. With widespread bipartisan support, Congress appropriated the national commission \$100,000 in total for its activities, with staff salaries accounting for 55 percent of the budget. One way to make the most of this money was to collaborate with the National Park Service, which was simultaneously lobbying for funding to celebrate the organization’s 50th anniversary in 1966. The NPS’s initiative, better known as

⁶² Bill Hardman 4 February 2013 Interview, Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP-146, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; William B. Keeling, *Travel Survey of Georgia 1960-1961: An Economic Study of Tourism & Recreation* (Athens, Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, 1961), 9; William B. Keeling, *The Georgia travel industry, 1960-1968* (Athens, Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, 1969); U.S. Census of Agriculture: 1959, Final Report Vol. 1 Part 28, Georgia, U.S. Department of Commerce, 36.

Mission 66, sought to expand facilities at battlefields like Gettysburg and Chickamauga. Since many of the CWCC and Mission 66 goals overlapped in regards to battlefield preservation, the collaboration between the two entities proved useful leverage in obtaining funding to advance patriotic endeavors and accommodate the growth of tourism demands.⁶³

As many states and local communities began planning commemorative events, looming questions remained: how to get people to participate in centennial events and how to turn a profit. The U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission tasked the Committee on Advertising with this concern and appointed Kermit Sloan of the Curtis Publishing Company in Philadelphia to the position of chairman. This committee would “serve as a liaison between the nation’s major corporations and advertising agencies and the Centennial planners.” White male ad executives from a variety of notable Madison Avenue firms and national publications like the *Ladies Home Journal* made up the rest of the committee members. Of the twenty-two members, only a few southerners filled the ranks including Wilbur Kurtz, Jr., of Atlanta, Forest Bogan of the *News Leader-Times Dispatch* of Richmond, and Robert E. Lee IV. The latter was a descendant of the beloved Confederate General, who was raised in New York and resided in San Francisco.⁶⁴

⁶³ “H.J. Res. 336, 85th Congress, 1st Session,” Box 181, F48, Bell Irvin Wiley papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 602; Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 24. For more on Mission 66 see: Ashley Elaine Baker, “Interpretation of Mission 66 Resources in the National Park Service,” M.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 2011.

⁶⁴ Flyer, Committee on Advertising to Assist in Tie-Ins for Civil War Centennial, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; News clipping, 5 January 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 594; The Committee on Advertising of the Civil War Centennial Commission, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

By establishing oversight via the Committee on Advertising the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission officials hoped to avoid any mishap. More specifically, it sought to “avoid the incorrect and objectionable statements which in the past have caused sectional resentment.” The USCWCC distributed 4,500 *Aid for Advertisers* booklets to state officials, corporate affiliates, advertising agencies and chambers of commerce, and received over one hundred additional requests. Even the Better Business Bureau “much impressed by the booklet” prepared a two-page bulletin summarizing the booklet to send to its affiliates. The *Aid for Advertisers* included a “do’s and don’ts” list warning “Don’t fan long-forgotten animosities. Remember that many of the present day generation feel strong emotional ties to the events of 1861-1865.” Echoing this sentiment, the Southern Advertising and Publishing Company stated more frankly, “let’s don’t fight no mo!” The Atlanta based agency went even farther urging southerners to accept the leadership of Chairman Grant, despite his relation to the famed Union General.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Clipping, American Public Rejoined in One Great Nation Goal of Commission, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Letter Kermit Sloan to Karl Betts 23 June 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Letter to Bob from Farrand, Kermit Sloan 7 June 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Service Bulletin #1739, Committee on Advertising Publishers Guide for Advertisers 25 May 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Flyer, Let’s Not Fight No More, Southern Advertising and Publishing, July 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

The Civil War Centennial Committee on Advertising included: Chairman Kermit V. Sloan of the Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia; Vice-chairman Lloyd S. Howard of Lloyd S. Howard Associates, New York; Publicity director Georgia Whipple of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., New York; Secretary Jim Crown of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., New York; George Giroux of Proctor and Gamble, Los Angeles; Robert E. Lee IV of *The Chronicle*, San Francisco; Stan Cohen of *Advertising Age*, Washington, D.C.; Wilbur G. Kurtz Jr. of the Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta; Maurice H. Needham of Needham, Louis & Brorby, Chicago; Frank S. Christian of Kenyon & Eckhardt, Boston; William Springer of *New Center News*, Detroit; Calvin Otto of Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey; Preston Ewing of Mel Richman, Inc. of New York; William Fricke of McCann-Erickson of New York; Arnold Gates of New York Civil War Round Table, New York; Robert M. Gray of Esso Division, Humble Oil & Refining Company, New York; Donald S. Hillman of National Educational Television and Radio Center, New York; Alton Ketchum of McCann Erickson, New York; Don Walsh of *Advertising Age*, New York; Stan Warren

Though the national commission urged both companies and state commissions to reap the financial gains by drawing on the historical themes, officials demonstrated a legitimate concern that the occasion would devolve into kitsch. The *Aids for Advertisers*, distributed by the USCWCC claimed, “The American people have always responded to advertising with a historical motif” and suggested a variety of unexpected “tie-ins.” For instance, tobacco companies could use historic themes to profit off the centennial since clandestine bartering over tobacco “brought the enemy [sic] Blue and Gray soldiers together in common bond before Appomattox.” So too could clothing manufactures, who could supposedly “illustrate the colorful uniforms of the War while pointing out the inadequacies by today’s standards.” A trade journal, *The Printer’s Ink*, agreed and claiming the centennial will pay “dividends to advertisers who tie in with it intelligently and tastefully.” Everything from Johnny Reb “21” Bourbon to American heritage inspired games and toys, books and replica uniforms were mass-produced. With the question of where to draw the line left largely unanswered, both ad officials and the public expressed some frustration.⁶⁶

A memo from the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission to Governor Ernest Vandiver Jr. (1959-1963) predicted unprecedented numbers of tourists would travel

of Muzak Corporation, New York; George W. Head of National Cash Register Company, Dayton, Ohio; Forrest Bogan of *News Leader-Times Dispatch*, Richmond, Virginia. Consultants to the committee included: Bruce Catton, accomplished Civil War author; NYU and Columbia University professor of history Henry Steele Commager; Robert Henry Selph of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad and former president of the Southern Historical Association; Columbia University professor of history Allan Nevins; Emory University professor of history Bell Wiley; Virginia Carrington Jones of the Washington D.C. Civil War Round Table; LSU professor of history T. Harry William.

⁶⁶ “Aids for Advertisers: The Civil War Centennial 1961-1965” prepared by Committee on Advertising Civil War Centennial Commission, Box 13 Folder 2: Kurt Jr. Wilbur Civil War Centennial 1959-1963, Wilbur G. Kurtz, Sr. Papers, MSS 130, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center; “Aids for Advertisers: The Civil War Centennial 1961-1965” prepared by Committee on Advertising Civil War Centennial Commission, Box 13 Folder 2: Kurt Jr. Wilbur Civil War Centennial 1959-1963, Wilbur G. Kurtz, Sr. Papers, MSS 130, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 595; Advertising Outlook in *Printer’s Ink* 28 April 1960, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

South during the centennial. Between September 1960 and August 1961, the Georgia travel study reported nearly 15 million recreational trips within the state with 35 percent of travelers listing “visit historical places” as the purpose of their visit. The GCWCC pointed out how “communities throughout Georgia can capitalize on historic reenactments and other activities of interest to the visitor from within and outside our State, if adequate preparations are made.” However, the state commission only had a small budget totaling around \$50,000 per year. In comparison, the state of Virginia appropriated over \$1.3 million for centenary activities. To maximize both profits and exposure, several notable men such as H. Hansell Hillyer, founder of the South Atlantic Gas Company and John W. Lastinger of C & S National Bank, proposed expanding the state commission by adding businessmen that could focus their attention on tax deductions, licensing souvenirs, and selling broadcasting privileges.⁶⁷

The commission agreed to some elements of the proposal as businessmen made up most of Georgia’s Publicity and Promotions Committee and the Official Souvenir Committee. Both of these state committees wrestled with many of the same issues concerning marketing appropriateness, historical authenticity and sectional antagonism that the national commission faced. James Robinson, director of the *Albany Herald*, served as chairman of the Publicity and Promotions Committee with many other

⁶⁷ Memo to Governor Vandiver and Peter Zack Greer regarding “Georgia Civil War Centennial Preparations,” Folder- Centennial Bulletins 1959-1960, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives; William B. Keeling, *Travel Survey of Georgia 1960-1961*, 9; Memo to Governor Vandiver and Peter Zack Greer regarding “Georgia Civil War Centennial Preparations,” RCB7548, Folder- Centennial Bulletins 1959-1960, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives; Georgia: two-year period between July 1963 to June 1965 budgeted \$104,050; Box 12 Folder 1: Civil War Centennial Commissions Transcripts (Vol. I, 1960), 297 in DuBose Family Collection, MSS 1020, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center; Memorandum Re: Georgia Civil War Centennial Preparations, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives.

committee members drawn from the newspaper industry. William S. Stuckey Sr. and Jesse Anderson, both of the famed roadside attraction Stuckey's, served as co-chairman of the Official Souvenirs Committee.⁶⁸

The Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission saw the centennial as a chance to “sell the South of today.” Or as Chairman Greer more pointedly said, “An opportunity to sell Georgia and Georgia's history to the nation.” In many ways, these sentiments echo back to the New South campaign of their forefathers. As the New South attracted northern financiers, the centennial presented the state with vast economic opportunity, this time to attract history-minded visitors and their hard earned money. Though northern carpetbaggers had invaded the South in the post-Civil War era in hopes of cashing in, this time the tables had turned and southerners sought to profit off the northern visitors. Of like mind, Sidney Roebuck, Mississippi State Highway Commission, noted, “the Centennial is the first opportunity we have had in a hundred years to make the Yankees pay for the War and like it.” Afterward, the state commission's final report claimed, “For each dollar the State invested, the return was ten-fold.”⁶⁹

According to American Automobile Association (AAA), Civil War sites were “competing with famous tourist attractions of Europe.” The USCWCC joined ranks with

⁶⁸ Folder - Original Souvenir Committee 1959-1961 and Folder - Publicity and Promotion Committee, 1959-1962 RCB7548, Georgia Archives. Some of the other big names on the committee included: Julian Foster, of Tara Plantation Inc.; H. Hansen Hillyer of South Atlantic Gas Company; and, William Corley of Georgia State Chamber of Commerce; Other members included Abit Massey and Jack Minter, of Georgia's Department of Commerce, Edward Y. Chapin III, President of Rock City, Alva Haywood of *The Richmond County Times*, and Peyton Hawes, Revenue Commissioner of Georgia.

⁶⁹ Notes, first meeting, 21 July 1959, Folder- 1st Organizational Meeting of GA, Civil War Centennial Commission – Chairman – Information Inquiries Correspondence, 1963-1965, DOC1732, Georgia Archives; “Opportunity to sell Georgia,” 7 June 1960, Folder- Press Releases May-August Events 1960, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550 Georgia Archives; Governor Ross R. Barnett's Speech at Confederate States Civil War Centennial Conference, 3 November 1961, Folder- Confederate States CC 1960-1961, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7547, Georgia Archives; Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, *Report: Commemorating the War Between the States 1959-1965* (Atlanta, 1965).

the State Department to sponsor a three-month international publicity trip to “the free countries of Europe” in which Dr. Bell Wiley promoted the Civil War centennial and delivered lectures on the war. Several universities in England along with the Confederate Research Club of London expressed interest in Wiley’s trip. If enough Europeans requested the lectures, the State Department’s International Educational Exchange Service agreed to finance the trip since the USCWCC did not have any money to spend on such a venture. Nevertheless, the trip reflected a real desire to market the American Civil War and its centennial to a European audience.⁷⁰

Travel and motor clubs such as AAA and Rand-McNally released special Civil War centennial maps featuring dozens of sites of historical significance around Georgia including: Fort Pulaski east of Savannah, Chickamauga National Military Park, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Andersonville Prison, Jefferson Davis Memorial Park, and Alexander H. Stephens Memorial State Park. Before centennial events kicked off in 1958, Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park reported 309,474 visitors. During the height of festivities in 1963, visitations at the military park had increased to 1.084 million.⁷¹

An internal state memorandum outlined efforts to “induc[e] tourists and families to take ‘motor-trek’ campaigns in Georgia.” According to Stanley Rowland Smith, the state CWCC Executive Director, “Georgia will make its best opportunity to tell its own story, rich in history, economic, industrial and agricultural recovery. More

⁷⁰ Fried, *The Russians are Coming!*, 123; Letter U.S. Grant to Bell Wiley 21 April 1960, B185 Folder 1- European Publicity Trip, Bell Wiley Papers; Letter Patrick Courtney to Bell Wiley 16 March 1960, B185 Folder 1- European Publicity Trip, Bell Wiley Papers; Letter Bell Wiley to James Godfrey, 16 May 1960, Box 185 Folder 1- European Publicity Trip, Bell Wiley Papers.

⁷¹ Public Use of the National Parks: A Statistical Report (December 1963) Box 186 Folder 22 Bell Wiley Papers.

tourists/vacationers will attend Georgia's centennial events on a continuing year-round program than we can hope to draw to a single reenactment with limited audience facilities and space." T. T. Tucker of the Georgia Granite Company wrote to Ben Fortson Jr., of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, "With the coming of the Centennial, those people believe that the eyes of the world will be upon the South. They feel that our Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial could be the logical rallying point." The Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, an ardent segregationist, also hoped to cash in on the increase in travelers, remarked, "I believe that the kind of people who can and will come South will be the kind of people we want to come—and I don't mean 'freedom riders.'" Though Georgia officials did not make nearly such a direct statement about the types of visitors expected, one newspaper enthusiastically remarked, "Save Your Confederate Money, Boys, The South Shall Rise Again." This advertisement seeking to attract the "right" visitors overtly expressed sympathy to the white southern cause and urged those who viewed the Civil Rights Movement as unfavorable to come spend money in the South.⁷²

Despite the pleas to profit off tourism, the GCWCC stressed the centennial "is not a commercial venture and cheap commercialism should be avoided." Profiting off the commemorative spirit not only occurred but also quickly became a central focus. The GCWCC and State Chamber of Commerce asked public relations firms to submit plans

⁷² Letter Tucker to Fortson, 21 September 1951, Folder: T. T. Tucker, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550, Georgia Archives; Letter from William R. Taum, AAA, to Betts 8 June 1960, Folder- Monuments, Memorial & Commemoration, RCB7548, Georgia State Archives; Memo, "Outline of continuing commemoration of Civil War Centennial Programs in Georgia," Folder- Memos & Commemorations 196, R Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives; Governor Ross R. Barnett's Speech at Confederate States Civil War Centennial Conference, 3 November 1961, Folder- Confederate States CC 1960-1961, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7547, Georgia Archives; Clipping, Save Your Confederate Money, Boys The South Shall Rise (On TV?) Again, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 - 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

for the appropriate mementos and promotional items. Walter Baber, an advertising specialist out of Atlanta, suggested around fifty items to sell as exclusive merchandise bearing an “official” seal. Items such as Confederate jewelry, porcelain ashtrays, parchment reproductions of the Articles of the Confederacy, a Dixie music box, decals, cufflinks bearing the Confederate seal, and minié-ball (bullet) key chains ranged in price from twenty-nine cents to ten dollars. Retailers were asked to pay a three percent royalty to the state in order to support the centennial, which the Official Souvenirs Committee estimated would produce \$1 million per item. The Confederate Memorial Jewelry Company even offered “authentic” Stone Mountain replica cuff links, tie bar and tie tacks featuring the “three-dimensional equestrian” design. Atlanta journalist Frank Wells expressed concern that reproduction items, such as the bullets, might be misidentified as “genuine” and suggested passing a law requiring a reproduction label. Though such debates over appropriate merchandise seem trivial decades later, the issued created great controversy, most of which surrounded the reproduction of the Confederate battle flag.⁷³

Hereditary organizations such as the Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) especially denounced the commercialization of the 100th anniversary of the Civil War. The apparent misuse of the Confederate battle flag ever since the Dixiecrats and other organizations like the Ku Klux Klan adopted the emblem was especially disconcerting. The organizations thought the appropriation of the flag undermined the honor of those who sacrificed their lives for the southern cause. The

⁷³ *Civil War Centennial. Manual for Georgians: A Guide for Local Committees* (Atlanta: Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, 1959), 12; Memo from Walter Barber Advertising Specialties, Folder: Souvenirs, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives; Confederate Memorial Jewelry Folder: Souvenirs, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives; Frank Wells, “Not So Deep: 2 Taras Should Be Enough for Atlanta,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 26 May 1959, 13.

UDC passed internal legislation to “Protect the Confederate Flag from Desecration and Misuse,” which restricted use of the Confederate battle flag or the Southern Cross to ceremonial occasions.⁷⁴

Complaints flourished after the Martex Division of Willington Sears of New York began manufacturing Confederate flag beach towels. The UDC argued, “it would be a disgrace for a Southern man, women or child to purchase or use, the beach towel.” The state of Mississippi went as far as threatening “Yankee business concerns” with a hundred dollar fine and jail time if caught selling the Confederate beach towel within the state. H. F. Chadeaye, of the UDC wrote, “Confederate Flags are the sacred emblems of the South. They have been hallowed by the blood ... They are the emblems, not of hatred, strife, or defeat, but of love, courage and sacrifice... It is our duty and obligation as descendants of those who gave us these emblems to protect them from calumny.” Sons of Confederate Veterans publicity director, Belmont Dennis, of Covington, Georgia, also noted the organization “vigorously oppose[d] the desecration of the flag under which so many thousands of young Confederate soldiers gave their lives.”⁷⁵

The Georgia General Assembly followed suit passing a law prohibiting the use of the Confederate or state flag in advertising, effective January 1, 1961. This did not include patriotic or decorative usage though. Instead, the formalized rules prevented the use in “clothing of any kind,” ephemera “designed for temporary use and discard,” or display on automobiles except during “special Confederate observances.” Despite the

⁷⁴ John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 162-163

⁷⁵ “Confederate Organizations Protest Desecration Confederate Battle Flag,” *UDC Magazine*, April 1958, 40; “Yankee Flag Plan Scored,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1958, 36; Mrs. H. F. Chadeayne, “Correct Use of the Confederate Flag,” *UDC Magazine*, January 1958, 26; “Confederate Organizations Protest the Desecration Confederate Battle Flag,” *UDC Magazine*, April 1958, 40.

concern about the proper usage of the flag, one reporter noted, “There were more Confederate flags sold during the first year of the Civil War Centennial (1961) than were sold throughout the South during the war itself.” In his comprehensive account of the flag, John Coski, Museum of the Confederacy historian and library director, argued, “debate[s] over the proper place of the Confederate battle flag in American life is an important means by which citizens engage with the meaning of the Civil War and its legacies,” or rather, a “barometer of modern perceptions of the CSA.” In the case of the centennial, this proved especially true as official commemoration organizations, government entities, civic organizations and ordinary people grappled with the legacy of the Civil War.⁷⁶

Despite national guidelines hoping to avoid any mishap, many embarrassing incidents still occurred. Historian Bell Wiley privately expressed fear that many would inappropriately seize the impending anniversary for commercial opportunities. He wrote, “If the doors are opened to publicity seekers, popularizers, and ‘quickie’ artists anxious to capitalize on current interest... [the Centennial] will fall short of the objectives desired.” The *Holiday Magazine* called the centennial a “shabby circus.” By 1961, even Civil War historian Bruce Catton claimed, “The Civil War Centennial has taken on the air of a strawberry festival.” Catton criticized the “syrup sentiment” claiming it showed that American’s notion of the Civil War reflected “a vastly entertaining misunderstanding.” Catton explains that the inclination to create a “musical comedy” with old-timey music

⁷⁶ Flyer, Let’s Not Fight No More, Southern Advertising and Publishing, July 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, citing Harry Golden, “Let’s End the Civil War,” *Saturday Evening Post* 235 (22 August 1962), 10; NACP; John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America’s Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), xi, 163-164. For more on the debate over the Confederate flag see Thomas J. Brown, editor. *Remixing the Civil War: Meditation the Sesquicentennial* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2011), Chapter 2.

and costumes during the centennial detracts from the larger issues such as the end of slavery and the vast death toll sustained by both sides. Many of the complaints about such things as Confederate flag beach towels suggest that quite a few folks were uncomfortable with the commercialization of historical memory.⁷⁷

“Their Massive Pride”: Commemorative Events in Georgia

Despite scandals at the national level, Georgia commission officials carried on planning local events. The state’s Civil War-era capital, Milledgeville, hosted a three-day event complete with pomp and fireworks for the anniversary of secession. More than eighty bands and floats from Milledgeville and surrounding counties appeared in a parade. Historic homes around the town also opened their doors for tours. The Women of the Moose, a fraternal service organization, hosted a dinner and period fashion show complete with hoop skirts and crinoline at the Milledgeville Country Club. The highlight remained a pageant entitled “Their Massive Pride” reenacting the passage of the Ordinance of Secession on January 19, 1861. Directed by Leonard Hart of the Georgia State College for Women drama department, the cast of sixty-five delivered pro- and anti-secession speeches derived from fiery nineteenth-century oratory that had been “boiled down for a modern audience.” Lieutenant Governor Garland Byrd served as the guest of honor in place of Governor Vandiver. Many enthusiastic supporters showed up including a local liquor dealer, Johnnie Nimmer, who wore “the gray and yellow with golden epaulets on his shoulders.” Though Nimmer reported, “I’m not in the parade or

⁷⁷ Bell Wiley letter 19 April 1956, Box 181, Folder 48, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; *Holiday Magazine* quoted in flyer, Let’s Not Fight No More, Southern Advertising and Publishing, July 1961, File Unit: Committee - Advertising, 1960-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; Bruce Catton article clipping from *The Negro History Bulletin* in File Unit: Colored Organizations, 1959-64, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

the pageant,” he decided to wear the attire, “at the store and parading around trying to liven this thing up.” At the sight of Georgia seceding once again, the *Atlanta Constitution* remarked, “If Sherman’s Yankees came marching through Georgia this year, they’d probably die of shock. They couldn’t believe it was happening again.” Georgia was not entirely unique though as other state commissions held similar events across the South. Most notably, South Carolinians reenacted the first shots fired at Fort Sumter at the opening of the Civil War.⁷⁸

At the encouragement of the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, local companies, city councils, and historically minded individuals all found ways to participate. The *Atlanta Constitution* published a widely read weekly supplement “The Atlanta Century” reprinted events that occurred one hundred years prior as the Civil War broke out. Claude Purcell, of the state commission’s Education Committee, sent a memo to all school superintendents stressing the responsibility to get young people to take part in the observation. The flyer “What Can We Do?” urged teachers to “instigate special studies,” housewives to “dig out period dresses from trunks,” and libraries to “create special Civil War book displays.” After all, “we want to tell the world that Georgia led the South in 1860-64 just as she leads the South today!” The flyer drew on Atlanta’s nineteenth-century status as an important railroad hub for the Confederacy as well as its later identification as the icon of the New South. Former Emory University history professor Bell Irvin Wiley even published a pamphlet entitled “Why Georgia Should Commemorate the Civil War.” He noted the “great role” Georgia played in “organizing the Southern Government” before dedicating pages to the many great statesmen, military

⁷⁸ “Milledgeville Opening Centennial With Celebration of Secession,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 19 Jan 1961, 7; Andrew Sparks, “Georgia Secedes All Over Again,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 19 Feb 1961, SM11.

leaders and “tremendous contributions of Georgia women” from around the state. Finally, Wiley remarked, “Georgia should commemorate the Civil War to recognize and pay tribute to the greatness demonstrated by her people during the crisis of a century ago.”⁷⁹

Even the iconic staple of downtown Atlanta commerce, Rich’s Department Store, took part in the anniversary despite frequent sit-ins by civil right activists. A store exhibit juxtaposed a gray homespun Confederate uniform with a Union lieutenant’s dark blue dress uniform. The store’s sixth floor hosted a private collection of Civil War weapons. Rich’s also displayed sculptures of Generals John B. Gordon, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Joseph E. Johnston and John B. Hood. The crowning spectacle, however, indisputably remained the statue of General Lee elegantly posed on his beloved horse Traveler placed in the middle of the ladies lingerie department. As the *Atlanta Constitution* smartly remarked the exhibit was “enough to turn Lee’s head” and yet he “doesn’t show a single bit of embarrassment.” After the exhibition, Secretary of State Fortson praised Rich’s for gifting the five statues to the state, where they were placed in the second-floor lobby of the Capitol building.⁸⁰

The Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad also took part by restoring the famous locomotive the *General* to reenact Andrew’s Raid popularly known as the “Great Locomotive Chase.” The GCWCC named Vice-President of the Southern Region of the Nation Railway Historical Society David Austin to the position of Chairman, Andrews Raid Excursion Train. From April 12 to the 14, 1962, two excursion trains accompanied

⁷⁹ Jim Bentley, “Civil War Body Hails Atlanta Century,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 16 June 1961, 22; Flyer “What Can We Do?” Folder- “What Can We Do?” Circulars for Schools 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550, Georgia Archives; Bell Wiley, *Why Georgia Should Commemorate the Civil War* (Atlanta, GA: Department of State Parks, 1960).

⁸⁰ Harold Martin, “2 Uniforms Tell Story of the War,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 27 Jan 1961, 4; “It’s Enough To Turn Lee’s Head,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 10 Jan 1961, 8; For Immediate Release—Southern Generals Re-Enter Georgia State Capitol 4 October 1961 File Unit: State Commission - Georgia, 1958-65 (2 files); Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966; Records of the National Park Service.

the *General* along the original 87-mile route the stolen train had taken a century prior. On the way to Chattanooga, the trains through Northwest Georgia towns such as Resaca, Dalton, and Ringgold. According to the GCWCC news release, “passengers on the excursion train will have an opportunity to follow the route of the raid, and to observe and participate in major events scheduled at several key points between Atlanta and Chattanooga.” Afterward, the L&N Railroad displayed the restored steamer for interested train enthusiasts and sightseers. Wilbur G. Kurtz Sr., son-in-law of the *General*’s conductor Captain W. A. Fuller, who also served as the technical director for the Disney 1956 film remake of the raid, even took part in the commemorative program. Though the “Great Locomotive Chase” had no significant military effect, the thrilling adventure was a popular Centennial reenactment and became something of a legend in the years after the Civil War.⁸¹

The mid-September 1963 anniversary of the Battle of Chickamauga posed an especially important occasion too. The Confederate victory at the Battle of Chickamauga was the largest battle ever fought in Georgia, and for the time, prevented the Union army from advancing into the state. Given the battle’s importance to the southern war effort, the GCWCC organized a two-day event and invited several other states with monuments at Chickamauga National Military Park to participate. The main “Georgia Day” activities included a parade from Fort Oglethorpe to the park’s visitor center and a short concert by the 3rd Army Band before a 45-minute commemoration program hosted by Governor Carl

⁸¹ News Immediate Release 28 February 19962, Folder- Andrews Raid SRS 1961-1962, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives; Report of the Georgia CWCC, File Unit: State Commission - Georgia, 1958-65 (2 files), Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; For Immediate Release 24 January 1962, Folder- Andrews Raid SRS 1961-1962, RCB7548, Georgia Archives.

The *General* currently resides in Kennesaw, at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History.

Sanders, Director of the NPS Conrad L. Wirth and Chickamauga National Military Park Superintendent John O. Cook.⁸² Fort Oglethorpe Mayor Doyle Phillips predicted six to eight thousand people would attend the parade and another three to four thousand for the concert.⁸³

In cooperation with the National Park Service, the GCWCC planned a program at the Georgia monument within the park “to pay honor and tribute to those Georgians who participated in the battle.” A large crowd witnessed Governor Sanders, who served as the ceremony’s guest speaker, and Allen Julian, Director of the Atlanta Historical Society, who presented the history of the Atlanta Campaign. The battlefield program highlighted themes such as reconciliation and unity but did not dwell on the lingering “race problem.” As such, the program at Chickamauga exemplified historian David Blight’s argument that battlefields “have been used as places of reconciliation and healing, sometimes at the expense of other kinds of learning.”⁸⁴

Other events in greater metro-Atlanta included a lecture tour series at Stone Mountain Park, battle reenactments at the Battle of West Point and Fort McAlister, and newly published Civil War books and bibliographies for history enthusiasts. Atlanta’s WAGA-TV Channel 5 ran a thirteen-part television series on Sunday night’s “The

⁸² Memo to Governor Sanders to Rowland Smith, 4 September 1963, Folder: Georgia Day, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives; Memo to Beverly DuBose to Stanley Rowland Smith, 10 September 1963, Folder: Georgia Day, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives; Georgia Chickamauga Day Program, 20 September 1963, Folder: Georgia Day, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives

⁸³ Memo to Governor Sanders to Rowland Smith, 4 September 1963, Folder: Georgia Day, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia Archives

⁸⁴ Folder: Georgia Day, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7548, Georgia State Archives; News Immediate Release 9 April 1962 File Unit: State Commission - Georgia - 1961, 1961-65; Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966; Records of the National Park Service; David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 170.

American Civil War.” WAI-TV produced “The Death Knell of Atlanta” program and WSB-TV produced 65 episodes of “The Confederate Diary.” Radio stations around the state also donated over 2,000 hours of time dedicated to Civil War Centennial news and special broadcasts. The radio industry cut the GCWCC a substantial deal on airtime totaling less than \$12,000 instead of upwards of \$200,000. Even Mayor William Hartsfield reassured the GCWCC that the city of Atlanta would do its part by “reopening some old breastworks and renovating our Cyclorama.”⁸⁵

Models of Remembrance or Re-Writing History

In honor of the Civil War centenary, the city of Atlanta and Georgia Historical Commission embarked on a joint program to erect historical markers and normalize the memory of the war. Between 1952 and 1962, the Georgia Historical Commission erected a total of 750 historical markers. Battle sites around the city chosen to have a commemorative historical marker include Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, and Ezra Church. The Commission also published a companion guidebook to explain the importance of the sites. Although the historic marker program was “the pivotal force” for state historic preservation during the Civil War centennial, many openly criticized the commission’s work.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ WAGA-TV release Historical Drama Debut July 3, Folder- TV, Radio, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550, Georgia Archives; Report of the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission, Box 12 Folder 5, DuBose Family Collection; Letter DuBose to Governor Sanders, 30 December 1963, Box 12 Folder 3, DuBose Family Collection; Letter Mayor Hartsfield to W. F. Bond, Folder- Andrews Raid Correspondence & General Information 1960-1962, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth A. Lyon, “Historic Preservation in Georgia on the 30th Anniversary of the State Historic Preservation Office, 1969-1999,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXXIII, No.1 (Spring 1999), 77; General Outline of Proposed Projects for the Georgia Civil War Centennial Association, 16 August 1963, Box12 Folder 5, DuBose Family Collection; Jann Haynes Gilmore, “Georgia’s Historic Preservation

Many expressed concern about what interpretation of the Civil War would be presented on the historical markers. While one group of critics opposed the glorification of the bloody conflict, there was a surprisingly large cadre of individuals who pressured for exactly the opposite. Some complainants argued sites concerning the infamous 1864 March to the Sea “only glorified General Sherman” while other markers “were historically incorrect.”⁸⁷ The makers deemed “historically incorrect” often address the military failures of the Confederacy. In fact, many public letters to the Commission favored presenting sympathetic Lost Cause arguments casting the Confederacy in a noble light.

Absent from these historical markers was any consideration of race or African American memories of the Civil War. To combat the perceived dismissal not only in the monument markers but also throughout the entire centenary, the African American community planned their own events. Several journals including the *Negro Digest*, *The Journal of Negro History*, and *Negro History Bulletin* distributed by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History published articles concerning the centennial. Each edition of the *Negro History Bulletin* included a list of important Civil War dates that held significance to the African American community such as the activities of “colored troops” and abolitionist organizations.⁸⁸ Even the American Oil Company took part, issuing the *American Travelers Guide to Negro Monuments* as a guidebook dedicated to

Beginning: The Georgia Historical Commission (1951-1973),” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No.1 (1979): 9.

⁸⁷ Jann Haynes Gilmore, “Georgia’s Historic Preservation Beginning: The Georgia Historical Commission (1951-1973),” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 13.

⁸⁸ Rudolph Edmonds, “A Suggested Centennial Program for the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,” *Negro History Bulletin*, Vol. XXIV, No. 5 (February 1961),118-119.

the plight of African Americans during the Civil War.⁸⁹ Journalist Joel A. Rogers published a series of pamphlets including “Civil War Centennial Myth and Reality” and “The Civil War Centennial: 100 Years Later.” He urged “Negro and interracial groups [to] buy it, sell or give it to their members, who, in turn, give it to white people.”⁹⁰ All of these publications attempted to highlight what renowned historian David Blight has deemed the “emancipationist vision,” of remembering the Civil War that was “embodied in African Americans’ complex remembrance of their own freedom.”⁹¹

The lack of attention paid to the failed promise of freedom for African Americans and the causal role of slavery in the Civil War within centennial literature was especially irksome to many outside the South. In the weekly magazine, *The Nation*, Chairman Betts openly admitted, “We’re not emphasizing the Emancipation. You see there’s a bigger theme—the beginning of a new America.” Later in the same article, he claimed, “A lot of fine Negro people loved life as it was in the old South.”⁹² The blatant Lost Cause rhetoric—claiming vast support among African Americans for the Confederacy—exemplified the myth of the loyal slave and evoked mammy caricatures. Many black newspaper editors, scholars, the National Organization for the American Negro Emancipation Centennial Authority, and the NAACP understandably insisted on moving beyond this imagery to address the historical significance of the era. Though not directly saying as much, these organizations pushed the commission to move beyond the

⁸⁹ American Travelers Guide to Negro Monuments by the American Oil Company File Unit: Colored Organizations, 1959-64, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

⁹⁰ Joel A. Rogers, “History Shows,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 November 1960.

⁹¹ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2.

⁹² “Civil War Centennial: Bull Run with Popcorn” in *Nation*, 30 Jan 1959, 97 cited in Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 42.

reconciliationist memory of the Civil War and grapple with the war's consequences in terms of African Americans civil liberties.

Under political pressure from such groups, President John F. Kennedy publicly declared, "The Emancipation Proclamation expresses our nation's policy, founded on justice and morality, and that it is, therefore, fitting and proper to commemorate the centennial of the historic Emancipation Proclamation." In contrast, Scott Candler of Stone Mountain Memorial Association declared the Emancipation Proclamation the "most shameful and inhuman act directed against women and children" in an attempt "to have the slaves rise up ...[to] compel the Confederate troops to leave the army to defend their families." Similarly, this action only affirmed the claim leveled by the Sons of Confederate Veterans that the Centennial "will be merely a glorification of Lincoln." Despite the dismay of some southerners, many people outside of the South agreed with President Kennedy. For instance, Peggy Glenn of Palo Alto, California, demanded, "the proper federal attitude towards this centennial by issuing a second emancipation." Divided opinions surrounding the Civil War centennial once again aligned along sectional lines with the segregationist South facing off against the rest of the nation.⁹³

In light of such events, President Kennedy called upon the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to work with the National Civil War Centennial Commission, governors, mayors and other public officials to plan appropriate commemoration events. Several organizations eventually collaborated to sponsor a program honoring the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation at the Lincoln Memorial. Though seemingly a "win" for

⁹³ Joel A. Rogers, "100 Years of Freedom: President Honors Courier Request for Proclamation," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 5 January 1963; Letter from Scott Candler to Karl Betters 1 August 1960 and Ira West to U.S. Grant 19 April 1959, File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

African Americans, the event still created controversy. The influential Bishop Williams, of the D.C. chapter of the SCLC, called the entire Civil War centennial, including the Emancipation Proclamation program, a “mockery.” Although officials invited civil rights activist and “Queen of Gospel” Mahalia Jackson to perform, Bishop Williams demanded African Americans, who he claims were “snubbed” from the program, boycott the entire Emancipation anniversary event unless planners added black speakers. Ultimately, the only African Americans on the program would remain singer Jackson and Judge Thurgood Marshall.⁹⁴

After alleged hostility from the national commission, eleven southern states joined forces in defiance creating the Confederate States Centennial Conference (CSCC) to exchange planning ideas among regional neighbors. Loosely referencing the demands to commemorate emancipation, the CSCC declared, “It would be a mistake for the National Civil War Commission to engage in any activity, or to promote in any way any program that could, or would, be considered by any section of our nation as propaganda.” For example, before a convention in Charleston, one CSCC delegate called Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* “sheer propaganda and half truths” and drew a comparison to Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* before thanking God for the UDC as “the truth is now being told.” Though shocking, this type of rabble-rousing rhetoric undoubtedly played well to the audience at hand and presumably only heightened the regional sense that the southern state commissions were being unfairly targeted.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Sponsors include: U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, the D.C. Civil War Centennial Commission, the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia and the National Park Service. “Negroes’ Boycott In Capital Stands: Emancipation Observation Saturday Left Unsettled,” *New York Times*, 18 September 1962, 25.

⁹⁵ Civil War Centennial Commission, Staff Director, Administrative Records, 1959-1965, Civil War Centennial Commission, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB 7547, Georgia Archives; Statement of the Confederate States Centennial Conference, Folder- Confederate States CC 1960-1964, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director -

Many Confederate States Centennial Conference representatives expressed outrage about the politicization of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. The feeling that southern state commissions had been controlled and manipulated by the more powerful national commission echoed back to the Reconstruction-era and the South's uneasy relationship with the federal government exerting local force. For instance, one CSCC representative demonstrated an unwillingness to take directives from the national commission writing, "our [Southern States] Conference would not support any move that would bring Civil Rights into the Centennial." Just days later, Georgia's CWCC Executive Director Stanley Rowland Smith replied; "One of my close associates has learned that Thurgood Marshall, or possibly Martin Luther King, is proposed as ... [a] replacement on the national commission!!! I guess the NAACP is determined to run the centennial along with everything else." Smith's statement is especially telling. It not only reflected a sense of resentment over the gains the Civil Rights Movement had made across the South but affirmed the indisputable emotional response evoked by the Civil War centennial.⁹⁶

These attitudes largely mimicked the opinions expressed by other southern states representatives. At one point Rowland Smith, of the GCWCC, wrote, "We need to move with a great deal of caution, and by all means guard against being tricked into any acceptance of plans to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation." Even former Executive Director of the National CWCC Karl Betts seemed to join in on the hostility

Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7547, Georgia Archives; Address by Rep. John May at UDC South Carolina division annual meeting 12 October 1961, Folder- Confederate States CWCC South Carolina 1960-1964, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7547, Georgia Archives.

⁹⁶ Letter John May to Sidney Roebuck 13 December 1961, Folder- Confederate States CWCC South Carolina 1960-1964, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7547, Georgia Archives; Letter Stanley Rowland Smith to John May 15 December 1961, Folder- Confederate States CWCC South Carolina 1960-1964, RCB7547, Georgia State Archives.

towards black Civil War memory. He replied to Smith, “I doubt if you can count on any contribution of efficient help from the National Commission. They are only interested in promoting the Emancipation Proclamation and staging a political rally under the guise of a National Assembly... Nevins has already stated to several people “the South must learn that the Negro has been emancipated.”⁹⁷

Despite his former high-level leadership position within the national commission, Karl Betts clearly displayed his strong sympathy for the white South. Though never directly stated, it would seem that southerners equated commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation with the acceptance of civil rights. Though the national CWCC officials had attempted to operate outside the bounds of larger political events, the centennial ran straight into the battle over civil rights. The controversy over the Emancipation Proclamation reflects the inability of some white leaders to accept what historian David Blight calls the “emancipation model” of remembering the Civil War. In the postwar era, many African Americans memorialized the war as a struggle over slavery, race and competing definitions of labor; thus, the Civil War was not about unity but conflict. Commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation would give credence to the emancipationist model of Civil War remembrance, which was unacceptable to many southern states that still bore a Lost Cause mindset.⁹⁸

As the 1964 National Assembly of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission drew near, the escalation of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta became especially troublesome for the host city. Executive Director James Robertson Jr. wrote to Georgia

⁹⁷ Letter Stanley Rowland Smith and letter Karl Betts to Stanley Rowland Smith 4 January 1962, Folder-Correspondence Karl S. Betts 1961-1962, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7548, Georgia Archives.

⁹⁸ For more about “emancipationist” vision of remembering see David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), Chapter 3 and 9.

Chairman Beverly DuBose Jr. expressing concern over “the racial situation” in Atlanta in advance of the pending meeting. DuBose dismissed his apprehensions blaming the media for exaggerating tensions. According to DuBose, “probably 70% of the population” was “not exactly southern” and “our City Government has been very progressive for many years under [Mayor] Hartsfield and now under [Mayor] Allen.” He praised “negro leadership,” claiming “the present flare-ups represent the smallest minority possible, and unfortunately, involved people from elsewhere.” National leadership expressed vast “wariness stemming from the painful ordeal” after the 1961 meeting in Charleston and firmly noted, “we cannot afford again to become embroiled in sectional or racial strife.” DuBose confidently reiterated that there was “less to fear in Atlanta than in almost any city” and wrote that few incidents at Leb’s Restaurant and Heart of Atlanta Motel had “all been professionally organized or students of the radical group.” DeBose portrayal of race relations in Atlanta sought to downplay any conflict and once again drew on the longstanding notion of the city as a place of moderation and tolerance.⁹⁹

Ultimately, the 1964 National Assembly in Atlanta went off without a hitch. On a Friday evening in June, Governor Carl Sanders gave opening remarks before an audience at Stone Mountain. Sanders noted, “We gather in peace and friendship—neighbors from all sections of America—to remember events of a century ago.” Though Sanders called Stone Mountain “symbolic of American virtues... solid, immovable, deeply rooted in our devotions” he did acknowledge the need of Georgians and Stone Mountain to be “willing to change with their times and able to adapt to the needs of our Nation.” As a modernizer,

⁹⁹ Letter from Beverly DuBose to James Robertson Jr. 14 February 1964, James Robertson Jr. to Beverly DuBose 10 February 1964, and Beverly DuBose to James Robertson Jr. 6 February 1964, File Unit: State Commission - Georgia - 1961, 1961-65, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

Governor Sanders was seen by political commentators as more pragmatic in regards to civil rights than his predecessor the archetype segregationist former Governor Marvin Griffin. During his campaign for governor Sanders had notably remarked, “In my case, a ‘moderate’ means that I’m a segregationist but not a damn fool.” As part of the National Assembly program, commission members in attendance also enjoyed barbeque during a trip to Kennesaw Mountain and visited the legendary Cyclorama.¹⁰⁰

When it came time for the closing of the centennial, Georgia officials sought to make the event as grand as the kickoff. The GCWCC planned to end commemorative events in Fitzgerald during the 1965 “Blue and Gray Days” scheduled for the Fourth of July. Chairman Beverly DuBose Jr. rejoiced at the choice calling the city the “ideal location for our commission to come to a close” and a moving “story of peace... [that] stands as a living symbol of unity.” At the turn of the nineteenth-century, Civil War veterans from both the Union and Confederacy had founded the South Central Georgia town in Ben Hill County. Fitzgerald prided itself on being “the only town in the United States where the North and South joined in a memorial to lasting peace on a fifty-fifty basis.”¹⁰¹

In cooperation with the GCWCC, the Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Civil War Centennial Commission scheduled a three-day program with the outdoor pageant “Our Friends, Our Enemies” as its centerpiece. Written by Beth Davis, the pageant reenacted the colonization of Fitzgerald “when the fires of hatred for Yankees still smoldered in the

¹⁰⁰ Carl Sanders Speech before US CWCC, Series IV Cox 1 Folder - June 1964, Carl E. Sanders Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; “Words of the Week,” *Jet Magazine*, 14 March 1963, 30. Harold P. Henderson and Gary L. Roberts, editors. *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: From Ellis Arnall to George Busbee* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 179.

¹⁰¹ General Outline of Proposed Projects for the Georgia Civil War Centennial Association, 16 August 1963, Box12 Folder 5, DuBose Family Collection.

hearts of many of the people in Georgia.” According to the souvenir program, Fitzgerald remained “a living memorial to national unity,” even though there was no representation of African Americans. Despite the sectional antagonism, and at times, outwardly hostile actions, the Georgia CWCC ended on a note that was in harmony with the national commission: a message of unity though white reconciliation overshadowed the legacy of emancipation.¹⁰²

With domestic turmoil in the 1960s over the Civil Rights Movement, the nation needed a unifying force. The centennial proved anything but unifying with battles over commercialism and the collision between Civil War history and memory. Many ordinary Americans felt the centennial amplified divisions within society as the nation’s tenuous race relations often stole the limelight from festive displays of American patriotism. As David Blight, a historian of Civil War memory concluded, “The official Civil War Centennial could never find adequate, meaningful ways to balance Civil War remembrance with civil rights rebellion.” The centennial was an important moment of national reflection on the enduring myth and memory of the Civil War. As a national event, it also posed an opportunity to reconcile sectional strife and racial justice within a national public forum.¹⁰³

Yet instead, Civil War centennial events in Georgia accentuated many ugly truths. Romanticized notions of a “noble war” often overshadowed the lasting consequences of the Civil War and its impact on black freedom. Many of the centennial events in Georgia

¹⁰² General Outline of Proposed Projects for the Georgia Civil War Centennial Association, 16 August 1963, Box12 Folder 5, DuBose Family Collection; DuBose in Georgia CWCC booklet, File Unit: State Commission - Georgia, 1958-65 (2 files), Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

¹⁰³ Fried, *The Russians are Coming!*, 122; Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 15; Letter from Harris Vennema 1 May 1961, File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service; David Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 11.

only solidified this concern by focusing on Lost Cause themes. Despite what some have called “a century of progress” since emancipation, the 100th anniversary of the Civil War quickly showed just how much more was left to accomplish. As the Report on Observation summarized, “the Civil War is not going to be forgotten and the South does not wish to be forgiven.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Report on Observance of the Centennial of the Civil War, File Unit: Complaints- Re: Commission, 1969-62, Series: Subject Files, 1957 – 1966, Records of the National Park Service.

CHAPTER 2

A MONUMENT FOR THE “ENTIRE SOUTHLAND”: STONE MOUNTAIN PARK

On Tuesday, January 14, 1958, Governor Marvin Griffin (1955-1959) exuded support for the purchase of Stone Mountain from the state capitol in Atlanta. He proclaimed, “I am convinced that the purchase of Stone Mountain ...will be of everlasting benefit to the present generation and all future citizens of this State, and the entire Southland.” Griffin’s speech mimicked the original rhetoric used by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to preserve the legacy of the Old South within the public landscape. At the 1924 UDC annual convention, Hollins N. Randolph, president of the Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association noted, “the Southern people have turned their attention to the construction of a monument at Stone Mountain to commemorate in that imperishable granite, the valor and self-sacrifice displayed in such boundless measure by the men and women of the South in 1861-65.” Although Griffin’s language over fifty years later was not nearly as direct as Randolph, his speech still evoked Lost Cause ideology reminiscent of the 1920s vision for Stone Mountain. Despite later attempts to mitigate the message physically carved in stone, the strong ideological links with the remembrance of the Old South and the celebration of the Lost Cause Myth inspired the original commemorative memorial carving.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Georgia General Assembly, *Journal of the House of Representatives* (21 January 1958), 34; Hollins N. Randolph, “Address Delivered at the Annual Convention United Daughters of the Confederacy.” Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association (Savannah, GA. November 19, 1924), 2. For a complete

The famed memorial carving at Stone Mountain took over half a century to complete. During the height of southern women's efforts to memorialize the Lost Cause, Helen Plane envisioned a monument at Stone Mountain and proposed its construction at the 1915 United Daughters of the Confederacy General Convention. That same year D. W. Griffith debuted his racist silent film *Birth of a Nation* and Methodist preacher William Joseph Simmons revived the Ku Klux Klan in a fiery ceremony atop Stone Mountain on Thanksgiving Eve. The next year, the Venable family deeded ten acres and the skyline of Stone Mountain to the UDC to erect the monument commemorating legendary Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and President Jefferson Davis. In June 1923, renowned sculptor Gutzon Borglum began the carving and the next year unveiled Robert E. Lee's head. Conflict over slow progress on the carving caused the memorial association to part ways with Borglum and sculptor Augustus Lukeman took over the project. By 1928, a lack of funding left the memorial carving incomplete, and as a result, the property reverted back to the Venable family.¹⁰⁶

In 1941, the state's newly created State Parks Authority proposed plans to complete the memorial and establish a 2,500-acre park. Samuel Venable, a descendant of the original property owners, maintained a close relationship with the Ku Klux Klan. He even granted the Atlanta Klavern "an easement" on top of the mountain to hold mystic

history of the UDC see: Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Southern Culture* (Gainesville: The University of Florida, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Stone Mountain Park. "Confederate Memorial Carving." (Accessed 31 October 2015)

<https://www.stonemountainpark.com/Activities/History-Nature/Confederate-Memorial-Carving>; "Nation: The Various Shady Lives of the Ku Klux Klan," *Time*, Vol. 85, No. 10 (9 April 1965); "Background Information on the Stone Mountain Memorial Carving," Series III Box 17 Folder 12 – Stone Mountain Dedication, J. Phil Campbell Jr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone: The History of Stone Mountain* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 63. The original warranty deed between Venable family and Helen Plane stipulated the memorial must be completed within 12 years or the land reverted back to the owners.

initiatives, and commemorative events on the property until well after the Second World War. During the 1940s, the newly created State Park Authority briefly revived attempts to acquire the property and complete the carving. In 1952, Governor Herman Talmadge signed a bill to purchase Stone Mountain for \$700,000 but the deal was never completed, and in the meantime, the sellers increased the price. Despite renewed interest from both ordinary citizens and the state, nothing ever came to fruition until the actions of politician Marvin Griffin.¹⁰⁷

Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, defining a coherent vision for Stone Mountain Park proved increasingly troublesome as conflicted groups struggled for control of the park's message. The allure of potential profits and economic opportunity forced planners to soften associations with the Confederacy and the defense of white supremacy in favor of recasting the park as a recreation space through tourism advertising campaigns that highlighted outdoor activities. Stone Mountain officials refashioned the park's image not by sheering off its past, but by recalibrating the message and downplaying any connection between the park's development and ongoing struggles over civil rights. Officials developed Stone Mountain as a feature of southern "heritage" shorn of contemporary political context and thereby rendered safe for development in the "city too busy to hate."

The narrow-minded concept for Stone Mountain Park celebrating southern culture originally advanced by the SMMA and state planners eventually diverged from the visitors' growing interest in recreational activities. Once Georgia revived the

¹⁰⁷ "Action is taken to rush Stone Mountain Park," *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 April 1941, 4A; David M. Chalmers. *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*. Third Edition (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 5 & 30; Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 52 & 61; "Stone Mountain Waits: CSA Memorial Still Only Dream," December 1957 article Attractions- Confederate Memorial, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

development of Stone Mountain, planners had to contend with the remnants of the 1920s vision steeped in notions of white supremacy and fervent Lost Cause ideology. The park began to adjust its marketing strategy and assumed the trends of the burgeoning statewide tourism industry in order to substantially increase annual visitation and profit margins.

Although Stone Mountain has captivated audiences for generations, scholars have paid little attention to the state's purchase of the granite monolith or the early phases of the park's development during the 1960s. David Freeman's comprehensive history of Stone Mountain began with a discussion of local Paleo-Indian tribes 200 million years ago and recapped the monolith's lengthy past through the completion of the carving. Although he also provided an account of events, Freeman did not situate Stone Mountain within the broader context of social and political events or the wealth of scholarship dedicated to the historical memory.¹⁰⁸

Historian Grace Hale viewed Stone Mountain as an emblem of whiteness during the 1920s and 1930s but does not meaningfully engage the later period of development. Hale argued, "Some southern whites hoped to capture their newfound sense of regional and racial serenity in stone." Political geographer Jamey Essex has extended Hale's discussion of whiteness by focusing on racial and regional identities after the privatization of the park in 1998. Furthermore, Essex rightfully asserted Stone Mountain "has become primarily a place for the consumption of a commoditized historical experience." Finally, Stone Mountain has appeared in several popular press accounts.

¹⁰⁸ David B. Freedman, *Carved in Stone: The History of Stone Mountain* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997). Freeman provides a comprehensive history of Stone Mountain, but he does not situate it within the broader context of social and political events or the prodigious scholarship dedicated to historical memory

This chapter fills the historiographic void with a thorough focus on the development of Stone Mountain during the late-1950s and 1960s.¹⁰⁹

This chapter examines the contested visions of the park and the Confederate carving. These vision would simultaneously represent the popularity of heritage tourism enterprises celebrating the Old South and the boosters' desire to market Atlanta—at least to white audiences—as a forward-looking city of the New South. While many of the individuals and organizations associated with the purchase of Stone Mountain attempted to anchor southern identity in symbols of the Confederacy as a means of resisting challenges to white supremacy, complications arose as officials debated how best to achieve profitability at the park. Although the desire to defend white supremacy initially guided actions under Griffin's administration, the development of Stone Mountain quickly became more complicated as public and private interests—which were often at odds—came together to create an appealing yet profitable tourist destination.

Buying “one of the wonders of the world”

The purchase of Stone Mountain coincided with white efforts, both real and symbolic, to thwart the Civil Rights Movement in the years following the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision. The state of Georgia intentionally exhibited interest in Stone Mountain amid tensions over the escalating civil rights demands. During his 1954 gubernatorial campaign, Marvin Griffin pledged “massive resistance” to desegregation, including his

¹⁰⁹ Grace Hale, “Granite Stopped Time: The Stone Mountain Memorial and Representations of Whiteness,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXXXII, No. 1 (Spring 1998), 23; James Essex, “The Real South Starts Here: Whiteness, the Confederacy and Commodification at Stone Mountain,” *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (November 2002), 211; For additional coverage of Stone Mountain see: Tim Hollis, *Stone Mountain Park* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009) and Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain: A Multicultural History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011); Willard Neal, *Georgia's Stone Mountain* (Atlanta: Stone Mountain Memorial Association, 1970).

promise to buy and complete the carving at Stone Mountain. In retrospect, Griffin recalled, “I’d go by Stone Mountain and see that unfinished work there... I was a little ashamed because it was in memory of not only a lost cause but it looked like the people of Georgia had fallen down and it was just a failure.” Griffin was distressed that the dated emblem of the Confederacy had been abandoned. A 1955 Georgia General Assembly resolution mimicked Griffin’s concern. It stated, “The incomplete and unsightly condition of the Stone Mountain Memorial has long weighed upon the pride and civic conscience of all Georgians.” The resolution claimed “Stone Mountain Memorial and Park”—viewed as separate entities—would bring the state at least \$500,000 in annual revenue. Calling upon his proud “heritage,” Griffin vowed to buy and complete the carving “for the people of Georgia.” Given Griffin’s clear predisposition towards the celebration of Lost Cause Myth and the maintenance of white supremacy, to him, “the people” of Georgia only consisted of white segregationists.¹¹⁰

During his run for the governor’s mansion, constituents sent Griffin a variety of letters concerning the granite monolith. One constituent, P. K. Burns, sent Griffin an extraordinarily detailed plan for the site. Calling Stone Mountain “one of the wonders of the world,” Burns proposed a “memorial to life, alive, living and growing historical memorial from creation onward.” His proposal included special monuments to the Confederacy, veterans of both world wars, and unknown soldiers. “When travelers and the tourist and the sight seeing people,” start visiting, Burns claimed it would usher in, “a new era for this section of the state and country.” Burns also suggested purchasing 10,000 acres surrounding the mountain for every state—and even foreign nations—to complete

¹¹⁰ Harold P. Henderson and Gary L. Robert, edited., *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: In an Age of Change from Ellis Arnall to Georgia Busbee* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 134; Georgia General Assembly. House Resolution No. 35, “Stone Mountain Memorial,” Vol. 1 (1995), 5.

commemorative projects of their choosing on land laid out like a map. To generate the sizeable investment required for such a plan, Burns suggested charging a general admission fee and selling “relics and miscellaneous concessions.” Though Griffin did not adopt Burn’s grandiose plans, he did see the importance of Stone Mountain as a symbol of massive resistance.¹¹¹

Many companies and civic organizations in DeKalb County—home to Stone Mountain—supported the state’s purchase of the property. The Kiwanis Club of Decatur went on “record as unanimously and wholeheartedly” endorsing the plan to purchase and convert Stone Mountain into a state park. Charlie Haasl of the John Deere Plow Company and DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce also supported the plan. In a letter to the governor, the owner of the Red Arrow Ranch horse stables and farm in Lilburn called Stone Mountain a “dead asset to our state” as it stands but the park had the “potential [for] prestige” with proper care and development. Already these constituents highlighted an issue that would come to a head during the 1960s—would Stone Mountain be simply the carving or a fully developed park with a carving.¹¹²

In June 1956, several businesses and civic leaders took the matter into their own hands. Fifteen Georgians established the non-profit “charitable and educational corporation” Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial. According to a founding resolution, the corporation was organized “for the purpose of reviving and reawakening interest in, and the completion of, a suitable memorial at Stone Mountain.” The Atlanta Chamber of

¹¹¹ “What to do with it now,” Box 1 Folder 14 - Campaign Issues, Marvin Griffin Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

¹¹² Kiwanis Club of Decatur to Griffin, 31 December 1957, Folder – Jan 1958 (2), RCB63127, Georgia Archives; C. M. Hassl to Griffin, 30 December 1957, Folder – Jan 1958 (2), RCB63127, Georgia Archives; William Hardman to Griffin, 6 January 1958, Folder – Jan 1958 (2), RCB63127, Georgia Archives.

Commerce confirmed the sentiment noting Stone Mountain is “a great asset to this city,” and it had “long been of the major interests” of the chamber. Financier Mills B. Lane successfully led the non-profit through negotiations with the Venables heirs, and consequentially, acquired the deed to a half-mile area on the face of the mountain and approximately 40 acres at the base. By 1957, the General Assembly encouraged the completion of the carving as “a constant reminder to the State and the Nation as a whole of the Confederate States of America and its heroes.” Those in favor of purchasing Stone Mountain demonstrated a variety of social, economic, and political motives.¹¹³

After assuming his duties as governor in January 1955, many of Griffin’s actions only bolstered his stance of massive resistance against civil rights. This, combined with the upcoming Civil War centennial, made his endorsement of Stone Mountain not the least bit surprising. During the Griffin administration, Georgia incorporated the highly controversial St. Andrew’s cross—Confederate battle flag—into the state colors. In 1956, House leader Denmark Groover asserted the flag change “would leave no doubt in anyone’s mind that Georgia will not forget the teachings of Lee and Stonewall Jackson...that we in Georgia intend to uphold what we stood for, will stand for, and will

¹¹³ 1956 Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial Inc. Resolution, Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records, Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia; Clipping by Curtis Driskell “Work to Start Soon,” Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Attractions – Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Georgia General Assembly. “Encouragement to Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial Association,” Vol. 1. Sequence 223 (1957), 532.

The founders included: Philip H. Alston, Jr., an Atlanta lawyer who lost gubernatorial race to Marvin Griffin; Peyton Anderson, owner and publisher of the *Macon Telegraph*; Craig Barrow Jr., vice-president of the Johnson, Lane, and Space investment firm in Savannah; Howard Callaway, Callaway Gardens and later member of the Georgia House of Representative; Lamartine G. Hardman III, grandson of the Georgia governor by the same name and former director of Georgia Power and First National Bank of Commerce; George H. Hightower, vice-president of Thomaston Mills; G. Arthur Howell Jr., a prominent Atlanta lawyer; Gordon Jones, president of Fulton National Bank in Atlanta; Mills B. Lane Jr., president of Citizens and Southern National Bank; Arthur Montgomery, vice-president of Coca-Cola Bottling Company; Frank M. Ridley, vice-president of Marsh and McLellan insurance firm in Atlanta; James Sibley, board member for Coca-Cola and SunTrust Banks; Robert Train, president of the Bibb Manufacturing Company; William B. Turner, president of the W. C. Bradley Company; and W. C. Vereen, president of Moultrie’s Cotton Mills and Riverside Manufacturing Company.

fight for.”¹¹⁴ When considering the ongoing battles to desegregate public schools across the South, the statement becomes more pointed. While segregationists could rally behind the adopted symbol as a sign of resistance, the meaning of the battle flag for black Georgians would remain much more painful.

In 1958, the state legislature passed a resolution creating a joint House-Senate Committee to explore the potential acquisition of Stone Mountain. Representative James Mackay, a Democrat from DeKalb County, served on a committee. Mackay was one of the thirty-two members of the state House of Representatives who opposed the incorporation of the Confederate battle flag into the state flag just a few years before the measure finally passed. Considering he rejected the inclusion of such an overt emblem of resistance to civil rights to the state flag, his appointment to a committee tasked with evaluating the purchase of an iconic Lost Cause monument remains curious. The joint committee unanimously recommended the state General Assembly authorize the purchase of Stone Mountain “without delay.” Summarizing the inquiry, Griffin remarked, “My request of the people of Georgia concerning the advisability of acquiring Stone Mountain was overwhelmingly in favor of its purchase.” Although the committee estimated converting Stone Mountain into a park would cost \$1.5 million, it also suggested it would “take in enough tourist revenue to pay for itself” within five years.¹¹⁵

To get the project started longtime Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield pledged the city would contribute \$100,000 to complete the carving due to the “potential tourist value

¹¹⁴ “Ga. Legislature OK’s Bill Giving State New Flag,” *North Georgia Tribune*, 15 February 1956, 1.

¹¹⁵ Georgia General Assembly. Law #3, “Committee to Study Proposed Purchase of Stone Mountain,” Vol. 1, Sequential No. 3 (1958), 8; Alexander J. Azarian and Eden Fesshazion, “The State Flag of Georgia: The 1956 Change In Its Historical Context,” Georgia Senate Research Office (August 2000) available at <http://www.senate.ga.gov/sro/Documents/StudyCommRpts/00StateFlag.pdf>; “Summary Report of Senate-House Committee on Stone Mountain, 1958, Series II Box 8 Folder 8, J. Phil Campbell Jr. Papers, Russell Library; “For Release 2 March 1958” Box 1 Folder 5, Marvin Griffin papers, Russell Library.

of the memorial.” His support was no surprise given his prior pledge of \$25,000 over a decade prior, calling Stone Mountain a “debt of honor” for which “all the Confederate states should participate.” Mrs. Ezra Wilson of Watkinsville, Georgia, wrote to the governor. She called Stone Mountain a “priceless heritage symbol,” and urged the governor, “please do everything in your power to persuade the legislature to buy Stone Mountain as a symbolic memorial to our way of life. Something tells me 1958 is the year to red[ed]icate our lives to the principles on which this state was founded, or be submerged beneath the NAACP. There is no equality with them.” To Wilson, the mountain was not simply a potential stream of tourism revenue, but an emblem of white southern resistance to the Civil Rights Movement.¹¹⁶

Upon approval of the purchase, Griffin proclaimed, “I am delighted that this generation has taken the responsibility for completing this memorial.” He continued, “when attempts are being made to destroy our very way of life, it will serve as a rallying point for all of us who believe in preserving the ideals for which our forefathers fought.” By insisting on the completion of the memorial, Griffin reiterated the importance of the Lost Cause carving just as debates over desegregation loomed across the South. In 1958, the state purchased Stone Mountain with its incomplete Confederate homage and 2,500 adjacent acres through the sale of long-term revenue bonds.¹¹⁷

That same year the Georgia legislature created the Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA) to manage the purchase and development of the site. The association consisted of four state constitutional officers and three members appointed by

¹¹⁶ “Stone Mountain Work” clipping Subject Files. Stone Mountain Park—Attractions—Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Herman Hancock, “Bill Is Offered to Complete Gray Memorial,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 Feb 1945, 7; Ezra Wilson, Folder- Jan 1858 (2), RCB63127, Georgia Archives.

¹¹⁷ 1958 Speech, Box 1 Folder 5, Marvin Griffin Papers.

the governor. The original three-year appointments to the SMMA consisted of: Ben Fortson, Jr., Georgia Secretary of State; Eugene Cook, Georgia Attorney General; Matt L. McWhorter, Public Service Commission; Phil Campbell, Secretary of Agriculture; Doris Walker Lyle, President-General of the Georgia division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy; Scott Candler, director of the Georgia Department of Commerce; and S. Price Gilbert Jr., retired Vice-President of Coca-Cola. The SMMA's activities largely reinforce the findings of public policy and urban development expert Harvey Newman, whose study of Atlanta illuminated a "strong partnership" between local businesses and political leadership. Although a legislative-appointed governing body supposedly representing the interests of the people of Georgia, the SMMA seemed to represent the interests of local Atlanta business leaders and the Democratic Party, to which nearly all the members had extensive public affiliations.¹¹⁸

Atlanta's "governing regime" business-elite essentially controlled the SMMA and its decisions. Floyd Hunter, a sociologist who studied community-power relations, considered both SMMA members Mills B. Lane Jr. and Julius McCurdy part of Atlanta's 1950s "power-structure." According to Hunter, members of this "power structure" wielded great power and influence over Atlanta public policy and decision-making process—like that regarding Stone Mountain. Though Mills had a "rather flamboyant personality as a younger man" that left some businessmen wary of his ability to lead a large company, Mills B. Lane Jr. assumed the role of president of his family's banking empire Citizen and Southern National Bank. He was also the sole trustee of the Venable Construction Company—the same family that once owned all the property at

¹¹⁸ Georgia General Assembly. Law #57, "Stone Mountain Memorial Association Act," Vol. 1, Sequence 21 (1958), 61; Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1999).

Stone Mountain—and arranged for the association to purchase adjacent parcels of lands. According to McCurdy, “Mills was extremely helpful in trying to get things going. If they needed some money, and they didn't have it, he would advance it.” Nevertheless, in 1965, Lane resigned from the association citing conflicting interests amidst controversy surrounding the allocation of the associations’ funds and a probe into the Stone Mountain motel project. In the aftermath of the controversy, Phil Campbell Jr. defended the association as “more sensitive to the wishes of the General Assembly and people of Georgia than appointed officials,” and went so far as to suggest the creation of a permanent authority.¹¹⁹

Aside from state elected officials such as Ben Fortson Jr., who resided in DeKalb County, other SMMA members also had direct ties to the county. Scott Candler Sr.’s involvement with Stone Mountain dated back to the early 1940s when he served as a DeKalb County Commissioner. Affectionately known as “Mr. DeKalb,” Candler served as mayor of Decatur for seventeen years at which time he even attempted to purchase Stone Mountain from the Venable family for the county. Though Candler realized the nearly impossible breadth of the project without state support, SMMA members remembered him as a guy who could “could get things done.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Use of “governing regime” drawing on Clearance Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1989); Hunter, *Community Power Succession*, 50; SMMA Meeting Minutes 10 March 1958, Tourism: Stone Mountain Park - History – Stone Mountain Memorial Association, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; McCurdy, Julius, Interviewed by Clifford Kuhn, 21 November 1988, P1988-19, Series B. Public Figures, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta; Fellow SMMA member Campbell claimed Lane’s position on the Stone Mountain committee and the Citizen and Southern Bank posed a conflict of interest. On controversy concerning SMMA financial practices audit and Lane’s resignation see: “2 Resign Board at Stone Mtn.,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 1 January 1965, 1; “Stone Mountain park Cost Put at \$11.4 Million in Audit,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 17 December 1964; Don McKee, “Stone Mtn. Probe to Rap Some Practices of Past,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 27 December 1964; “Mountain Operations Hit, Reform Urged by Probers,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 30 December 1964, 2; “Campbell Defends Stone Mountain,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 October 1964.

¹²⁰ “Ben Fortson Jr. Is Dead at 74, Ex-Secretary of State in Georgia,” *NYT*, 21 May 1979, 13; In 1971, local

With Stone Mountain's governing body comprised of state bureaucrats and Atlanta businessmen, the park's finances remained of central importance and undoubtedly influenced the direction of future development. Reports repeatedly stressed how the park must be treated as a *business* within the travel industry in order to entice the most tourists and profits. In effect, the selling of Stone Mountain exemplified the commodification of "Dixie" and attempts to market the region's past to tourists seeking out an "authentic" southern experience. According to the Department of Commerce, Mt. Rushmore National Memorial inspired Griffin and the SMMA to travel to South Dakota to tour the site. Impressed by the carving at Rushmore and its \$30 million annual profit, Griffin determined "Stone Mountain is the richest gold mine yet undeveloped in North America." Officials hoped to increase the allure of Stone Mountain in hopes that the park would become financially self-sufficient like Mt. Rushmore. Throughout the 1960s, the SMMA sold millions of dollars in long-term revenue bonds, like those used to purchase Stone Mountain, to finance new construction projects. Any additional plans for future development had to increase visitor statistics and potential revenue margins in order to recoup these investments.¹²¹

author Morris Shelton wrote a book about Scott Candler, Sr. entitled *Mr. DeKalb*. Dealing with Stone Mountain as DeKalb official see: McCurdy, Julius, Interviewed by Clifford Kuhn, 21 November 1988, P1988-19, Series B. Public Figures, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta; Pilcher, Crawford, Interviewed by Clifford Kuhn, 23 February 1989, P1989-06, Series B. Public Figures, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library, Atlanta.

¹²¹ "Stone Mountain Memorial Park: Current Status and Future Potential," Tourism: Stone Mountain Park – History - 2 of 3, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; "Rushmore Inspires Georgia To Complete Mountain Rushmore," Georgia Department of Commerce Newsletter, September 1958, Series II Box 8 Folder 8, J. Phil Campbell Jr., Russell Library; "Georgia Association's \$5 Million Bonds Get 3.2734% Interest Cost," *Wall Street Journal*, 6 August 1964, 17.

Competing Visions: Memorial or Honky-Tonk?

A variety of competing visions for the development of Stone Mountain Park emerged. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Magazine* invited readers to send in suggestions. It asked, “What are YOUR ideas about the Stone Mountain Memorial?” Atlantan Raymond Shives felt “a valuable tourist attraction [wa]s being wasted and a fitting memorial neglected.” He proposed “expand[ing] [the park] into another Disneyland” complete with “an international hotel” so that Stone Mountain could “cater to an international clientele of travelers and tourists.” Commenting on the enthusiasm surrounding Stone Mountain, Atlanta reporter Frank Daniels claimed it “is now an obsession with lots of Georgians, particularly those who are in position to profit by the idea.” The *Covington News* vehemently objected to the far-fetched suggestion that designers add Union General William T. Sherman to the carving. According to one article, “Stone Mountain is as strictly southern as the Suwannee River, and Southern people will not allow it to be desecrated in any way whatsoever.” Though exaggerated, the impassioned consideration of Stone Mountain as something akin to a southern “holy shrine” that could not be “desecrated” paralleled the UDC’s early twentieth-century treatment of Confederate monuments and memorials.¹²²

Some prominent figures in metro-Atlanta suggested drawing on elements of the state’s legendary past. In a phone call with A. P. Almond of Robert and Associate Engineers, SMMA member Prince Gilbert Jr. noted, “Now we hoped—and this is

¹²² William Hammack, “What Should the Stone Mountain Memorial Be?,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Magazine*, 20 May 1956, 36; Letter from Raymond Shives 7 Jan 1958, RCB 63127, Georgia Archives; Frank Daniels, “Stone Mountain Memorial Ruined,” *Atlanta Journal*, 15 Feb 1962 clipping at Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Antebellum Plantation, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, DeKalb History Center Archives; “Stone Mountain Memorial Is Strictly a Southern Project,” *Covington News*, 23 April 1953.

confidential—to have a reproduction of Tara, Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* movie set” and call it the Margaret Mitchell Museum. Similarly, Christine Kennedy Mitchell—who married SMMA member Matt McWhorter in 1960—and Kenneth Garcia proposed a thirteen-point plan of development that included the construction of a Margaret Mitchell Memorial. Their prospective memorial would house manuscripts from the Mitchell estate that they ensured the family would gift to Stone Mountain. For those subscribing to Lost Cause ideology, the idea of a tribute to Margaret Mitchell at Stone Mountain would make the park an indispensable asset in the fight to memorialize the “southern way of life.”¹²³

In contrast, some Georgians criticized the Lost Cause nostalgic focus of the park. Perturbed by the controversy surrounding the conversion of Stone Mountain into a Confederate “gilded freak show,” journalist Nick Fersen of the *DeKalb New Era* wrote, “Save the rebel yell for pageants and memorial days.” Fersen continued, “There is no room for “South,” “North,” “East,” or West” within the boundaries of our land. There is room only for America, one, whole, and indivisible.” Fersen disapproved of divisive imagery and rhetoric that inflamed sectionalism and instead called for national unity. These conflicting opinions as to the future direction of Stone Mountain hinged on the ongoing tension between the Confederate carving and the larger development of the park.¹²⁴

In another unsolicited proposal, H. B. Fuller of the Atlanta marking research firm of the same name passed along a proposal for a “Memorial Arch of America” designed

¹²³ Telephone transcript with Gilbert and Almond Folder- Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; Christine K. Mitchell and Kenneth Garcia, “Addressing the Stone Mountain Memorial Committee,” Folder – Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives.

¹²⁴ Nick Fersen, “Coming and Going” *DeKalb New Era* 1951, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park. History - 3 of 3, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

by the National Patriotic Organizations of Georgia. As a member of the Sons of the American Revolution—affiliated with the National Patriotic Organizations of Georgia—Fuller claimed the arch would help “create a greater feeling of national unity” and give tourists outside of the South a reason to visit the park. Each of the forty-nine granite blocks used to construct the arch would be engraved with the name and founding date of each state. In this regard, the arch would be dedicated “to the everlasting memory of all Americans who obtained and preserved the independence and freedom” of the United States. Fuller urged state officials and the SMMA to broaden Stone Mountain’s scope and appeal to both “sectional and national interest[s].” Though Fuller saw the need to market the site to a larger national audience, these ideas largely fell on deaf ears.¹²⁵

Before deciding on an official direction, the SMMA asked the National Park Service to conduct a field study and provide advice on appropriate types of development. After all, state officials had floated the idea of turning the site into a state park in the 1940s. The NPS’s Region One Chief Officers’ 1958 report claimed, “Stone Mountain possesses the required values for state park status.” While the NPS did not have the “commercialized objectives” like other parties interested in Stone Mountain, it recognized it “[wa]s not an average park.” Instead the NPS noted that Stone Mountain “possesse[d] above average natural and historic visitor appeal.” Recreation remained the site’s greatest potential attractor and “may equal or exceed those whose principle objective is to see the memorial carving.” With this in mind, the NPS stressed the importance of “day-use development,” particularly picnicking on the rocks and hiking to

¹²⁵ H. B. Fuller to McWhorter, 10 December 1958 and Fuller to McWhorter and Memorial Arch of American Proposal, 10 December 1958, Series II Box 8 Folder 8, J. Phil Campbell Jr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

the mountaintop, in order to attract those from metro-Atlanta. Similarly, the report suggested limiting development north of the mountain to preserve the natural beauty and environment. “The aura or atmosphere created by the magnitude of the mountain and the impressive spirit,” the NPS wrote, “are subtle and may be jeopardized by encroachment of mass visitation of conflicting recreational objectives or interests.” Although the NPS focused on the importance of recreation, it would take some time for the SMMA to embrace this notion.¹²⁶

The next year Robert and Company Associates, an Atlanta engineering firm, finalized the first official Master Plan for the site. Presumably expecting overwhelmingly white visitors sympathetic to the South, the Robert plan intended to transform Stone Mountain into “an everlasting memorial to the Confederacy” that would become “a mecca for untold thousands of visitors.” The Robert blueprints included segregated “colored” bathrooms, much smaller than their white counterparts, with outside entrances on site plans. It is not clear, however, if the SMMA really expected black visitors or intended to employ African American staff. The Master Plan called for Confederate battle flags and an exhibit on Margaret Mitchell’s Tara to represent plantation life and “depict the flavor and atmosphere which prevailed during the War Between the States.” In the administration building a “Battlarena” marked the route of Sherman’s March to the Sea and demonstrated “the general idea of why the Confederacy needs a memorial.” Some segregationists felt that the “southern way of life” had been under attack with the escalating Civil Rights Movement, and therefore, the Confederacy needed to be

¹²⁶ Letter Fred Arnold, Acting Regional Director, to Matt McWhorter, 18 July 1958 and Planning Report: Stone Mountain Memorial Park Georgia by US Department of the Interior, NPS, Region One Office, Richmond, VA, 18 July 1958. Folder- Master Plan & Blueprints from US Department Interior 1958-1960, RCB498, Georgia Archives.

memorialized within the public landscape.¹²⁷ One of the most astonishing features of the plan remains the proposed mountaintop parking lot, bus terminal, restaurant, and concessions.¹²⁸ Mocking the idea, one article criticized the \$350,000 road to the stop that would “culminate, no doubt, in a hot dog stand and a souvenir shop!”¹²⁹ In hindsight, the thought of bulldozing into the mountain for these features seems especially peculiar since so many stressed the natural, unique beauty of the mountain itself.

Despite Robert and Associates recommendation to look towards the future by expanding, the SMMA—at least for the time—remained concerned with the completion of the Confederate memorial. In September 1959, Thomas T. Tucker of the Georgia Granite Company urged the SMMA to quickly complete the carving because some “people are rather bitter about it.” Tucker also noted that many Georgians are “expecting a spiritual beacon to be carved in the living rock of the mountain.” Tucker suggested Austrian-born sculptor Felix W. deWeldon—who completed the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington—design and complete the carving. The “Confederate Shrine” remained the centerpiece of the Tucker proposal, which stressed the importance of finishing the project by April 9, 1965—the anniversary of Robert E. Lee’s surrender during the last year of the Civil War centennial. Reflecting on the substantial undertaking at Stone Mountain, T. T. Tucker wrote to SMMA member Matt L. McWhorter, “Rushmore is child’s play compared to what we propose to do.” Like many other

¹²⁷ Georgia Stone Mountain Memorial Association, *The Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial* (Atlanta: Standard Press, n.d.); Robert Association Stone Mountain Blueprints dated 28 May 1951, Unprocessed Robert and Associates Collection, Georgia Archives; Willard Neal, “The World Comes to the Mountain, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution Magazine*, 17 July 1966, 24.

¹²⁸ Robert Assoc SM Blueprints—GA Archives & “Stone Mountain Memorial: Report and Plans Prepared for SMMA” Folder- SMM- Report and Plans Prepared by Robert & So Associates, n.d., RCB498, Georgia Archives.

¹²⁹ “IS Ga. Making a Molehill of a Mountain?” Series II Box 8 Folder 8- Stone Mountain 1958, J. Phil Campbell Jr. Papers.

Georgians, Tucker wanted to complete the carving in time for the Civil War centennial because “the eyes of the world will be upon the South.”¹³⁰

In 1960, the Stone Mountain Memorial Association expressed concern over the direction of the carving design. Under the direction of renowned University of Georgia art professor Lamar Dodd, the SMMA’s Committee on Sculpture reported the “necessity of recognizing that the monument must be conceived in relation to the over-all park planning and particularly the areas surrounding the monument.” The committee also noted, however, “whatever is done, the monument must be a memorial to the Confederate States of America, not a monument to Peace or Union or anything other than the Confederacy itself.” Despite any attempts to broaden the appeal of the park with a message of national reconciliation, this letter reaffirmed the SMMA’s desire to keep the carving solely about the Lost Cause.¹³¹

Although both state and SMMA officials agreed the completion of the carving would prove profitable, many committee members and reporters scrutinized the aesthetics. Lamar Dodd wrote a confidential letter to fellow Sculpture Committee member John Walter, of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., questioning the completion of the preexisting carving elements dating back to the 1920s. Dodd remarked, “the horrible monstrosity remains on the side of the mountain, and it is a terrible blemish. The figures are hardly recognizable, even from the roadside immediately beneath the

¹³⁰ Letter Thomas T. Tucker to McWhorter 21 September 1959, Folder- Proposed Plan. Finance & Complete Confederate Shrine Stone Mountain, Civil War Centennial Commission - Staff Director - Administrative Records, 1959-1965, RCB7550, Georgia Archives.

¹³¹ 1960 letter, Box 131 Folder - 1954-1960 Correspondence, Series II Box 131, Lamar Dodd collection, MS 1296. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries; Memorandum to Mr. McWhorter from the Committee on Sculpture, SMMA, 28 March 1960, Series II Box 131 Folder - 1954-1960 Correspondence, Lamar Dodd collection.

mountain. Something must be done.”¹³² While Dodd indicated the existing carving should be demolished and work should start from scratch, many other people expressed similar concerns about the existing project.

Atlanta reporter Frank Daniels considered Augustus Lukeman’s carving design “an anachronism when it was accepted nearly 40 years ago.” Daniels did not, however, elaborate on whether or not the design was anachronistic because of its design or its emphasis on the Confederacy. Nevertheless, Daniels raised an important point—that the message behind the original carving remained a relic of a bygone past. Daniels pointedly wrote, “that mess on the side of Stone Mountain today, fast deteriorating, is a memorial to Georgian chicanery, Georgian incapacity to accomplish an artistic pursuit. It is a solemn warning against faction, Georgia’s genius.” Even the Georgia Arts Council “turned thumbs down” to the memorial carving on the mountain calling it “offensive to reputable artistic judgment.”¹³³

Although SMMA member Prince Gilbert Jr. also wanted to scrap the previous designs, he still wanted a memorial icon to the by-gone past. Gilbert suggested carving “a half figure (from the waist up) of Lee in military uniform.” Gilbert believed draping a Confederate flag on Lee’s back, or perhaps his side, would “soften the impact.” He believed Lee was “the one man who [wa]s the symbol of the Confederacy and the symbol of the South,” and therefore, the only figure that needed to be in the carving. Amidst these rising concerns and conflicting ideas about the design, the committee offered clarification. The committee announced the Georgia legislation did “not mean that we

¹³² Letter Dodd to John Walter, 9 January 1960, Box 131 Folder - 1954-1960 Correspondence, Lamar Dodd collection.

¹³³ Frank Daniels, “Stone Mountain Memorial Ruined,” 15 Feb 1962 clipping, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Antebellum Plantation, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

should complete the present carving,” however, “it d[id] mean that whatever we do should be ON the Mountain itself, not elsewhere in the park.” The original design could be discarded, but the notion of a carving on the mountain could not. Once again these debates highlighted the divide between the larger park—and its intended audience—and the memorial carving.¹³⁴

After establishing the goals for the carving, the SMMA began the process of choosing an artist to complete the project. The process dragged on until 1963 when the committee selected Walker Kirtland Hancock, a sculptor born in St. Louis, from nine juried competitors. Hancock noted, “The Memorial area should be big enough to match the magnitude of the mountain, bold enough to portray the rugged determination of the Confederate states and simple enough to be easily understood.” But like previous commenters, the newly selected artist wanted to ditch the previous designs and “start from scratch.”¹³⁵

Despite enthusiasm surrounding the renewed work on the mountain, there were mixed feelings about the selection of the artist, and subsequently, his design. *Atlanta Journal* writer James F. Donohue questioned the abilities of artist Walter Hancock to complete “Georgia’s sculptural paean to Dixie” seeing as he was “a Confederate

¹³⁴ Memo from Prince Gilbert Jr. to SMMA Folder – Ideals of Development, 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; Memorandum to Mr. McWhorter from the Committee on Sculpture, SMMA, 28 March 1960, Series II, Box 131, Lamar Dodd Collection.

¹³⁵ “Background Information on the Stone Mountain Memorial Carving,” Series III Box 17 Folder 14 – Stone Mountain Dedication, J. Phil Campbell Jr. Papers; “Dixie Caves Out an Answer to Mt. Rushmore,” Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Antebellum Plantation, DeKalb History Center Archives.

For an account of the Hancock phase of the carving see: Paul Stephen Hudson and Melora Mirza, *Atlanta’s Stone Mountain: A Multicultural History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011), p. 94-100; David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone: A History of Stone Mountain* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997). For a detailed account of Stone Mountain’s Confederate carving and notions of southern identity see: Grace Elizabeth Hale, “Granite Stopped Time: The Stone Mountain Memorial and the Representation of White Southern Identity,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 82, Issue 1. (Spring 1998). Hancock also gave an interview about his work on Stone Mountain, see: *Oral history interview with Walker Hancock*, 1977 July 22-August 15, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Yankee.” Donohue seemingly took the hiring of Hancock, whose studio was located in Gloucester, Massachusetts, as a sign of disrespect to the entire project. One Georgia sculptor protested paying an out-of-state artist when “too many talented Georgia taxpaying artists are hurting very badly.” Historian Harold M. Martin even mocked the carving and called it “a monument to anger, stubbornness, frailty, and jealousy, rather than to the nobility of the Confederate cause.” Despite the turmoil, Hancock resumed work on the carving with only minor alterations to the existing design—though it would not be complete until 1971.¹³⁶

Re-Envisioning the Park for Tourists

The SMMA hired Burke Dowling Adams (BDA), an Atlanta public relations company, to advertise the park. Stone Mountain was in good hands from an ad perspective as BDA’s other clients included another hometown company—Delta Airlines. From May 1962 to 1963, BDA dedicated more than 3,500 man-hours to making sure “the American public and people worldwide are better aware of Stone Mountain Memorial Park and its development.” Aside from radio and television ads, BDA focused on crafting a “favorable impression” of the park among tourists through print media. Posters were displayed in fifteen locations around Fulton and DeKalb Counties along with exhibits at five travel trade shows in the United States and Canada. Additionally, the Department of Commerce distributed 10,000 brochures along with another 10,000 brochures sent out in mailers by the Atlanta Convention Bureau. In total, BDA estimated

¹³⁶ James F. Donohue, “Carving Being Directed By Confederate Yankee,” *Atlanta Journal*, 30 September 1966, 16; Ann Carter, “Sculptor Taps State Policy of Hiring Artists,” *Atlanta Journal*, 26 August 1966; Martin, *Atlanta and Environs*, 387.

51,000 “stories” concerning Stone Mountain appeared in print media over the course of the year.¹³⁷

Just as the concept for Stone Mountain Park began to solidify, the state of Georgia broadened its tourist horizons. According to William “Bill” Hardman, director of the state’s Tourism Division, Georgia had an “awful” reputation, and was “known for speed traps, clip-joints, and poor roads.” This would soon change after the Tourism Division embarked on a campaign aiming at the numerous motorists heading to Florida on vacation. The State of Georgia adopted what Hardman called, the “perfect slogan”—“See Georgia First.” The Tourist Division partnered with the State Highway Board to construct Welcome Centers along the newly constructed interstates. The professionalization of the state’s tourism industry, and consequentially, tourist travel studies compelled the SMMA and park officials to embrace marketing strategies and development plans they had once dismissed.¹³⁸

Throughout the mid-1960s, the carving’s role and the larger concept for Stone Mountain Park would undergo tremendous change. In December 1963, the SMMA contacted UGA’s College of Business Administration, Bureau of Business Research, to investigate Stone Mountain’s economic potential. The report, published in 1964, found “a lack of balance in its present stage of development.” The authors William B. Keeling and Raymond Herman believed, “Stone Mountain can fast become the most significant tourist attraction south of Williamsburg,” and urged, “stronger concentration on the historical

¹³⁷ Burke Bowling Adams Inc. Report on Program of Public Relations and Publicity at Stone Mountain, Folder- Advertising and Promotion, RCB496, Georgia Archives; “Advertising: B.B.D.O Seeks Atlanta Unit,” *NYT*, 23 October 1964, 62.

¹³⁸ Bill Hardman 4 February 2013 Interview, Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP-146, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

aspects of the park.” The comparison was especially curious considering Williamsburg, Virginia, has a rich colonial past, while the Confederate memorial at Stone Mountain embodied what historian Eric Hobsbawm referred to as the “invention of tradition.” The “tradition” invented at Stone Mountain largely reflected the spirit of Confederate nationalism based on romanticized symbols and myths. This idea of playing up one element of southern history would manifest itself at the park in many different ways.¹³⁹

Some Georgians wrote letters to the SMMA and affirmed the desire to highlight historic elements like other formidable tourist sites such as Colonial Williamsburg. Years prior Christie Mitchell McWhorter had claimed, “the general public would like to see an actual old Southern Plantation and its outbuildings right here in Georgia.” After the Keeling and Herman report, Stone Mountain Park would indeed do this and develop an eighteen building plantation complex. Stone Mountain had already moved the Spring Creek Plantation from Dickey, Georgia, to the park for restoration in 1961. With the renewed focus on the plantation complex, the Atlanta Arts Alliance gifted the Thornton House of Greene County to Stone Mountain. In April 1963, the complex—known as “Stone Acres Plantation”—opened to the public. It included outbuildings such as an overseer’s house, kitchen, barn, slave quarters, and a coach house.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Raymond O. Herman and William B. Keeling, *Economic Potentials of Stone Mountain Memorial Park* (Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, 1964), 1; “Optimistic Report Heard on Stone Mountain Future,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 13 December 1965, 4; While Williamsburg has a notable colonial history as the capital of the colony of Virginia to built on, Stone Mountain Park and the Confederate memorial created a vision of southern history in the twentieth century specifically for tourists that originally sought to legitimize the Confederate past. See: Hobsbawm, Eric & Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁰ Christie K. Mitchell and Kenneth Garcia, “Addressing the Stone Mountain Memorial Committee,” Folder- Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; Stone Acres Plantation to Open At Mountain, 3 April 1963 article, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, DeKalb History Center Archives; “Restored Plantation Presents Life Of ‘Gentle Society’” Dedication Special-Decatur-DeKalb News, 9 May 1970, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

The SMMA spent approximately \$500,000 on restoration projects to ensure the authenticity of the structures and interior furnishings at Stone Acres Plantation. According to the local newspaper, antique enthusiast Christie Mitchell McWhorter, wife of SMMA member Matt McWhorter, “almost single-handedly” amassed “the astonishing collection of artifacts that has made the plantation buildings spring into vitality, evoking the impression that the gentle mistress of the manor might have driven out in her carriage on some afternoon calls.” Even the description of the plantation complex evoked romanticized images of the “plantation mistress.” By November 1963, reporter Doris Lockerman called the plantation complex “the most successful project undertaken for many a year in Georgia,” and the “crowning jewel of the Stone Mountain Memorial development.” That year, 29,000 visitors toured to the plantation complex. The *Atlanta Journal Magazine* even proclaimed, “Many tourists have pronounced the Ante-Bellum Plantation the most delightful section of Americana they have ever seen.”¹⁴¹

The SMMA maximized the association between the park’s Stone Acres Plantation and Tara from Margaret Mitchell’s legendary *Gone With the Wind*. The park hired actress Butterfly McQueen—better known for her role as a ditsy house slave in *GWTW*—who had fallen on hard times, and from 1963 to 1965, worked at the plantation complex. Stone Mountain capitalized on McQueen and had her appear in a half-hour television program

¹⁴¹ SMMA financial disclosure reports, Folder- Joint Report of Senate & House Investigation of Financial Operations of the SMMA, RCB497, Georgia Archives; Doris Lockerman, “A Moment in the Old South Comes Stirringly Alive Again,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 Nov 1963, 23; Willard Neal, “The World Comes to the Mountain,” *AJC Magazine*, 17 July 1966, 23; “900 See it Daily: Stone Mountain Plantation Offers Peak at South’s Past,” 27 July 1969 article Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; “Stone Mountain Memorial Park: Present Status and Future Potential,” Reports- SMMA, RCB 498, Georgia Archives. For scholarship on “plantation mistress” and relationship with female slaves see: Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman’s World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon of Random House Books, 1982) and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

on WOR-TV promoting the park. Reporter Doris Lockerman referred to McQueen as “the Negro maid Prissie of “Gone With the Wind...[who] has gained a few pounds during the years,” and attributed her employment to “Mrs. McWhorter’s sense of drama.” Even newspaper articles referencing Butterfly McQueen at Stone Mountain seemed to diminish her as a person outside of her famous role. In a plan of development, McWhorter suggested, “Colored help would be employed and dressed in gay gingham costumes.” Once at Stone Mountain, McQueen was outfitted in a costume, but it was a “billowy white gown and white gloves and a straw hat.”¹⁴²

McQueen’s relationship with the park remains curious. Nearly thirty years after the debut of *GWTW*, McQueen’s notoriety from the film had not diminished. Upon meeting McQueen at the plantation, one couple stated, “We’re not interested in the garden...we came all the way from South Carolina just to see you, Prissy.” A sign “Prissy is here today” even adorned the entrance of the plantation complex to advertise McQueen’s presence. Judging by the South Carolina couple and the entrance sign, many visitors sought out the fictional character and the romanticized “simpler time” that came with it and not the complexities of McQueen as a person and the character she played.¹⁴³

Given the timing amidst the Civil Rights Movement with student sit-ins at Rich’s Department store in downtown Atlanta, the presentation of race and gender at the plantation complex is especially interesting. Reporter Doris Lockerman claimed the

¹⁴² Burke Bowling Adams Inc. Report on Program of Public Relations and Publicity at Stone Mountain, Folder- Advertising and Promotion, RCB496, Georgia Archives; Doris Lockerman, “A Moment in the Old South Comes Stirringly Alive Again,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 Nov 1963, 23; Christie K. Mitchell and Kenneth Garcia, “Addressing the Stone Mountain Memorial Committee,” Folder - Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives. For discussion about the presentation of slavery at public history sites see: James Oliver and Louis E. Horton, eds. *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina, 2006).

¹⁴³ Paul Hemphill, “No Premiere for Prissy,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 Oct 1967, 6B; Photo of the sign in Tim Hollis, *Stone Mountain Park* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 67.

plantation demonstrated “the glory and the cross of the Old South...side by side with the grainy, bare-bone confrontation of slavery.” Yet aside from the sheer existence of slave quarters in the complex, the only mention of African Americans or their role in history at the plantation complex was Butterfly McQueen. In her proposal for the plantation complex, McWhorter distinguished between “colored help” and “Ladies” or “hostesses” that would guide tourists around and “lecture on the interiors and explain antiques of historical interest.” Promotional literature on Stone Acres Plantation referred to the white tour guides as “hostesses” who had “housewifely ingenuity and know-how,” which stood in stark contrast to the description of the “colored help.” The white “hostesses” appeared to be the Lost Cause “keepers of the flame.”¹⁴⁴

Stone Mountain’s employment of Butterfly McQueen oddly conjured images of the “loyal house slave.” According to one souvenir booklet, “Georgia plantation owners as a rule were good to their slaves. It was not only a humanitarian blunder but also an economic one.” Though not explicit, the booklet seemingly implied the mistreatment of slaves remained the “humanitarian blunder,” not the existence of the entire system of slavery. Aside from drawing on the nostalgia of loyal mammies and “genteel mistresses,” the park played up the notion of southern hospitality to attract visitors. Betty Carrollton, the newspaper’s women’s editor, stressed the importance of the plantation complex among the “wives of businessmen.” Quoting a visitor, Carrollton wrote, “Bustles and bonnets and Scarlett O’Hara, you had such a beautiful way of life and now it’s gone.” Though this way of life might have been “beautiful” to elite white southerners, Carrollton’s statement reeked of Lost Cause nostalgia devoid of any unpleasanties.

¹⁴⁴ Doris Lockerman, “A Moment in the Old South Comes Stirringly Alive Again,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 Nov 1963, 23; “Stone Mountain Guides,” 5 August 1970, Stone Mountain Park- General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

According to the Atlanta Convention Bureau, the popularity of visits among “business-wives” helped “foster a more personal and favorable relationship between the wife and the husband’s corporate or professional affiliations.” These writers clearly viewed the plantation complex as a space specifically for female visitors due to the highly gendered rhetoric and overtones.¹⁴⁵

While the SMMA and various planning reports saw the expanded potential for Stone Mountain and even sought to cash-in on rival Williamsburg’s living-history model, many others began considering the possibility of theme park like amusement. By 1964, General Manager Harold R. Maddux (1963-1968) envisioned it as a “sort of combination Mount Vernon, Yosemite and Disneyland that can be with proper promotion, a major tourist attraction and in good taste, too.” That same year, park office manager Baxter Williams declared, “Stone Mountain will help take Georgia into the ‘mainstream’ of American tourism.” After Six Flags Over Georgia opened in June 1967 in nearby suburban Cobb County, comparisons with Stone Mountain flourished. While speculation mounted over the SMMA’s ability to complete the project, Governor Maddox pressured the association to “jazz up” Stone Mountain with “rides and all” to make the park compete with Atlanta’s newest theme park.¹⁴⁶

The governor was not the only one considering new areas of development. A memo between SMMA members debated the idea “that we have an Amusement Park similar to Disneyland at Stone Mountain... [with] various ‘rides.’” At one point, the

¹⁴⁵ J Vincent Lowery, “Tourists Experience Southern Distinctiveness at Stone Mountain,” 231; Betty Carrollton, “Plantation Is Past; Hospitality Isn’t,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 4 July 1967.

¹⁴⁶ “Will Robert E. Lee Ride Again?,” *Business Week*, 26 September 1964, 188; Paul Valentine, “Stone Mtn. Development Processing,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 11 June 1964, 6; Charles Pou, “Georgia Politics,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 5 November 1967, 3A. & “Editorials: Stone Mountain Again,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 12 November 1967, 18A. For more discussion of Six Flags Over Georgia and Atlanta see: Harvey, *Environs*, 420-421 & 503-504.

SMMA entertained a pitch for a 10-acre area dedicated to amusement with rides that would entertain both “older youngsters and the teenage members of the family.” The plan for rides included: the Jolly Caterpillar, Pony Cart or Roadway Ride, Merry-Go-Round and Paddle Boats. Nevertheless, ridicule grew as the general public became increasingly restless with the progress at the park. Local journalists began mocking the development, advancing “opprobrious nicknames—DeKalb Disneyland, Rushmore on the Rocks, Paradise Unvisited.”¹⁴⁷

The desire to expand Stone Mountain into a vibrant tourist attraction faced criticism from a variety of opponents. The outgoing president of the American Society of Landscape Architects wrote into the *Atlanta Journal*, “the current combination of different architectural styles, inappropriate structures, discordant colors and bizarre development is damaging to the long-range appearance and harmonious enjoyment of this great treasure.” The society released an official statement on the development of Stone Mountain. The American Society of Landscape Architects claimed, “the authorities have created a bizarre attraction,” while other organizations noted, “Stone Mountain is on the edge of design squalor.” For Atlanta reporter Frank Daniels, the carving was not only “a tacky undertaking” it “despoiled and defaced” the mountain. The sum of criticism noted that plans for development were “too commercial” and “detract[ed] from the natural beauty.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Letter 24 Sept 1959 Prince Gilbert to Matt McWhorter, Folder- Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; “Proposal for an Amusement Ride and Recreational Area for Stone Mountain, Georgia,” Folder- Recreational Area as Proposed By Stone Mountain Airways, RCB498, Georgia Archives; Eugene Patterson, “Progress Impressive at Stone Mountain,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 14 March 1965, 9-B.

¹⁴⁸ “Architect Blast Mountain Design,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 1 July 1967, 8A; Ann Carter, “Stone Mountain Draws Criticism,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 30 June 1967, 6A; Frank Daniels, “Stone Mountain Memorial Ruined,” *Atlanta Journal*, 15 Feb 1962 clipping, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Antebellum

Even SMMA members expressed concern over excessive commercial development. Matt McWhorter explicitly wrote, “I feel that an Amusement Park is not the answer...[it] would have no direct connection with a Confederate Memorial or with Stone Mountain.” Prince Gilbert Jr. wrote to McWhorter, “We are supposed to build at Stone Mountain, a Confederate Memorial, a Confederate shrine,” thus, the Disneyland type of amusement, Gilbert claims, “would be taking a terrific gamble.” He insisted that any type of amusement park entertainment might detract from the park’s true goals and insisted, “All [development] must have a direct connection with the Confederate Memorial.” More compelling was his statement, “I can’t visualize General Lee looking down from the mountain carving on such an area.” Gilbert implied that Confederate leaders would be horrified by what had become of a once honorable, at least to some, memorial. Fellow SMMA businessman Mills Lane Jr. expressed concern that “the whole area should be a park and not a honky-tonk.”¹⁴⁹

Although the SMMA had strongly avoided a “‘carnival’ or ‘midway’ atmosphere” since its inception, many suggested it was perhaps time for a change at the park. In one tongue-and-cheek article, a local reporter suggested erecting a 200-foot “SEE STONE MOUNTAIN” sign—drawing on the “See Rock City” slogan—on the backside of the mountain. The potential addition of neon lights especially caused Atlanta travel editor Don Deaton dismay. As Deaton noted, “Someone has got to bring Stone Mountain back down to earth and park status and quit experimenting with every device known to 20th

Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Ann Carter, “Stone Mountain Draws Criticism,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 30 June 1967, 6A.

¹⁴⁹ McWhorter letter and Gilbert to McWhorter, Folder- Ideals of Development 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; “Goal for Stone Mountain: ‘Park, Not a Honky-Tonk,’” Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

century tourist trap promoters.” Stone Mountain was not alone though in experimenting with various techniques to increase tourist traffic.¹⁵⁰

“Georgia’s Year-Round Historical Recreation Area”

Although the original plan for Stone Mountain focused almost exclusively on the park as a site dedicated to “the culture of the Old South” with the carving as its centerpiece, this began to change in the mid-to-late 1960s. In the “Economic Potential” report, William Keeling and Raymond Herman advanced an alternative three-phase vision that would transform the park into “an outstanding, first-class, revenue-producing, recreation complex.” The park would continue to commemorate the Confederacy, but the authors also suggested, Stone Mountain “should be a place for recreation for the people of Georgia,” and “a vacation-recreation area for people of other states as well.” While the park focused on recreational opportunities, state tourism officials tried to capture out-of-state vacationers. In 1962, UGA’s Bureau of Business Research reported out-of-state travelers in Florida had spent \$2.245 billion compared to the \$329.4 million spent by tourists in Georgia. By attempting to cash in on these trends and persuade travelers on their way to Florida to “stopover,” the focus on developing recreational areas at Stone Mountain would take the park in an unprecedented direction.¹⁵¹

The “Present Status and Future Potential” report claimed Stone Mountain would put Georgia “on the tourist map” and increase the state’s reputation for hospitality and “air of relaxation.” By 1964, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and Mozelle Christian,

¹⁵⁰ Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, I-2; Don Deaton, “Let’s Put Stone Mountain in Lights!” *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 1 August 1965, 13D.

¹⁵¹ Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, III-1, I-2 & VII-1; William B. Keeling, *The Georgia Travel Industry, 1960-1968*. Travel Research Study #11. (Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, 1969), 21.

director of the state's "Stay and See Georgia" marketing program, deemed Stone Mountain Park a "critical asset." The Tourism Division spent \$100,000 on advertising in 1964 to entice out-of-state travelers to "stay" over in Georgia. State officials were inspired by one Georgia travel study that claimed Stone Mountain had the potential to draw visitors from the Midwest and Great Lakes regions on their way to Florida. Officials viewed Stone Mountain as "part of the gigantic travel industry," and therefore, began encouraging vacation seekers to "stop over" in Georgia and visit the park. Drawing on the nineteenth-century conception of "carpetbaggers," Stone Mountain office manager Baxter Williams stressed the importance of attracting northern visitors. After all, Williams claimed, "One Yankee tourist is worth a bale of cotton and is twice as easy to pick."¹⁵²

To attract large crowds of both in-state and out-of-state visitors, Stone Mountain included a variety of attractions to compel visitors to visit the park and spend money. At this point, every attraction within the park charged its own admission fee. One park brochure boasted a new marina, a campground with thirty spaces, a restaurant, and a new snack bar. The European ski lift like "skylift" constructed by Bell Engineering Works of Switzerland transported visitors a half-mile to the top of the mountain. In just a few short months at the end of 1963, over 120,000 tourists made the trip to the mountain's summit. Similarly, the Stone Mountain Scenic Railroad with its five miles of track carried over 400,000 tourists in just two years of operation. The park also boasted a "Game Ranch"

¹⁵² "Stone Mountain Memorial Park: Current Status and Future Potential," Tourism: Stone Mountain Park – History - 2 of 3, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Jean Gulley, "Stone Mtn. To Kick Off Tourist Plan," *The Atlanta Journal*, 24 Jan 1964, 2; Jean Gulley, "Uncork Promotion, Stone Mtn. Urged," *The Atlanta Journal*, 28 Jan 1964; "Tourism Advertising," *Georgia Progress* (Atlanta: Department of Industry and Trade, 1965), insert "First Place, 1965, Professional Trophy Award Society of Industrial Realtors," 6; Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, V-10; Paul Valentine, "Stone Mtn. Development Processing," *The Atlanta Journal*, 11 June 1964, 6.

(petting zoo), a “Riding Academy” with twenty horses available for rent, and seven miles of horse trails to boot. Plans for 1965 included the addition of an 18-hole golf course. Park Manager Elliot bragged that for just \$3.25 visitors could purchase a mini-ticket book that included access to “free daily concerts by the park’s 732-bell carillon, and several miles of scenic trails.” Along with the varied attractions, the park capitalized on its relationship with Atlanta the based Coca-Cola Company and offered guests a variety of bottled, mixed, and blended Coke products to satisfy their every carbonated desire.¹⁵³

By the late 1960s, the appeal of the great outdoors and the park’s recreational activities began to take center focus. According to the *Decatur-DeKalb News*, “picnicking, daily carillon concerts, the beach and the golf course lead the list of favorite activities” at Stone Mountain. Although the park offered a glimpse into Confederate “history” via the carving, activities such as canoeing, picnicking, horseback riding, camping hiking, and fishing at the stocked lake became widely-popular with tourists. Since visitors could hike to the top of the mountain, Prince Gilbert Jr. proposed “we place a crown, literally a crown, on the brow of the Mountain some 300 feet in diameter” to keep people from falling off. Within the “crown” of fences, Gilbert proclaimed tourists could enjoy the view and see all the way to Atlanta on a clear day. Along the trails, “botanically speaking,” the *Atlanta Journal* reported, “there is something for everyone...scholar or casual sightseer interested in plants.” Even the trade magazine *Dixie Business* pronounced the hiking trail at Stone Mountain Georgia’s “Most Popular

¹⁵³ Assorted Clippings in Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain - Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; William Schemmel, “Will Success Spoil Stone Mountain,” *Atlanta Magazine* (April 1970), 78; “Visitors Find a Mountain of Fun at Stone Mountain” *The Refresher* 1968, Stone Mountain collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; “Stone Mountain Memorial Park: Present Status and Future Potential,” Reports- SMMA, RCB 498, Georgia Archives.

Mountain Trail.” Considering the popularity of the North Georgia Mountains and its ample opportunities to trek the great outdoors, the title was quite an achievement.¹⁵⁴

Statewide surveys commissioned by the Department of Industry and Trade reflected the growing interest in “recreation.” Approximately 61.4 percent of travelers who stopped at Georgia Welcome Centers were taking a trip for the “general air of relaxation and fun.” The other top-ranking travel motivations included: view scenery, beaches and swimming, visit historical places, fishing, picnicking, and visits State Parks. (Appendix F) Furthermore, studies of tourists indicated that sites offering *variety*—such as natural beauty and a sense of history—often had the greatest success. In that regard, Stone Mountain Park excelled by offering a range of attractions.¹⁵⁵

By nurturing the relationship between the park and the City of Stone Mountain, boosters hoped to draw attention to their “unique tourist town.” Many locals sought to extend the popularity of the park as shops and restaurateurs in the actual town—just a few miles down the road on Highway 78—began selling Stone Mountain souvenirs to tourists. General Manager Harold R. Maddux predicted, “‘literally millions’ of visitors may be expected annually indicat[ing] that retail trade generated in the City of Stone Mountain by the park may exceed the wildest current predictions of Stone Mountain city officials, merchants and other leaders.” SMMA member and DeKalb County attorney,

¹⁵⁴ “Stone Mountain Welcomed 3,188,027, Visitors” *Decatur-DeKalb News Special progress Edition*, 10 March 1971. Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Memo from Prince Gilbert Jr. to SMMA Folder – Ideals of Development, 1956-1963, RCB497, Georgia Archives; Dorothy Nix, “Nature’s Beauty Preserved,” *Atlanta Journal*, 27 April 1966, 6N; “Georgia’s Most Popular Mountain Trail,” *Dixie Business*, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

¹⁵⁵ Keeling, *The Georgia Travel Industry, 1960-1968*, 21 & 55. The statistics on Welcome Centers was calculated out of 5,099 reported trips. From 1949 until 1962, state economic development was handled by the Department of Commerce; then from 1963 to 1972, the Department of Industry, and Trade; in 1973, the Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism; Patricia Mooney-Melvin, “Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism and History,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Spring 1991), 40-41.

Julius McCurdy remarked, “I think [Stone Mountain Park]’s one of the greatest developments the county’s ever had” and “is probably as great an attraction for tourists in the metropolitan Atlanta area as we have.”¹⁵⁶

Although visitors increasingly flocked to Stone Mountain, this complicated the park’s relationship with the surrounding community. The DeKalb Chamber of Commerce had “unite[d] behind efforts” to help Stone Mountain Park develop to “its full potential as rapidly as possible.” For example, chamber vice-president William C. Thorton firmly believed that developing “quality recreation” at the park would create “a boost in the area’s economy.” Many SMMA members had considered a nominal park admission fee in 1963, and then again in 1964, to raise revenue and “keep the riff-raff out,” but officials had discarded the idea due to the objection of the concessionaires who feared a loss of visitors. The controversy came to a head again in April 1965, however, when Stone Mountain Park began charging a fee of \$1 per car for an annual gate pass and \$5 fee per commercial bus.¹⁵⁷

The SMMA officials hoped to make the park self-sustaining and predicted the gate fee could net up to \$125,000 in revenue in just the first year. Local newspapers, however, reported that the fee would deter metro-Atlantans who might otherwise visit several times a week. After the implementation of the fee, officials claimed, “if a single tourist had been unimpressed, or failed to have a good time he did not write to the

¹⁵⁶ Dorothy Nix, “Town Seeks Ties with State Park, 29 November 1967, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - General, DeKalb History Center Archives; “Profile: New Stone Mountain Park Director” *DeKalb Pictorial News* (September 1963), Tourism - Stone Mountain Park – Management/Staff, DeKalb History Center Archives; Julius McCurdy Interview 1982, Oral History Collection, DeKalb History Center Archives.

¹⁵⁷ “Chamber Asks Support For Stone Mtn. Park,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 17 March 1965, 10N. The pleas continued throughout the 1960s, see: Dorothy Nix, “Stone Mountain: Town Seeks Ties With State Park,” 29 November 1967, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - General, DeKalb History Center Archives; “Stone Mountain Decides Not to Charge Admission,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 February 1963, 1; William O. Smith, “Mountain Gate Fee Assembly Dilemma,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 October 1964, 20.

management.” The concern ran much deeper than the nominal fee though. As one Atlantan noted, locals “have been accustomed to visiting the mountain at will.” Locals had long appreciated the park and it “was a popular spot for picnicking and related recreation long before the state decided to establish a public park.” The real issue seems to be that the gate signified the end of unrestricted access to what many locals considered a *public* recreation area. As metro-Atlanta and its maze of roadways continued to grow, natural space became more limited and in higher demand, yet simultaneously, access to just this type of natural environment at Stone Mountain now came with an admission fee. The gate charge highlighted a growing tension—while many local and state officials hoped to profit off the tourism industry and out-of-state visitors, this often created a fraught relationship between those officials guiding such change and locals who did not appreciate the consequences.¹⁵⁸

In 1965, Stone Mountain’s public relations director Jack Gilchrest announced a \$100,000 national advertising campaign. In an attempt to convince vacationers heading to Florida to “stopover,” twenty-six billboards for the park were installed along newly built interstates 75 and 20 at a cost of \$10,000. The park also ran ads in popular East Coast circulars such as *Time Magazine*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Women’s Day* and *National Geographic* that together nearly 4 million readers. Meanwhile, the Department of Industry and Trade’s “See Georgia First” brochure tempted visitors to visit Stone Mountain, “the South’s newest, most exiting vacationland” because there was “fun and entertainment for all the family and visitors, too.” Nearly 14 percent of out-of-state guests

¹⁵⁸ William O. Smith, “Stone Mountain Fee \$1 For Year,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 30 March 1965, 9 & Bill Winn, “You Buy It Here.... Stone Mountain Fee Doesn’t Hurt Park,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 21 April 1965, 1E; William O. Smith, “Mountain Gate Fee Assembly Dilemma,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 October 1964, 20; Willard Neal, “The World Comes to the Mountain,” *AJC Magazine*, 17 July 1966, 19; “Editorial: A Park Toll?” *The Atlanta Journal*, 30 July 1964, 26.

to the park acknowledged advertising was an important factor in their decision to visit. In 1966, the Department of Industry and Trade reported the state's tourism industry was growing at a rate of 15 percent annually. Stone Mountain Park officials recognized the viability of national advertising campaigns and sought to cash in on larger trends occurring across the state—and as tourism became an increasingly significant portion of Georgia's economy.¹⁵⁹

Under General Manager Thomas Elliot (1968-1975), park brochures advertised Stone Mountain as “Georgia's Year-round Historical-Recreation Park.” The monolith of granite and surrounding scenic beauty consistently received top marks among visitors. Surveys distributed to visitors during the busy summer months reinforced the importance of recreational activities at Stone Mountain. In 1968, “scenic beauty” remained the thing most appreciated by visitors from metro-Atlanta, yet by 1968, had given way to picnics, camping, the carillon, and swimming. In 1965, for instance, 15.6 percent of metro-Atlanta residents and 26.7 percent of out-of-state visitors enjoyed the “mountain.” Similarly, “scenic beauty” accounted for 19.8 percent of metro-Atlantans favorite aspect of the park that same year. The scenic railroad also consistently received in high marks from visitors. (Appendix C) In contrast, the “[Civil] War in Georgia” program and

¹⁵⁹ Bill Winn, “Stone Mountain Ads Seek 5 Million Visitors In '65,” *The Atlanta Journal*, 20 Jan 1965, 2N; Joseph H. Baird, “Stone Mountain in Park Story Being Told in ‘Clear Tones,’” *DeKalb New Era and N. DeKalb Record*, 27 May 1965; Joseph H. Baird, “Stone Mountain in Park Story Being Told in ‘Clear Tones,’” *DeKalb New Era and N. DeKalb Record*, 27 May 1965; Visit Stone Mountain Brochure 1964, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; William B. Keeling, Polly W. Hein, and Stone Mountain Memorial. *A Survey of Visitors to Stone Mountain Park*. (Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, Athens, University of Georgia 1969), 27; “Tourism Topics,” *Georgia Progress*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (February-March 1966), 10. By 1964, I-75 from the Florida line to Unadilla, Georgia, was complete. By 1966, I-20 was complete through Walton County, Georgia and I-75 was complete from Florida to just north of Macon. By 1970, only a section of I-75 north of Atlanta from Bartow County to Marietta was incomplete. While Stone Mountain Park was being developed, so too was Jekyll Island. Both sites used Robert & Company engineering plans and became part of the “Stay and See Georgia” program in the mid-1960s. For more on the development of Jekyll Island, see: C. Brenden Martin and June Hall McCash's “From millionaires to the Masses: Tourism at Jekyll Island, Georgia” in *Southern Journeys*, editor Richard Starnes.

museum had low remarks despite coinciding with the Civil War centennial. By 1968, five of the top ten free response “suggestions” concerned expanding the campground. Other comments reflected a desire for a swimming area and more picnic spaces had many comments.¹⁶⁰

“The world’s most unusual mountain”

Attracting out-of-state tourists became central to the success—at least in terms of visitor attendance—of Stone Mountain Park. In 1964, the Stone Mountain Park reported just over 800,000 visitors. In the summer of 1965 and 1968, metro-Atlanta counties provided the greatest proportion of visitors to Stone Mountain Park. In 1965, out-of-state visitors accounted for only 17 percent of those attending the park, but with the completion of interstate projects around the state easing travel, out-of-state visitors nearly doubled. Park brochures even stressed Stone Mountain’s convenient “locat[ion] at the hub of highways through the State.” By 1968, out-of-state visitors had increased to approximately 32 percent.¹⁶¹ (Appendices D & E) The increase in out-of-state visitors overwhelmingly considered the Southeast—especially states within driving distance such as Florida, Alabama, Tennessee and the Carolinas—home though. (Appendix E) The preponderance of southern visitors likely accounted for the continued existence of Lost Cause elements alongside the new focus on natural recreation. After all, the park as a

¹⁶⁰ Historic Stone Mountain Brochure, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - Printed Materials, DeKalb History Center Archives; William B. Keeling, Polly W. Hein, and Stone Mountain Memorial, *A Survey of Visitors to Stone Mountain Park*, 51.

¹⁶¹ Curt Scheiler, “The Confederacy’s Answer to Mountain Rushmore,” *The New York Times*, 4 May 1969, XX16; Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, V-10.

monument to “southern culture” still appealed to some tourists despite changes brought about by the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁶²

In 1968, “vacationers” seeking recreation spent \$35.4 million, which equated to 4.8 percent of the total revenue collected by the state that year. The Department of Industry and Trade reported over 13 million “vacation/recreation” trips in Georgia with over 39 million tourists. Over the past two years, Georgia Welcome Centers saw a 24 percent increase in tourists. Stone Mountain Park benefited from this increase in tourism and greatly exceeded predictions with an impressive 2.4 million visitors in 1968. The development of the park, however, continued to reflect the dialectical tension between the commemoration of the Confederacy at the site and the expansive increase in visitors seeking amusement. Although the official promotional materials dropped the “memorial” from its name in the late-1960s to simply become Stone Mountain Park, the memorial—which was still under construction—remained carved in stone.¹⁶³

Stone Mountain Park became the place for a variety of recreational pursuits *and* a place to celebrate the Confederate memorial if a tourist wished to do so. Perhaps one brochure said it best—see Stone Mountain “the world’s largest carving on the world’s most unusual mountain.” While the highly racialized rhetoric in the early visions for Stone Mountain celebrating the Confederacy appealed to many southerners who resented

¹⁶² Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, V-10; Keeling, *A Survey of Visitors*, 7; Stone Mountain Memorial Park Brochure, ca. 1960s, Stone Mountain collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University. In the summer of 1965 and 1968, Stone Mountain Park had Dr. William Keeling, University of Georgia’s Business Administration, directed a study of park visitors. The information compiled from surveys was used for ‘management decisions,’ and to design ‘advertising campaigns.’ Upon entering the gate, attendants distributed surveys, which visitors could return upon exit or mail in. In 1965, approximately 33,000 surveys were distributed with 11.5 percent returned with usable responses. In 1968, approximately 30,000 surveys were distributed with 15.3 percent of those returned had usable responses.

¹⁶³ Keeling, *The Georgia Travel Industry, 1960-1968*, 22 & 3; “Welcome Centers... a driving force of Georgia tourism,” *Georgia Progress*, Vol. 4. No. 4. (Nov 1968), 28; Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, V-7. The exact year the word “memorial” was dropped is unclear. Documents and brochures still referred to the park as Stone Mountain *Memorial* Park in 1966, but by 1970, it was gone.

the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement, this message did not appeal to all potential tourists from other regions. While the SMMA devoted great attention and financial resources to attract out-of-state visitors, this would force the park to downplay the primacy of the Confederate carving. Nevertheless, all this development at Stone Mountain created tension with the surrounding community and local residents who largely viewed the park as a recreational spot for those living nearby.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Historic Stone Mountain Brochure, Tourism - Stone Mountain Park - Printed Materials, DeKalb History Center Archives.

CHAPTER 3

“LEST SOMEONE SHOULD FORGET”: STONE MOUNTAIN FLUX

On Saturday, May 9, 1970, Senator Herman Talmadge presided over the dedication of the Confederate carving at Stone Mountain Park. One planning document claimed Talmadge was uniquely suited for his role as chairman of the Advisory Committee because he “is deeply steeped in the traditions of Georgia and the South; yet he is a man of the whole nation.” The granite carving of three famous Confederate icons General Robert E. Lee, General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and President Jefferson Davis had been in the works for over half a century. A year before, the *New York Times* christened Stone Mountain “the Confederacy’s answer to Mount Rushmore.” The Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA) invited the sculptors to the ceremony along with four of Stonewall Jackson’s descendants. Representatives from forty-nine states and diplomats from Germany, Iceland, Spain, Austria, Israel, and South Africa attended. Speaking from a platform draped in red, white and blue plastic bunting, Talmadge declared, “Today, as we stand in respect beneath this majestic carving, we pay tribute to a South that is neither gone nor forgotten.” He continued, “Let us resolve at this time and place to look to this symbol and renew the American faith. We are one people. We are one nation.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ “Plans for Dedicating the Stone Mountain Memorial Carving prepared for Honorable Phil Campbell,” Series III Box 17 Folder 14, J. Phil Campbell, Jr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Curt Scheiler, “The Confederacy’s Answer to Mountain Rushmore,” *NYT*, 4 May 1969, XX16; Gene Stephens, “100,000 Due

It was a warm day for the ceremony with forecasters predicting a light wind and a cloudless sky with a high in the mid-80s. Governor Lester Maddox praised native Georgian Margaret Mitchell's iconic *Gone With the Wind* for "giv[ing] the world a fair understanding of the people who lived and died with the Confederate States of America." The SMMA also honored the United Daughters of the Confederacy for "play[ing] a singular part in conceiving and bringing about the Memorial." Chief Carver Roy Faulkner "li[t] up the torch and symbolically finish[ed] the carving." Both the anthem of the Confederate States of America "Dixie," and patriotic Union song, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" entertained the crowd. J. Phil Campbell Jr., Undersecretary of Agriculture, thought the dedication "could provide the historic setting for a speech comparable in tone and objective to Lincoln's Second Inaugural which cheered a disheartened people and rallied a torn nation." Although it did not supersede Lincoln's speech, the dedication ceremony special broadcast by Bell-Tel NBC and print media coverage reached over 300 million people around the world.¹⁶⁶

The memorial carving at Stone Mountain remains the greatest symbolic monument to the Lost Cause Myth and leaves a permanent—and tremendously controversial—impression on the skyline. Former President Warren G. Harding once predicted the carving would "be one of the world's finest testimonies, one of history's most complete avowals, that unity and understanding may be brought into the scene

At Stone Mountain Ceremonies," *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 May 1970, 1A; Opening Remarks of Senator Herman E. Talmadge, Folder: SM Press Misc, Stone Mountain Memorial Association - the Association - Minutes, 1958-1965, RCB510, Georgia Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Clifford Hodges Brewton Collection of Lester Maddox Speech/Press Records, 1964-1976, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; "Plans for Dedicating the Stone Mountain Memorial Carving prepared for Honorable Phil Campbell," Series III Box 17 Folder 14, J. Phil Campbell, Jr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; "Stone Mountain Park Reached 3,188,027 Visitors," *The Decatur-DeKalb News Special Program Edition*, 10 March 1971, 4A; Hugh Nations, "Leftovers: Too Much Chicken for Crowd," *AJC* 10 May 1970, 21-A.

where faction, hatred, and hostility have once reigned supreme.” Yet by 1970, nearly the opposite had occurred as the carving dedication ceremony proved divisive, and future development at the site continued to fuel debates concerning racial politics, Civil War memory, and the future of the state’s tourism industry. As historian Bell Wiley argued, “The lauding of Confederate heroes, and the dedication of memorials to them... can be offensive to minority groups and serve as barriers to the achievement of the racial harmony and unity that we as a region and a people must achieve.” Despite substantial changes occurring over the previous decades such as the implementation of the Voting Rights Act and Atlanta’s black majority gaining political control of the city, two conflicting historical narratives coexisted tenuously in the metropolitan area.¹⁶⁷

By the 1970s, Stone Mountain Park served as a year-round tourist destination where natural recreation opportunities coexisted with the dated rhetoric of the Lost Cause radiating from the carving. A commemorative postcard advertised Stone Mountain as “the world’s largest piece of sculptural art on the largest known granite monolith surrounded by 4000-acre historical and recreational park.”¹⁶⁸ With the allure of potential profits and increased publicity, state-funded advertising campaigns highlighted the extensive array of outdoor activities available at the park. Stone Mountain’s relationship with Lost Cause mythology, however, could not be completely eliminated since it appealed to many southerners. It was, after all, carved in stone. Instead, Stone Mountain Park sought to showcase “southern heritage” under the misguided notion that as

¹⁶⁷ “Plans for Dedicating the Stone Mountain Memorial Carving prepared for Honorable Phil Campbell,” Series III Box 17 Folder 14, J. Phil Campbell, Jr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Letter Wiley to Coles, 11 May 1970, Series VII, Box 181 Folder 38, Bell Irvin Wiley papers.

¹⁶⁸ Postcard, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Attractions Confederate Memorial Commemorative Stamp First Day of Issue, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center

“heritage” it could be shorn of contemporary political context and, thereby, rendered safe for development in the “city too busy to hate.”

Only recently, has the scholarship moved beyond the Confederate carving to focus on the post-1998 privatization period. J. Vincent Lowery’s article “A Monument to Many Souths: Tourists Experience Southern Distinctiveness at Stone Mountain” in Karen Cox’s edited collection *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History* argued the park presented multiple “Souths.” He focused mostly on the creation of the plantation complex and the Reconstruction Era town “Crossroads” after Herschend Family Entertainment Company took over management. In the article, “‘The Real South Starts Here’: Whiteness, the Confederacy, and Commodification at Stone Mountain,” then geography PhD student Jamey Essex, in some ways extended Grace Hale’s earlier study of Stone Mountain. Essex examined the construction of racial and regional identities and the intersection of “commodified historical experience” at the park, especially after privatization. Finally, Tim Moore’s thesis “The Disneyfication of Stone Mountain: A Park’s Response to Its Visitors” also dealt with the aftermath of privatization. Moore explored what he called “The Disneyfication of Stone Mountain” when park officials attempted to meet visitor’s amusement park expectations. None of these accounts thoroughly addressed the period of development between the state’s purchase of Stone Mountain and the privatization period.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ J. Vincent Lowery, “A Monument to Many Souths: Tourists Experience Southern Distinctiveness at Stone Mountain” in *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History*, ed. Karen L. Cox (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Jamey Essex, “‘The Real South Starts Here’: Whiteness, the Confederacy, and Commodification at Stone Mountain,” *Southern Geographer*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (November 2002), 211-227; Grace Hale, “Granite Stopped Time: The Stone Mountain Memorial and the Representation of White Southern Identity,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, Issue 1. (Spring 1998): 22-44; Jamey Essex, “‘The Real South Starts Here’: Whiteness, the Confederacy, and Commodification at Stone Mountain,” *Southern Geographer*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (November 2002), 211; Moore, Tim. “The

This chapter picks up with the dedication of the Confederate memorial carving at Stone Mountain and ends with efforts to privatize the park in the late 1990s. It examines the highly politicized carving dedication amidst the Republican Party's "southern strategy," and the completion of the Confederate Memorial Plaza in the late 1970s. While Stone Mountain Memorial Association, elected state officials, and local Georgians expressed concern about the park's financial solvency, the state entered a public-private partnership in 1998 with Herschend Family Entertainment Company, which would privately manage many aspects of the park. Theme park giant Herschend fully embraced so-called "southern heritage" imagery in an attempt to maximize profits. When looking at what the site had become by the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is hard to imagine officials had seriously considered making Stone Mountain into a state park at one time.

Lost Cause Emblem or Symbol of "Unity Through Struggle"?

By early 1970, the carving was nearing completion and the Advisory Committee on the Stone Mountain Dedication tasked with planning the ceremony began making arrangements. The advisory committee even included African American community leaders, though mostly in a "consultant" role. Given the blatant Lost Cause ideology that had motivated the carving, dedication planners presumably tried to deflect charges of racism by perpetuating an image of interracial cooperation in line with the progressive image of the city Atlanta boosters projected to the nation. Although the committee nominated C. A. Scott, the African American editor of the newspaper the *Atlanta Daily World*, one writer claimed, "Some blacks regard Scott as a conservative and doubt the

value of his appointment.” As a pragmatic black businessman, the article implied Scott could not afford to alienate the “urban regime” or, rather, the biracial coalition between the public and private industries to govern Atlanta.¹⁷⁰

The advisory committee also asked civil rights activist and charismatic pastor Dr. William Holmes Borders of Atlanta’s Wheat Street Baptist Church to offer the benediction before what promised to be a majority white audience. Borders had been a friend of Martin Luther King Jr. and worked closely with Mayor William Hartsfield to desegregate the Atlanta Police Department in 1948. James R. Venable, descendant of the former Stone Mountain property owners and Imperial Wizard of the National Knights of the Klan, protested Borders’ invitation. Venable objected to the very “presence of a Negro,” asserting, that it was “improper for a member of his race to take part in the program” and would “disrespect to the memory of those who so valiantly supported the cause of the Confederacy.” Nevertheless, the SMMA likely viewed the appointment of both Scott and Borders as safe choices given they were of an older non-militant accommodationist generation of African American community leaders.¹⁷¹

When news of President Nixon’s attendance leaked, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* blamed former-Congressman Howard “Bo” Callaway. Callaway wrote to J. D. Brumm, of Rich’s Department Store, “I share our enthusiasm about the President’s visit to Stone Mountain.” Nelson Price, pastor of the Roswell Street Baptist Church claimed, “so far the reaction to the President’s visit to Georgia has been excellent.” In

¹⁷⁰ William Schemmel, “Will Success Spoil Stone Mountain,” *Atlanta Magazine* (April 1970), 69; Using term “urban regime” to refer to “the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interest function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions” as used in Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Topeka: University of Kansas, 1989).

¹⁷¹ Gene Stephens, “Agnew Visit Under Fire,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May 1970, 1A; See Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Race and Family* (1997) for discussion of generational differences within Atlanta’s black community over matters of civil rights.

writing to White House liaison and “southern strategy” architect Harry Dent, Reverend Price expressed concern about making “the press reaction a good more bit than just coming to dedicate a Confederate Memorial.” While some suggested the president attend the Atlanta Opera, others wrote he should make an appearance at a “youth rally” in Marietta co-sponsored by the Jaycees and Roswell Street Baptist Church or the “Scouts Exposition” at Lakewood Ranch. The inclination to make the president’s visit about more than the Confederate memorial revealed that the dedication could be seen as a political liability.¹⁷²

Escalating domestic and international circumstances hindered President Nixon’s plans to attend the dedication though. The backlash over U.S. and South Vietnamese troops invading Cambodia, the massacre of unarmed students at Kent State University, and concern over ensuing student protests all forced President Nixon to abandon his highly anticipated trip to Georgia. Special Assistant Clark Mollenhoff explained, “How could he go bouncing all over the country with the situation like it is?” Similarly, Nixon’s chief of staff H. R. Haldeman wrote in his journal, “Everyone [sic] relieved he’s not going to Atlanta.” Unsurprisingly Governor Lester Maddox felt Nixon had abandoned the dedication “at the altar like a rejected bride.” Indeed his decision came as such a surprise that the park’s commemorative newspaper had already printed a photo of President Nixon alongside the memorial, and the *DeKalb New Era* noted similarly that the “reader will get a real collector’s item bonus in their paper this week” as the Stone Mountain Park supplement was printed prior to Nixon’s cancellation. The decision was not altogether

¹⁷² Callaway to Brumm 30 April 1970 Series II Box 8 Folder 2 – Nixon Visit Atlanta, Howard “Bo” Callaway Papers, Richard B. Russell Libraries for Political Studies and Research, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Nelson Price to Harry Dent 8 April 1970 and Letter Sherman Stubbs to Howard H. Callaway, Series II Box 8 Folder 2, Howard “Bo” Callaway Papers.

surprising, though, since presidential advisers had speculated about the political expediency, or rather, “what little political ground he might lose or gain” by attending the dedication at Stone Mountain.¹⁷³

Vice President Spiro Agnew stepped into the breach just four days before the dedication ceremony. According to Haldeman, Agnew was given strict orders to deliver a reconciliatory speech. The decision came amidst heightened media coverage of Agnew’s harsh attacks on student protesters—many of whom had called for the impeachment of Nixon and Agnew. Students protesting the “unconstitutional war in Asia and other crimes against the Constitution” had forced the University of Georgia to shut down. In his memoir, former presidential speechwriter William Safire recalled that Nixon had worried, “On the Agnew speech tomorrow, I hope to hell he doesn’t hit the students.” Sensing the shift in public opinion about student dissent after the Kent State Massacre, Nixon felt it was not the time for Agnew’s typical hardline stance.¹⁷⁴

After news of Agnew’s visit broke, longtime Emory University professor of Civil War history Bell Wiley quickly became one of the most vocal opponents. Wiley took issue with the vice president’s statements about college students and faculty. For instance, at an October 1969 fundraiser in New Orleans, Agnew called the student

¹⁷³“On the Potomac—Talmadge Kept Cool on Nixon” *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 May 1970, 6B; Handwritten Diary Entry: May 6, 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA; David Nordan, “Agnew Replaces in Dedication Talk,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May 1970, 10 A; “President Cancels Stone Mountain, Agnew Scheduled to Make Dedication,” *DeKalb New Era*, 7 May 1970, 1A Box 17 Folder 5 MSS#95, Stone Mountain collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University; David Nordan, “Politics Key to Nixon’s Decision on Stone Mountain Dedication,” 8 March 1970, *Atlanta Constitution*, 23A.

¹⁷⁴ Longhand notes of H.R. Haldeman; Vol. V, April 17 – July 22, 1970; entry of May 5, 1970. Diary Entry: May 6, 1970, H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA; “Demonstration Spawns UGA Injunction,” *Red and Black*, 12 May 1970, cover; William Safire, *Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers Rutgers, 2005), 203.

protests “disruptive demonstrations” and claimed, “The student now goes to college to proclaim rather than to learn.” Regarding college professors, Agnew remarked, “A spirit of national masochism prevails, encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals.” Due to statements like these, Wiley deemed a dedication speech by Vice President Spiro Agnew “an affront to the memory of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.” News outlets repeatedly quoted Wiley who affirmed General Lee “was a gentlemen and a statesman...he believed in higher education... [He] didn’t believe that college student and professors were bums.” He continued, “Lee believed strongly in the right of protest,” and explained that Lee had surrendered career in the U.S. Army “to fight for his convictions.” Though Wiley claimed he “did not expect this much attention,” he wrote to University of Pennsylvania Professor Normal Palmer stating the “real reason for opposing his [Agnew] coming here was a fear that it might cause an outbreak of violence on campuses of this area.” Although Wiley hoped Agnew would cancel the visit, the attempt to relate Robert E. Lee and student protesters was peculiar in that a turn of events, the Lost Cause was being used to support the student protest movement.¹⁷⁵

Wiley even reached out to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger in a desperate attempt to sway the course of events. After four failed attempts, Wiley requested Kissinger’s secretary pass along a message, “It would be very fortunate if

¹⁷⁵ Jules Witcover, *Very Strange Bedfellows; The Short and Unhappy Marriage of Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 74; University of California, Berkley. “Vice President Spiro Agnew Speech, Houston, Texas, May 22, 1970,” Transcript. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/pacificviet/agnewtranscript.html> (Accessed 18 January 2018); “Agnew Role,” in *CQ Almanac 1969*, 25th ed., 1197. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1970. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal69-871-26656-1246117>; “Historian against Agnew appearance at dedication,” *Rome News Tribune*, 7 May 1970, 20; Box 181 Folder 38, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; “Opposed as Guest Speaker,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 May 1970; Wiley to Palmer, Wiley B181 F38, Bell Irvin Wiley papers.

something would happen that Mr. Agnew could not make his Saturday schedule, since this would mean that Senator Talmadge would make the address.” Fearing additional public and political outcry, Wiley “suggested that Agnew get a serious case of indigestion” and cancel his appearance. Given the chaotic political climate, Wiley feared Agnew might encourage more unrest on campuses across the state, and hoped one of Georgia’s own would speak in his place.¹⁷⁶

After media outlets printed Wiley’s comments, he received several letters in response. John McDaugh, a Wiley student at Emory, agreed with the Professor asserting, “We have felt for a long time that Mr. Agnew’s attacks on the university and on young people in particular were irrational and even dangerous.” In another supportive note, Steve Bernie of the Atlanta Public Library, wrote to Wiley, “Even an ‘ex-Yankee’ like myself find this an affront to the character of Robert E. Lee.” Others blamed Georgia public officials for the controversy surrounding the scheduled guest speakers. Atlanta attorney L. Michael LaBella wrote, “I am sorry that our Attorney General [Arthur K. Bolton] is unable to comprehend the difference between the stifling of dissent by a high public official and the selection of a guest speaker by persons particularly competent to make this selection.” Fellow Professor of History Harold Hyman, of Rice University, penned a snarky yet supportive letter to Wiley. He wrote, “Perhaps Mr. Agnew will perform more appropriately when and if monuments are erected to the Civil War’s black marketeers, bounty-jumpers, and confiscation-sequestration commissioners Union or

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Wiley to Mort, 12 May 1970, Box 181 Folder 38, Bell Wiley Papers.

Confederate.” Overall, many complainants found Vice President Agnew’s presence at the dedication would be inappropriate or only fuel more, potentially violent, dissent.¹⁷⁷

Not everyone agreed with Professor Bell Wiley’s harsh criticism of Vice President Spiro Agnew. According to an editorial entitled “Is a Hippie a Gentlemen?” by Carole E. Scott, “Professor Wiley has certainly let his current passion cloud his view when he can see Robert E. Lee—the gentleman’s gentlemen—in hippie dress burning American flags and throwing rocks at policemen ... Agnew’s is no Southern Strategy; it is a Sanity Strategy.” Another commenter, Keene Daingerfield, wrote that his grandfather, who had fought for the Confederacy, “would be angry and horrified at the dishonors heaped on the flag of the Confederacy by the kluxers, yahoos, and [Strom] Thurmonds of today.”¹⁷⁸

Even members of the Republican Party’s coveted “Silent Majority” weighed in on the matter. Dorothy Taylor, of Atlanta, wrote to the *Atlanta Constitution* “in shame” because “our only morning paper would stoop as low as to print such a dastardly, insulting editorial about Mr. Agnew... a fine patriotic American.” Condemning the newspaper, Taylor continued, “The silent majority are more than ashamed of your extreme left editorials. You better start to act like real Americans or you may just not have too many customers.” Taylor’s demonstrated a growing sense of alienation felt by many, as the previous constituent self-identified as the “silent majority.” With the “southern strategy” aligning political trends, many white middle-class suburbanites who rejected federal government involvement and viewed protesters with disdain remained

¹⁷⁷ Letter John McDaugh to Wiley, letter Steve Bernie to Wiley dated 8 May 1970, letter LaBella to Wiley dated 8 May 1970, and letter Hyman to Wiley, Box 181 Folder 38m Bell Wiley Papers.

¹⁷⁸ Carole E. Scott, “Is a Hippie a Gentlemen?” and letter Daingerfield to Wiley, 14 May 1970, Box 181 Folder 38, Bell Wiley Papers.

loyal supporters of Vice President Spiro Agnew and his hardline rhetoric. As previous historians have demonstrated, many of Atlanta's segregationists had indeed become modern conservatives by supporting candidates using racially coded language. Ever aware of such political trends, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, "The officially dedicated sculpture of the three Confederate heroes testifies to the fact that a Southern Strategy can succeed." Or in this case, those defending the Lost Cause memorial carving and supporting Vice President Agnew joined ranks with a growing conservative contingent.¹⁷⁹

Poor Turnout Meant Cold Fried Chicken

On the day of the ceremony, ghosts of the Confederacy quickly appeared making a mockery of the dedication's official motto "Unity Through Struggle." *The Atlanta Constitution* reported, "Dedication Day was also a Day of Dichotomy." The 116th Georgia Army National Guard Band played the "Star Spangled Banner." The Advisory Committee had hoped Reverend Billy Graham would give the invocation, but the televangelist bowed out due to an alleged Black Panther threat. Instead, Reverend Leonard Pedigo of Lithonia delivered the opening prayer. Georgia Secretary of State and Vice-Chairman of the SMMA Ben Fortson Jr. wore a gray hat while delivering

¹⁷⁹ "Pulse of the Public," Box 181 Folder 3, Bell Wiley Papers; Don Winters, "'Lost Cause' Survives Sectional Furor, Artistic Strife," *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 May 1970, 21A.

For more about conservatives and the "southern strategy" see: Joseph A. Aistrup, *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 2014); Peter Applebome, *Dixie Rising: How the South Is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company 1996); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Joe Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); David Lublin, *The Republican South: Democratization and Partisan Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Reg Murphy and Hal Gulliver, *The Southern Strategy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

introductions. He even let out “a rebel yell,” that according to one account is “still reverberating on the airways of eternity and somewhere in outer space its decibels have melded with the shouts of soldiers of all history in victory and in defeat.” The Confederate battle flag even decorated the Park until “someone had second thoughts” and “the Stars and Stripes replaced one of the Stars and Bars banners.” Other programs for the dedication program included a reception at the Governor’s Mansion for patriotic groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy and an Old South Ball. Even the U.S. Postal Service took part issuing a six-cent commemorative stamp to honor the Stone Mountain Memorial, though it was not available until September due to print delays.¹⁸⁰

Vice President Agnew entered in a memorable fashion with “the whirl of a helicopter averting everyone’s attention.” Despite all the prior controversy, Agnew delivered a twelve-minute speech pleading for an end to racial discrimination in the South. With the nation “undergoing change and social crisis,” he called the ceremony at Stone Mountain “a powerfully symbolic occasion for an appeal for renewal of national unity and national purpose.” “Though tragic,” he recognized the Civil War “gave birth to the unity we have today.” He urged Americans to “set aside the evils of sectionalism once and for all.” “Just as the South cannot afford to discriminate against any of its people, the rest of the Nation cannot afford to discriminate against the South,” he asserted. Agnew’s speech embodied the “southern strategy,” or rather, coded rhetoric that played to racial

¹⁸⁰ Don Winters, “‘Lost Cause’ Survives Sectional Furor, Artistic Strife,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 May 1970, 21A; Hugh Nations, “Strange Contrasts Mark Dedication of Memorial,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 May 1970, 21A; Entry for May 5, 1970, in Box 34, White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: H.R. Haldeman H Notes April-June '70 [April 1-May 5, 1970] Part I [5 of 5] from Nixon Presidential Library; Dedication Program in Bell Wiley, B181, F 25, Bell Wiley Papers; “The Great Carving IS Finished” from July 1970, Box 17 Folder 7, Stone Mountain Collection; Stone Mountain Dedication planning document, Series III Box 17 Folder 14 J. Phil Campbell Jr. papers. For more information of the long-standing tradition of *Reverend* Billy Graham offering spiritual counsel to the president see: Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House* (New York: Hatchett Book Group, 2007).

tensions in hopes of increasing support for the Republican Party among white southerners. The Vice President's speech openly embraced some iconic elements of booster Henry Grady's notion of the New South. According to Agnew, "the South that will make its greatest contribution to the American Dream is the New South." He continued, "The New South embraces the future, and presses forward with a robust economy fueled by industrial development." By praising the "New South," Agnew disregarded the centrality of white supremacy and racial segregation during the time of Henry Grady or the subsequent Jim Crow era. The dedication sought to draw attention to the park and celebrate the completion of the Confederate carving, but in reality, Agnew's speech arguably highlighted the ongoing racial discord.¹⁸¹

Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, who remained a staunch segregationist throughout the Civil Rights Movement, unsurprisingly ignored Agnew's pleas for unity. In many ways, Maddox exemplified historian Grace Hale, who argued the carving "provided a paradoxical measure of white regional insecurity, nationalism, and ambition." Maddox attempted to revive compassion for the Confederacy under the guise of "southern pride" in his lively dedication speech. The carving, he remarked:

"Is an enduring expression of our pride in our Southern heritage and our region's contribution to the national way of life... the ideals of which it stands have remained untarnished in the hearts of the great majority of our people... May that which has been carved in stone and penned in the pages of sympathetic history forever be engraved in the breasts of all free men—to endure long after this granite has been covered with moss and the pages of history have become yellowed with time."

¹⁸¹ Sharyn Kane, "Memorial: Agnew leads dedication," *Red and Black*, 12 May 1970, 5; quoted in Stone Mountain Dedication document, Series III Box 17 Folder 14, J. Phil Campbell, Jr.; Jon Nordheimer, "Agnew Mellow in Talk Hailing Confederate Heroes," *NYT*, 10 May 1970, 69; "A Speech to the New South," *Atlanta Daily World*, 14 May 1970, 4.

According to Maddox, the Confederacy—which he conflated with “southern heritage”—was a “way of life” devoid of any mention of slavery and a noble cause worthy of “sympathetic history.” His vision of the past afforded space only for white men, as he used the racially loaded term “free men.” Only six years prior, Maddox brandished an ax handle to chase three African American protestors out of his Pickrick Cafeteria restaurant in Midtown Atlanta. His personal ideology and understanding of the Stone Mountain carving depended and relied upon the Lost Cause Myth’s portrayal of Confederate soldiers as noble defenders of their homeland.¹⁸²

Atlanta’s African American community took notice of the heightened publicity surrounding the Stone Mountain dedication. “A nervous finger is being kept on the pulse of the black community,” reported *Atlanta Magazine*. Despite Nixon’s inability to attend, the *Atlanta Daily World* reported, “We think it is significant that the president, and a Republican at that, agreed to come here... his coming would have helped to narrow the gap which has existed between the North and the South since the most unfortunate Civil War; it would have also helped to improve race relations.” Although subtle, many black readers would have noticed this coded language. The newspaper hoped the dedication ceremony at Stone Mountain would “call their [the people of Georgia’s] attention to the importance of unity in this great Nation.” Furthermore, the paper argued the carving “will be a constant reminder that division, revolution and secession are not the way to solve our differences.” The *Atlanta Daily World* clearly tried to send two messages. To black

¹⁸² Grace Hale, “Granite Stopped Time: The Stone Mountain Memorial and the Representation of White Southern Identity,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No.1 (Spring 1998), 25; Richard Severo, “Lester Maddox, White-Only Restaurateur and Georgia Governor, Dies at 87,” *NYT*, 25 June 2003; Clifford Hodges Brewton Collection of Lester Maddox Speech/Press Records, 1964-1976, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

readers, it sought to oppose the continued celebration of the legacy of the Confederacy through the Lost Cause, to support civil rights, and perhaps, even suggest patience in enforcing such laws. To the white leadership of Atlanta concerned with perpetuating a unified image of the city hospitable to business and tourism, it presented willingness to compromise on racial issues and outward support for reconciliation on white terms.¹⁸³

The *Atlanta Inquirer*—created in 1960 amidst the growing Civil Rights Movement as a voice for the African American community—also covered the carving dedication. An anonymous article went so far as to call Stone Mountain “a repugnant symbol,” and mocked the program’s theme of unity. It noted, “some bitterness toward black people was evident last week” during the dedication ceremonies, which “reveals some racism [was] still evident.” The author asserted both the idea of Dixie—as memorialized in the carving and the Confederate flag—continued to “project a repugnant image for blacks who chance to look upon the mountain.” In closing, the author remained hopeful that “perhaps one day the ugly symbol will also be completely drowned but for now we are still reminded the mountain, though majestic and a thing of awe, is still a repugnant symbol.” Considering the origins of the carving, the newspaper’s accounts remained remarkably composed.¹⁸⁴

Although Stone Mountain Park’s general manager Tom Elliott (1968-1975) considered it a “great day for Georgia and the South,” the dedication did not live up to the planners’ expectations. Attendance peaked at around 10,000—a far cry from the advisory committee’s expectation of upwards of 100,000 people, “or a crowd of 150,000 or more

¹⁸³ William Schemmel, “Will Success Spoil Stone Mountain,” *Atlanta Magazine* (April 1970), 69; Richard Severo, “Lester Maddox, White-Only Restaurateur and Georgia Governor, Dies at 87,” *NYT*, 25 June 2003; “We Welcome Vice President Agnew to Atlanta & Georgia,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 8 May 1970, 4; “A Speech to the New South,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 14 May 1970, 4.

¹⁸⁴ “Still a Repugnant Symbol,” *The Atlanta Inquirer*, 16 May 1978, 2.

depending on the weather.” The committee also made accommodations for 50-to-70,000 tourists to ride the shuttle, operated by the Atlanta Transit System, from outside parking lots to the dedication site at the base of the mountain. Actual shuttle riders, however, maxed out at 4,067. Secretary of State Ben Fortson Jr. identified the lack of “any president” on the dedication program a “terrific mistake” responsible for the lackluster crowd. Some SMMA members, *The Atlanta Constitution* reported, believed “the feeling there might be a demonstration kept some people away.” The gross overestimate in the size of the crowd caused approximately 6,000 boxes of fried chicken to go cold. Harry Hearn, of Wishbone Chicken, assembled an impressive array of trucks and helicopters to supply the ceremony with ample fried chicken. The Wishbone staff prepared 10,000 boxes of fried chicken, yet the concessions sold only a measly 2,000. With disappointing turnout, Hearn said, “We just stopped cooking,” and he “quickly shoved a complimentary box of chicken” at Governor Maddox as he walked by after the ceremony. Calling the governor an “old drumstick entrepreneur,” the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* reported, he replied “Ummm, good” after taking a bite.¹⁸⁵

Almost two years after the highly publicized dedication, the carving would finally be completed and rigging removed from the mountainside on March 3, 1972. Despite efforts to literally carve a particular vision of the past onto the landscape, the park's officials failed to control how the public used the space over the next several decades as the search for profits and political agendas collided. Lackluster attendance at the dedication ceremony remained indicative of this battle as Atlanta struggled to reconcile

¹⁸⁵ Don Winters, “Carving,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 9 May 1970, 6A; Pat Potter, “President Nixon Dedicates Confederate Memorial,” *DeKalb New Era*, 7 May 1970, 1A; Gene Stephens, “Planners Mistake Blamed at Mountain,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 11 May 1970, 5A; Hugh Nations, “Too Much Chicken for Crowd,” *AJC* 10 May 1970, 21A.

its Civil War past and a marketable identity for the future amidst a changing local leadership and shifting racial politics. Indeed, the SMMA itself had a shift in leadership after a scandal with Phil Campbell, of the Department of Agriculture, replacing Matt McWhorter, of the Public Service Commission, as Chairman.¹⁸⁶

Maintaining the Lost Cause Post-Civil-Rights

In 1970, the Department of Industry and Trade reported tourists spent \$780 million on travel in Georgia—a 149 percent increase from 1961. Of these tourists enjoying Georgia, 13 million were out-of-state visitors. For comparison, in 1970 the State of Georgia reported \$612 million in industrial capital investment. The 1970 annual report in *Georgia Progress*, the Department of Industry and Trade’s magazine, claimed, “Total development” in the state “is vitally dependent on the tourist and manufacturing industries.” Tourism had become big business in Georgia. William “Bill” Hardman claimed the state’s Tourism Division had one of the largest advertisement budgets in the nation. By 1973, the Stone Mountain “Economic Potential” report predicted over five million out-of-state visitors would travel to Atlanta, and of those tourists, approximately 900,000 would visit the park.¹⁸⁷

During the decades of state intervention at Stone Mountain, the surrounding areas within DeKalb County experienced vast demographic transformations. Urban growth and the suburbanization of metro-Atlanta overlapped with the struggle to complete the

¹⁸⁶ “No More Reprisals, please,” *The Augusta Chronicle*, 1 June 1963.

¹⁸⁷ “Annual Report,” *Georgia Progress* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Dept. of Industry and Trade, February 1971 February 1971), 14; “Annual Report,” *Georgia Progress* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Dept. of Industry and Trade, February 1971 February 1971), 19; Bill T. Hardman, Sr. Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Herman and Keeling, *Economic Potentials*, V-6.

carving. As historian Kevin Kruse has demonstrated, many white Atlantans responded to desegregation with a mass exodus from the city, or rather “white flight,” to the suburbs. The African American population in urban counties like Cobb and Fulton grew as many white residents fled to suburbia. In 1960, DeKalb County had a population of nearly 300,000 with white residents making up just over 91 percent of the population. As a result of trends like suburbanization though, DeKalb County’s African American population increased to 42 percent by the 1990s. These changing demographic patterns around Stone Mountain Park made its imagery—notably the Confederate carving—even more curious.¹⁸⁸ (See Appendix B)

For all of the boosters’ talk of racial moderation in Atlanta, the persistence of residential segregation in DeKalb County told a different story. In fact, Kruse claimed the suburbs were “just as segregated as the city—and, truthfully, often more so.” The I-285 “perimeter” or “outer ring” running through DeKalb County served as an indicator of the divide. The supposedly *de facto* racial distribution following the highways and evolving residential housing pattern has led scholars to recognize a “modern day ‘black belt’” stretching from Fulton into DeKalb County. According to a 1971 *Ebony* article by Phyllis “Phyl” Garland, “black folks have more, live better, accomplish more, and deal with whites more effectively” than elsewhere in the South. Though ironically, just a year prior, the SMMA dedicated the carving Stone Mountain Park memorializing three Confederate icons in a county with an ever-growing black population.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Social Explorer & U.S. Census Bureau; For an account of “white flight” in Atlanta see: Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁸⁹ Kruse, *White Flight*, 8; Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 86; Phyl (Phyllis) Garland, “Atlanta, black mecca of the South,” *Ebony* (August 1971), 152.

Amidst these changes, the SMMA relied on Robert and Company Associates (RACA) of Atlanta, under director Robert Steiner, to conduct a development report in the mid-1970s. Residential areas and the freeway surrounding the park presented barriers to additional development. Mindful of the sprawl now encircling Stone Mountain Park, the report stated, “The park prospect for its expansion are limited. Therefore, extreme caution must be exercised in programming all future activities within its boundaries.” RACA took pause of any proposed expansion noting, “The original intent and objective of the park will be increasingly difficult to maintain.” Although the report acknowledged visitors’ “recreational needs,” the main proposed addition was the construction of a craft village adjacent to the plantation complex exhibiting artistries such as weaving, pottery, blacksmithing, and quilting.¹⁹⁰

Despite the perceived limits on growth, one planned element of the park that had not yet been completed: the Confederate Memorial Plaza. Back in 1967, the SMMA had approved a sixteen-acre plaza design from sculptor Walter Hancock in collaboration with Griswold Winters, Swain and Mullins landscape architect firm from Pittsburgh. The implementation of this concept, however, faced unexpected obstacles like a metamorphic rock that forced some elements to be restyled. The project had also been delayed by both public and professional outcries over its appropriateness. For example, the North Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) claimed the proposed memorial plaza area with its “many auxiliary statues, towers and embellishments... will detract

¹⁹⁰ “Stone Mountain Master Plan Updating,” Folder- Proposed SM Master Plan Updating from Robert & Co Association, RCB498, Georgia Archives.

from Stone Mountain, a God-given natural wonder.” The AIA even went as far as to ask the governor to censure the SMMA for “disregard[ing] [their] professional opinion.”¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, construction of the plaza proceeded in the early 1970s. It included thirteen state flags and granite plaques honoring the Confederate States of America. According to one official, designers chose to include Kentucky and Missouri, even though the states were not part of the CSA, because “those states contributed many soldiers to the southern side.” At the edge of the plaza, most near the mountain, stood a reflection pool with two bronze statues perched on pink granite representing “Sacrifice,” depicting southern women, and “Valor,” a soldier holding a broken sword. Hancock expressed concern about the lack of African American representation in the inscriptions located at the base of the statues and reached out to Professor Bell Wiley for assistance. After explaining the themes of “self-sacrifice” along with “generosity and hospitality,” Hancock wrote in a letter to Wiley, “I hope I may have some suggestions from you.” Wiley offered quotes from three Confederate women—one from Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia—but noted the difficulty of representing African American soldiers. Wiley recommended a short passage from his book about black soldiers in Louisiana during the Civil War who received a special accommodation for actions in battle. Ultimately, a quote from General P. G.T. Beauregard’s wife Caroline Deslondes Beauregard “the country comes before me” was chosen for “Sacrifice,” and for “Valor,” a line from a Confederate soldier spoken moments before his death.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ “Memorial Completed at Stone Mountain,” Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park – Antebellum Plantation, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Ann Carter, “Architects Urge Intervention in Stone Mountain Proposals,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 January 1969, 12. For more discussion about the setbacks with the plaza design see David Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 180.

¹⁹² Henry Eason, “Confederate Plaza Dedication Set Sunday,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 April 1978, 6C; “Memorial Completed at Stone Mountain,” DeKalb Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park – Antebellum Plantation; Hancock letter to Wiley, 17 June 1971 and Wiley letter to Hancock, 21 June 1971,

By 1978, the SMMA moved forward with the dedication of the Confederate Memorial Plaza at the base of the mountain. On April 23, 1978, Governor George Busbee delivered the dedication address for the newly completed plaza. As one *Atlanta Journal* reporter mocked, “lest someone forget there was once a Confederacy, ceremonies are scheduled for Sunday afternoon.” The occasion was also close to Confederate Memorial Day (April 20), which Georgia had commemorated for over one hundred fifty years. Although planning documents do not indicate it was intentional, the dedication ceremony so close to Confederate Memorial Day still remains suspect.¹⁹³

Many former governors attended the dedication including: Lester Maddox, Marvin Griffin, Ernest Vandiver and Ellis Arnall. Before the ceremony, State Attorney General Arthur Bolton praised the park stating, “[Stone Mountain] is one of the finest [parks] in the world... It is something of which Georgians who furnished the money for the completion of the park and all Americans can be proud.” Despite the Attorney General’s satisfaction, much like other projects at Stone Mountain, not everyone viewed the plaza with such esteem. “The assembled flags of the Confederacy grace the end of a reflecting pool,” according to one reporter, but “unfortunate[ly] Muzak-like tunes tinkle

Wiley Box 179 Folder 8, Bell Wiley Papers; Victoria J. Gallagher, “Displaying Race: Cultural Projection and Commemoration” in *Rhetorics of Display*, edited by Lawrence J. Prelli (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2006), 188.

¹⁹³ Henry Eason, “Confederate Plaza Dedication Set Sunday,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 April 1978, 6C; For more about Governor Nathan Deal replacing “Confederate Memorial Day” in 2015 with the more neutrally titled “State Holiday,” see: Emily Wagster Pettus, “Confederate Memorial Day is still celebrated in these states,” *USA Today*, 24 April 2017 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/04/24/confederate-memorial-day-southern-states/100835694/> (Accessed 20 June 2018); Greg Bluestein, “Atlanta Democrat Wants OK Café to shelve Rebel emblem,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 August 2015. <http://politics.myajc.com/blog/politics/atlanta-democrat-wants-cafe-shelve-rebel-emblem/sE1tE0LSJ0ZRjO8qOtMnWM/> (Accessed 20 June 2018)

out of loud speakers.” The dedication of the plaza marked the completion of overt Lost Cause commemorative elements at Stone Mountain Park.¹⁹⁴

Yet in 1979, questions about the *Battle of Atlanta* Cyclorama coming to Stone Mountain appeared in the local newspapers one last time before the City of Atlanta settled the matter. Throughout the 1970s, Stone Mountain had investigated the possibility of getting the Cyclorama. The gigantic *Battle of Atlanta* oil painting many affectionately refer to simply as the Cyclorama captures a dramatic historical moment: the fighting that occurred around 4:30 in the afternoon on July 22, 1864, when John Bell Hood’s Confederate forces met Union troops under the command of James B. McPherson. Georgia Secretary of State Ben Fortson had “envisioned Stone Mountain as the Civil War capital of the world.” With the support of SMMA member Tommy Irvin, Fortson had entered negotiations with Atlanta Sam Massell, but many Atlantans disapproved of the idea. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* widely reported that the general public supported “an uptown site, ready access to the city’s many visitors, [and] a fine new building.” In 1975, however, voters failed to pass a \$10 million bond package that would have paid for improvements to Grant Park—including the Cyclorama and the zoo. The issue finally came to a close in 1979 with Mayor Maynard Jackson. Apparently “sick and tired” of the critical media coverage about the poor state of the Cyclorama, Jackson “retailiate[ed] against an effort” to move the Cyclorama by “pushing a bill in the General Assembly to move Stone Mountain to Grant Park.” The Cyclorama stayed in Grant Park—until 2017 when it moved to the Atlanta History Center—and the City of Atlanta authorized a massive restoration project. Stone Mountain did not become the “Civil War capital” in

¹⁹⁴ “Georgia Governors Attend Dedication,” *Decatur-DeKalb News*, 27 April 1978, 1A; Henry Eason, “Confederate Plaza Dedication Set Sunday,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 22 April 1978, 6C Peter Range, “The Pinnacle of Kitsch, Southern-Style The Pinnacle of Kitsch,” *NYT*, 29 Oct 1972.

the way Fortson had hoped, and instead, the park added new types of attractions throughout the next decade.¹⁹⁵

“Southeast’s Second Leading Attraction Located in DeKalb”

Although Lost Cause emblems were firmly in place, Stone Mountain Park continued to evolve beyond its role as a monument to the Confederacy throughout the 1980s. For instance, the park invested millions in a golf course and convention center while removing the memorial carving from the official logo. Even a 16,000 square foot roller skating rink was built. In 1980, the SMMA commissioned a study to investigate the feasibility of moving the zoo in Grant Park to Stone Mountain. Atlanta Zoological Society members felt “tying a major zoo to the popular Stone Mountain attraction would be an excellent way to increase zoo attendance.” Despite a federal lawsuit between the operator of the game ranch at Stone Mountain and the SMMA, the park moved forward with plans for the zoo. In 1983, Stone Mountain embarked on the first phase of the 60-acre “natural habitat” zoo in an area of the park that once housed the game ranch.¹⁹⁶

One of the best-known attractions of the park undoubtedly was—and remains still to this day—the laser show. The feature was added under the leadership of Park General Manager Larry Allen (1983-1993), who was previously the general manager of Six Flags

¹⁹⁵ Kurtz, *The Atlanta Cyclorama*, 11; Gene Stephens, “Stone Mountain Park Wants to Get Cyclorama Painting,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 June 1970, 3A; Leo Aikman, “Put What Is Good For Cyclorama First,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 39 July 1972, 21A; Lyn Martin, “Grant Park Will Keep Cyclorama,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 April 1977, 14A; Alexis Scott Reeves, “Mayor Rebuffs Attacks on Cyclorama Project,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 February 1979, 1C; Cyclorama Conservation 14 December 1981, Box 1 Folder Reports 1981-1982., Battle of Atlanta Cyclorama collection, 1886-1890, undated, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center.

¹⁹⁶ Bob Harrell, “Don’t Take it For Granite,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 June 1980, 16; Carole Ashkinaze, “Cyclorama Restoration Expected to Start Soon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 October 1979, 1C; Fran Hessser, “Atlanta Zoo Move Is Approved,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 May 1980, 1C; Kevin Sack, “Game ranch sues Stone Mountain Park,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 December 1982, 3B; “Stone Mountain Zoo Debut Delayed,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 June 1983, 6A.

Over Georgia. In 1983, Stone Mountain debuted “the world’s largest laser light and sound show.” The original one-hour show entitled “Night on Stone Mountain,” developed by Lasermedia of Los Angeles, ran on the weekends just after dark. By end of summer 1983, park officials had predicted the ability to run the laser show every night during the summer and special events with the purchase and installation of permanent lasers at the information center and two locations by the lake. One early 1980s souvenir booklet noted that the laser show “exert[s] its magical pull by anachronously interplaying a colorful blend of things historical with a potpourri of up-tempo recreational excitement, all sprawled about the gigantic backdrop of a great natural wonder.” Despite its “magical pull,” many once again questioned the intent of the park and asked whether a laser show was appropriate for the park.¹⁹⁷

Throughout the 1980s, Stone Mountain Park proudly advertised its recreational opportunities but this shift in focus was not without some criticism. Charles Barrow, historian for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, noted with melancholy that Stone Mountain had once been “a place for Southerners to picnic on the plazas named for each of the Confederate states and for Northerners to view America’s monument to a classical civilization that is no more.” That began to change when many of the overtly celebratory Lost Cause elements of the Park were removed. For instance, park officials renamed the Robert E. Lee riverboat Henry Grady and the Yellow Daisy Festival replaced the Confederate Daisy Festival. As Charles Barrow summarized, “we are faced with a

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth Best, “Stone Mountain Adds Laser Light Show,” at DeKalb Historical Society, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Attractions- Laser Light Show, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Frazier Moore, “Stone Mountain adding permanent lasers for light shows,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 August 1982, 1B; Morris Shelton, “An Exciting and Colorful Biography of the World’s Largest Carving at Stone Mountain, Georgia,” Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

Memorial Association that has completely lost its purpose.” For southerners like Barrow, the move away from Stone Mountain Park solely as a monument to the Lost Cause proved alarming but for others, served as a proud moment in which metro-Atlanta sought to live up to its progressive image.¹⁹⁸

In 1984, Stone Mountain once again partnered with the Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Bottling Company. Back in 1965, Coke had gifted Stone Mountain the “largest carillon” in the world. The 610-bell carillon—a musical instrument housed in a tower—was originally made for the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair. Then in the 1980s, Coke financed a twenty-seven minute 35 mm film, produced by Academy Award winner William Moffitt, for the park. The “historical/fantasy” film entitled “Miracle of the Mountain” debuted in June 1984 in the park’s Theater in the Sky located on top of the mountain. The family-friendly film examined “the history and natural beauty” of Stone Mountain through the eyes of a 500-year-old gnome named Talus.¹⁹⁹

With such an array of attractions available at the park, *DeKalb News* ran a headline in 1985, the “Southeast’s Second Leading Attraction [is] Located in DeKalb.” The leading attraction, of course, remained Disney World. “Stone Mountain is one of the places that comes closest to resembling Tara,” according to Kathryn Thweatt of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau. The implication was that tourists coming to Georgia wanted to see Tara. In 1988, Stone Mountain Park reported more than 6 million

¹⁹⁸ Clipping Charles Kelly Barrow, “What Place Does a Laser Show Have,” 17 September 1989, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Attractions- Laser Light Show, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Bob Farrell, “Stone Mountain: Don’t Take it for Granite,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 June 1980, 16; Clipping “What Does a Laser Show Have at a Confederate Memorial?” 1989, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Attractions- Laser Light Show, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

¹⁹⁹ “Stone Mountain Is Given the Largest Carillon—officially,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 14 October 1965, 68; Coca-Cola, *The Refresher* (1968), Box 17 Folder 14, Stone Mountain Collection, MSS95, Emory; For Immediate Release, *Miracle on the Mountain*, Subject File- Tourism Stone Mountain Park General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

visitors a year, and for comparison, Disney World employees claimed the Florida tourist site had over 26.5 million. That same year, the Southeastern Tourism Society—founded by Georgia’s own Bill Hardman—awarded the park “the Shining Light Award for Attraction of the Year.”²⁰⁰

In 1990, the Department of Trade, Industry, and Tourism publication *Georgia On My Mind* ran a full-page ad promoting Stone Mountain by its newest slogan—“A World A Park!” Georgia’s “leisure destination.” Although the article mentioned “the world’s largest granite mountain and high-relief sculpture,” it did not refer to the Lost Cause carving. Instead, the article promoted a “world of attractions, entertainment and natural beauty” complete with “authentic plantation,” a riverboat, and activities like tennis and golf. By that time, the gate admission fee had increased to \$5. While the advertising campaigns embraced the array of activities available, Irene Dobbs Baranuik—daughter of Auburn Avenue’s beloved “Mayor” John Wesley Dobbs—still found the park troublesome. Baranuik proclaimed, “I have yet to go to the Stone Mountain Park...even today, if the Klan were dead that would die with it. But the klan is not dead. And the fact that that [it] is sort of a spiritual and historical founding place for them...I’m not comfortable with it, that’s all.”²⁰¹

The expanding image of Stone Mountain Park continued with the 1992 Master Plan. The SMMA once again relied on Robert and Company Associates, but this time also included environmental planners Sasaki Associates, the minority-owned engineering

²⁰⁰ Stone Mountain article 22 May 1985 in Subject File- Tourism Stone Mountain Park General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Clippings, “Stone Mountain Park third in most visitors,” and “Stone Mt. Park Receives Light Award,” Subject File- Tourism Stone Mountain Park General. Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

²⁰¹ “A World A Park,” *Georgia On My Mind* (Atlanta: Georgia Travel Publications Inc., 1990), 15; Irene Dobbs Baranuik interview, Box 1 Folder 6, Gary M. Pomerantz papers.

firm B & E Jackson and Associates, and financial analysts Hammer, Siler, George Associates to aid with the project. Looking ahead to Atlanta's bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics, the SMMA already felt Stone Mountain Park could be a major venue. The plan sought to "carefully position all Olympic venues so that they would logically fit into the Park." The planners' inclination was correct, and Stone Mountain would host canoeing, archery, rowing, and indoor bicycling events during the Olympics.²⁰²

The most significant change in the 1992 Master Plan was the recognition of four major districts within the park: natural, recreation, park center (or historic) and events. Although the vast majority of the park—roughly 65 percent—would be classified as the natural district, the 250-acre park center (or historic) district contained the carving, plantation complex, and "authentic" southern town, remained the most visited. The 1992 Master Plan "vision" for the park sought to: memorialize southern history, respond to visitors' needs, achieve financial self-sufficiency, and promote the preservation of the park's natural resources. While "memorialize southern history" still had its place in the 1992 Master Plan, other types of attractions had clearly become important to park officials.²⁰³

²⁰² "The Planning Process/ Add Two" Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; "Georgia's Stone Mountain Park: Preserving and Enhancing a Natural Legacy," Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; "State of the Park: 1992 Dedicated to Planning, in *The Park Report* Vol. 4 No. 1, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park – General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

At this point in time the SMMA included: Attorney Susan Cahoon as chairman; former Commissioner of Industry, Trade and Tourism George Berry as vice-chairman; professional baseball legend Henry "Hank" Aaron; Gwinnett County elementary school teacher Diane Bowen; former-press secretary for Zell Miller's Lieutenant Governor campaign Walter Gordon; Chief Operating Officer of Premium Beverage, Inc. Glenn E. Hicks III; banker T. Stephen Johnson; and Commissioner of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Joe D. Tanner. Committee obtained from "SMMA Board of Directors" Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

²⁰³ Robert and Company, "Stone Mountain Park Planning and Development Timeline," Master Plan Amendment Report (15 August 2005), I-4. <http://stonemountainpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SMMA-Master-Plan-2015.pdf> (Accessed 18 January 2018).

Although Stone Mountain Park proved popular with tourists, many Georgians expressed financial concerns. On three occasions in the 1960s, the park had to issue revenue bonds to finance expenses. In 1988, the park once again borrowed money from the state. This time, the park sought \$23.5 million to build a conference center. This development coincided with Atlanta's self-promotion as a "convention center" destination. After less than three years in operation, the Evergreen Conference Center "exceeded all original projections" and earned a "reputation as a premium meeting facility." In 1990, the Evergreen Conference Center and Resort at Stone Mountain ranked among the "nation's 10 best conference centers," which not only proved profitable but helped secure Atlanta's standing as a conference destination.²⁰⁴

Privatization with "the Confederacy as hood ornament"

When Governor Zell Miller formed a commission in 1995 to identify state government agencies and programs that could be converted into private enterprises to save money, Stone Mountain Park made the list. According to a flyer from the public hearing, "The Stone Mountain Memorial Association owes the state \$55.5 million for previously issued bonded indebtedness." The same flyer raised an important question: "whether State Government should continue to be involved in resort-type activities, such as those at the Park, which compete directly with the private sector." Financial solvency was not the only issue at stake, though.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ For more on the role of Atlanta as a convention destination see Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, 234-238 & 194-198; Steve Harvey, "For Some Meetings, Smaller is Better," *AJC*, 18 September 1990, C1.

²⁰⁵ "Master Plan Questions and Answers," Georgia's Stone Mountain Park, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Privatization Flyer, DeKalb Subject Files- Tourism. Stone Mtn Park – Development & Privatization, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

In January 1997, nearly two hundred gathered at Stone Mountain's Evergreen Lodge and Conference Center to protest the privatization. Mary Owen, a member of the Friends of Stone Mountain Park, told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, "I think we're being robbed." In some ways, her claim echoed back to the mid-1960s when locals resented having to pay for access to what they considered a public park. Others like Steve Fulton urged citizens to speak out against the proposal fearing "the privatization of Stone Mountain could easily lead to the privatization of every other state park in Georgia." Another critic argued, "Living history, public memorial and environmental wonder—are too valuable for the state to entrust to strangers who care more about ledgers than legends." Those against privatization of the park expressed fears ranging from the implementation of admission fees to "billboards along the world's largest outcropping of granite." Even the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution opposing privatization. It cited several reasons including the park's "unique natural and recreational environment" that enriches the lives of county residents.²⁰⁶

Despite the protests, the SMMA entered a long-term joint public-private contract in 1998 with the Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation (HFE). The HFE also managed—and continues today—notable amusement parks such as Dollywood, Silver Dollar City, and Wild Adventures and proudly boasts "Christian Values and Ethics." Despite four million annual visitors, the HFE struggled to make a profit off the park and claimed a \$3 million a year loss due in large part to the hefty \$11 million annual rent paid

²⁰⁶ Privatization Flyer, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Development & Privatization, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; "Go Public with Stone Mountain," Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Development & Privatization, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; Clipping Ben Smith III, "New Battle Cry: Don't privatize Stone Mountain," *AJC*, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Development & Privatization, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; DeKalb County Resolution, February 1997, Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Development & Privatization, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

to the state. Undoubtedly, this business agreement influenced the park's development and allowed the demands of tourists to shape imagery at the park in order to best maintain a profitable enterprise.²⁰⁷

In 2000, an HFE official told a *New York Times* reporter, "When our guests enter Stone Mountain Park, they will cross the threshold into the story of the Southern spirit... we believe we can become Americans best storytellers." The choice of the word "storytelling" was especially interesting as the secondary meaning "fibber" or "liar" indicates a degree of fabrication. According to HFE officials Stone Mountain Park, "tell[s] what they call the fun side of the Southern story. Slavery will not be part of the attractions, at least not initially, nor the Klan." The antebellum plantation area—that included two slave cabins—remained open. This left one to wonder: How do slave cabins fit into the narrative if only the so-called fun side of the story was told? The antebellum plantation area located within the "park center" received high traffic and included many other historically significant elements such as the railroad with the famous Great Locomotive Chase, memorial carving, and plaza area. In contrast to the HFE statement, the mayor of Stone Mountain, Chuck Burris—the first African American elected to the position—noted how inspiring "a balanced, truthful story of the South" could be. By attempting to maximize tourist revenue, Stone Mountain Park had attempted to recreate "authentic" South but in reality largely represented the story of white Georgians as issues

²⁰⁷ "Our Commitment," Herschend Family Entertainment. 2018. Accessed 18 March 2018. <http://www.hfecorp.com/our-commitment/>; "Our Properties," Herschend Family Entertainment. 2018. Accessed 18 March 2018. <http://www.hfecorp.com/our-businesses/>; Chandler Brown, "Four Concepts in Company's Poll," Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park – General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center; *Master Plan Amendment Report: Georgia's Stone Mountain Park*. Atlanta: Robert and Company Engineers Architects Planners, 2005.

of race and class were hardly—if at all—explored.²⁰⁸

The 2005 Master Plan envisioned Stone Mountain Park as “a unique destination for visitors worldwide, which provided a rich atmosphere of natural beauty, educational experiences of the natural environment and Southern heritage, recreational activities, and entertainment.” The park’s business plan acknowledged the expansion of historical endeavors and considers “Southern heritage” as a viable direction for park operations. Use of the loaded phrase southern heritage, however, raised questions as to exactly whose heritage was being displayed and echoed back to Governor Maddox’s earlier attempt to use “heritage” to muster enthusiasm at the carving dedication ceremony. Nevertheless, the use of “southern heritage” had plentiful returns—by 2010, officials expected Stone Mountain Park to contribute \$139.2 million annually to the state’s economy.²⁰⁹

This desire to increase the bottom line has dictated how the Herschend Family Entertainment Company manages Stone Mountain Park. In the summer of 2006, HFE conducted an online poll among visitors for “market research.” The four proposed ideas to expand the Park included: a “Country Fair” amusement park, an “Ol’ Swimming Hole” water park, “Jim Fowler’s Wild Georgia” nature center, and an “Outbound Adventure Village” outdoor area. Though the HFE claimed, “ninety percent of items we test are never developed,” the company asked participants to rank the four ideas. The Friends of Stone Mountain Park criticized all of the ideas, as expected, citing “overdevelopment at the historic site.” Curtis Branscome, CEO of the SMMA, reassured visitors that, “We

²⁰⁸ Somini Sengupta, “Georgia Park Is to Hail ‘Southern Spirit,’ *NYT*, 8 October 2000, 18; “storyteller.” Merriam-Webster.com. 2011. <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (Accessed 8 March 2018).

²⁰⁹ Master Plan Amendment Report. Georgia’s Stone Mountain Park. August 15, 2005. (Atlanta: Robert and Company Engineers Architects Planners), iii; “Georgia’s Stone Mountain Park: Preserving and Enhancing a Natural Legacy,” Subject File - Tourism. Stone Mountain Park- Printed Materials, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

said from the beginning we weren't going to do rides and things that go flying through the air." Nevertheless, Stone Mountain officials, developers, and the public have debated the feasibility of gimmicks like those suggested in the poll for decades. With a "themed-entertainment company" managing the park, it seems all the more likely these types of things will not be going away anytime soon.²¹⁰

Since Stone Mountain Park straddles a troubled position as both an amusement park and Confederate memorial, the historical imagery at the park remains all the more relevant amidst current debates over the power of public monuments and racial inequality. The park remains a self-proclaimed celebration of the southern experience and the connections to its Confederate heritage are not only highly visible but also unavoidable for visitors. The park does offer a variety of recreational pursuits though loosely based on what the HEF calls "southern heritage." As cultural geographer Jamey Essex argued, Stone Mountain "has become primarily a place for the consumption of a commodified historical experience." By doing so, Stone Mountain became even more problematic. Although the park continues to expand into the realm of entertainment, officials admit the "southern past" remains the inspiration. Yet not all visitors are informed about the nuances of southern history to know what is factual or fictive in the park. As such, Essex has pointed out how Stone Mountain Park—and Disney World—demonstrate "how state- and corporate-controlled landscapes can direct collective

²¹⁰ Chandler Brown, "Four Concepts in Company's Poll," Subject File- Tourism. Stone Mountain Park – General, Archives and Research, DeKalb History Center.

For a more in depth analysis of Stone Mountain after HFE took over management see: Jamey Essex, "'The Real South Starts Here': Whiteness, the Confederacy, and Commodification at Stone Mountain," *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol., 42, No. 2, (November 2002): 211-227; Tim Moore, "The Disneyfication of Stone Mountain: A Park's Response to Its Visitors." B.A. Thesis, American University, 2010; J. Vincent Lowery, "A Monument to Many Souths: Tourists Experience Southern Distinctiveness at Stone Mountain" in *Destination Dixie: Tourism and Southern History*, ed. Karen L. Cox (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

memory” In the case of Stone Mountain Park, this has been especially problematic as unsuspecting tourists were inundated with “southern heritage” attractions that visitors would mistake as authentic history. Stone Mountain Park remains packed full of families, especially during the summer months, and remains a popular tourist site in metro-Atlanta, and consequently, helps maintain a conflicted historical landscape.²¹¹

Although some southerners have undoubtedly still clung to the original ideas for the park rooted in white identity, Stone Mountain expanded its focus and purposefully refashioned its image. Promotional campaigns began focusing on the recreational aspects of the park as outright public support for white supremacy rhetoric began to fade in favor of more tourist-friendly narratives. Just as Atlanta leadership was concerned with its image and sought to market the city as hospitable, Stone Mountain sought to increase the park’s marketability by offering visitors a variety of “experiences” to meet the tourists’ interest in historic, recreation, or natural attractions. “The survival of the park depends upon its flexibility,” historian J. Vincent Lowery rightfully summarized, by “surrounding the memorial with attractions that will lure tourists in search of other Souths.” In this regard, the park paralleled the development of the state tourism industry as promoters played up opposing elements of metro-Atlanta’s historic past as an icon of the Old South and leader of the New South.²¹²

Journalist Tony Horowitz stated, “like so much in Atlanta, Stone Mountain had become a bland and inoffensive consumable: the Confederacy as hood ornament.”

Although crass, his statement shed light on the development of Stone Mountain Park. For

²¹¹ Essex, “The Real South Starts Here,” 211 & 219.

²¹² Lowery quoted in *Destination Dixie: Tourism & Southern History*, edited by Karen L. Cox (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012), 239; For discussion of the formation of southern “civic identity” rooted in history see: Stephanie Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

years, the city's establishment actively constructed advertising campaigns for Atlanta that benefitted current politics and depicted a business-friendly atmosphere. The struggle to define Stone Mountain Park and the Confederate carving remained a defining moment in the attempt to sell metro-Atlanta to the rest of the nation—and most especially out-of-state traveler—as a vibrant tourist destination.²¹³

²¹³ Horowitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 288.

CHAPTER 4
 “ATLANTA’S DOWNTOWN NATIONAL PARK”: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
 AND AUBURN AVENUE

At 7:30 p.m., on January 7, 1974, at the Atlanta Civic Center, the city of Atlanta inaugurated its first African American mayor: Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. Jackson, a thirty-five-year-old attorney, was the grandson of Auburn Avenue’s beloved unofficial mayor and leader of the Atlanta Negro Votes League, John Wesley Dobbs. With over 5,000 people invited to the ceremony, it could not be held at City Hall as custom dictated, which led some critics to suggest the occasion “smacked more of a coronation” than an inauguration. Ninety percent of the attendees were black, most middle class and middle-aged. Among them were sixty-one of Jackson’s relatives who had traveled to Atlanta for the ceremony. Attendees included dignitaries such as Coretta Scott King, Ivan Allen III of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and Vernon Jordan Jr. of the National Urban League. The Atlanta Symphony, Morehouse Glee Club, and Jackson’s aunt, renowned opera singer Mattiwilda Dobbs, all performed.²¹⁴

Jackson represented the first generation of black leaders in Atlanta that rose to power via the ballot box. Previous generations had gained prominence through affluence and the ability to compromise with what political scientist Clarence Stone has called the “governing regime.” Cognizant of this distinction, Jackson called his swearing in the

²¹⁴ Peter Ross Range, “Capital of black-is-bountiful,” *NYT*, 7 April 1975, 268; Jim Meriner, “Jackson Inauguration Tonight,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 January 1974, 1A; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, 421 & 422-423.

“People’s Inauguration” and claimed it “symbolize[d] the full citizen participation which will be the style and the reality of this new administration.” Continuing his connection to the masses, Jackson used the phrase “we” over fifty times in his speech that called for biracial cooperation, the eradication of crime, and continued economic growth. Many African Americans in Atlanta took his use of “we” to mean the black community, whereas Jackson seemingly meant “Atlantans”—no matter race or class. Citing the biracial “Atlanta Style” of cooperation, Jackson noted, “We must do more than say we are concerned and that we care. We must begin to translate that concern into action because we know that injustice and inequality are not vague and shadowy concepts that have no tangible dimensions.” According to author Gary M. Pomerantz, “Maynard Jackson became more than a mere candidate. He was a cause, a symbol, a spiritual manifestation of black hopes and dreams a century old.” To his African American constituents, Jackson embodied their hopes and dreams, and with that, became an icon of everything that could be.²¹⁵

By the time of Jackson’s election in 1973, the city would have been unrecognizable to *Gone with the Wind’s* legendary heroine Scarlett O’Hara. African Americans outnumbered white residents in 1970 within the city limits. (See Appendix A) In 1972, Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District, encompassing most of downtown Atlanta, elected Andrew Young making him the state’s first black U.S. representative since Reconstruction. The successful voter registration drives of the 1960s, as well as

²¹⁵ Use of the term “governing regime” is from Stone, *Regime Politics*; Maynard Jackson’s “Inaugural Address” in *The Eyes on the Prize: Civil Rights Reader*, editor Clayborne Carson (New York: Viking, 1991), 614-615; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, 406. For full discussion of generational differences in African American leadership, see: Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*; Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*; Hunter, *Community Power Succession*, 66- 84.

Atlanta's changing racial demographics, had begun realigning voting patterns. Young had received 98.5 percent of the black vote and 25 percent of the white vote in 1972. The next year, a revision to the city of Atlanta's charter shifted from ward elections to the more equitable district system of representation. Under the new charter, an eighteen-member City Council with twelve members elected by districts and six by citywide votes replaced the Board of Aldermen. Jackson's election, the city's changing demographics, and most importantly, the establishment of the MLK historic site are important moments in contrast to the perpetuation of Lost Cause imagery across metro-Atlanta.²¹⁶

This chapter builds on the growing scholarship concerning the commemoration of the Civil Right Movement. Human geographers Owen Dwyer and Derrick Alderman have explored what civil rights "stories" have been remembered—and forgotten—in what they call the "geography of memory." Through an investigation of monuments, memorials, grave markers, and street names around the country, the authors provide insights into "the evolving verities of power and racism in American society." The recent addition of civil rights memorials, Dwyer and Alderman argued, reflects the ongoing process of social justice "by representing the past and its heroes in more diverse terms." Further examination of the struggles surrounding the establishment of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site expands this discussion.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-century Atlanta*, 46; Jean B. Bergmark, *Grace Towns Hamilton and the Politics of Southern Change* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 174-179.

²¹⁷ Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008), 8 & viii.

In addition to the books mentioned, there are articles on the subject by geography scholars: Joshua F.J. Inwood, "Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of the Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park," *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 16 (2009): 87-109; Derek H. Alderman, "Creating a New Geography of Memory in the South: (Re)Naming of Streets in Honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1 (May 1996): 51-69. Inwood's article was derived from his dissertation: Inwood, Joshua F. J. "Sweet Auburn: Contesting the Racial Identity of

The collection *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* edited by historians Renee Christine Romano and Leigh Raiford examined how the memory of the Civil Rights Movement has become “institutionalized.” The editors argued, “Some of the most heated battles in the arena of the black freedom struggle are not about resources or laws... [but] resolve around how the Civil Rights Movement should be remembered.” The thirteen essays explored topics such as the public acceptance, visualization, and divergent memories of the Civil Rights Movement. Two authors investigated sites in Georgia. While Derek Alderman examined the process of naming streets for Martin Luther King, Jr. in Bulloch County, Kathryn L. Maastom explored the memory—or lack thereof—female civil rights leaders in Atlanta. This chapter addresses more localized issues such as the intersection of historic preservation, revitalization plans, and heritage tourism in Martin Luther King Jr. historic district and larger Sweet Auburn neighborhood.²¹⁸

This chapter explores the complexities surrounding the recognition for African American history within metro-Atlanta’s public landscape. Debates over the revitalization of Sweet Auburn and the formation of the MLK site left many African American residents wondering whether heritage tourism would really solve community problems like poverty, unemployment, and lack of homeownership. Sociologist Floyd Hunter considered many of the leaders featured in this chapter—Julian Bond, John Calhoun, Jesse Hill, Maynard Jackson, Leroy Johnson, Hosea Williams, and Andrew Young—as part of the “center of power in Atlanta black affairs” during the 1970s. The

Atlanta’s Most Historically Significant African American Neighborhood.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2007.

²¹⁸ Renee Christine Romano and Leigh Raiford, editors, *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), xii.

lack of a unified black voice as shown in this chapter, however, stifled revitalization plans. Making a place for the local community versus a place for outsider tourists became a divisive battle that left residents weighing race and class concerns. Although many residents in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood felt the mayoral election of Maynard Jackson followed by Andrew Young were profound moments, these seemingly became hollow victories if securing a place for African American history within the state's growing tourism industry meant sacrificing some of the character of their own community.²¹⁹

“Sweet Auburn” in Decline

During the 1970s, Atlanta assumed a new moniker as *Ebony* proclaimed the city the “black Mecca of the South” and the *New York Times* also dubbed the “Capital of black-is-bountiful.” According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, “Black power was in the ascendancy.” In his seminal study of policymaking and social stratification, sociologist Floyd Hunter argued the city’s “black power structure” had made substantial gains in electoral politics and entered the realm of “policy-making structures.” State representative Julian Bond, co-founder of the prominent Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, however, stated, “This is the best place [for blacks] in the United States if you’re middle class and have a college degree, but if you’re poor, it’s just like Birmingham, Jackson or any other place.” Bond’s statement speaks to what scholars call the “Atlanta Paradox,” or rather, the uneasy existence of “both the mecca of the black middle-class and a bastion of poverty and segregation throughout the twentieth-century.”

²¹⁹ Floyd, *Community Power Succession*, 70.

This phenomenon especially described the Sweet Auburn Area—which includes Martin Luther King Jr.’s childhood home and Ebenezer Baptist Church—as it was once an epicenter of black business but had more recently seen poverty and decay.²²⁰

In the aftermath of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, Auburn Avenue had become the vibrant epicenter of the city’s black community after many African American businesses left the central downtown business district. By the 1910s, the street affectionately known as “Sweet Auburn” boasted a thriving black middle class unlike that seen elsewhere across the South. The Odd Fellows Complex and Auditorium housed many black-owned businesses and even a theater. In 1928, William Alexander Scott II founded the *Atlanta Daily World* on Auburn Avenue, and throughout the century, the newspaper remained an important voice for African Americans. Three pillars of commerce also called Sweet Auburn home: the Citizens Trust Bank, Mutual Federal Savings and Loan, and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, which scholar Alexa Benson Henderson has deemed the “guardian of African-American economic dignity.” Furthermore, many of Atlanta’s civil rights leaders rose to prominence at religious institutions such as Big Bethel AME, Wheat Street Baptist Church, and Ebenezer Baptist Church—where Martin Luther King Jr. co-pastored with his father. By the mid-twentieth-century, the neighborhood *Fortune*

²²⁰ Phyl Garland, “Atlanta: Black Mecca of the South,” *Ebony*, August 1971, 152; Peter Ross Range, “Making it in Atlanta: Capital of black-is-bountiful,” *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 7 April 1974; “A City in Crisis: Massell Climbed to Power, Fell as the Guard Changed,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 March 1975, 1A; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, 400; Godshalk, *Veiled Visions*, 280.

Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Succession: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953). Hunter’s list of African American power brokers during the early 1970s includes: Ralph David Abernathy, Julian Bond, William Holmes Borders, Ben Brown, John Calhoun, Robert Cannon, Warren Cochrane, Fletcher Coombs, John Cox, Grace T. Hamilton, Vivian Henderson, Jesse Hill, Maynard Jackson, Leroy Johnson, Coretta King, John Middleton, L. D. Milton, James Paschal, Charles Reynolds, Herman J. Russell, C. A. Scott, Lyndon Wade, Hosea Williams, Q. V. Williamson and C. R. Yates.

magazine had once called “the richest Negro street in the world,” was in a state of decline.²²¹

In 1964, the completion of the I-75/85 connector bridge cut through the heart of Auburn Avenue exacerbating economic issues and displacing over 7,000 residents. Upon reflection, Mtamanika Youngblood, executive director of the Historic District Development Corporation, described the neighborhood as a “dilapidated version of the wild, wild West.” Despite falling on hard times, Auburn Avenue—and the many important historic sites within the neighborhood—remained important to the African American community. Cultural geographer Joshua Inwood has recognized Auburn Avenue as an important “black counterpublic,” or rather, an autonomous alternative public sphere for political economy discourse and debates over identity and common community concerns. As such, the revitalization of Sweet Auburn remained an important task.²²²

After a vast period of growth in Atlanta during the post-World War II era, the city commissioned a long-range land use development plan. In 1952, the all-white Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) released the “Up Ahead” report proposing the

²²¹ Alexa Benson Henderson, *Atlanta Life Insurance Company: Guardian of African-American Economic Dignity* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Joshua F.J. Inwood, “Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of the Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park,” 92; John Hughes Emmet, “The Negro’s New Economic Life,” *Fortune Magazine* Vol. LIV (September 1956), 248. For a full account of Sweet Auburn its historical significance and development see Gary M. Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Two Families and the Making of Atlanta* (New York: Scribner, 1996) and David Andrew Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Rights Movement and Race Relations: Atlanta Georgia, 1946-1981* (New York: Garland Publisher, 1996).

²²² Baylor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-century Atlanta*, 71-73; Harvey Newton, *Southern Hospitality*, 134; Wendell Brock, “Mtamanika Youngblood,” *Atlanta Magazine*, 2 June 2016. <http://www.atlantamagazine.com/women-making-a-mark/mtamanika-youngblood/> (Accessed 18 March 2018); For discussion of “black counterpublic” see: Michael Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); Michael C. Dawson, “A Black Counterpublic?: Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 7 (1994), 195-223 & 206; Joshua Inwood, “Sweet Auburn: Contesting the Racial Identity of Atlanta’s Most Historically Significant African American Neighborhood,” Dissertation. University of Georgia, Athens, 2007.

destruction of low-income (mostly black) housing and relocation of black businesses in order to expand the central (white) business district. The plan utilized the National Housing Act of 1949 slum clearance measure as justification to eliminate most of Auburn Avenue. After criticism from black leaders, the MPC amended elements of the “Up Ahead” plan concerning Auburn Avenue. T. M. Alexander, a realtor and president of Empire Real Estate Board, had called the “Up Ahead” plan “especially insulting and insensitive” to the black community. Although the revised plan bypassed Auburn Avenue, the area continued to experience decline.

Soon after the assassination of famed civil right leader Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, his widow Coretta Scott King announced a living memorial to maintain his legacy. In 1970, on what would have been MLK’s forty-first birthday, his descendants and community leaders dedicated the first phase of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center along Auburn Avenue with a ceremony at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The King Center also established an “experimental relationship” with historian Vincent Harding’s Atlanta based-research center, Institute of the Black World (IBW), and together they embarked on the Library Documentation Project to preserve the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Despite private funding, the King Center experienced setbacks concerning its vision and scope. Furthermore, in September 1970, the IBW parted ways with the Center to become its own entity. Summarizing Harding’s position, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, “The IBW [was] not wedded to King’s strategies and concepts.” While Coretta Scott King felt the Center “can and should use the creative abilities of many people...they don’t have to all be black,” Harding maintained an all black staff and asserted, “there are many occasions where it is not appropriate for whites to be present in

black deliberations.” Already there was an inherent tension about what the King Center should and could be to metro-Atlanta’s African American community.²²³

Shortly thereafter the racially charged rhetoric of Atlanta’s 1973 mayoral campaign revealed underlying tensions in the city. The mayoral field was crowded with eleven candidates including incumbent Sam Massell, Vice-Mayor Maynard Jackson, former U.S. Representative Charles Weltner, state Senator Leroy Johnson, and former Department of Industry and Trade Deputy Commissioner Harold Dye. As in previous elections, the city’s leading newspapers took sides. The black newspaper, the *Atlanta Daily World*, endorsed Sam Massell. According to historian Alton Hornsby Jr., some “older members of the black power structure,” like the *Atlanta Daily World* editor C. A. Scott, felt that Maynard Jackson “had not paid his dues” and did not have adequate political experience. Similarly, Jesse Hill, president of black-owned Atlanta Life Insurance Company, maintained, “Atlanta was not ready for a black mayor and that it was going to disrupt the plan for black political progress.” The other African American newspapers, the *Atlanta Voice* and *Atlanta Inquirer*, however, supported Maynard Jackson. In their study of Atlanta’s “public-private partnership,” Dale Henson and James King also demonstrated that, “the predominately white power structure [was] prepared to accept a black mayor ... willing to work for his election.” The endorsement of candidates by many business leaders and newspapers seemed to reflect class concerns.²²⁴

²²³ Bill Montgomery, “Blacks to Dedicate King Memorial,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 11 January 1970, 17B; “Center Renamed” in King Center newsletter April 1972 Vol. 1 No. 1, Box 30, Annie L. McPheeters Papers at Auburn Avenue; Bill Montgomery, “Black Institute, King Center Part Ways,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 September 1970, 2A. In the April 1972, Coretta Scott King announced the center’s name was changed to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolence Social Change (“the King Center” as it would later become known)

²²⁴ Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 136; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, 402; Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Rights Movement and Race Relations*, 266; Dale Henson and James King, “The Atlanta Public-Private Romance: An Abrupt Transformation,” in R. Scott Fosler and Renee A.

On Election Day, constituents largely voted along racial lines. The October 2, 1973, election saw a solid 52.6 percent turnout of voters—especially impressive for a local election. In the city of Atlanta, black voters accounted for 49 percent of all registered voters and Jackson captured around 80 percent of the black voters but only 7 percent of white voters. Meanwhile, incumbent Sam Massell captured only 7 percent of the black vote. Although Jackson only finished 3,500 votes shy of a majority, the race proceeded to a runoff election scheduled for October 16 between Jackson and Massell.²²⁵

While Jackson had advanced to the run-off, Reverend Hosea Williams, former executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and aide to Martin Luther King Jr., known as “the wild man of Atlanta,” lost his race for president of the Atlanta City Council. Historian Alton Hornsby Jr. claimed Williams “had long been a thorn in the sides of both the black and white power structures... denounce[ing] the selfishness and timidity of middle-class blacks as well as the racism of whites.” Voters did elect five new African Americans though—John Calhoun, James Bond, James “Jim” Howard, Arthur Langford, and Carl Ware—to ensure a 9-9 racial split on the council. The 1973 election also ushered in a black majority on the nine-member Board of Education, which also featured five women.²²⁶

Berger, eds. *Public-Private Partnerships in American Cities* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1982), 306.

²²⁵ “City of Atlanta 1973,” Registration & Election, Fulton County, GA. <http://fultoncountyga.gov/elections-documents/documents/registration-elections/year1973/City-of-Atlanta-General/>; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-century Atlanta*, 18. Tom Linthicum and Howell Raines, “Jackson Gets Jump in Runoff Politicking,” *AJC*, 4 October 1973, 1A; “Vote Analysis,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 20 October 1973, 2; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, 410.

²²⁶ Alton Hornsby Jr., *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of African Americans in Atlanta* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 138-139; Atlanta Labor Council and Black Coalition Endorsement Card and James Howard 8 October 1973, Box 54, Annie L. McPheeters Papers; “Members of the New City Council,” *Atlanta Inquirer*, 20 October 1973, 11; “City of Atlanta 1973,” Registration & Election, Fulton County, GA. <http://fultoncountyga.gov/elections-documents/documents/registration->; “Meet Your New City Government,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 20 October 1973, 2.

Despite winning a plurality of votes and advancing to the runoff, C. A. Scott still refused to endorse Jackson. Instead, Scott attempted to dissuade voters from backing Jackson through his editorials. Just five days before the runoff, the *Atlanta Daily World* ran a front-page editorial about “the question of getting too much power arises with Negro leaders.” In light of the recent black electoral victories, the article doubted “we should seek [the] executive power of the mayor’s office this year.” Despite Scott’s reservations, Jackson won the runoff election and became Atlanta’s first African American mayor. Jackson garnered 59 percent of the total vote capturing 95 percent of the black vote and 21 percent of white ballots. Reflecting on Jackson’s landmark victory, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, “Blacks no longer needed a surrogate in City Hall. They had enough strength to elect their own man.” According to political scientist Clarence Stone, “Jackson appeared to be the linchpin for a new urban regime, bringing together independent-minded blacks and political conscious[ness] and organized neighborhood activists, predominately (though not exclusively) white.”²²⁷

Despite the unquestioned success of African Americans at the polls, Atlanta’s rapidly shifting demographics and the election of its first black mayor spurred uncertainty. Federal authorities, city officials, and community leaders struggled to agree upon a comprehensive plan to restore Auburn Avenue. Just a year into Jackson’s administration, the *Atlanta Constitution* published a series of investigative articles: *City in Crisis*. These articles explored “What’s happening in Atlanta” and asked, “Will the dream survive?” Despite Atlanta’s well-crafted image of racial harmony, cracks began to

²²⁷ “The question of getting too much power arises with Negro leaders here,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 11 October 1973, 1; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn*, Chapter 24 & 419-420; “A City in Crisis: Massell Climbed to Power, Fell as the Guard Changed,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 March 1975, 1A; Stone, *Regime Politics*, 86.

appear. The *Atlanta Constitution* “warned that the city was moving away from its earlier racial harmony and was in severe danger of dividing along racial lines.” One article in the series cited increased crime, rampant white flight, and the polarization of leadership arguing, “Atlanta was Camelot” but the “decade of prosperity and goodwill has faded.” These editorials only exacerbated the growing divide between the city’s black city government and largely white downtown business elites, which impaired the ability to enact any plan for revitalization.²²⁸

Many believed Jackson’s election and the establishment of the King Center would boost interest in Sweet Auburn. Jackson asserted Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. “probably accounts for my being here today as mayor.” One Auburn Avenue business owner, Andrew Robert Jackson, felt “the Martin Luther King Center is going to have a very good effect on this street.” Additionally, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company invested millions of dollars in Auburn Avenue throughout the 1970s, but it “did not catalyze the revitalization of the area either.” The “Historic Preservation Study of Selected Properties Owned by Atlanta Life Insurance Company” argued that Auburn Avenue “has lost much of the economic vibrancy it once possessed.”²²⁹

Although neighborhood organizations attempted to gather both political and financial support to revitalize the Sweet Auburn, these groups saw little success. The City

²²⁸ The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* cited in David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler, editors. *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City* (Chicago & Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 185; “ATLANTA: A decade of prosperity and goodwill has faded,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 March 1975, 1A.

²²⁹ Jim Merriner, “Building Begun on King Center,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 September 1975, 6A; *Sweet Auburn Chronicle* (August 1978) Series II Box1 Folder 6, Sweet Auburn Neighborhood Project oral history interviews, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System; Urban Development Consortium “M.L. King Jr. Historic Site / Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas, Final Report Working Document (October 1985) Box 96 Folder 3, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. records, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center; Historic Preservation Study of Selected Properties Owned by Atlanta Life Insurance Company (1979) page 5 in Parks and Historic Sites - Historic Preservation Section - Grants Files, 1969-2000, RCB 16509, Georgia Archives.

of Atlanta introduced Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU), twenty-five in total, to serve as citizen advisory councils allowing traditionally disenfranchised residents to take part in community decisions. Any “planning or zoning proposals” had to be referred to the affected NPU for local input before the city could act. According to public policy and economic development consultants M. Dale Henson and James King, the new charter and “rise of neighborhood power... indicat[ed] that the demands of blacks and low-income groups would have to be recognized and dealt with in the 1970s.”²³⁰

Although Neighborhood Planning Units were a measure to ensure “citizen participation,” a requirement of the 1973 city charter, Atlanta’s premier downtown business organization Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) resented them. CAP claimed the NPU were an “attempt to emasculate Downtown interests.” Jackson reportedly noted, “I will not cater exclusively to the old-line establishment leaders of Atlanta commerce, whose wishes were often granted by past administrations.” Some business leaders struck back though leveling complaints of “reverse racism.” Despite interest from NPU-M, representing the Auburn Avenue and the “Old Fourth Ward” along with the Auburn Area Revitalization Committee (AARC), development plans for the area were largely unsuccessful. Jackson had “campaign[ed] on a strong neighborhood platform,” and therefore, residents had perceived him as a strong agent for change. Although the Jackson administration focused on “the promotion of minority businesses,” between 1973 and 1975, “Atlanta was trounced by the worst recession experienced since the 1930s” which impaired any plan costly plans for revitalization.²³¹

²³⁰ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 86; Henson and King, “The Atlanta Public-Private Romance: An Abrupt Transformation,” 307.

²³¹ Dale Henson and James King quoted in Stone, *Regime Politics*, 87; Jessica Ann Levy, “Selling Atlanta: Black Mayoral Politics from Protest to Entrepreneurism, 1973 to 1990,” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 41

In 1974, Joseph Scott Mendinghall, the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, nominated the area of Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howell Streets for status on the National Register of Historic Places. To justify the nomination, he cited the area's prominence throughout the Civil Rights Movement. The nomination was part of a larger trend in the 1970s in which advocacy groups—like the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation and Association for the Study of Negro Life and History—worked with the U.S. Department of Interior to survey black historic landmarks. Mendinghall's nomination succeeded, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District was listed on the U.S. Register of Historic Places.²³²

That same year, the Inner City Development Corporation, the City of Atlanta, Georgia Tech, and the National Endowment for the Arts collaborated on a nearly \$100,000 project to restore Sweet Auburn as the heart of Atlanta's black heritage. The Inner City Development Corporation (ICDC)—with successful African American real estate developer Robert B. Jackson III as executive director—served as an umbrella organization for community groups including the Auburn Avenue Development Association and Hunter Street Development Association. Although Robert Jackson assured residents the plan “would not require the demolition of a large number of structures,” the *Atlanta Constitution* reported the ICDC sought to “turn [the] black

No. 3 (2015): 420-443; Emma Edmonds, “Auburn Avenue May Be ‘Sweet’ One More Time,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 5 October 1978, 1C; Atlanta, Georgia – City Code of Ordinances. Part III, Chapter 3, Article B, Neighborhood Planning; “City of Atlanta, Neighborhood Planning Units,” Office of Planning, <http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=739>; <https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/city-planning/office-of-zoning-development/neighborhood-planning-unit-npu>; Stone, *Regime Politics*, 84; Henson and King, “The Atlanta Public-Private Romance,” 308-309. For an overview of the various projects in Auburn Avenue see: Jesse Clark, “Approaches to the Cooperative Revitalization of Auburn Avenue.” M.A. Thesis, Georgia Technical University, 2011.

²³² Joseph Scott Mendinghall, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination: Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District (Landmark),” National Park Service, 1974; Fred Brown Jr., “Preserving America's Black Historic Landmarks,” *Washington Post*, 20 February 1989.

business area into [a] tourist center.” The article implied that the ICDC believed tourism was a viable means by which to ameliorate community issues.²³³

In 1977, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior designated the area—including Ebenezer Baptist Church, King’s childhood home, and other properties along Auburn Avenue—a National Historic Landmark. While the historic registry offered tax incentives to preserve the properties, status as a National Historic Landmark meant a new level of support with the National Park Service assisting with administration and preservation. After such recognition, the *Atlanta Constitution* urged Atlantans to “put on their tourist shoes” and explore one of the strongest examples of black heritage in Atlanta’s “Ethnic Southwest” region. Despite the recognition of the district’s cultural and historical importance at the federal level, the titles did not immediately translate into success. A neighborhood study conducted by the Sweet Auburn Neighborhood Project, with support from the Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs and National Endowment for the Humanities, still reported, “the once vibrant Auburn Avenue Street life has essentially disappeared, business activity has declined, and many historic and other structures stand deteriorating and underutilized.”²³⁴

At the 1977 Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Atlanta, real estate consultant Donovan D. Ryokema highlighted the economic benefits of historic preservation. Ryokema had concerns though and asked the crowd, “How do we achieve community

²³³ Jim Merriner, “Auburn Avenue Restoration Eyed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 17 May 1974, 8C; Tom Walker, “Sweet Auburn: Plans Advance for Downtown Redevelopment,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 11 August 1974, 1E.

²³⁴ Joseph Scott Mendinghall, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination: Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District (Landmark),” National Park Service, 1974; National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, Updated 18 May 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/nhl/> (Accessed 7 June 2018); Carole Ashkinaze, “Put Yourself in a Tourist’s Shoes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 June 1977, 2T; “General Information About Sweet Auburn,” Series II Box 1 Folder 3, Sweet Auburn Neighborhood Project oral history interviews.

preservation and economic development without losing our community soul?" His question highlighted a key tension that served as the root of conflict for local Auburn Avenue residents. Although both federal officials and localized groups sought to revitalize the area and promote it as a tourism destination, metro-Atlanta's public landscape still commemorated the "southern way of life" at sites like Stone Mountain. In 1978, an *Atlanta Economic Review* article praised the city's growth but found the "memories of an Old South" and tendency to maintain Lost Cause imagery troublesome. As the authors Dana F. White and Timothy J. Crimmins asserted, "Stone Mountain, the Cyclorama, *Gone With the Wind* are monuments to an Old South—an entity, a state of mind, a condition not really appropriate to Atlanta." Although some people thought memorializing the Old South was no longer appropriate and sought to add other voices to the public landscape, how this would play out in Auburn Avenue with historic structures associated with MLK remained unclear. Soon an even more pressing issue paralyzed some of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods though as dozens of African American, mostly male, children and young adults disappeared between 1979 and 1981 in the "Atlanta Child Murders."²³⁵

Legislating the National Historic Site

In September 1980, the United States Senate took up discussion of legislation that would create the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. To open, U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers, of Arkansas, argued, "This bill would help focus additional deserved

²³⁵ Farrisee, "Heritage Tourism: Telling the Rest of the Story," 106; Dana F. White and Timothy J. Crimmins, "How Atlanta Grew: Cool Heads, Hot Air and Hard Work," *Atlanta Economic Review* (January/February 1978), 8; Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 177. See the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* for complete coverage for an account of the Atlanta Child Murders.

attention and recognition to the work and life of a man who was dedicated to bettering the status of others.”²³⁶ The measure justified the site as a measure to “protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations” areas associated with Martin Luther King Jr.’s childhood and life’s work. Georgia’s foremost historic preservation officer Elizabeth Lyon noted the “painfully slow growth of public awareness” as to the area’s historical significance. Although two other national historic sites honored famous African Americans Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, neither focused on the Civil Rights Era. Aware of this void, James Bond, the younger brother of the famed civil rights activist Julian Bond, argued the MLK site was especially important as it would be the only one to address the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. At the hearing, Jan Meadows, an African American member of the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, asserted, “We have a unique opportunity for the city, the state of Georgia and the whole country to show what black business looked like in the early 1900s.”²³⁷

Cecil D. Andrus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, predicted the acquisition of 23.5 acres of land for the site would cost \$3.5 million along with \$920,000 in development costs and around \$3.48 million in operational expenses over a five-year period. To oversee the site’s development, the bill established a nine-member advisory commission with three appointees recommended by the King Center, two governor appointees, two appointees chosen by the mayor of Atlanta, and finally, a chairman of the

²³⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation, and Renewable Resources, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, State of Georgia; and the Chacoan Culture Preservation Act. 11 September 1980, available at <https://congressional-proquest.com.proxy/remote.galib.uga.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1980-nar-0062?accountid=14537> (Accessed 6 March 2018)

²³⁷ S.2630, 96th Congress, 2nd Session, 3; Emma Edmonds, “A Bitter Battle Brews In Sweet Auburn,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 July 1980, 1B.

commission selected by the Secretary of the Interior. Coretta Scott King or “[an]other appropriate family member” would serve as an ex-officio member of the commission as well. While under discussion, legislators added another member to the advisory commission and added requirements for those asked to serve. For example, the governor’s appointees had to have preservation experience, and the mayoral appointee must also represent the interests of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. Moreover, the Ebenezer Baptist Church would get an appointee along with two additional members from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, which reported to the mayor. These additions demonstrated a concentrated effort to represent the varied interests of the black community, the King family, elected officials, preservation officers, and developers.²³⁸

With Governor George Busbee and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources supporting the legislation, several witnesses testified before Congress about the proposed legislation. Notable witnesses included: U.S. Senator Sam Nunn from Georgia; Cecil D. Andrus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior; Elizabeth Lyon, Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer; Pelham William, vice chairman of the Great Park Authority of Atlanta; James Bond, chairman of the Atlanta City Council’s Development Committee; and, Coretta Scott King, president of the King Center. Co-sponsor of the bill, Senator Sam Nunn, noted that the site would benefit the whole country. He argued, “It will provide all Americans the opportunity to visit the place where Dr. King spread his message of peaceful change.” Though perhaps more importantly, Nunn declared, “it will

²³⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation, and Renewable Resources, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, State of Georgia; and the Chacoan Culture Preservation Act. 11 September; *An Act to establish the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes*, Public Law 96-428, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 94 (1980), 1843-1849.

serve as a reminder to us that the pursuit of equality for all our citizens is not a completed task but a continuing challenge.” Though Nunn did not directly say as much, his testimony revealed that he saw the site as a place for social justice.²³⁹

According to the legislation, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site would span Auburn Avenue with Jackson Street serving as the westward boundary and Howell Street on the east. To “insure [sic] historical consistence,” Coretta Scott King sought to have the Auburn Avenue corridor and MLK site deemed as a single preservation district. With so many privately owned properties within the proposed historic district, Andrus explained that “the use of cooperative agreement with private organization and individuals” would govern the site. For instance, the National Park Service reached an agreement with the King Center to stage tours of MLK’s birthplace. Additionally, the legislation asserted land acquisition “shall be conducted in a manner which will encourage restoration and preservation by individuals and groups other than the Federal Government.” Even in such an early phase, the NPS reflected a desire to not be solely responsible for the maintenance and restoration of all structures within the 23.5-acre site.²⁴⁰

Before the official designation as part of the “historic district,” annual visitation at the MLK birthplace and gravesite reached 250,000. The National Park Service expected visitors to increase to 750,000 within five years of the establishment of the site. The expected increase in tourists created controversy over a provision in the proposed legislation regarding funding for the church. Reverend Joseph L. Roberts Jr., Pastor of

²³⁹ Statement of Hon Sam Nunn quoted in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, page 17.

²⁴⁰ Cecil Andrus letter to Walter F. Mondale 18 April 1980 within U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, page 11-12.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, testified that three sightseeing companies regularly stop at the church and formal recognition as a national historic site would certainly increase visitation. Roberts asked the Congress, “Is it fair to request that Ebenezer Church bear the total burden of increased tour traffic which the proposed legislation before you anticipates?” Russell E. Dickerson, director of the National Park Service, opposed the use of any federal funds to maintain the Ebenezer Baptist Church. Dickerson felt this use of taxpayer money was highly inappropriate, as it remained an active congregation. Coretta Scott confirmed the church “incurs considerable expense during the week with tours through there and people from all over the United States.”²⁴¹

Although tourism at Ebenezer Baptist Church would likely increase with the official status as a “national historic district,” Dickerson remained steadfast. He explained it was a “constitutional problem” in which no federal monies must ever go towards an active congregation, and instead, suggested the Ebenezer Baptist Church look to the private sector for funding. Disappointed, King argued that the Founding Fathers could not have possibly “envisioned the historical role of a church like Ebenezer in the political life of 20th century America.” Roberts also let it be known that the “congregation is seriously disappointed.” Subcommittee Chairman Phillip Burton, a Democrat from California, rejected the suggestion that Ebenezer Baptist Church charge an admission fee to solve the funding issue. Ultimately, the legislation largely overlooked the issue through ambiguity. The legislation enabled the Secretary of the Interior to “take only such actions within and upon the grounds of the Ebenezer Baptist Church as will directly support appropriate

²⁴¹ Testimony transcript included in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, 12; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, page 20.

public visitation to and within the church.” As written, funding for Ebenezer it seemed was left to the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus.²⁴²

On October 10, 1980, Congress passed the legislation and established the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site and Preservation District (MLK NHS). (Appendix G) It was administered by the National Park Service and included portions of Auburn Avenue surrounding King’s birthplace, the King Center, and Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site and Preservation District also incorporated a “preservation area” that extended west to Courtland Street and contained notable structures such as the Wheat Street Baptist Church, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company Building, and Atlanta Daily World Building. According to geographer Kenneth E. Foote, the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site was the “first true monument” to the Civil Rights Movement. But before this happened, Martin Luther King Jr. had to be transformed from the “leader of a minority cause to a national hero,” and then, he could be recognized within the public memorial landscape. With Foote’s argument in mind, MLK had assumed a prominent position as a “national hero.” Upon signing the legislation into law, President Jimmy Carter had remarked, King’s “dream is still not a reality. It is my hope that... our people will come to understand more fully what we have accomplished and what remains to be done.” Although the establishment of the MLK historic site—and with it recognition on the public landscape—seemed a major victory, as Carter argued, there was still much work to be done in regard to social justice.²⁴³

²⁴² “King Memorial Gains Support,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 May 1980, 9C; Cecil Andrus letter to Walter Mondale and testimony transcript in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee, Hearing HRG-1980-NAR-0062, 12, 20-23; *An Act to establish the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes*, Public Law 96-428, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 94 (1980): 1849-1843.

²⁴³ *An Act to establish the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes*, Public Law 96-428, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 94 (1980), 1849-1843; Kenneth Foote,

The same year, the U.S. Census Bureau found the City of Atlanta's African American majority had grown to nearly two-thirds of the population. The demographics of residents residing within the MLK NHS, however, showed patterns of poverty. In 1980, 1,470 people resided within the official boundaries. The National Park Service considered the "impact area" within the neighborhood much higher though at 6,566 people. (Appendix H) Of those residents, 92.7 percent were African American with 13.8 percent under the age of 18 years old and 29 percent were 65 years of age or older. The median household income of those living within the site boundaries was less than half the citywide average. Only 6.6 percent of residences were homeowner-occupied. Additionally, there were few opportunities for employment as the area mostly consisted of small businesses like barbershops, shoe repair, and dry cleaners. While the historic site would inevitably attract tourists, the neighborhood was largely unprepared for the consequences and inundation of outsiders. With the formation of the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site and preservation district encompassing most of Sweet Auburn, the

Shadowed Ground: America's Landscape of Violence and Tragedy (Austin: University of Texas, Austin), 325 & 75; Jimmy Carter, "Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historical Site Statement on Signing H.R. 7218 Into Law," 11 October 1980; For more on the site see: Joshua F.J. Inwood, "Contested memory in the birthplace of a king: a case study of the Auburn Avenue and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park," *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 16 (2009), 87-109.

The MLK Jr. Development Program Advisory Committee included: Bill Campbell, Commissioner Aaron Turpeau, Owen Funderburg, Dewitt N. Martin Jr., Robert Morrison, Randy Scott, Valencia Henderson, John Calhoun, Lloyd Davis, Robb Pitts, Marian Jones, Susie LaBord, Robert J. Menhinick, Dan Thorpe, Reverend Martin L. Morgan, Dorothy Shaw and Bennie Smith.

The MLK National Historic Site Advisory Commission included: William Allison, as chairman; Elizabeth Lyon, as vice chairman; John Cox; Christine King Farris; Freddy Henderson; Reverend Joseph Roberts; John Calhoun; Randy Humphrey; Millicent Dobbs Jordan; Handy Johnson; Jim Patterson; Coretta Scott King, ex-office member; and Randolph Scott, ex-officio member. It also included more African American community members such as Christine King Farris, Reverend Joseph Roberts, John Calhoun, Millicent Dobbs Jordan, and Coretta Scott King.

debates over the two could not really be separated, and furthermore, it exacerbated tensions that had begun in the 1970s with attempts at revitalization.²⁴⁴

Concerned Citizens and Community's Response

Although Mayor Andrew Young (1982-1990), the city's second African American mayor, was determined to restore Underground Atlanta, he was also dedicated to the Sweet Auburn project. Young praised the formation of the MLK NHS because the park service "provided much of the leadership for planning improvements" in the Sweet Auburn area. In the early planning stages for the historic site, the National Park Service proposed several different interpretative themes. The planning document "The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sweet Auburn: Proposals for the National Historic Park" included four themes. These included: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Dr. King as a leader; Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement as seen in Sweet Auburn; and Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement. Within these larger themes, the NPS suggested more refined topics, such as: Sweet Auburn, the training ground; the life and legacy of Dr. King; Dr. King in the context of the prosperous black neighborhood; and the evolution of the Civil Rights Movement: the struggle for equality. The accompanying pamphlet suggested "Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement" had "the greatest potential for tourism and related industries." While the historic site undoubtedly highlighted the importance of MLK, it also cast him as part of the city's tradition of racial moderation. The implications of such a view seemingly overlooked what Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called the "long Civil

²⁴⁴ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 109; U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 General Population Characteristics, Georgia; NPS, *Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia: general management plan & development concept* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986). According to the NPS report, in 1979, the citywide household median income was \$11,297 within the park it was only \$4,385.

Rights Movement” as it did not address the movement’s nuance with different tactics and leaders.²⁴⁵

According to a National Park Service brochure, “the preservation district and national historic site tell much of the history of black urban culture in the South and provide the background for the story of the Civil Rights Movement.” For some visitors to the site, however, it was difficult to see the Civil Rights Movement as more than Martin Luther King, Jr. The site—and nearby King Center—focused heavily on MLK and his principle of nonviolence. Historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has argued that holding up MLK as the Civil Rights Movement’s “defining figure—frozen in 1963” has only “ensure[d] the status of the classical phase as a triumphal moment in a larger American progress narrative.” Although the inclusion of black history within the public landscape remained an important milestone, the presentation of Civil Rights Movement and more specifically whose story was included—or not—was problematic.²⁴⁶

The National Park Service distributed over 4,000 “planning folders” which included brochures, the interpretative proposal, and a comment card to gather feedback. An enclosure letter from Mayor Andrew Young “encourage[d] the people of Atlanta to become involved in moving this project forward and helping to define” what he proudly called “Atlanta’s Downtown National Park.” The NPS urged “property owners, tenant residents, social and government organizations, businessmen, community leaders and

²⁴⁵ The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sweet Auburn: Proposals for the National Historic Park, NPS, Folder - MLK Proposed National Park, Georgia Archives - Administration - Director's Subject Files, 1929-2007, RCB 5721, Georgia Archives; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4. (March 2005), 1233-1263. For extensive coverage of Underground Atlanta during the 1980s see the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

²⁴⁶ Brochure “Sweet Auburn: A Multidimensional Community” Box 302 Folder 8 Andrew J. Young Papers, Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* (March 2005), 1234.

other individuals and groups with an interest in the future of the area and the park” to return the comment card to the NPS office on Auburn Avenue. The cards asked participants to give input on a variety of issues: tours, historic preservation, programming, and financial responsibility. For instance, the reply card asked whether the city, state, federal government or private owners should have “the primary responsibility for the protection and rehabilitation” of historic structures. Another question asked what areas the NPS should include on tours: Auburn Avenue, residential areas, or the commercial area. Finally, the comment card also asked whether participants thought the additional areas along Auburn Avenue should be “developed as a tourist attraction.”²⁴⁷

The National Park Service also held a series of public meetings to hear public suggestions. Meetings were held at a variety of locations such as Fellowship Hall in Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Urban Life Center at Georgia State University, and the Adams Park Recreation Center in Southwest Atlanta. NPS project manager Janet C. Wolf and Richard V. McCollough, chief planner for the Department of the Interior, urged people to “participat[e] in deciding how these tremendous stories of success and achievement can be told to this and future generations.” With low community turnout though, Kelly Questrom wrote to the *Atlanta Constitution* criticizing the “lack of public interest” in the NPS’s proposals. Questrom reasoned this “may be an example of our being too close to the forest to see the trees bearing the fruit in our own backyard.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ US Department of Interior, NPS, “Plan Approval Finding of No Significant Impact for General Management Plan/ Development Concept Plan,” Box 96 Folder 1 Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records; The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sweet Auburn: Proposals for the National Historic Park and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sweet Auburn Comment Sheet, Folder - MLK Proposed National Park, Georgia Archives - Administration - Director's Subject Files, 1929-2007, RCB 5721, Georgia Archives.

²⁴⁸ US Department of Interior, NPS, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site Planning Participation letter, 25 May 1983, Folder - MLK Proposed National Park, Georgia Archives - Administration - Director's Subject Files, 1929-2007, RCB 5721, Georgia Archives - Administration - Director's Subject Files, 1929-

Some locals were uneasy with federal oversight and worried that economic development would supersede the interest of locals. The nonprofit People's Neighborhood Community and Economic Development Corporation sought to represent the interests of low-income residents living within the site and prevent displacement. Also concerned for local residents, Coretta Scott King, Christine King Farris, MLK's sister, and John Cox, former executive director of the Butler Street YMCA, formed the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC). The HDDC sought to create a sustainable community, restore economic vitality, and ensure the historic character of the neighborhood without displacing existing residents. According to another community activist, Florence McKinley, a spokeswoman for the Concerned Citizens of the Old Fourth Ward, "our two main fears are rampant displacement (by the parks service) and private investors coming into the area and doing things for profit." The array of neighborhood groups all had one thing in common, a shared concern that the involvement of the National Park Service in the community would result in the displacement of local residents.²⁴⁹

Hosea Williams, who by this time was a state senator, also became a vocal neighborhood advocate. Williams joined forces with African American civil rights activist, former Atlanta city councilman, and real estate developer John Calhoun. Together Williams and Calhoun founded the Auburn Avenue Community-Based Development Corporation, or to use their term a "special task force," that met at Wheat

2007, Georgia Archives; Kelli Questrom, "Development of Sweet Auburn should be city priority," *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 July 1983, 12A.

²⁴⁹ Young to Bob Scherer, 21 Sept 1983, Box 92 Folder 2 Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records; letter Richard McCollough to Victor Gregory 10 July 1984 Box 92 Folder 1, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records; Historic District Development Corporation "About Us" (Accessed 23 January 2018) <https://sites.google.com/site/historicdistrictdevelopment/>; Sheryl Lauer, "King historic area spurs fear of ousters," *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 Aug 1983, 1A.

Street Baptist Church with the goal of “saving Auburn Avenue.” According to promotional flyers, “[Auburn Avenue] it’s the only thing blacks have left in the downtown area.” Speaking on behalf of the newly formed group, Williams issued a statement to radio stations blaming the “fighting between the five organizations involved in the restoration program” and “just plain ole petty personal jealousies between certain Black leaders” for the delays in any plans for revitalization.²⁵⁰

In the summer of 1983, Williams asserted “apathy and complacency” had been “intentionally perpetuated upon the residents and small businesses throughout the Auburn Avenue area.” To Williams, the failure to revitalize the community and proposed development plans overlooking the concerns of locals represented the constant “economic injustice Black Atlantans” faced. The powerful business organization Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) leveled back against claims that the leadership ignored Auburn Area and the demands of black residents. In a WGST radio statement on August 8, 1983, CAP President Daniel Sweat proclaimed, “if the Reverend [Hosea Williams] would spend more time on ‘Sweet Auburn’ and less time in jail for his unique [drunk] driving habits he would learn that a lot is happening... a number of public and private agencies are at work to spur on development.” Nevertheless, Williams sought to “revive the interest” in Auburn Avenue by “raising the conscious level of both the rich [sic] Black and White business community.” Of course, Williams asserted, “The rich black business leaders should take the lead.”²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Immediate Release 9/30/83, Flyer “Join and Support the Newly Development Special Task Force to Revitalize Auburn Avenue”, Metro Atlanta SCLC For Immediate Release 9/1/83, and “Statement Issued to Radio Stations by Hosea Williams 30 Sept 1983 Box 92 Folder 1 Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

²⁵¹ Black Atlantans Demanding Economic Justice for Immediate Release 7/29/83 Box 92 Folder 1 Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records; Robert Byrd, “Civil Rights Veteran Hosea Williams Faces Battle to Keep His Credibility Politics,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1 September 1991; “Hosea” Statement by Dan Sweat WGST

A meeting at the Wheat Street Baptist Church set for August 1983 included representatives from the Metro Atlanta Southern Christian Leadership Council, the Metro Atlanta Black Chamber of Commerce, the National Park Service, the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, the King Center, the Downtown Development Authority, the Auburn Avenue Area Revitalization Committee, and the Neighborhood Planning Unit-M. Approximately 290 people attended the public hearing held at the church to discuss the NPS' proposal. After the meeting, Williams wrote to project director Janet Wolf, "We strongly recommend that the federal officials and employees (local, regional and national) accept the newly formed Auburn Avenue Community-Based Development Corporation as a cooperating and working partner." After the request to accept the new group as a partner in the project failed, Williams noted we "will proceed with our own community-based group." Despite good intentions, the existence of so many different community groups created some confusion and stifled progress.²⁵²

Aside from holding the public meetings, the National Park Service also conducted interviews to gauge community's attitudes and concerns toward development. Those polled indicated a fear of increased crime and the deterioration of the neighborhood. For instance, Auburn Avenue between Piedmont and the I-75/85 interchange had the second highest rate of muggings in the city. Other residents "expressed dissatisfaction with the influx of outsiders to the area" namely in terms of the availability of on-street parking,

Radio 8 August 1983, Statement Issued to Radio Stations by Hosea Williams 30 Sept 1983 and For Immediate Release 9/30/83, Box 92 Folder 1, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

From 1966-1969 Dan Sweat was Mayor Ivan Allen Jr.'s administrative aide; 1969-1971, Sweat was the City of Atlanta's Chief Administrative Officer; 1971-1973, he was Executive Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission; 1973 to 1988, Sweat served as president of Central Atlanta Progress. For more about the importance of CAP see: Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Succession: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 61.

²⁵² Metro Atlanta SCLC For Immediate Release 9/1/83 and Hosea Williams to Janet Wolfe 31 August 1983, Box 92 Folder 1, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

and disruption to “the use of porches for meetings and socializing.” This concerned reflected an uneasy dynamic as the community sought to balance the needs of local residents and expectations of outside tourists. Those interviewed also expressed confusion about the conflicting role of entities such as the King Center, City of Atlanta, the National Park Service, and individual landlords. The displacement of residents, however, remained the foremost concern among neighborhood groups and local merchants. While some residents expressed pride that tourists now came to see their neighborhood, they “emphasize[d] that it is not worthwhile if their neighborhood is destroyed throughout the displacement of people from their homes.” With property values and rent increasing due to the arrival of the National Park Service, the majority of the low-income residents were especially vulnerable.²⁵³

To better understand the concerns of local residents, the numerous neighborhood organizations, and community activists like Hosea Williams, it is important to consider rhetoric. Although she studied Los Angeles, historian and architect Dolores Hayden noted the different meanings of “neighborhood.” To locals “neighborhood” implied “a complex network of social as well as spatial ties,” but often time state officials and developers simply meant “neighborhood” as a set of geographical boundaries.²⁵⁴ This same issue largely applies to Atlanta, where residents saw Sweet Auburn as much more than just streets and structures needing redevelopment under the direction of outside leadership.

²⁵³ *Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia: general management plan & development concept* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), 20 - 23.

²⁵⁴ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 4.

By March 1984, Curtis Hall, deputy director of the Atlanta Economic Development Corporation, indicated that officials had narrowed the list of potential firms to complete the development program to two choices: William Russell & Johnson and Urban Development Consortium. The City of Atlanta, the NPS, and CAPS entered into a contract with Urban Development Consortium at a cost of \$240,000 split equally between the three parties, to provide a development program. The contract treated the MLK historic site and larger Auburn Avenue community as one interconnected project. Although confusing with so many different parties, the NPS would oversee the management of the national historic site and the Urban Development Consortium would create a development plan for the larger Sweet Auburn community surrounding the site.²⁵⁵

To learn about their target area before making a development plan, the Urban Development Consortium also conducted a series of in-person and telephone interviews. The Urban Development Consortium investigated how local residents and merchants felt about development and sought to evaluate the community's marketability. In summary, it found nearly 75 percent of those surveyed were aware of the historic district and 55 percent had visited the King Center. Of the 300 phone interviews conducted within metro-Atlanta, 56 percent of those polled, or a member of their household, had visited the King Center or other facilities within the historic district. Seventy-three percent of the polled visitors to the King Center from metro-Atlanta were African American. Even the majority of non-residents, 82.6 percent to be exact, had heard of the King Center. There

²⁵⁵ Contract entered 25 June 1984 & Letter E. Larry Fonts to Curtis Hall 12 March 1984 Box 92 Folder 1 Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

were many negative perceptions, however, such as the area was unsafe, physically unappealing, and had few reasons to visit.²⁵⁶

In September 1985, the Urban Development Consortium released the development program. The consortium found that the area surrounding the MLK historic district “suffers from a lack of market appeal and continues to be viewed as a blighted, unsafe district.” To improve such conditions, the plan established a guiding principle that sought “to revive the spirit, coherence, vitality, and unique personality of the once-thriving “Sweet Auburn” District.” The Urban Development Consortium determined “undesirable residents” such as those involved with drinking, drugs, prostitution, and gambling posed the greatest threat to the “social character” of the area. To restore economic vitality and ensure visitors would frequent the area, the consortium sought to overhaul the image of Auburn Avenue.²⁵⁷

The first phase of the Urban Development Consortium’s development plan included mixed-use areas and the construction of a new black culture and heritage museum (now the African American Panoramic Experience APEX). The second phase included a \$22.9 million renovation of the “Herndon Tower” located across the street from the Odd Fellows Building and other retail and entertainment projects. In total, the Urban Development Consortium plan encompassed 430 acres—much larger than the actual historic site or preservation district—had twenty-six different projects, and cost over \$106.7 million. To finance such an extensive development project, the Urban

²⁵⁶ Urban Development Consortium, *M. L. King Jr. Historic Site / Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program: Final Report Work Document* (October 1985), 255-258 and Attachments A-D, Box 96 Folder 3, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

²⁵⁷ Urban Development Consortium *M. L. King Jr. Historic Site / Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program: Final Report Work Document*. (October 1985), I – ii & 229, Box 96 Folder 3 Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

Design Consortium stressed the importance of “private sector funding” and bond packages. To oversee such vast plans, the Urban Design Consortium proposed creating the MLK/Auburn Development Authority with CAP, the NPS, and the City of Atlanta forming a “technical assistance committee.” Considering local residents were worried about the character of their neighborhood after the National Park Service’s historic site proposal, they would presumably, not take kindly to such a drastic overhaul.²⁵⁸

Shortly thereafter, in February 1986, the National Park Service approved the General Management and Development Plan for Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site based on the earlier proposals. The park service expected the plan to govern the site for five-to-ten years. It included interpretative programs that utilized Ebenezer Baptist Church, King’s birth home, residence, and gravesite. The comment cards from “planning folders” distributed within the community overwhelmingly favored alternative theme three and four—Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement as seen in Auburn Avenue and Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement.²⁵⁹ Along with the National Park System’s larger governing themes such as “American at Work” and “Society and Social Conscience,” the management plan decided to focus on King’s life and legacy, the prosperous black neighborhood, and the evolution of the Civil Rights Movement. In all, the NPS chose themes that appeared more representative than those that had been originally proposed, which focused more on the centrality of Martin Luther King Jr.

The General Management and Development Plan also outlined a one-to-two hour guided tour of King’s birth home and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Additionally, the NPS

²⁵⁸ Urban Development Consortium, *M. L. King Jr. Historic Site / Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program: Final Report Work Document* (October 1985), 227 in Box 96 Folder 3, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

²⁵⁹ US Department of Interior, NPS, “Plan Approval Finding of No Significant Impact for General Management Plan/ Development Concept Plan,” Box 96 Folder 1, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

created a self-guided walking tour of the rest of the site. The plan also noted that the birth home would be leased from the King Center in order to provide “long-term preservation and interpretation.” In response to the overwhelming concern about local residents, the plan stipulated that tenants could stay “in their homes at stabilized rents.” The NPS would also purchase, rehabilitate, and resell any empty properties on the same street as the birth home. The NPS estimated \$4.34 million was needed to restore the structures, create interpretative exhibits, and construct visitor parking and a community center.²⁶⁰

The General Management and Development Plan expected the City of Atlanta to “take appropriate actions” to increase historic preservation, revitalization, and tourism. In 1983, approximately 350,000 people had visited the historic site, and park service conducted 20,000 interpretative tours at King birth home. Of those visitors, 58 percent were male and 75 percent were African American. Eighty-four percent indicated they would like to know more about the neighborhood where King grew up. With these statistics in mind, the NPS expected an increase in tourist traffic due to advertising, completion of restoration projects, and additional programming. Although the park service claimed it would not establish a visitor center within the historic district, if there was a substantial increase in tourists, the NPS would “supplement the city’s efforts” by operating a visitor center at the “west end of the preservation district.”²⁶¹

After the release of the Urban Development Consortium’s development plan and National Park Service’s general management plan, both city officials and neighborhood

²⁶⁰ NPS, *Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia: general management plan & development concept* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), iii, 49 & 51.

²⁶¹ Urban Development Consortium, *M. L. King Jr. Historic Site / Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program: Final Report Work Document* (October 1985), 1 in Box 96 Folder 3, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records; NPS, *Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia: general management plan & development concept* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), iiv-iv.

groups expressed concern. Thomas Weyandt Jr. of the city's Bureau of Planning found the Urban Design Consortium development proposal in conflict with the park service's plan. With so much mixed-use and retail development, Weyandt feared the areas' national historical designation "might be jeopardized." Weyandt asserted, the "UDC wants to draw parallels between the Sweet Auburn Development and Underground [Atlanta]." Although he did not directly say as much, the sticking point remained whether this type of development was appropriate for the community. Weyandt also questioned the proposed demolition of several buildings, the museum's architectural design, the neighborhood's "glossed over" commercial area, and perhaps most importantly, the "financing and organizational issues." To understand the ramifications, he suggested a comprehensive list of all the buildings and their history for review slated for demolition within the plan. Correspondence between City of Atlanta officials dating to fall 1985 revealed frustration with the Urban Development Consortium because "very little of substance, if anything, has changed since we last commented on their plan."²⁶²

The Auburn Avenue Revitalization Committee (AARC)— John Calhoun as vice president—also criticized the Urban Development Consortium's plan. The neighborhood group asked, "What has happened to the low and fixed income residents in the community that he [the director] helped 'revitalize'?" The AARC asserted the development proposal was simply a "program for gentrification, plain and simple," and drafted a list of formal demands in response. Calling the plan "closely guarded," the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported the biggest issue remained there was not "enough housing to suit residents of the district." The AARC asserted, "the revitalization of that

²⁶² Thomas L. Weyandt Jr. to Ed Armentrout, 13 November 1985 and Thomas L. Weyandt Jr. to Curtis Hall, Office of Economic Development, 24 October 1985 in Box 96 Folder 1, Central Atlanta Progress Records.

racial and historical character should have priority,” and not whether or not, the plan “can attract white upper-middle-income people back to the inner-city.” Asserting Sweet Auburn’s black community had been pushed aside, the AARC insisted the Urban Development Consortium sought to “structure community people out of the process by placing them (maybe) on purely ‘advisory’ not policy making boards.” In response, the group leveled, “We can survive without tourism and regentrification.” The critique was not entirely unfounded. History had shown that African Americans were systematically relegated to “advisory” positions for decades in metro-Atlanta as seen during the Civil War centennial and during the planning of the Stone Mountain carving dedication.²⁶³

The Auburn Avenue Revitalization Committee also took issue with the National Park Service’s General Management and Development Plan, in particular, the relationship with the King Center. The AARC suggested the park service “conduct all guided tours throughout the [National Historic] Site, leading to a culmination point at the [King] Center.” Additionally, it suggested visitors view a film at the King Center’s auditorium after tours and receive a “beautifully designed brochure” with a list of programs and an “envelope for voluntary contributions.” For the neighborhood group, the financial support and inclusion of the King Center remained an important element of any plan. These suggestions echo back to the earlier debates about funding for Ebenezer Baptist Church while the legislation was still under debate.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Cathy Dolman, “Downtown projects creeping along—International Boulevard, Underground under study,” *AJC*, 7 November 1985, A31; Comments on MLK Jr. Historic Site Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program, Box 92 Folder 2, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

²⁶⁴ Auburn Avenue Revitalization Committee “Comments on the M.L. King Jr. Historic Site Auburn Avenue and Adjacent Areas Development Program,” Box 92 Folder 2, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. Records.

Navigating the conflicted demands of the neighborhood organizations, the legislative mandates, and commercial developers hoping to restore economic prosperity and increase tourist traffic proved especially difficult. After no progress had been made, Atlanta City Council President Marvin Arrington—an African American lawyer and longtime councilman—brought the issue before city officials again the next year. As Arrington so acutely argued, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “Parading hundreds of thousands of visitors annually through this corridor of neglect and decay defiles the city’s heritage.” Despite a concerted effort, community redevelopment would not take place on a major scale until the 1990s.²⁶⁵

Black Heritage Preservation and Tourism

In the mid-1980s, the State of Georgia took a greater interest in historic preservation, which coincided with the solidification of the management program at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. In particular, the Department of Natural Resource’s Office of Historic Preservation published a catalog of properties associated with African American history in 1984. The catalog’s editor, Carole Merritt, director of the African American Family History Association, claimed, “African-American history is essential to an understanding of our nation’s development... [but] is often ignored in historic preservation.” According to architectural historian Dell Upton, “the civil rights and black history memorials get caught up in the specifics of local symbolic and patronage politics and of economic development efforts, and particularly in the effort of

²⁶⁵ Donna William Lewis, “Arrington urges black leaders to get behind Sweet Auburn redevelopment,” *AJC*, 6 November 1986, A33. Referencing the 1994 Butler Street/Auburn Avenue Community Redevelopment Plan. For complete coverage of this plan and other revitalization efforts in the area see: Clark, Jesse. “Approaches to the Cooperative Revitalization of Auburn Avenue.” M.A. Thesis, Georgia Technical University, 2011.

Southern urban and regional growth machines to create a new New South.” Upton’s statement especially held true in the case of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and its role within the community along with larger debates about development in Sweet Auburn.²⁶⁶

Despite the recognition of the importance of African American history, the persistence of other imagery in metro-Atlanta detracted from some of these efforts. In 1987, the *Wall Street Journal* lifestyle article “What’s Doing in Atlanta” celebrated Atlanta’s 150th anniversary. The article promoted, in this order: the Cyclorama at Grant Park, Stone Mountain Park with “a reconstructed plantation,” the King Center with exhibits on MLK, and the Martin Luther King National Historic District, which included “the mother church of the Civil Rights Movement.” The article illustrated the complicated—and at times contradictory—nature of heritage tourism enterprises in Atlanta. The revitalization of Sweet Auburn and formation of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site occurred alongside the popularity of Stone Mountain Park and efforts to restore the Cyclorama and save the Crescent Apartments where Margaret Mitchell penned *Gone With the Wind*. Although he was talking more specifically about memorials, architectural historian Dell Upton has argued the realities of economic and political power along with a desire to “avoid alienating large portions of the electorate” explain the complicated nature of the public landscape and commemorative sites. Elected officials, local residents, and tourism promoters had accepted the commemorative of

²⁶⁶ Carole Merritt, *Historic Black Resources* (Atlanta: Historic Preservation Section Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1984), 6; Upton, Dell. *What Can and Can’t Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 17.

Martin Luther King Jr. yet plenty of sites and attractions around metro-Atlanta still perpetuated romanticized imagery of the “Old South” or “southern way of life.”²⁶⁷

By the end of the 1980s, the connection between the preservation of black historical structures and tourism was even more profound. “Not only does historic preservation help tourism,” according to *A Vision for the Future*, the state’s historic preservation handbook, “but tourism aids preservation by building awareness and final support of preservation.” In 1988, tourism generated \$8.56 billion in Georgia, and by 1989, was the state’s second largest industry. Of these tourists, one study indicated that 90 percent favored communities with “authentic historic properties.” The 1989 Georgia Historic Preservation Plan noted, “Preservation must become an issue that more blacks support if it is to succeed in urban areas.” In many ways, this claim mimicked statements by Hosea Williams, who urged local residents to take an interest in revitalization plans for their community. According to human geographers Owen Dwyer and Derrick Alderman, “The placement of civil rights memorials in historically African-American areas mark a point of convergence between the black community’s history and the contemporary promotion of heritage tourism.” In response to the growing awareness of this relationship, the Georgia Office of Historic Preservation formed the Minority Historic Preservation Committee in 1989. The committee sought to increase “public awareness” of African American history in Georgia. A few years later, the National Park Service and Georgia Office of Historic Preservation collaborated to publish an updated

²⁶⁷ Robin Toner, “What’s Doing In Atlanta,” *Wall Street Journal*, 15 March 1987, 643; Upton, *What Can and Can’t Be Said*, 17. For more on the restoration of the Crescent Apartments see: Jennifer W. Dickey, *A Tough Little Patch of History: Gone with the Wind and the Politics of Memory* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2014).

guide to important African American history that recognized both Sweet Auburn and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.²⁶⁸

After the IOC announcement that Atlanta would host the 1996 Olympics, promoting a variety of appealing tourist destinations to potential visitors became especially important. The Department of Trade, Industry, and Tourism's 1990 travel guide *Georgia On My Mind* ran a full-page ad on "Georgia's Black Heritage" with the sole image of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s tombstone. The accompanying article asserted, "The rich, bitter-sweet history of African-Americans weaves a vibrant texture through the fabric of our nation," and furthermore, "the Sweet Auburn Historic District was "the heart and pride of black Atlanta." The article claimed "native Georgia, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. [was] America's 'drum major for justice.'" Overall it advertised several sites in metro-Atlanta including the King Center, Sweet Auburn Historic District, APEX Museum, Hammond House—the home of an art patron with Haitian works—Atlanta University Center, the home of entrepreneur Alonzo Herndon, and the National Black Arts Festival.²⁶⁹

Other initiatives in the early 1990s also sought to promote African American tourism destinations. In 1991, the Atlanta Convention and Visitor Bureau specifically targeted black American tourists, and according to public policy expert Harvey Newman,

²⁶⁸ Tourism state from "Benefits of Historic Preservation," *A Vision for the Future: The Georgia Historic Preservation Plan* (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resource, 1989), 1, 97 & 84; Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*, 79; Carole Griffith, Donna Fuller, Elizabeth Rosser, and Mary Ann Eaddy, editors. *African-American Historic Places and Culture: A Preservation Resource Guide for Georgia*, (Atlanta: Minority Historic Preservation Committee, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1993), V & 55. In 1993, members of the Georgia Minority Historic Preservation Committee included: Linny Bailey, Jackie Edwards, Charlotte Frazier, Isaac Johnson, Phyllis Lowther, Fletcher Muse, Addie Powell, Howard Scott, Janice White Sikes, Carolyn Thomas, Barbara Washington, and Susie Wheeler.

²⁶⁹ "Georgia's Black Heritage," *Georgia On My Mind* (Atlanta: Georgia Hospitality & Travel Association and Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, 1990), 27-28.

even developed an African American visitor's guide titled *Atlanta Heritage*. Newman argued the bureau "increased the attractiveness of the Auburn Avenue area as a tourism destination by highlighting its important role in the history of the Civil Rights Movement." Additionally, the Georgia Power Company and Georgia Humanities Council collaborated to fund a series of posters that were hung at the Capitol Rotunda during Black History Month and a tourist brochure advertising African American historical sites around the state. Due to the confluence of international scrutiny surrounding the forthcoming Olympics and more determined historic preservation efforts, both elected leaders and prominent organizations were more than willing to promote Georgia's native-born civil rights leader and African American history.²⁷⁰

With legislative recognition and increased attention to African American historic preservation, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site increased in popularity. By 1994, it was the third most popular national historic site behind only the Statue of Liberty and Independence Hall in Philadelphia. This increased visitation, however, heightened tensions within the community about what the role of the site, and with it, the park service. In December 1994, conflict quickly escalated between the King Center and the National Park Service over the "Peace Pavilion" visitor center. The King Center had lobbied Congress for funding with the National Park Service for a visitors center but then, Coretta Scott King "suddenly withdrew her support."²⁷¹

Despite years of collaboration, the King family ordered the NPS off the King birth home and tomb site. The hostilities centered around the park service's plan to construct

²⁷⁰ Harvey Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, 232-233; Minority Historic Preservation Committee, *African-American Historic Places and Culture: A Preservation Resource Guide for Georgia*, (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1993), v.

²⁷¹ Elizabeth Levitan Spaid, "Atlanta Avenue of Black Culture to See Rebirth," *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 December 1996; Cynthia Tucker, "Resolve King Center conflict," *AJC*, 21 Jan 1995, A18.

an \$11.8 million visitor center across the street from the King Center in time for the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics. The King family opposed the new visitor center because they wanted to build an interactive museum on that same property, which was owned by the NPS. Additionally, the King family demanded a substantial increase in federal appropriations from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million to maintain the King Center. At a press conference Dexter Scott King, the youngest son of the famed civil rights leader and president-elect of the King Center, stated, “We feel strongly that the heritage of the Civil Rights Movement is too important to be controlled by a government agency which has only superficial familiarity with the internal dynamics of our freedom struggle.” In his statement, King omitted the financial concerns and refocused the dispute around who controls history and its interpretation.²⁷²

The matter even divided Atlanta’s African American community as different leaders and organization took sides. Ebenezer Baptist Church officials sided with the NPS as they had just negotiated a 50-to-100 year land lease in which Ebenezer would get a new sanctuary in exchange for allowing the park service to lease the original church, restore it, and then hold daily tours. Ebenezer Pastor Roberts blamed the allure of potential profits for the King family’s “undemocratic and dictatorial” behavior that was “in violation of the spirit of MLK.” Even Mtamanika Youngblood, executive director of the Historic District Development Corporation, claimed a poll of neighborhood residents would “overwhelming” approve of the NPS’ plans for the visitor center.²⁷³

²⁷² Janis Magin, “King Center Orders Park Service to Leave Property,” *New York Beacon*, 13 January 1995, 13; Cynthia Tucker, “Resolve King Center conflict,” *AJC*, 21 Jan 1995, A18; Ronald Smothers, “King Family Feels Pushed Aside by Park Service,” *NYT*, 23 December 1994, A14.

²⁷³ “Ebenezer Plans New Edifice As King Controversy Rages,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 25-27 December 1994, 4.

The *Atlanta Daily News*, founded in 1928 by one of the neighborhood's own, reported that "many residents and operators in the Auburn Avenue area" felt that "the Kings were wrong in opposing the Nation Park Service's \$11.8 upgrad[e]." The paper chastised the King family for the dispute with the NPS with the headline, "No, no Mrs. King!" The article stated, "they [Coretta Scott King and children] seem determined to push their dream for profits against sharing him, his words, deeds and prophecies with the people he fought for... shame on their selfishness!" In contrast, the editor of the *Atlanta Daily News*, C. A. Scott, widely embraced both federal and local government involvement at the site, which he felt would bring much needed economic development to Sweet Auburn.²⁷⁴

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* also published a series of article about the dispute. Some accused the family of trying to profit off King's legacy. Coretta Scott King shot back at such claims, "Not even for a moment has personal enrichment been a goal of me or my children." She continued, "It seems that the same evil forces that killed Martin Luther King Jr. are now trying to destroy his family." Opinion editor Cynthia Tucker lashed out at the King family. "There was a time when I believed the ... [the King Center] would live up to its promise," Tucker wrote, "But the center is now no more than a 10-minute stop for tourists looking for a symbol of one of the South's most famous sons." Tucker argued, "The center shows little inclination to delve seriously into the problems that confront America" and "shows little interest in the poverty of its own neighborhood." According to Cynthia Tucker, "King's family has done what racism could not do...demeaned his legacy." She claimed the King family wanted to open an "I

²⁷⁴ "Ebenezer Plans New Edifice As King Controversy Rages," *Atlanta Daily World*, 25-27 December 1994, 4; "No, no Mrs. King!" *Atlanta Daily World*, 22-23 December 1994, 4

Have a Dreamland, to make a profit from a Disney-esque trip through the Civil Rights Movement.” While Tucker’s tirade against the King family bordered over the top, the family did intend to build a “high-tech” museum with “virtual-reality technology.”²⁷⁵

In contrast to some of the newspapers that sided with the National Park Service, Dr. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Reverend James Orange, coordinator of the AFL/CIO, both supported the King family. Orange told reporters, “We think the legacy of Dr. King’s dream would much better serve the public and the world, if the King Center and family, and those veterans of the Civil Rights Movement, could tell our story rather than the National Park Service.” Again, Orange made the issue about who controlled history and its interpretation. Lowery admitted he was biased since Martin Luther King Jr. had served as the SCLC’s first president yet he pleaded for all parties to “reason together.” Lowery urged Congressman John Lewis—whose district included the King Center—to arrange a meeting. The city’s other black newspaper, the *Atlanta Inquirer*, denounced the “cruel assault on the King family” and chastised the other local papers that commented on the situation “without even a consultation with the family.”²⁷⁶

State Representative John Lewis held a meeting in an attempt to mitigate the dispute. Dexter King refused to attend claiming Lewis was “not unbiased.” Considering Lewis was a longtime supporter of the historic district and former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee leader, King’s attack seems absurd. Nevertheless, Lewis held

²⁷⁵ Ronald Smothers, “King Family Feels Pushed Aside by Park Service,” *NYT*, 23 December 1994, A14; Cynthia Tucker, “A dream gone astray,” *AJC*, 18 December 1994, G7; Cynthia Tucker, “A dream within grasp,” *AJC*, 15 August 1994, A6.

²⁷⁶ “MLK Center in Dispute with the National Park Service,” *Sun Reporter*, 5 Jan 1995, 4; “Statement from SCLC President Joseph Lowery: The Controversy Over King Center Improvements,” *Atlanta Inquirer*, 31 December 1994, 5.

the meeting and encouraged other Sweet Auburn leaders to attend. In a *New York Times* article about the dispute, civil rights historian David Levering Lewis claimed, “People closest to the legacy are not the most reliable stewards of that legacy [because] they are emotionally invested in an experience and feel proprietary about it.” Perhaps this “emotional investment” in the project explains Dexter King’s rejection of Congressman Lewis and his attempts to reach an agreement.

Nevertheless, in March 1995, the King family and National Park Service finally reached a truce. Disappointed school children unable to go inside the historic buildings convinced Dexter King to negotiate a temporary agreement. As part of this agreement, the park service “was considering resumption” of a \$500,000 maintenance stipend for the King Center and “logistical help” with the private interactive museum.²⁷⁷ Given the City of Atlanta’s near frantic preparations for the 1996 Summer Olympics, having tours of downtown attractions commemorating the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King Jr. once again in order, likely made boosters heave a sigh of relief.

Georgia’s National Park

The revitalization of Sweet Auburn and the development of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site—recently elevated to a national park—reshaped Atlanta’s public landscape and inventory of heritage tourism destinations. In January 2018, when the site was made a National Park, Georgia Congressman John Lewis proclaimed, “I am so proud that we were able to work in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to establish

²⁷⁷ Cynthia Tucker, “Resolve King Center conflict,” *AJC*, 21 Jan 1995, A18; Ronald Smothers, “Issues Behind King Memorial,” *NYT*, 16 January 1995, A1; Ronald Smothers, “King Family, in Truce With Park Service, Reopens,” *NYT*, 5 March 1995, 13.

Georgia's first National Historical Park in Dr. King's name and legacy before what would be his 89th birthday and the 50th anniversary of his tragic assassination."²⁷⁸

For nearly a century, monuments and memorials to the Confederacy had largely dominated the landscape metro-Atlanta absent of African American heritage. According to African American studies scholar Manning Marble, "aspects of American history have often been hidden from plain view because of the power of the past—or at least the power of the popularly perceived past—to shape the realities of our daily lives." But starting in the 1970s, community groups along with local and federal actors came together to solidify the legacy of the famous Georgia born civil rights leader and the once vibrant black-owned business district. The larger revitalization of the Sweet Auburn, however, illuminated a complicated relationship between the demands of various groups that were often at odds. Nevertheless, the establishment of the historic site was an important step to correct this by writing African Americans and the struggle for civil rights into Atlanta's historical narrative, and with this, became a highly promoted tourist destination.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ "H.R. 267 – 115TH Congress: Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park Act of 2017." (Retrieved 9 March 2018) <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr267>; Tamar Hallerman, "Trump signs bill upgrading Atlanta's MLK site," *AJC*, 9 January 2018.

²⁷⁹ Manning Marble, *Living Black History: How Reimagining the African-American Past Can Remake America's Racial Future* (New York: Civitas Books, 2006), 3.

CHAPTER 5

“CITY OF BRASH BOOSTERISM POLISHES ITS IMAGE”: THE 1996
SUMMER OLYMPICS

On Saturday, July 19, 1996, NBC broadcasters Dick Enberg and Bob Costas hosted the 1996 Summer Olympics’ four-hour long opening ceremony in Atlanta. Centennial Olympic Stadium, renamed Turner Field after the Games, attracted a crowd of more than 83,000 for a showcase of southern culture. The opening showcase “Welcome to the World” featured theatrical lights mounted on thirty Chevrolet pickup trucks, five hundred cheerleaders, local marching bands, and nearly two hundred steppers from Clark Atlanta University. Cheerleaders moved about to spell out the message “How Y’all Doin’?” Atlanta native Gladys Knight, a Motown superstar, sang the official state song “Georgia on My Mind.” The *New York Times* reported the one hundred thousand athletes from a record one hundred ninety-seven countries took part in the parade of nations. Former Olympic gold medalist and heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali lit the cauldron, and President William “Bill” Clinton “declared open the Games of Atlanta.”²⁸⁰

William “Billy” Payne, president and CEO of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) asserted the opening ceremony was “the culmination of a

²⁸⁰ Jere Longman, “In Atlanta, Festivities Touched By Sorrow,” *NYT*, 19 July 1996, B13. For a description of ceremony see Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, Chapter 9.

Chapter title quote from Marilyn Milloy, “Hi Y’all: Atlanta and the 1996 Olympics,” Series IV Box 16 Folder 13 George J. Berry Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

decade-long dream.” He continued “It is a dream about sharing the beauty and character of Atlanta and the charming hospitality of the American South with the world.” However, the image of the American South put forth in the opening ceremony was not universally accepted. Anita DeFrantz, both the first female and the first African American to represent the United States on the International Olympic Committee (IOC), noticed the ceremony omitted any reference to the legacy of slavery. But she mused, “I don’t know how you bring it into a celebration of an international event such as the Olympics.” She found it “an acceptable compromise” that no references to *Gone With the Wind* would appear in the ceremony. Others expressed fears that having pickup trucks center stage would only solidify the stereotype of southerners as hillbillies. As one highly critical *Washington Post* reporter eloquently summed up the opening ceremony, “the big show opens with the kitsch of death.” He had expected, “floating above it all, big balloons of Scarlett O’Hara and Rhett Butler. Oh, and a giant inflatable bottle of Coca-Cola.”²⁸¹

The ceremony proudly touted a unified image of Atlanta with African American steppers performing alongside emblems of southern college football. Public policy and urban development scholar Harvey Newman best summarized the presentation stating, “The regional imagery portrayed in the opening ceremony was a vision of a biracial South in a post-civil rights era.”²⁸² The Atlanta Organizing Committee (AOC) promotion of this message did not come about easily though. Politicians, business leaders, and city officials had spent decades producing this vision, one that sought to eliminate

²⁸¹ “The Centennial of the Olympic Games,” 19 July 1996, Series IV Box 168 Folder 1, Zell Miller Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Jere Longman, “In Atlanta, Festivities Touched By Sorrow,” *NYT*, 19 July 1996, B13; Tony Kornheiser, “The Big Show Opens With the Kitsch of Death,” *Washington Post*, 20 July 1996, G01.

²⁸² Harvey K. Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, 276.

uncomfortable issues of race and class that might detract from the promotion of the city to an international audience.

The 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta was a defining moment for the city. Boosters, corporations, and even individual Olympic-enthusiasts along with organizations such as the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce worked to re-package Atlanta as a business paradise and booming tourist empire attractive to not only national but also international visitors all while promoting the city's Confederate past in the post-civil rights South. Internal debates over "self-examination" were hardly novel though as former Fulton County Commissioner Chairman Michael Lomax asserted, "This city hasn't figured out how, at highly visible moments, to talk about its past. Talking about the past winds up being embarrassing, awkward, and it winds up being edited away."²⁸³

The 1996 Summer Olympics promoted an image of southern hospitality and proclaimed the "too busy to hate" mentality. In reality, however, the vision of Atlanta for the games only focused on the sellable qualities—not surprisingly. According to *American Heritage* writer Henry Wiencek, "the visitors who come here for the Olympics this summer won't find Tara. What they will find is a city facing an unusual—and sometimes painful—past with clarity of vision and generosity of spirit." Despite championing an African Americans mayor and African American boosters on the planning committee, only middle and upper-class black interests were really represented as the construction of new Olympic facilities "relocated" many inner-city poor. In a 1993 interview with author Gary Pomerantz, former President Jimmy Carter claimed there was

²⁸³ Jill Sabulis, "Portraying the Old South During the Olympics- To showcase or shelve?" *AIC*, 23 June 1996, D1.

as much a “chasm between the elite blacks and the poverty-stricken ones as there is between the elite whites and poverty-stricken African Americans.”²⁸⁴

Many scholars—and general audience writers—have considered the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter Frederick Allen argued the Olympics was a shining moment for the City of Atlanta to gain recognition as an international metropolis, a title boosters had sought for decades. Drawing on Walt Disney’s terminology, anthropologist Charles Rutheiser claimed officials sought to “imagineer” an urban landscape devoid of issues of race and poverty during the Olympics through the use of federal urban renewal monies and private capital amidst a growing global market. Finally, urban development and public policy scholar Harvey Newman’s chapter “Atlanta’s Olympics and the Business of Tourism” in *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* examined how Atlanta’s leaders used the Olympics “as a means of promoting urban growth.” Through an examination of the Olympics, Newman asserted that civic leaders “promote[d] Atlanta’s image as an international city ready to play an important role in global commerce.” By hosting the Olympics, Atlanta “pushed itself up the next rung on the municipal ladder.” Although Newman’s account examined tourism during the Olympics, he focused more on the “business” aspects such as the legacy of the Olympic Stadium, Underground Atlanta, and Centennial Olympic Park along with the ability of other hospitality businesses to attract other “large-scale tourism events.”²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Henry Wienczek, “The Road to Modern America,” *American Heritage*, Vol. 47, Issue 2 (April 1996); Pomerantz interview with former President Jimmy Carter at Carter Library 18 March 1993, B2 F10 Gary M. Pomerantz papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

²⁸⁵ Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 241; Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (London and New York: Verso, 1996); Starnes, ed., *Southern Journeys*: 215, 216 & 39. Harvey Newman is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Public Management and Policy at Georgia State University.

Other scholars—from an array of different fields—have focused on corporate sponsorships, economic projections and business enterprises, international media representations, and the gentrification of core neighborhoods during the 1996 Summer Olympics. While Preston Queensberry examined the city’s image amidst the extensive media coverage building up to the Olympics, Nancy Rivenburgh considered the importance of international media representation of the city. Also in the *Southeastern Geographer*, Seth Gustagson noted how city officials displaced thousands of African American urban residents, moved homeless, and destroyed urban low-income housing in pursuit of an idyllic environment in preparation for the Olympics. This chapter will move in a different direction by investigating how elected officials, business leaders, and tourism industry officials harnessed the city’s historic past during the Olympics, often to the objection of locals, and at times, even visitors.²⁸⁶

This chapter examines how boosters used over a century of carefully manipulated historical narratives to market the city during the Olympic bid process. The ACOG unsurprisingly highlighted favorable aspects of Atlanta’s past—such as the birthplace of MLK Jr. and renowned “southern hospitality”—instead of realities like the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, the legacy of segregation, and destruction of African American communities.

Although the city’s history helped secure the games, there were many unanticipated—

²⁸⁶ Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 241; Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (London and New York: Verso, 1996); Seth Gustagson, “Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta, 1990-1996,” *Southeastern Geographer* Vol. 53, No.2 (2013): 198-213; Preston Queensberry, “The Disposable Olympics Meets the City of Hype,” *Southern Changes*, Vol. 18 No. 2 (Summer 1996): 3-14; Nancy Rivenburgh, “For the Cinderella of the New South, the Show Just Didn’t Fit: The ‘Most Exceptional’ Games of 1996,” *International Journal of Sport Communication*, Vol.1 (2008): 465-486. Urban and Regional Planners have also considered the impact of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics on public policy, see: Tuna Batuhan, “Olympic Strategy of Downtown Atlanta Business Elites: A Case Study of the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 2015; Eva Kassens-Noor, *Planning Olympic Legacies: Transportation Dreams and Urban Realities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012); “Atlanta and the 1996 Summer Olympics,” in Matthew J. Burbank, Gregory D. Andranovich, and Charles H. Heying, editors. *Olympic Dreams: The Impact of Mega-Events on Local Politics* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001).

like the need to “sanitize” history—and unpleasant consequences—such as the displacement of local residents. Like the Civil War centennial almost half a century prior, Olympic attractions and programming also met criticism regarding the historical appropriateness and commercialization.

Business Elites Bid on the Games

Atlanta’s bid to host the 1996 Olympics stemmed from local attorney and former University of Georgia defensive end William “Billy” Payne. Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young (1982-1990) recalled in an interview how Billy Payne saw *17 [sic] Days of Glory* on television while recovering from a heart attack and “gets the idea, could we bring the Olympics to Atlanta?” The city had previously flirted with the idea of bidding for the 1984 Summer Olympics, but it never got off the ground due to fiscal concerns. The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee responsible for managing the 1984 Summer Olympics had, however, discovered a profitable strategy and ultimately managed a \$233 million surplus.²⁸⁷

Billy Payne convinced longtime friend Peter Candler to join him in the endeavor. Together, they founded the nonprofit Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation (GAAF) in 1987 to persuade other business leaders of the potential benefits of hosting the Olympics. Accordingly, the GAAF sought to promote Atlanta as “an attractive site for big-time amateur athletics.” With the wheels in motion, a group of influential civic and business

²⁸⁷ Andrew Young incorrectly calls the documentary “17 Days of Glory” in the interview but it is really *16 Days of Glory*. Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP 153, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-164; “1996-2006: Atlanta’s Olympic Legacy,” *AJC*, 16 July 2006, C4.

Harvey Newman claimed Payne got the idea after reading about Nashville’s interest in bidding for the games but this contradicts with Andrew Young interview. See Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, 253.

leaders, nicknamed “the Atlanta Nine,” combined forces and financial resources to move the bidding process forward. The all-white “Atlanta Nine” included: Peter Candler, lawyer and descent of Coca-Cola dynasty; Ginger Watkins, a prominent Atlanta philanthropist and Junior League member; Horace Sibley, partner at King and Spalding law firm; Tim Christian, businessmen and former Auburn assistant football coach; Cindy Fowler, founder of *Presenting Atlanta* hospitality firm; Charles H. Battle Jr., a prominent attorney and former president of Central Atlanta Progress; Linda Stephenson, an avid golfer and Junior League member; Charles Shafffer, an attorney and civic leader; and Robert Lee Bobby Rearden Jr., a prominent philanthropist and leader in the insurance industry. Anticipating claims of elitism, Payne defended the group and its mission, “This is not a high-society operation,” and instead, he claimed to have assembled “the broadest cross section of the community.” The “Atlanta Nine” would later take part in all Olympic organizational committees and played a vital role in the production.²⁸⁸

The GAAF understood that bringing influential business leaders and politicians on board would be vital to its Olympic ambitions. Mayor Andrew Young, though, was not an easy sell. He knew the former host city of “Montreal was still \$700 million dollars in debt” after hosting the 1976 Games, and later in an interview, Young recalled, “My staff Shirley Franklin and Jean Duggy and others didn’t want me to even meet with Billy Payne because they said [sic] you Olympic crazy and he might convince you.” Although he was initially skeptical, Payne’s plan to use non-profit corporations instead of public resources to finance and manage facilities—so so-called “private purpose capitalism”—

²⁸⁸ “Chronology of ACOG” in November 1992 Press Information Guide, Folder - Olympics General Info, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives; Dave Kindred, “Local group clings to dream of 1996 Olympics in Atlanta,” *AJC*, 27 Aug 1987, E3; William Oscar Johnson, “The Push Is On,” *Sports Illustrated*, 27 August 1990, Cover Story.

convinced Young. His shift was not entirely surprising since Young had expressed a business-friendly posture since winning the election. “The most important part of my job is creating jobs, and that means we must have private investment.” Young claimed. The Olympics would afford Young and the city to do just that on a global stage and scale.²⁸⁹

The central role of business in the Olympic bidding process echoes back to the long, working relationship between the city’s political leadership and downtown business elite. In his landmark study of public policy decisions in Atlanta, Clarence Stone asserted an “urban regime,” or rather, an informal bi-racial merger of public and private interests, worked together guiding city governance. During the Olympics bid, this alliance became more crucial. Andrew Young’s endorsement was especially important to the bidding process. Barbara Ray, an urban studies professor at Georgia State University, told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “Andy Young is a 20th century Henry Grady” implying Mayor Young was the spokesman for the latest incarnation of the New South. A pastor who had worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference before serving as a United Nations ambassador during the Carter administration, Mayor Young was, in many ways, an African American icon with considerable community influence. His participation was, therefore, essential to the Olympics bid and the continuing success of Atlanta’s “urban regime.”²⁹⁰

The boosters’ chief task was to sell Atlanta to the United States Olympics Committee (USOC) responsible for deciding which American city would be in the running. In a supportive letter to the USOC President Robert Helmick, Georgia Governor

²⁸⁹ Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP 153, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Kenneth Labich, “The best Cities for Business,” *Fortune*, 23 October 1989, 66.

²⁹⁰ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 6; Bert Roughton Jr., “Quest for the Games - Atlanta is engaging in hand-to-hand combat,” *AJC*, 17 December 1989, A1.

Joe Frank Harris (1983-1991) stressed Atlanta's cooperative spirit. He also expressed "confide[nce] that our existing and planned facilities, as well as the Southern hospitality offered by our citizens, would enable us to make the Games ... most successful and memorable."²⁹¹ Harris' statement shows the willingness of city and state leaders to vacillate between Atlanta as an emblem of southern exceptionalism and the American mainstream. To strengthen the chance of securing the United States' nomination, officials emphasized Atlanta's legacy of accommodation in contrast to other southern cities' sordid racial history. Atlanta was not only an important southern city but also a major American city, therefore, perhaps the bid sought to set the city apart from others in both regards.

The Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation (GAAF) drew on well-crafted narratives and stressed Atlanta's reputation as both "the city too busy to hate" and "black mecca." The GAAF produced a video promoting Atlanta to the USOC featuring Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris, Andrew Young, and Martin Luther King III, son of the martyred civil rights leader. Entitled "Live and Dream," the video highlighted the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, MARTA, ample lodgings, and private funding as well as the city's history of hosting large conventions. Throughout the bid process, planners stressed Atlanta's role as the birthplace of famous civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., as well as its reputation for racial moderation. In doing so, planners advanced an image of Atlanta as the epitome of a harmonious bi-racial South. To further demonstrate their dedication to "southern hospitality," the GAAF hand delivered the

²⁹¹ Letter Governor Harris to Robert Helmick 2 Sept 1987 Folder 11 – Frank Harris Olympics (1987) RCB 1510, Georgia State Archives.

bidding materials to the USOC officials in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in September 1987.²⁹²

In January 1988, the USOC Executive Board coincidentally held its annual meeting in Atlanta. This meant one hundred voting members of the USOC visited the city just before the decision was finalized. Governor Harris recalled his wife Elizabeth gave IOC members visiting the governor's mansion souvenir gifts such as a leather-bound copy of *Gone With the Wind* so that they kept "Georgia on their Mind."²⁹³ The visit to Atlanta provided organizers with a unique opportunity to showcase the city's attributes before the USOC Site Selection Committee visited to officially evaluate its existing facilities and infrastructure. The Site Selection Committee judged the city on six categories: organizing ability, quality of venues, hotels, airport, and rapid transit, and ability to handle large numbers of people. Although the city was set to host the 1988 Democratic National Convention, the site selection committee's primary concern remained Atlanta's lack of experience hosting amateur athletic competitions. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that the lobbying efforts of the GAAF's lobbying efforts—especially its willingness to meet with the USOC executive board members, provide first-class plane tickets Delta provided to Atlanta—were especially impressive. Aside from flying officials during the bidding process, Delta—Atlanta's hometown airline—became a Centennial Olympic Games Partner and sponsored several teams.²⁹⁴

²⁹² The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. I. Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1997), 7; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 7.

²⁹³ Joe Frank Harris, *Joe Frank Harris: Personal Reflection on a Public Life* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 211.

²⁹⁴ Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 7; Bud Shaw, "Atlanta wins U.S. nomination for '96 Olympics," *AJC*, 30 April 1988, A1; "Partners and Sponsors" in November 1992 Information Press

Although Mayor Sam Massell (1970-1974) had supposedly “kicked the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce out of City Hall” during his single term in office, the organization still played an important role in public affairs. As journalist Tony Horowitz once stated, Atlanta’s “a crass, brash city built in the image of the Chamber of Commerce and overrun by carpetbaggers, corporate climbers and conventioners.” In January 1988, the chamber passed a resolution authorizing its board of directors to promote the city’s Olympic bid alongside the governor, mayor, and GAAF. That same month, the chamber affirmed the importance of the Olympics because it would aid “the development of tourism as a viable industry.” And of course, bring with it “state and local state revenue, as well as expanded employment opportunities.” At the March 1988 Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce meeting, Anne Duncan, manager of the Atlanta Sports Council division, praised the “business community’s support” during the USOC’s Site Selection Committee visit. She also counseled members to expect calls from the media asking about the organization’s role in the bidding process.²⁹⁵

By the summer of 1988, the chamber had also increased their Olympic-related activities and even drafted a document outlining its organizational strategy and management services. The document proposed expanding the chamber sports department’s funding, staff, and resources to focus on developing Olympic sports.

Guidebook Folder - Olympics General Info, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives; Karen Walker, “Home Run,” *Flight International*, 12-19 June 1996, 29. Delta sponsored teams from Greece, Ireland, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. As part of the sponsorship, Delta agreed to provide 2/3 of its deal through travel and cargo services to the ACOG, thus reducing cash contributions to less than ten million

²⁹⁵ “A City in Crisis: Massell Climbed to Power, Fell as the Guard Changed,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 March 1975, 1A; Tony Horowitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 283; 20 Jan 1988 Board of Directors Atlanta Chamber minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records, MSS 1077, Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center; 12 Jan 1988 Executive Committee minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Minutes 1 March 1988 and 6 October 1988 minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records.

Additionally, the chamber proposed paying for or co-hosting a reception with the GAAF for the IOC that included at least five senior Atlanta business executives. In addition to participating in the Atlanta Olympic delegation trip to 1988 Olympics in Seoul, the chamber would participate in all other delegate events. Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce president Gerald Bartels proposed establishing a subsidiary entity with some autonomy to work on the Olympics bid process. This suggestion ultimately failed, however, after chairman Ronald W. Allen argued, “the Olympics effort not be brought under the Chamber because it may be perceived by the IOC as an attempt to commercialize it.” Instead, the chamber members would continue their support by serving on various advisory boards and committees. In total, the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce helped raise over \$5 million for “worldwide marketing” to secure the Olympics bid.²⁹⁶

The United States Olympic Committee had narrowed down the candidate cities down to Atlanta and Minneapolis-St. Paul by spring 1988. The USOC announced, on April 29, that Atlanta had won the nomination by a 65-42 vote. Atlanta would then compete against five other international cities: Athens, Greece; Toronto, Canada; Manchester, England; Melbourne, Australia; and Belgrade, Serbia—the former Yugoslavia—to host the 1996 Summer Olympics. Many observers considered the Greek capital the odds-on favorite due to the symbolic nature of the 1996 Centennial Games. The first modern Olympic games had been held there in 1896.

Securing the City’s Image on the International Stage

Once the GAAF (Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation) had secured the

²⁹⁶ News Release 18 April 1996, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records.

nomination, it reorganized as the Atlanta Organizing Committee (AOC) in November 1988 and began prepping the city's official bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics. Although the organization remained primarily dependent on volunteers, its top brass included several of Atlanta's most prominent civic leaders. Mayor Andrew Young presided as chairman of the AOC, Bill Payne served as president and CEO, and Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce president Gerald Bartels was secretary. Ginger Watkins, an AOC member and original member of the "Atlanta Nine," praised the "spirit of volunteerism" while noting "the tremendous strength of our people is what makes Atlanta's bid unique." Indeed, volunteer sign-ups reportedly had topped 100,000. Bartels, however, added a note of caution stating, "The biggest challenge now faced is to convince local businesses and state and local government officials that Atlanta should seek the bid." Perhaps Bartel sensed many Atlantans and state officials were still skeptical about pursuing the Olympics given the vast financial expenditure needed up front without any promise of return.²⁹⁷

Billy Payne predicted the bidding process would cost an estimated \$6 million. A tremendous sum, he noted, but it was "considerably less" than other competing cities. Payne also praised both the government and private sectors for "be[ing] so supportive that raising campaign funds has been surprisingly easy." At a January 1990 board meeting, however, he reported the projected bid had increased to \$7 million. To cover the additional costs, a measure was put before the 1989 state legislature to ensure \$250,000

²⁹⁷ Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 2 & 9; "Volunteers Are Key Element of Atlanta's Bid," AOC Magazine, Vol 1. No 2 (1989), Series IV Box 22 Folder 17 James F. (Jim) Martin Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; "Chronology" in November 1992 Press Information Guide Folder - Olympics General Info, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives; 29 Sept 1988 Board of Director minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records.

per year for two years, and at the local level, requested both the City of Atlanta and Fulton County each pay \$125,000 annually for two years to cover the cost of the bid. Even with the added cost, Andrew Young called the Olympics the “next best idea the Chamber invested in” since the “city too busy to hate” slogan. Despite the obvious enthusiasm following the USOC nomination, Alaskan officials issued a warning about the mounting cost arguing that funding did not always translate into success. After all, the city of Anchorage had spent \$2.5 million bidding for the 1992 Winter Olympics but received only five votes in the second round of IOC voting compared to the 25 votes Albertville, France, the winner, received. Anchorage Board Member Dick Angell told Atlanta reporters, “When I look at the Atlanta people, it’s like I’m looking in a mirror. Atlanta’s people are very enthusiastic, but they have no idea what they’re getting into.”²⁹⁸

The scale of the endeavor the city had undertaken, though, had become increasingly obvious by early 1989. At the February 24, 1989 Metro Atlanta Chamber meeting, Phil Humann, executive chairman of SunTrust Bank, requested his colleagues allocate a portion of the Forward Atlanta marketing campaign’s \$1.5 million surplus to “support the Olympic effort.” Launched in 1986, the chamber’s aggressive Forward Atlanta advertising campaign marketed Atlanta as a vibrant business center with tremendous potential for growth, and in many ways, revived the chamber’s original 1920s national campaign that espoused the same ideas. The chamber responded to Humann’s request with a \$300,000 contribution to the bid. Once again highlighting the

²⁹⁸ “A Word with the President,” AOC Magazine, Vol 1. No 2 (1989), Series IV Box 22 Folder 17 James F. (Jim) Martin Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; MAOGA board meeting minutes 19 January 1990 Folder - MAOGA Board Meeting Vol 1 Part 1, DOC7593, Georgia State Archives; “AOC Legislative Matters” enclosure 9 Jan 1989 letter, Folder - AOC folder (1989), RCB 2285, Georgia State Archives; 3 Dec 1990 Board of Director minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Bud Shaw, “Atlanta’s Bid for ‘96 Summer Olympics - Alaskans: Atlanta has no idea what it's getting into,” *AJC* 30 April 1988, A10.

crucial role of the city's business elites in the process to become the Olympic host city, both the official logo and slogan for Atlanta's bid were unveiled at the Chamber's Atlanta boardroom in February 1989. Copeland Designs created the Five A's logo—access, accommodations, ability, athletics, and attitude—for the bid, and the AOC also announced the Olympic theme: “Atlanta and the Olympics: Yes! Partners With the World,” which emphasized Atlanta's reputation as an ideal locale for business. The phrase “partners with the world,” meanwhile, drew on the city's pro-business reputation and positioned Atlanta as an “international” city. Whether or not Atlanta was really an international city remained unclear to observers during the build-up to the Games.²⁹⁹

On February 1, 1990, Atlanta representatives once again hand-delivered the five-volume bid weighing in at fifteen pounds to IOC officials in Lausanne, Switzerland, where Billy Payne also presented a six and a half minute speech. According to the *Broadcasters Handbook*, joining the “roster of other great world cities” and solidifying its image as an international city were Atlanta's chief goals. “As the birthplace of the modern human rights movement,” the bid noted, “Atlanta has the moral vision to express these ideals exceedingly well.” By stressing “the unique heritage and beauty” of the American South, the bid also appeared to support the “myth of southern exceptionalism.” Although the notion of southern distinctiveness had remained a contentious subject for scholarly debate for over a century, Atlanta's Olympic planners embraced that perspective in spite of the larger historical considerations. Historians Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino both rejected the myth and urged scholars to “traverse the regional

²⁹⁹ Executive Committee Meeting 24 Feb 1989, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Forward Atlanta's Accomplishments 1986-1988 in 1988 Minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Atlanta Chamber Report, Vol. XVIII, No 7. 20 Feb 1989, in Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 2.

boundaries” to investigate “deeper currents of American history.” Beyond the issue of southern exceptionalism, it remained questionable whether or not Atlanta was indeed representative of the South. As former Morehouse College president Benjamin E. Mays once claimed, “Atlanta is not the typical South, it is better.” Of course, “better” was and is relative, leaving the precise meaning of May’s statement open to extensive debate. Given the business-civic background of most of the AOC members and their associates, perhaps they were unaware of the pitfalls of branding Atlanta as an icon of southern exceptionalism.³⁰⁰

In fact, Atlanta’s Olympic bid oversimplified several historical realities and trends. The bid conflated the American South with the more the geographically nebulous “Sunbelt.” In a section entitled “Atlanta Today,” the AOC bid noted the city was “leading the resurgence and the ‘Sunbelt,’ as the American South is known.” This overly simplistic statement ignored interregional, or even interstate, differences that have fueled ongoing debates concerning the notion of “two Georgias,” or rather the unequal economic growth between Atlanta and the rest of the state. By the 1990s, geographers

³⁰⁰ Bert Roughton Jr., “IOC receives 5-volume bid, short speech,” 1 February 1990, A1; ACOG, *Broadcasters handbook*, In Georgia berry publications; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2- Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 6; Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, eds. *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bradley R. Rice, “Atlanta: If Dixie Were Atlanta” in *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II*, edited by Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice (Austin: University of Texas, 1983), 31.

For more on the myth of southern exceptionalism see: John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* (Lexington, MA: B.C. Heath & Co, 1972); Francis Butler Simkins, *The Everlasting South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963); Frank Vandiver, *The Idea of the South: Pursuit of a Central Theme* (Chicago: William Marsh Rice for Chicago University Press, 1964); Louis D. Rubin Jr., *The Lasting South: fourteen southerners look at their home* (Chicago: H. Regency Co., 1957); Charles Sellers, *The Southerner as American* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960); John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: the Southernization of Dixie* (New York: Harper’s Magazine Press, 1974); Harry S. Ashmore, *Epitaph for Dixie* (New York: Norton, 1958); McWhiney Grady, *Southerners and Other Americans* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).; Shafer, Byron E. and Richard Johnston. *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006),

Truman A. Hartshorn and Susan M. Walcott identified a “three Georgias” model that included the declining urban core, suburban sprout, and stagnant rural regions. Despite the bid’s proclamations, Atlanta still exemplified the urban-rural divide between the state’s economically vibrant metropolitan capital and its rural, dirt-poor farmers. As historian Jim Cobb has recognized, “Sunbelt Georgia, like its regional neighbors, had a number of areas that remained in the shade.” Post-World War II Atlanta shared more similarities with other large U.S. metropolises with dynamic, service-oriented economies than it did with South Georgia cities like Bainbridge. While the amorphous “Sunbelt” includes parts of the South, the entire “American South” is not in the Sunbelt.³⁰¹

Secondly, the official also cited Atlanta’s complex history. “Atlanta, like the Olympic movement, has struggled to overcome great adversity,” Payne told IOC officials, “but like the Olympic movement, Atlanta is winning the battle.” From the physical devastation the city sustained during the Civil War, the violence the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, and subsequent solidification of racial segregation, and the decades-

³⁰¹ Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2- Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 12; Charles F. Floyd, “The ‘Two Georgias’ Problem,” *Georgia Business and Economic Conditions*, Vol. 45 (March-April 1985), 3-13; Truman A. Hartshorn and Susan M. Walcott, “The Three Georgias: Emerging Realignment at the Dawn of the New Millennium,” *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol. XXXXI, No. 2 (November 2000), 127-150; James Cobb, “Cracklin’s and Caviar: The Enigma of Sunbelt Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No.1 (Summer 1986): 26.

For more scholarship on growth of Atlanta and Sunbelt see: Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston and Mobile 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Ronald H. Bayor, “Atlanta: The Historical Paradox” in *The Atlanta Paradox*, editor by David L. Sjoquist (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000); Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (London and New York: Verso, 1996); Jim Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Bradley R. Rice, “If Dixie Were Atlanta,” in *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II*, editors Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Bruce Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economy Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1982,1993).

long struggle to secure civil rights, the city had indeed experienced “great adversity.” The bid dubbed Atlanta “a gleaming city of hope” arguing it was both “the capital of the New South and the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement.” The AOC’s language continued in the same tenor as to highlight the city’s civil rights legacy, “Atlanta is by no means perfect, but in many ways it embodies the values of human liberty and equality as well as any city on earth.” In the brief portion addressing the city’s history, the bid authors claimed that “embedded in the rich tapestry of Atlanta’s short history are the tragic yet beautiful scenes of *Gone With the Wind* and the eloquently inspiring words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.” It remains unclear whether the term “tragic” refers to the end of GWTW’s iconic plantations like Tara or that the Old South’s entire socio-economic system that was built upon the backs of enslaved African American laborers.³⁰²

Throughout the bidding process, Atlanta’s Olympic planners repeatedly stressed the city’s supposed “southern hospitality.” The five-volume proposal “described Atlanta as a modern city with great expectations” yet also highlighted “the distinct history and culture of the American South.” Promoters sought to win the Olympics by capitalizing on Atlanta’s reputation for Old South charm and hospitality along with the New South’s legacy for business and commerce—two versions of southern identity that rested on a sleight of hand that either omitted or negated histories of race and racism. In the historical section of the bid entitled “When Cotton Was King, Georgia Was Queen,” the writers noted, “the plantation owners of Georgia and the rest of the American South developed an aristocratic lifestyle. But that lifestyle had a dark side that would leave a scar on

³⁰² Bert Roughton Jr., “IOC receives 5-volume bid, short speech,” *AJC*, 1 February 1990, A1; “The Centennial of the Olympic Games,” 19 July 1996, Series IV Box 168 Folder 1, Zell Miller Papers; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2-Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997).

Georgia’s history and would eventually divide the nation in Civil War—for it was based upon a system of slavery that stood in stark contrast to the American promise of equality for all.” This represented one of the few instances that actually mentioned slavery by name. Under the “New South” section, the bid writers claimed *Gone With the Wind* “captured the imagination of the country as it retold the dramatic story of Atlanta’s Civil War fate.” Although the bid authors utilized many well-known elements of Atlanta—and really the state of Georgia—history, they neglected uncomfortable elements that could have been used as a chance to address to unfortunate consequences.³⁰³

In addition to the official the actual bid document, the relationship between the city’s delegates and voting IOC members remained of the utmost importance. The AOC relied heavily on Mayor Young, who possessed ample diplomatic experience as the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, to woo IOC delegates. In fact, he had continued lobbying member nations at the announcement ceremony in the moments before Atlanta was awarded the Olympic games. Young reportedly stressed human rights, pointing out the anthem “We Shall Overcome,” which enjoyed popularity in Africa, originated as a Baptist hymn during the Civil Rights Movement. “The fact is,” Young told the *New York Times*, “at least half the people of our city are of African descent, so when African delegates came and walked down the street, they saw people who looked like back home.” According to Jean-Claude Ganga, President of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, “Without Andy Young, Atlanta could not have made it.” He continued, “We [Congolese] know Andy Young as a leader of black people

³⁰³ The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1 - Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 1997), 6-7; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2- Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 35.

in America, a civil rights leader and an associate of Martin Luther King...His is a hero in my country.” The hard work and dedicated campaigning of Atlanta delegates, especially Mayor Andy Young, paid off.³⁰⁴

To the dismay of Greeks hoping to win the centennial games, the IOC selected Atlanta to host the 1996 Summer Olympics after five rounds of secret ballot voting on September 18, 1990. In the final vote, Atlanta, Georgia, beat out Athens, Greece, 51-35. Despite the symbolic importance of the city as the first host of the modern Games, Athens’ political instability, security problems, and air pollution, as well as the necessity of nearly \$3 billion of infrastructure improvements, hurt their chances. In contrast, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch noted, “When you visit Atlanta, you feel like you’re already in the 21st century.” Maynard Jackson mirrored the sentiment in a subsequent interview, “I always knew that if we ever went head-to-head with Athens, that it was gonna be Atlanta. Because we could handle it... We became convinced that the IOC was motivated for Athens for sentimental reasons, but not on the practical side.” Even President George H. W. Bush hailed the decision as “a resounding vote of confidence in the United States and the future of the modern Olympic Games.”³⁰⁵

Highlighting the significance of winning the Olympics bid, *Fortune* writer John Huey wrote, “Not since Sherman marched through Georgia has one event so altered the landscape of Atlanta.” Delta Airlines CEO Ronald W. Allens and executive vice

³⁰⁴ Ed Hinton, “Atlanta’s Bid for ’96 Summer Olympics - Group’s next goal is selling Atlanta to other countries - Making international bid could cost Georgia planners at least \$5 million,” *AJC* 30 April 1988, A10; Steven Weisman, “Atlanta Selected Over Athens for 1996 Olympics,” *NYT*, 19 September 1990, A1.

³⁰⁵ Steven Weisman, “Atlanta Selected Over Athens for 1996 Olympics,” *NYT*, 19 September 1990, A1; 3 December 1990 Board of Director minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records; Pomerantz interview with Maynard Jackson, 23 February 1992, Box 4 Folder 2, Gary M. Pomerantz papers; George Bush: “Proclamation 6193—Atlanta: Olympic Host City Day, 1990,” October 3, 1990. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project* <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=1899>.

president W. Whitley Hawkins congratulated Mayor Young. Delta executives ensured the city would “continue to have the full support,” and that the company “enthusiastically look[ed] forward to preparing our city to host the world’s most prestigious sporting event.” Despite the hefty price both in terms of man-hours and hard currency, Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce member Bob McCullough concurred, “there was no question that hosting the Olympics would catapult Atlanta into the next century.”³⁰⁶

For most of the twentieth-century, the “Atlanta Way” signified a tendency towards bi-racial cooperation and conciliatory politics in the name of the larger good of the city. In his booklet praising the city, former Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. stated, “It seems certain that [Atlanta] will maintain and probably increase its leadership in southern business, industry and trade...as well as culture. It is more than the capital of Georgia... it is the capital of the Southeast.” Continuing this idea, *Fortune* magazine’s John Huey attributed the city’s Olympic success to the “Atlanta Way.” Drawing on the legacy of the “Atlanta Way,” Huey stated, “Blacks and whites cooperate in an unlikely but mutual self-interest that is unique among the world's large cities... played out over and over every day—but never with more impact than during the competition to stage the Olympics.”³⁰⁷

On December 3, 1990, the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors honored the AOC for their diligent efforts securing the Olympics. Former Governor George Busbee (1975-1983) praised Ivan Allen and Jack Rogers, whose successful fundraising campaigns made the bid possible. After receiving a standing

³⁰⁶ John Huey, “The Atlanta Game Against All Odds, This Sunbelt Hustler Snagged The Olympics By Selling Itself As a Third World City,” *Fortune*, 22 July 1996; Delta to Andrew Young 19 Sept 1990 Box 342 Folder 10, Andrew J. Young Papers; Bud Shaw, “Atlanta wins U.S. nomination for '96 Olympics,” *AJC*, 30 April 1988, A1; 6 October 1988 executive committee minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records.

³⁰⁷ John Huey, “The Atlanta Games,” *Fortune*, Vol. 134, No. 2 (22 July 1996), 43; “Atlanta Way” first appeared in Louie Newton article *City Builder* (Atlanta: Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 1925) on microfiche at UGA Libraries; Allen, *The Atlanta Spirit*, 24.

ovation from the crowd, Billy Payne stated, “Now that the Olympic dream has been realized, we must not just divide the spoils of victory but rather share the opportunities.” Payne also asserted that the Olympics provided an opportunity to “demonstrate to the world that it is a caring community that works together hand in hand, where the rich take care of the poor, where the public and private sector work together.” While a worthy cause, controversies that developed over the course of the Olympics made many question whether the city did indeed care about the poor. For instance, the official bid document could have addressed the legacy of slavery that had persisted into the twentieth-century by way of systemic poverty and the lengthy struggle for civil rights.³⁰⁸

Within six months of the IOC’s announcement that Atlanta won the hosting gig, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) was to be established with the responsibility of staging the Games. In January 1991, the ACOG incorporated as a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt “social welfare” organization to “foster national and international amateur sports competition and to organize and conduct the [Olympic] Games.” The ACOG included many familiar names from the business-civic community. Billy Payne served as president and CEO; Robert M. Holder Jr., of Holder Corporation and its subsidiary Holder Construction, and Andrew Young were co-chairs; Ginger Watkins, an Atlanta public relations expert, worked as chief of staff; Charles Battle Jr., a prominent attorney and former president of Central Atlanta Progress, was executive vice president of external relations; and Adolphus Drewery “A.D.” Frazier Jr., a former lawyer for C&S Bank, manager of President Jimmy Carter’s White House reorganization

³⁰⁸ 3 Dec 1990 Board of Director minutes, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce records.

team, and the first chairman of Georgia Public Broadcasting, served as the chief operating officer.³⁰⁹

The very same day it was incorporated, ACOG entered the Tri-Party Agreement with the City of Atlanta and Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Authority (MAOGA)—tasked with overseeing the construction of Olympic Stadium. The agreement outlined oversight and financial responsibilities. Though perhaps most importantly, the agreement indemnified MAOGA, the city of Atlanta, and the state from “any Games-related financial responsibilities.” It also specified that 50 percent of surplus processed to benefit a local non-profit youth foundation. Thus, the financial burden fell to the ACOG, which would rely on sponsorships to help offset the cost of hosting the games. Just a few months after the ACOG formed, attorney R. William Ide III wrote to Robert Holder, Andrew Young, William Porter and Horace Sibley about its members and mission. Ide noted that a “member’s perspective on a particular issue may be driven by the constituency of that individual, be it the City of Atlanta, the State of Georgia, the IOC, the USOC or management.” He maintained, “there certainly is nothing wrong with competing interests and perspectives being brought to bear to help reach the best decision.” Both the legal agreement and the correspondence with the lawyer reveal a fraught relationship between Atlanta and officials at both the local and state level.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 16-18; “Organization Chart” from November 1992 Press Information Guide, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia State Archives. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for the ACOG included: Co-Chairman Andrew Young and Robert M. Holder Jr.; President William Porter Payne; Mayoral Appointees R. William Ide III and Raymond J. McClendon; President of the USOC Robert H. Helmick; IOC Member Anita DeFrantz; and Board Appointees Ronald L. Krise and Ginger T. Watkins.

³¹⁰ Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 1- Planning and Organizing (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 18; City of Atlanta Progress Report, Readying Atlanta for the 1996 Olympics, 1993 Series IV Box 46 Folder 33, James F. (Jim) Martin Papers; Letter 19 April 1991 Box 342 Folder 10, Andrew J. Young Papers.

Overcoming the “Bubba Games” Stereotype

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy, who *New York Times* dubbed the “oracle of redneckness,” wrote a parody of Atlanta playing host to the Summer Olympics. In his comedy sketch with country superstar Alan Jackson, Foxworthy referred to the 1996 Atlanta Olympics as the “Redneck Games,” and stated, “God, you know we’re going to screw that up.” According to Foxworthy’s routine “when they let those doves go at the opening ceremony there are gonna be guys in the parking lot with shotguns.” He continued, “we will not have a flame that big without a pig on it.” He reiterated, “be prepared to watch the wildest show.” Warner Brothers, Foxworthy’s record company, even put up a billboard at North Avenue and Juniper Street to advertise his new CD “Games Rednecks Play.” Though humorous and light-hearted in nature, Foxworthy’s comedy skit is emblematic of how many, not only in America but also internationally still thought of Atlanta.³¹¹

After the IOC announced Atlanta would host the 1996 Summer Olympics, speculation swirled about the city’s aptitude. The ACOG had to contend with several problematic visions including the legacy of racism, the persistence of the Lost Cause imagery, and more generally, the misconception of the South as backwards. For instance, one journalist speculated, “The ‘Bubba Games’ were born.” A Canadian CTV commemorator stated, “Atlanta, of course, won’t have the majestic mountains, the spires, the coastlines that have enthralled the television viewers the world over.” More recently, scholar S. Zebulon Baker discovered contrasting media representations of the Atlanta Olympics “digitally preserved” on the worldwide web depicted a struggle between “the

³¹¹ Rick Bragg, “Added Game for Atlanta: Define (Find) a Redneck,” *NYT*, 21 July 1996; Jeff Foxworthy with Alan Jackson, *Redneck Games* (Warner Brother Music Group, 1996). <http://www.top40db.net/lyrics/?SongID=96219> (Accessed 18 March 2018)

regional identity versus a national one” along with the “national one versus international [identity].” As John Huey so aptly stated in *Fortune*: “When it comes to overheated imagery, teaming Atlanta and the Olympics is like pouring gasoline on a house fire.”³¹²

Criticisms regarding race relations in the media and from the public at large were especially difficult to overcome. Gary Skarka, a former Atlanta resident, wrote a scathing editorial published in the *South China Morning Post* of Hong Kong. Skarka denounced Atlanta’s suitability as Olympic host, proclaiming, “There is only one compliment I can give Atlanta, their chamber of commerce, marketing people, whoever, are very good at selling a myth.” Skarka referenced the Ku Klux Klan rallies held at Stone Mountain, and claimed, the “Olympics are being held in the biggest cradle of racism there ever was.” His criticism highlights perhaps the great irony of the entire Olympics. The city known for author Margaret Mitchell’s mythical Tara and the carving at Stone Mountain commemorating Confederate leaders would represent the American South, and the United States at large, on an international stage.³¹³

Not all business leaders were blind to such appraisals and some urged planning officials to float an alternative image of the city. Public relations executive Bob Cohn wrote to Governor Zell Miller (1991-1999) about spinning the Olympics in Atlanta’s favor. Cohn suggested the ACOG put forth a “strategic vision” that centers on the state’s “rich transportation heritage.” Once a regional railroad hub, Atlanta, the bid touted, now had the “world’s largest and busiest airport” along with the “finest interstate highway

³¹² Melissa Turner, “Inside the ’96 Olympics; One Man and His Mascot; ‘Bubba Games’ are Christened as Payne’s Whatizit Becomes Symbol of Ridicule,” *AJC*, 9 August 2000, 1A; Nancy Rivenbugh, “For the Cinderella of the New South, the Show Just Didn’t Fit,” 468; S. Zebulon Baker, “Whatquzwit?: The 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics Reconsidered,” *Southern Spaces*, 21 March 2006. <https://southernspaces.org/2006/whatwuzit-1996-atlanta-summer-olympics-reconsidered>; John Huey, “The Atlanta Game,” *Fortune*, 22 July 1996, 42.

³¹³ “Racist Atlanta Unfit to Host the Olympics,” *South China Morning Post* [Hong Konh], 23 July 1996, 16.

system in the American South.” Though mostly praiseworthy, Cohn’s lengthy letter claimed the image of both the city and state “has evolved haphazardly.” The haphazard claim is especially striking since boosters had spent decades, if not a century, meticulously crafting Atlanta’s image. Nevertheless, Cohn looked to the future and recommended building on the major telecommunication companies such as CNN, AT&T, National Data Corporation and Sprint headquartered in the city to bolster the notion of Atlanta as the heart of the “transportation of information.” Since the 1960s, urban economic growth and major transportation networks allowed Atlanta to become a major corporate headquarters. Considering the official bid boasted a “state-of-the-art fiber optic line” would unite Olympic venues and the central media center, Cohn’s plan had merit. He even proposed a new slogan, Atlanta as the “Communication Center of the Information Age.”³¹⁴

Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority Chairman George Berry also proposed a guiding vision for the Games in hopes that the Olympics could reflect well on the city. After traveling to Barcelona for the 1992 Games, Berry was especially aware of the “anti-southern bias” not only in America, but also around the world. Berry feared Atlanta, “a modern commercial city, could not, in my mind, hope to compare favorably.” Shortly after that visit, Berry penned “A Theme for Atlanta for 1996.” The document was originally printed anonymously due to differences between Billy Payne and Berry. According to Berry, “organizers of the Games, the people who actually had the vision for

³¹⁴ Letter Bob Cohn to Zell Miller, 6 Jan 1992, Series III Box 14 Folder 10, George J. Berry Papers; Bid Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2- Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 13; Susan M. Walcott, “Corporate Headquarters in Metropolitan Atlanta, 1960-1997: A Region Comes of Age,” *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol. XXXXI, No. 2 (November 2000), 193-208; Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games*, Vol. 2- Centennial Olympic Games (Atlanta: Peachtree, 1997), 34.

the bid, fe[lt] very much apart from the primarily African-American political leadership of the City.” C. Richard Yarbrough, managing communication director for the ACOG, mimicked that notion in an interview in which he called the city’s administration “very very poor” and “very uncooperative.” Aside from Andrew Young, middle-aged white men filled the ranks of most Olympic planning entities leaving Berry to assert that Payne’s leadership was kept “inside the fences.” Both Berry and Yarbrough exposed the troublesome relationship between City of Atlanta officials and the business-civic minded leaders spearheading the bid.³¹⁵

In “A Theme for Atlanta for 1996,” George Berry recommended focusing on Atlanta’s historic role as the home to civil rights icon MLK Jr. because he believed the theme of racial and ethnic strife was above criticism. Berry juxtaposed the “old Atlanta” of the Confederacy and *Gone with the Wind* with the “message of new Atlanta [that] is harmonious human relations.” The idea of “harmonious human relations” pervaded his account. Berry noted, “the modern history of Atlanta is personified by the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.” along with other Georgians such as Mayors Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson. Though by highlighting such important African American figures, he was aware that some might view this solely as a “black theme.” He made it clear, however, that “all races and ethnic groups should be included.” Robert Goizueta, of Coca-Cola and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, especially criticized Berry’s proposal. According to Goizueta, “under the surface racial and political problems did not serve to hold itself out as an example of racial harmony.” For Goizueta, Atlanta’s coveted

³¹⁵ George Berry (2013), Series III Box 14 Folder 10, George J. Berry Papers; Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP 150 – C. Richard Yarbrough, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641.

race relations were only a charade, and in reality, “the substance was such that it could not be presented as an example to the world.”³¹⁶

The attempts to distill Atlanta into a slogan ahead of the Olympics only exacerbated growing tensions. Mocking Atlanta’s long history of boosterism, *USA Today* reporter Tom Watson claimed the city’s new slogan should be “Sounds Crazy Enough, Just Might Work.” The ACOG did not heed the advice and released two official options: “Atlanta: The Next Great City” and “Atlanta: Hometown of the American Dream.” Journalists ridiculed the notion of Atlanta as the “American dream” because the city “teems with too many housing projects.” By 1990, the U.S. Department of Commerce reported 35 percent of African Americans in the city lived below the poverty line compared to just 9.7 percent of white residents. In 1995, the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau announced the official Olympic slogan “Atlanta. Come Celebrate the Dream.” Much like a century prior, city boosters decided to support a largely fictitious slogan that reflected wishful thinking about how officials wished others perceived Atlanta rather than reality. Ultimately negotiations between powerful business leaders, boosters, and city officials had made the 1996 Summer Olympics a reality.³¹⁷

A City “Too Busy To Care”: Downtown Commercialization

While Atlanta’s infrastructure helped secure the Olympic, local planners continued to advertise the city as leader of the New South’s pro-business legacy. In fact, *Fortune* voted Atlanta the “Best City in America for Business” in 1991. Many of the

³¹⁶ A Proposal to Establish a ‘theme’ for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Series IV Box 15 Folder 9, George J. Berry Papers; George Berry (2013), Series III Box 14 Folder 10, George J. Berry Papers

³¹⁷ David Sjoquist, *The Atlanta Paradox* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 31; “Tom Watson, “Another chance for Atlanta to glory in its can-do image,” *USA Today*, 20 July 1996, 15A; Aim Slogan at Atlantans,” *AJC*, 16 October 1996, A12; POVERTY. “Dream of a slogan for ’96,” *AJC*, Feb 1995, A1.

elements Olympic planners sought to highlight—modernization, business friendly environment, innovative transportation systems, and quality of life—are some of the very elements scholars have considered vital to the Sunbelt’s development. Yet by the 1990s, the inner city faced reputation issues. The Central Business District descended into a “zone of discard” as businesses left the physically decaying downtown landscape for the new prosperous suburbs. The same year Atlanta achieved its coveted recognition from *Fortune* as a great place for business, two icons of downtown closed: Rich’s Department store and the Citizens and Southern National Bank offices. To urban planners, these closures only confirmed the decline of “metropolitan hegemony.” The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) hoped the projected 77,000 jobs and \$5 billion the Olympics would pump into the state economy would ameliorate downtown. Many leaders saw the Olympics as an opportunity to revitalize downtown not only for the short-term influx of international visitors but with substantial changes that would benefit Atlanta long after the games were over.³¹⁸

The 1.5-mile imaginary circle radiating from the World Congress Center, known as the “Olympic Ring,” became a focal point. More than half of all the sporting events and many spectator hotels were located within the Olympic Ring. This ring, however, encompassed many of the city’s poorest residents. Of the sixteen neighborhoods within the Olympic Ring, a planning agency reported that 92 percent of residents were African American and 79 percent had an annual income of less than \$20,000. The physical appearance of downtown along with the reputation for crime and sordid characters was

³¹⁸ John Huey, “Best Cities for Business,” *Fortune*, Vol. 124, No. 11(4 November 1991), Cover Story/52; Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 176; Christopher B. Leinberger and Charles Lockwood, “How Business is Reshaping America,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 1986); Steven P. French & Mike E. Disher, “*Atlanta and the Olympics: A One-Year Retrospective*,” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (1997), 379-392.

especially troublesome to planners concerned about image and welcoming unprecedented numbers of international visitors. The Atlanta City Council approved plans to revitalize several neighborhoods including Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Butler Street/Sweet Auburn, Peoplestown, and the Old Fourth Ward. For many urban residents, revitalization plans evoked fears of displacement through gentrification. For the majority black residents of Mechanicsville, Summerhill and Peoplestown this fear proved true with the construction of Olympic Stadium—renamed Turner Field after the Games. Despite these concerns, a Coca-Cola spokesman claimed the company helped improve three “displaced shelters” and “contributed to the continued revitalization of downtown Atlanta.”³¹⁹

As part of the build up to the Olympics, the Atlanta City Council also enacted several so-called “anti-homeless ordinances,” making it illegal to walk in a parking lot unless you own a car, outlawing aggressive panhandling, and entering vacant buildings. Reportedly 9,000 homeless people were illegally arrested in Atlanta between 1995 and 1996. Though Billy Payne maintained the city cared about the poor, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* summarized, “it is a crime to be poor in Atlanta.” The community-action group, Olympic Conscience Committee reported that shelters turned away on average of 50-100 people, “who came to Atlanta with an Olympic dream but were too poor to sustain themselves.” Flyers for the community group played off the city’s infamous motto stating the games were an opportunity “to demonstrate that this city is not too busy to care for its poor and homeless citizens.” Even former President Jimmy Carter recognized the city’s divide though. In an interview, Carter stated, “Atlanta is two cities.

³¹⁹ Steven P. French & Mike E. Disher, “*Atlanta and the Olympics: A One-Year Retrospective*,” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (1997), 385 & 388; “Coke’s Hometown Olympics,” *NYT*, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/03/28/business/coke-s-hometown-olympics-the-company-tries-the-big-blitz-on-its-own-turf.html>

You've got one city that is in the elite and obviously Maynard Jackson is in that category—and you've got another Atlanta that we don't basically want to acknowledge that is there.”³²⁰

Claims that the City of Atlanta and ACOG did not really care about the poor only increased when plans for the Olympic Village became public knowledge. Finding a suitable location within the Olympic Ring to house the 16,500 athletes and coaches as stipulated by the host city contract proved daunting. After investigating several alternative designs, the Atlanta Housing Authority, the City of Atlanta, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ACOG and Georgia Tech settled on a solution that would eliminate Techwood, the nation's oldest low-income public housing complex. Located adjacent to Coca-Cola's headquarters, Techwood would be eliminated to make way for athlete housing, known as Olympic Village, which would become dorms for Georgia Tech after the Games. Reports on the condition of Techwood conducted in the late 1980s referred to the neighborhood as “Powder Alley” due to the influx of crack cocaine and turf battles between local gangs. After the ACOG released plans to build the \$100 million Centennial Olympic Park nearby, the crime-infested public-housing neighborhood became even more of a liability.³²¹

³²⁰ “Olympic Weekly—Your Olympic Connection,” *AJC*, 15 September 1995, D2; Gusagson, “Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta 1990-1996,” 199; Atlanta Conscience Committee letter to Billy Payne 14 Jan 1991, Series VI Box 27 Folder 30, James F. (Jim) Martin Papers; Flyer, Atlanta Conscience Committee, Series VI Box 27 Folder 30, James F. (Jim) Martin Papers; Pomerantz interview with former President Jimmy Carter at Carter Library 18 March 1993, Box 2 Folder 10 Gary M. Pomerantz papers.

³²¹ Master Plan, Series IV Box 35 Folder 34, James F. (Jim) Martin Papers; Larry Keating and Carol A. Flores, “Sixty and Out: Techwood Homes Transformed by Enemies and Friends,” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (March 2000), 286 & 297. For more on Techwood see: Frank Ruechel, “New Deal Public Housing, Urban Poverty, and Jim Crow: Techwood and University Homes in Atlanta,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No.4 (Winter 1997), 915-937; Larry Keating and Carol A. Flores, “Sixty and Out: Techwood Homes Transformed by Enemies and Friends,” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (March 2000), 275-311.

Against the objection of the residents, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* announced the detailed plan would convert 1,195 low-income housing units in Techwood-Clark Howell into 800 luxury mixed-income units. Despite this plan, the Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA), tasked with redevelopment, promised to “spread the benefits from the Olympics to poor neighborhoods.” After the Olympics, scholars reported only seventy-eight of the original residents returned to the redeveloped site known as Centennial Place. The creation of the Olympic Village solved two of planners’ problems—adequate athlete housing and the perception of crime and drug activity in the city’s central business district. The elimination of low-income public-housing and downtown neighborhood revitalization in combination with policies to remove the homeless only exacerbating longstanding racial tensions within the city and reaffirmed claims that officials sought to eliminate the city’s African American residents.³²²

Aside from considering an expansion to its corporate headquarters on five acres adjacent to the Techwood-Olympic Village site, Coca-Cola also embarked on other projects within the downtown business district. Less than a year after the announcement that the Olympics would come to Atlanta, the World of Coca-Cola opened in Underground Atlanta in August of 1990. Coke opened a \$15 million “monument to itself” spanning three-stories and 45,000 square feet. Guests could explore floors of Coke

³²²Larry Keating and Carol A. Flores, “Sixty and Out: Techwood Homes Transformed by Enemies and Friends,” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (March 2000), 291 & 301; Steven P. French and Mike E. Disher, “Atlanta and the Olympics: A One-Year Retrospective,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* (Summer 1997), 385. Several scholars have considered the implications of revitalization, and urban redevelopment for the Olympics on the downtown landscape. For a detailed analysis see Seth Gustagson, “Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta, 1990-1996,” *Southeastern Geographer* Vol. 53, No.2 (2013), 198-213; Ronald Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), xiv; Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (London and New York: Verso, 1996).

memorabilia on a self-guided tour that ended, of course, in a shop full of merchandise available for purchase. Underground Atlanta also boasted a public information gallery known as the Olympic Experience. Between September of 1991 and 1992, approximately 250,000 people visited the Olympic Experience and took part in the growing enthusiasm surrounding the upcoming games.³²³

Since 1928, Coca-Cola had been a continuous sponsor of the Olympics and paid the IOC \$40 million to become an international partner and official soft-drink company of the 1996 games. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* claimed Coke suffered an “institutional crisis,” however, and struggled to determine “how much or how little it should do, how visible or how subtle its presence” during the Games. Even if that were the case, a large part of the company’s \$1.3 billion advertising budget for 1996 would be geared towards the Olympics. Coca-Cola Chief Marketing Officer, Sergio Zyman, noted, “We are utilizing the Olympics to enhance the value of our brands and the value of our investment.” The company even paid 1/3 of their headquarters staff, or about 900 people, to volunteer during the Olympics. “While it’s true that Coke can come on like a July thunderstorm,” reporter Jim Auchmutey explained, “many people here take a measure of pride in the fact that this city more or less created a money tree.” The Olympics created an opportune moment to capitalize on media attention and increased visitors to the city.³²⁴

³²³ Keating and Flores, “Sixty and Out: 293-294; Paula Crouch Thrasher, “A Coca-Cola Classic,” *AJC*, 28 July 1990, L22; “Communication/Image” November 1992 Press Information Guide, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives.

³²⁴ Glenn Collins March, “Coke's Hometown Olympics; The Company Tries the Big Blitz on Its Own Turf,” *NYT*, 28 March 1996; “Coke’s Olympic balancing act,” *AJC*, 22 Jan 1995, A1; Glenn Collins March, “Coke's Hometown Olympics; The Company Tries the Big Blitz on Its Own Turf,” *NYT*, 28 March 1996; Jim Auchmutey, “Atlanta Games - Day 2 – City – Close Up – Heritage,” *AJC*, 20 July 1996, S34.

In May 1996, the hometown beverage giant set up a 12-acre corporate theme park named Coca-Cola Olympic City adjoining Centennial Park. The \$20 million park featured an IOC museum displaying memorabilia alongside the gigantic red Coke bottle and interactive games. For instance, visitors could experience what it was to like to be an Olympian by racing against a virtual athlete, partake in the ever-popular pin trading, or watch a live performance in the amphitheater while waiting for an athlete appearance. According Marketing Director of Coca-Cola Olympic City, Rich De Augustinis, “It was the quintessential way for Coca-Cola to welcome the world to our home — and to share the world of the Olympics with our hometown.” Though not an official Olympic venue, its close proximity to downtown and long hours of operation made it especially appealing. In fact, Coke reported nearly 800,000 tourists visited Olympic City, making it one of the most popular sites within the Olympic Ring.³²⁵

Although Atlanta’s legacy as a leader in commerce helped the city secure the Olympic bid, the brash commercialism quickly became a point of contention for many commentators. Some critics called the Games the “Coca-Cola Olympics.” Others deemed the Games “uniquely and unabashedly American,” or rather, “an overgrown state fair, a hodgepodge of vendors and oversized corporate logos.” The assessment was not entirely without merit. Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell (1994-2002), as C. Richard Yarbrough recalled, “instituted sidewalk vendors which clogged up the streets downtown and were a disaster.” One Canadian IOC member claimed the street vendors “destroy the look of the

³²⁵ Jay Moyle, “Coca-Cola Employees Remember '96 Atlanta Olympics,” 22 July 2016. <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/coke-employees-remember-96-atlanta-olympics> (Accessed 14 March 2018)

Today “Olympic City” is known as Pemberton Place and is home of the World of Coca-Cola, the Georgia Aquarium and the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Games.” Mocking the constant drive for prosperity, one comment to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* editor suggested “A Dancing Dollar Sign” would make a fine mascot.³²⁶

While the ACOG did not heed the advice, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* solicited suggestions. Proposals included the famed Uncle Remus character Br'er Rabbit, Phoebe the Phoenix in honor of the city's mascot, and of course, a Georgia peach.³²⁷ As soon as Billy Payne unveiled the ACOG's choice at the closing ceremony in Barcelona, ridicule ensued. The blue computerized mascot named Watizit with high top sneakers did not fare well with the public. International commentators struggled to describe the mascot. The Greek media mistakenly called Watizit an astronaut, the Korean media called it “antlike,” and the Mexican media called it a cross between a worm and insect. After such a poor reception the ACOG revamped the mascot to look more like a “dashing and daring cartoon figure” complete with a new name, Izzy. Although designing a mascot representative of Atlanta's many attributes proved difficult, the amorphous mascot neglected all the historical narratives that officials had been so eager to highlight throughout the entire planning process.³²⁸

³²⁶ Glenn Collins March, “Coke's Hometown Olympics; The Company Tries the Big Blitz on Its Own Turf,” *NYT*, 28 March 1996; Jennifer Frey, “A Curtain Call in Atlanta,” *The Washington Post*, 5 August 1996; Reflections on Georgia Politics Oral History Collection, ROGP 150 – C. Richard Yarbrough, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602-1641; Jere Longman, “In Atlanta, Festivities Touched By Sorrow,” *NYT*, 19 July 1996, B13; Bert Roughton, Jr., “In Search of the 1996 Olympics mascot; from peaches to pigs—Atlantans mull choices,” *AJC*, 31 July 1991, A1.

³²⁷ November 1992 Information Press Guide, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives; Bert Roughton, Jr., “In Search of the 1996 Olympics mascot; from peaches to pigs—Atlantans mull choices,” *AJC*, 31 July 1991, A1; “Communications/Image” in November 1992 Information Press Guide, Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives.

³²⁸ Rivenburgh, “For the Cinderella of the New South, the Show Just Didn't Fit,” 471; “The great adventures of Izzy,” *Parade Magazine* (24 October 1993), 16.

Sanitizing the “New South”

Aside from using the Olympics to champion the city’s “international” standing, Governor Zell Miller hoped to translate the Olympics into tourism success. Before a crowd at the White House Tourism Conference Miller explained the games are “Our chance to get the State of Georgia on the lists and in the minds of travel agents and travelers all over the globe.” Miller likened the Olympics to the 1895 Cotton States Exposition as a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.” Andrew Young told the Metro Chamber of Commerce “this is a time of consolidation of our identity to the rest of the world, of bringing out future vision into focus.” Drawing on the city’s long history of boosterism and slogan, it seems that Young was already looking for the next great slogan. Though Olympic and city planners had carefully manipulated the city’s past into well-crafted narratives, they were unable to control unofficial venues and individuals who seized the opportunity to cash in on the crowds.³²⁹

In the months leading up to and during the games, the ACOG hosted many official events for tourists such as the multidisciplinary Olympic Arts Festival. The festival boasted exhibitions, performances, and the outdoor Southern Crossroads festival in Centennial Olympic Park. The festival’s goals were two-fold: to bring first-class international talent into the region and to showcase the American South as it is today. While shuttles took visitors to Stone Mountain Park—it was the official cycling, archery, and rowing venue as well as home to the famous Confederate monument—the Olympic Arts Festival guide also had directions to the Atlanta Cyclorama—the panoramic painting

³²⁹ “Remarks by Governor Zell Miller White House Tourism Conference, 12/7/94” Series IV Box 69 Folder 247, Zell Miller Papers; Southern Celebration: Visions of the American South,” Governor - Intergovernmental Relations - Subject Files, 1987-1990, RCB 35854, Georgia Archives; Board of Director minutes, 14 December 1995, Metro Chamber of Commerce records.

of the Civil War's Battle of Atlanta. The Olympic Art Festival sought to illuminate the diversity of southern culture with concerts ranging from country to jazz and gospel. The festival guide advertised diverse exhibits such as "The American South: Past, Present and Future" at the Atlanta History Center, and "Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South" at Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum.³³⁰

Both Clark Atlanta University and the Auburn Avenue Research Library also exhibited African American art as part of the festival. At least in terms of the Olympic Art Festival, the ACOG showcased the complexities of the American South. Though once again, there was the problem of visitation as the events were spread out across different facilities, some of which were outside the main Olympics Rings. The *Olympics Legacy* reported over 250,000 festival tickets were sold, however, the High Museum's exhibition *Rings: Five Passions in World Art* accounted for over 1/3 of the ticket sales. As the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported, "Southern cultural and historical exhibits report thinner than anticipated Olympic crowds." Although the festival might have sold tickets, it largely reached a certain of visitors interested in art, music, and culture.³³¹

Although the festival showcased elements of the city's African American culture, some expressed disappointment the Olympics had not translated into success for minority tourism. Citing the \$50 billion a year tourist industry, Miller noted, "We want to make more people aware that Georgia has the depth and breadth of resources to be a special African-American vacation destination." Referencing Auburn Avenue, Tony White, a journalist for the *Afro-American Red Star* claimed, "Segments of the city more

³³⁰ Arts Festival Guide, Series IV Box 19 Folder 5, George J. Berry Papers; Tony White, "Unseen Atlanta legacy left out of Olympics," *Afro-American Red Star*, 10 August 1996, A3.

³³¹ *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, page 36 in Series IV Box 16 Folder 8, George J. Berry Papers; "Waiting for the World," *AJC*, 28 July 1996, B1.

representative of its true identity went unexplored, lost in the corporate camouflage.” Many eager tourists never made it beyond the “Olympic Ring” that was dominated by corporate logos and sponsorships though. White highlighted the irony that the AOC highlighted Atlanta as home to Martin Luther King Jr., yet the NPS historic district named in his honor containing his gravesite and childhood home did not reap the same rewards from the increased publicity and visitation to the city. As White stated, “Sweet Auburn, where Atlanta’s African-American history and heritage is richest, was left out of the equation.”³³²

On the eve of the Olympics, Atlanta Convention and Visitor Bureau Vice-President Bill Howard told the press he encountered the “Old South debate” almost daily. According to Howard, “We have to balance the two stories, between the historians who want to remember the past and what I call the vision group, which is forward-thinking and prefers to de-emphasize the past.” The 1996, *Georgia On My Mind* hospitality and trade magazine only fueled this tension. The annual magazine touted “people from around the globe [will] experience the history, culture and beauty of both the old and new South. Visitors will find that Georgia offers the best places for any lifestyle, including a prominent, international city to go business, [and] genteel Southern plantation towns to relax.”³³³

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³³² “Remarks by Governor Zell Miller White House Tourism Conference, 12/7/94” Series IV Box 69 Folder 247, Zell Miller Papers; Tony White, “Unseen Atlanta legacy left out of Olympics,” *Afro-American Red Star*, 10 August 1996, A3.

³³³ *Georgia On My Mind* (Atlanta: Georgia Hospitality & Travel Association and Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, 1996), 2.

historians who want to remember the past and what I call the vision group, which is forward-thinking and prefers to de-emphasize the past.” Aware of this tension, Billy Payne stated, “The world knows us for Civil War and civil rights. But if you represent the Civil War literally, you run the risk of offending those who champion civil rights—and vice versa.” Though Olympic and city planners had carefully manipulated the city’s past, they were unable to control unofficial venues and individuals who seized the opportunity.³³⁴

The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism supplied \$5.5 million for the “Welcome South Visitor Center.” Opened in May 1995, the center provided information about local tourist sites, an interactive kiosk with a film about the region, and other services for foreign visitors such as a currency exchange and the option to purchase Olympic game tickets or MARTA passes. Located downtown off the pedestrian path, the bureau anticipated 3,500 to 7,500 visitors per day, but in reality, saw only around 1,000 people per day. According to the Welcome South Visitor Center staff, many tourists ask where Scarlett O’Hara and Rhett Butler are buried. To many visitors to the tourist, *Gone With the Wind* was still on their mind.³³⁵

Both domestic and international visitors often came to Atlanta hoping to find Tara. During the Olympics, nearby traffic director stationed nearby told the newspaper that everyday hundreds of tourists stop to read the signs outside Margaret Mitchell’s apartment where she penned her infamous novel. According to the *Atlanta Journal-*

³³⁴ Jill Sabulis, “Portraying the Old South During the Olympics- To showcase or shelve?” *AJC*, 23 June 1996, D1; Jim Auchmutey, “Atlanta Games - Day 2 - City - Close Up – Heritage,” *AJC*, 20 July 1996, S34.

³³⁵ “Billy Payne,” *Art of Taking: the Heidrick & Struggles Leadership Journal* Vol. 1 No. 3 (1997) in Series IV Box 15 Folder 12, George J. Berry Papers; “Community – Downtown visitors center offers one-stop shopping,” *AJC*, 11 July 1996, D3.

Constitution, “Scarlett is threatening to become the unofficial mascot of the Atlanta Games.” According to the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, “callers are disappointed when they are told that Tara was fictional.” K.C. Bassham, owner of Inn Scarlett’s Footsteps, sought to capitalize on *Gone With the Wind* interest during the Olympics. According to Bassman, “For the next 20 days, we’re going to give them their dream so everyone can pretend they’re Scarlett and Rhett and that the romance is still alive.” Professional Scarlett O’Hara impersonator, Melly Meadows, also enjoyed success during the Olympics and booked appearances at Phipps Plaza and Centennial Park among many others, including tours for Delta, Coca-Cola, and Turner Broadcasting.³³⁶

The physical relics of the Confederacy proved troublesome though. As one reporter so aptly noted, “Rebel flags, hoop skirts and other Old South vestiges give Atlanta’s Olympic planners indigestion.” Many Civil War encampments exhibiting period uniforms and weaponry that had been planned at locations around the city were canceled. The Atlanta History Center canceled the annual encampment in honor of the July 22 Battle of Atlanta at the ACOG’s urging due to “logistics and traffic.” The leader of Hardee’s Guard Battalion from Suwanne reported, “We approached every possible venue offering our services and were turned down or ignored.” In another attempt to remove overt Civil War references, the Coors Historic Roswell Festival—operated by the Downtown Development Authority—was pressured to drop the word “antebellum” from its title. The seventeen-day festival removed the markers indicating slave quarters at the Greek revival mansion Bulloch Hall—a central historical feature of the festival.

According to the director of the festival, the markers were removed to “create an

³³⁶ “Waiting for the World,” *AJC*, 28 July 1996, B1; Jim Auchmutey, “Atlanta Games, City, Street Level, ‘Scarlett’ Fever All the Rage at Games,” *AJC*, 27 July 1996, 42S; Don O’Briant, “All roads don’t lead to disappointment for GWTW fans,” *AJC*, 19 July 1996, T1.

environment that wouldn't offend anyone." One Bulloch Hall administrator downplayed the removal of the markers noting, "We'll just put it right back out after the Olympics are over." The festival officials favored convenience and potential marketability given their lackadaisical attitude towards historical fact and correctness.³³⁷

In light of the Olympics, the state government even took up the issue of the state flag featuring the St. Andrew's cross design—better known as the Confederate battle flag—once again. The director of the Georgia Common Cause, government watchdog group, stated, "When we are in the international press, it's going to be dreadfully embarrassing to have that flag flying there. It's going to destroy all the work that's been done to promote a progressive image of Atlanta." According to Governor Zell Miller, changing the flag "is the final step Georgia must take to really become a member of the New South." *American Heritage* likened the flag to "the Rebel yell on a pole" or rather symbolic of "Georgia's old defiance of integration and of the white supremacist yearnings that linger in some hearts."³³⁸

For years leading up to the Olympics, political debates over the flag dragged on because such a visible symbol flew in the face of the infamous "too busy to hate" slogan. Both the state legislature and everyday Georgians debated the issue. Democrat Tom Murphy, Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, declared, "[Restoring the pre-

³³⁷ Jim Auchmutey, "Atlanta Games - Day 2 - City - Close Up - Heritage," *AJC*, 20 July 1996, S34; Jill Sabulis, "Portraying the Old South During the Olympics- To showcase or shelve?" *AJC*, 23 June 1996, D1; "Roswell taxpayers may fund festival after all," *AJC* 21 August 1996, C2; "Readers' Letters- Tell Us What You Think," *AJC* 18 July 1996, D10.

³³⁸ John Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 256; Steve Montgomery Harvey, "Governor flags down a hot issue—Miller call for change has phone line sizzling," *AJC*, 29 May 1992, A1; Henry Wienczek, "The Road to Modern America," *American Heritage*, Vol. 47, Issue 2 (April 1996). The State of Georgia adopted the state flag bearing the St. Andrew's cross in 1956. For a full account see: Alexander J. Azarian and Eden Fesshazion, "The State Flag of Georgia: The 1956 Change In Its Historical Context," Georgia Senate Research Office (August 2000).

1956 flag] is an appropriate idea. That is for the General Assembly to decide, but that's a good move." Belina Walker, an African American from southwest Atlanta, told the newspaper, "[The 1956 flag] gives a connotation of the Civil War and slavery, and I don't think it should be there." Outside of racially diverse metro-Atlanta area, however, the attempt to revert back to the pre-1956 flag ran into opposition. Georgia Commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Jim Reynolds, defended the incorporation of the Confederate battle flag claiming it was simply "a symbol of where we came from." Though Reynolds did not elaborate, to him "we" meant white southerners with Confederate ancestry. David Parman, from Dallas, Georgia, took a different angle and disagreed with the proposed change for a different reason. He "resent[ed] to the idea of "bow[ing] and scrap[ing] for the likes of the Olympics."³³⁹

In October 1992, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and local news WSB TV collaborated with Marketing Workshop to conduct a computer-randomized residential telephone survey on the issue. Reportedly two out of three Georgians "want to keep the flag as it is." Overall, 73 percent of white voters across the state objected to changing the flag. The survey did demonstrate, however, that young Georgians—those between the age of 18 and 29 years old—were the most supportive age group of changing the flag. As expected, rural, white Georgians with a high school education or less expressed the "most intense objection." In a way, this echoes back to the "two Georgias" sentiment.

According to John M. Coski—historian and vice-president of the Museum of the

³³⁹ "Officials," *AJC*, 29 May 1992, D7; Steve Harvey, "Polls finds 2 out of 3 Georgians want to keep flag," *AJC*, 25 October 1992, A8; "Representative Jones Introduces Legislation Creating Commission On Display Of State Flag for 1996 Olympics," *Atlanta Inquirer*, 28 January 1995, 1; Elizabeth Spaid, "Cultural Symbols Of the Old South Clash With Spirit Of the Olympics," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 July 1996, 1; "Reaction to Governor's Proposal—Views on the flag," *AJC* 29 May 1992, D7. For complete coverage of the debate over the flag see: John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

Confederacy—the flag debate “revealed anew just how central the St. Andrew’s cross battle flag was to white southern identity.”³⁴⁰

After Governor Zell Miller openly admitted “the flag was changed in 1956 to identify Georgia with the dark side of the Confederacy,” the Georgia General Assembly attempted to pass the “two-flag bill” in March 1993. The bill proposed a compromise that would make the pre-1956 flag the official state flag and the 1956 flag with St. Andrew’s cross a “ceremonial memorial” flag. Although the Senate killed the bill 44-12, it passed a measure calling for a referendum that would allow voters to decide the flag issue. The public referendum later that year also failed, and flag adopted in 1956 featuring the Confederate battle flag would remain the official state flag throughout the Olympics. For a city built on slogans about moderation and progress, many saw this highly visible sign of the Confederacy and resistance against the Civil Rights Movement stood as an embarrassment.³⁴¹

Despite the failure of the flag change, both ordinary citizens and elected officials exhibited concern that the city, and for that matter the state, might be sacrificing too much for the Olympics and its visitors. Jim Reynolds, Georgia Commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, took great issue with the attempts to sanitize Atlanta’s history. According to Reynolds, “it’s unfortunate that [some in Atlanta] have taken a stance that there are parts of our culture than need to be hidden.” He continued arguing, “they’re trying to be politically correct, and I think they’re insulting the people of Georgia.” From the rest of his statement, it is clear he only meant the white people of Georgia. Even the

³⁴⁰ “How flag poll was conducted,” *AJC*, 25 October 1992, A8; Steve Harvey, “Polls finds 2 out of 3 Georgians want to keep flag,” *AJC*, 25 October 1992, A8; Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 258.

³⁴¹ Zell Miller, “Will You Act as [an] Individual or Go with [the] Crowd?” *AJC*, January 13, 1993; Tom Baxter, “Politics—Troubling flag issue remains up in the air,” *AJC* 8 March 1993, B2; Mark Sherman, “Senate OKs flag referendum—compromise effort falls short of votes,” *AJC*, 5 March 1993, G3.

Christian Science Monitor mocked the effort to control the city's historical narrative writing "the Southern capitol is busy sanitizing its history—including taking down the Confederate flag and downplaying slave traditions—to promote itself as an international city."³⁴²

Others had more nuanced critiques of the changes taking place. Margaret M. Storey wrote a scathing letter to the *Atlanta-Journal-Constitution* over efforts to "sanitize the history" in light of the Games. Storey contended, "the triumph is meaningless without a corresponding explanation of the adversity faced by the city, and the South, over the past century and half of change." Storey seemingly advocated for discussion of historical pleasantries like the adoption of the 1956 flag during "massive resistance" to the Civil Rights Movement. Senator John Lewis also "urged the city to show the history of our struggle," though he also argued, "Every public policy decision should not be the result of marketing strategies." During the bid process, "What resonated within the hearts and minds of many of the world's leaders was the enduring legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr." Emblems of the Confederacy—whether it was on the flag, in the form of Civil War encampments, depicted in souvenirs, or carved on the side of Stone Mountain—detracted from the image Atlanta sought to project to international observers and Olympic visitors.³⁴³

³⁴² Jill Sabulis, "Portraying the Old South During the Olympics- To showcase or shelve?" *AJC*, 23 June 1996, D1; Elizabeth Spaid, "Cultural Symbols Of the Old South Clash With Spirit Of the Olympics," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 July 1996, 1; Jim Auchmutey, "Atlanta Games - Day 2 - City - Close Up - Heritage," *AJC*, 20 July 1996, S34.

³⁴³ "Readers' Letters- Tell Us What You Think," *AJC*, 18 July 1996, D10; *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8, George J. Berry Papers.

“Expectations Spread Like Kudzu”

With an estimated 5.5 million attendees and over \$2.5 billion in investment, both planners and city officials sought to evaluate their performance during the 1996 Summer Olympics.³⁴⁴ In October 1996, the non-profit Research Atlanta published a report *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved* examining how Atlanta could build on the momentum gained by the Olympics. According to the report, 73 percent of American and 70 percent of international visitors polled indicated that their opinion of Atlanta had improved. Most visitors, both foreign and domestic expressed an interest in Atlanta’s history. The Georgia Department of Industry and Trade proudly reported that 51 percent of those polled said they would “definitely return to Georgia” for a vacation or short pleasure trip. Not all responses were good, however, as the report noted that “we are still a largely divided, if not a formally segregated people, and race still drives us apart.” If boosters thought the Olympics would confirm the city’s legendary slogan, they were sorely disappointed.³⁴⁵

Also in 1996, Marketing Research Services of Cincinnati conducted a similar survey about perceptions of Atlanta Olympics and found similar results. Fifty-one percent of those polled gave the city an “A” for its job hosting the Olympics. Pre- and post-Olympic polls also measured Atlanta’s image. While 86 percent of participants

³⁴⁴ Newman, *Southern Hospitality*, 292; *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8 - Olympic legacy report (1996), George J. Berry Papers; “The Art of Taking Charge,” *Heidrick & Struggles Leadership Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (September 1997), Series IV Box 15 Folder 12 George J. Berry Papers. Subsection title quote comes from: *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8, George J. Berry Papers.

³⁴⁵ *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8 - Olympic legacy report (1996), George J. Berry Papers; “The 1996 Olympic Games An Analysis of the Response: Images of Atlanta and Georgia by the Governor’s Development Council” Series IV Box 63 Folder 15 – Olympics, James F. (Jim) Martin Papers. The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce had closely supported Research Atlanta Inc. from its inception in 1971 until the early 1990s when it became affiliated with Georgia State University.

considered Atlanta “progressive” before the games, that number had significantly decreased to 54 percent afterward. In the eyes of many visitors, the city did not live up to reputation advanced by boosters. Before and after the game polls, however, showed 66 percent and 65 percent of participants, respectively, believed Atlanta to be “the birthplace of civil rights.” However, most visitors and television viewers felt they had learned “not much” about the city.³⁴⁶ In all, the studies had mixed results. Despite drawing on the “legacy of cooperation,” *The Olympic Legacy* argued, “Atlanta seems to have run out of individual or institutional leaders who could override divisive racial and economic disputes, and who could act across turf lines to facilitate cooperation and coordination.”³⁴⁷

In order to host the 1996 Summer Olympics, city and local government officials struck an uneasy balance by selectively placing elements of the Atlanta’s past at the forefront of promotional campaigns. The bid materials exploited the city’s iconic role as the birthplace to both Margaret Mitchell’s beloved—yet imaginary—Tara and civil rights legend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Planners did not see this as problematic, and instead, embraced the city’s many slogans. The planning documents, official publications, representations of the city in literature, and debates over programming and reputation during the 1996 Olympics offered a glimpse into metro-Atlanta’s conflicted sense of history.

³⁴⁶ Melissa Turner, “After the Games: Polling America,” *AJC* 11 August 1996, A1; Susannah Vesey Rauscher, “After the Games: Polling America – Crime label,” *AJC* 11 August 1996, C5; *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8, George J. Berry Papers; Melissa Turner, “After the Games: Polling America,” *AJC*, 11 August 1996, C5.

Source: Poll of 802 U.S. adults conducted Aug. 4-6 by Marketing Research Services Inc. of Cincinnati. The poll has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

³⁴⁷ Rivenburgh, “For the Cinderella of the New South, the Show Just Didn’t Fit,” 475; *The Olympic Legacy: Building On What Was Achieved*, pages I, 1, 4 & 10, Series IV Box 16 Folder 8, George J. Berry Papers.

Metro-Atlanta was not alone though in this regard. To explain the complexities of the public memorial landscape, architectural historian Dell Upton has identified what he called “dual heritage,” or rather, a “convoluted ideology” that “treats white and black Southerners as having traveled parallel, equally honorable paths.” In metro-Atlanta, this meant commemoration the Confederacy—at places such as Stone Mountain and the Cyclorama—co-existed along side the national historic district honoring King and the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. Similarly, anthropologist Charles Rutheiser argued, boosters and politicians “construct[ed] a multitude of selectively imagined Atlantas that coexist, but only infrequently interact with one another.” In the case of Olympics, these imagined Atlantas interacted with one other—but only in the official bid, promotional materials, or tour guides. The city presented a confused historical identity during the games that showcased historical narratives with inherent conflicts without addressing the largely ramifications.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁸ Dell Upton, *What Can and Can't Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 15; Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 75.

EPILOGUE

Soldiers adorned in blue and grey uniforms fired the last shots over one hundred and fifty years ago, yet the legacy of the Civil War continues to make headlines. As historian David Goldfield has argued, the Civil War is like “a ghost that has not yet made its peace and roams the land seeking solace, retribution or vindication.” The Civil War Sesquicentennial provided a new opportunity to evaluate the war’s legacy but unlike the centennial, there would be no guidance from a federal commission due to budgetary constraints. On April 11, 2011, President Barack Obama “call[ed] upon all Americans to observe th[e] Sesquicentennial with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the legacy of freedom and unity that the Civil War bestowed upon our Nation.” Despite the “critical challenges of our times,” Obama stressed that it could not be forgotten that the promise of freedom as “enshrined in our Constitution” was extended through the sacrifice of millions. Despite these pleas, historian David Goldfield argued, “in commemorating the Civil War sesquicentennial, whites, particularly southern white politicians, ignore[d] African Americans and African American history at their own peril.”³⁴⁹

In Georgia, officials had slowly realized the importance of African American heritage tourism as both an educational tool and way to boost the economy. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported, “The Civil War [Sesquicentennial] is shaping up to be a

³⁴⁹ David Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History*. Updated Edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 1, 330 & 324; Barack Obama, For Immediate Release- Presidential Proclamation- Civil War Sesquicentennial, 12 April 2011 (Accessed 20 June 2018) <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/12/presidential-proclamation-civil-war-sesquicentennial>

big tourism draw for metro Atlanta, one that could be worth millions in visitor revenue.” Kevin Langston, deputy commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDED), indicated the state spent \$380,000 on advertising the Civil War events and programming around the state. In conjunction with the anniversary, the GDED also assisted with the placement or refurbishment of commemorative historical markers around the state in order “to be more inclusive of women and African-Americans.” In Atlanta, the \$100 million National Center for Civil and Human Rights spotlighting worldwide human rights issues and the Civil Rights Movement was under construction downtown on land donated by the Coca-Cola Company, adjacent to the Georgia Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola.³⁵⁰

Yet as an event, the Civil War Sesquicentennial had to address or ignore that it also marked the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement. The inherent tension did not escape *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reporter Bill Torpy who wrote, “The Civil War and Civil Rights Movement are two seismic American events, rooted in the South and still very much alive.” Georgia State University history professor Clifford Kuhn told reporters, “It’s a serendipitous moment, having the 150th anniversary and the 50th anniversary at the same time.” As Kuhn so fittingly asked, “Are we the Old South or the New South?” That very question has plagued metro-Atlanta throughout the mid-to-late twentieth-century and seemingly continues even today.³⁵¹

Fast-forward four years. One month after white supremacist Dylann Roof went on a shooting spree killing nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church

³⁵⁰ Leon Stafford, “Georgia Tourism – Civil War brings more s to metro Atlanta,” *AJC*, 5 August 2011, B1; Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War*, 325; “About Us,” The National Center for Civil and Human Rights,” 2018 (Accessed 30 June 2018), <https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/about-us/our-team/>

³⁵¹ Bill Torpy, “History Metro-Controversy binds anniversaries,” *AJC*, 17 April 2011, B1.

in Charleston, officials removed the Confederate battle flag from the South Carolina statehouse grounds. The flag had been flown along with the American flag since 1962 when it was placed as a sign of “massive resistance” to civil rights. After the heinous tragedy in Charleston, the media exposed Roof’s support of Neo-Nazi ideology and he admittedly hoped to “start a race war.” Black history scholar Manning Marble has argued, “enduring symbols” such as historical narratives, landmarks, heritage tourism sites, and of course, public monuments “all have practical consequences in shaping civic behavior and social consciousness.” These events further proved the validity of Marble’s statement, and consequently, exacerbated the decades of oft-contentious dialogue about the persistence of monument, memorials, and symbolism that perpetuates Lost Cause ideology rooted in white supremacy.³⁵²

Amidst these new controversies, metro-Atlanta’s famous mountain of granite once again garnered media attention. In the wake of the latest tragedies, Atlanta NAACP chapter leader Richard Rose called for the removal of the Confederate leaders from the face of Stone Mountain. “Those guys need to go. They can be sand-blasted off, or somebody could carefully remove a slab of that and auction it off to the highest bidder,” Rose told a WSB-TV reporter. Despite promotional campaigns downplaying the prominence of the carving in favor of other more diverse attractions, Stone Mountain Park still proved troublesome, as it remains a formidable identifier of metro-Atlanta. In the era of Black Lives Matter with activists seeking justice against systemic racism and

³⁵² Ralph Ellis, Greg Botelho and Ed Payne, “Charleston church shooter hears victim’s kin say, ‘I forgive you,’” CNN, 19 June 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-church-shooting-main/> (Accessed 20 June 2018) and Robert Costa, Lindsey Bever, J. Freedom du Lac, and Sari Horwitz, “Church shooting suspect Dylann Roof captured amid hate crime investigation,” 18 June 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/17/white-gunman-sought-in-shooting-at-historic-charleston-african-ame-church/?utm_term=.bb04e39aa8bf (Accessed 20 June 2018); Manning Marble, *Living Black History: How Reimagining the African-American Past Can Remake America’s Racial Future* (New York: Civitas Books, 2006.), 19.

violence, the type of iconography carved into Stone Mountain became all the more relevant as a physical reminder of the inequality that still exists.³⁵³

With renewed attention, locals once again proposed an assortment of ideas about what to do with the carving with Stone Mountain. Artist Mack Williams started a provocative online petition calling for Georgia hip-hop duo OutKast to be added to the carving. According to Williams, “By no means do we wish to erase or destroy the current carving, which, regardless of its context, is an impressive and historic work of art. We simply wish to add new carvings... There’s plenty of room.” Instead of completely removing the carving, Williams embraced the idea of adding diverse figures to make it more inclusive. Williams’ proposal fell on deaf ears though since a political compromise almost ten years prior, which resulted in the removal of the St. Andrew’s cross—better known as the Confederate battle flag—from the state flag, prohibited such action. In 2001, the Georgia General Assembly had passed a law protecting monuments, plaques, and markers dedicated to the Confederate States of America and any past or present military personnel. Furthermore, one provision of the law stated:

“The memorial to the heroes of the Confederate States of America graven upon the face of Stone Mountain shall never be altered, removed, concealed, or obscured in any fashion and shall be preserved and protected for all time as a tribute to the bravery and heroism of the citizens of this state who suffered and died in their cause.”

³⁵³ “NAACP wants removal of Confederate generals from Stone Mountain,” WSBTV, 13 July 2015. <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/naacp-wants-removal-confederate-generals-stone-mou/nmyKH/>; See the extensive media coverage for a full account of the Black Lives Matter movement. A few articles include: Guynn, Jessica “Meet the woman who coined #BlackLivesMatter,” *USA Today*, 4 March 2015 <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/03/04/alicia-garza-black-lives-matter/24341593/> (Accessed 20 June 2018); Jenna Wortham, “Black Tweets Matter,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 2016. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/black-tweets-matter-180960117/> (Accessed 20 June 2018) For more on the intersection of Black Lives Matters and Confederate monument see: Sarah Beetham, “From Spray Cans to Minivans: Contesting the Legacy of Confederate Soldier Monuments in the Era of ‘Black Lives Matter’” *Public Art Dialogue*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2016): 9-33.

With this law, the state affirmed the commemoration of the Confederacy within the public landscape, and as a result, proposals like that of artist Mack Williams, could not be enacted without new legislation.³⁵⁴

On Monday July 20, 2015, the Atlanta City Council voted on a resolution that called for a committee to study potential changes to the carving at Stone Mountain. The measure passed with a 9-2 vote and the resolution was sent to Governor Nathan Deal (2011-2018). Instead of destroying the carving, the resolution suggested the addition of other figures to the carving to better represent Georgia's pluralistic history. Although Deal stated, "[the state] cannot deny its heritage," the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported, the governor also "said he [sic] won't rule out comprehensive changes to the state laws that protect Confederate images." African American Councilman Michael Julian Bond—son of the famous civil rights leader Julian Bond—hoped the resolution would make Stone Mountain "an enlightened place that reflects all of Georgia's history." This effort like others before it seeking to alter the face of the Stone Mountain stalled.³⁵⁵

Two years later, in August 2017, a "Unite the Right" rally over the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville, Virginia, turned violent. In response, the City of Atlanta under Mayor Kasim Reed (2010-2018) passed legislation forming the Confederate Monument Advisory Committee (CMAC). The twelve-committee members, appointed by the mayor and City Council president, focused on the future of "Confederate-related monuments" owned by the city and street names. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, as of August 2017, 718 Confederate monuments and

³⁵⁴ Greg Bluestein, "Best from the Blog Political Insider; Petition: Stone Mountain needs OutKast," *AJC*, 19 July 2015, 6B; O.C.G.A. 50-3-1 (2010) 50-3-1. Description of state flag; militia to carry flag; defacing public monuments; obstruction of Stone Mountain.

³⁵⁵ Katie Leslie, "Atlanta council asks Deal to consider a relief makeover," *AJC*, 21 July 2015, 8B.

statues exist on public property, with Georgia having the third most behind only Virginia and Texas. Within the Fulton County limits, Atlanta boasts twelve Confederate monuments, not including battlefield and grave markers. Although Charlottesville “brought renewed attention to Confederate markers and street names,” Reed promised, “we [will] approach this in a thoughtful manner, and that will include community input in the process.” Although some praised Reed’s proactive stance, many others had complaints.³⁵⁶

The Confederate Monument Advisory Committee received criticism regarding both its racial makeup and mission. The public policy analysis firm the Coffee Group took issue with the inclusion of only four African Americans. Turpeau demanded that the committee contain a minimum of 54 percent African Americans—to more accurately reflect the racial makeup of Atlanta. The Coffee Group commented on the initial report

³⁵⁶ “Summary Position Paper on Confederate Monuments Advisory,” The Coffee Group, 30 October 2017. <https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/executive-offices/advisory-committee-on-city-of-atlanta-street-names-and-monuments-associated-with-the-confederacy> ; Accessed 13 January 2018; City of Atlanta Resolution 17-R-4089 (September 2017); Guelda Voien, “The Number—and locations—of Confederate Monuments in the US Prove How Much Work We Have Left To Do,” *Architectural Digest*, 17 August 2017 (Accessed 20 June 2018) <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/confederate-monuments>; Gould B. Hagler Jr., *Georgia’s Confederate Monuments: In Honor of a Fallen Nation* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2014), 144-165; “Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy” SPLC <https://www.splcenter.org/20160421/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>

According to the original 2016 report, there are 718 monuments and statues with Confederate iconography in the country; 223 in Virginia, 178 in Texas and 174 in Georgia. The SPLC excluded the almost 2,600 historical battlefields, markers, museum or cemeteries from the count. In addition to the monument and states, the SPLC identified 1,503 publically sponsored symbols of the Confederacy.

For more on Civil War monument sites in Georgia, also see: Barry L. Brown and Gordon R. Elwell. *Crossroads of Conflict: A Guide to Civil War Sites in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

The Confederate Monument Advisory Committee includes: Sheffield Hale, President & CEO of Atlanta History Center; Derreck Kayongo, CEO of the Center for Civil and Human Rights; Sonji Jacobs, Senior Director of Corporate Affairs, Cox Enterprises; Dan Moore, Founder, APEX Museum; Shelley Rose, Senior Associate Director, Southeast Region, Anti-Defamation League; Larry Gallerstedt, CEO, Cousins Properties and Trustee, Robert Woodruff Foundation; Douglas Blackmon, Senior Fellow and Director of Public Programs, University of Virginia’s Miller Center and Pulitzer Prize-winning author; Nina Gentry, owner of Gentry Planning Services; Regina Brewer, preservation consultant; Martha Porter Hall, community advocate; Brenda Muhammad, Executive Director, Atlanta Victim Assistance.

posted on the city's website. The Coffee Group stated, "The only moral and legitimate purpose of any government or committee with regard to monuments honoring those who advocated for our enslavement is to determine how they will be removed as soon as possible." In contrast, Charlie Crawford of the Georgia Battlefield Association stressed the difference between historical markers and monuments. In a letter to the committee, Crawford wrote, "I would caution against any universal approach to all markers and monuments and plaques and street names." Instead, Crawford advocated for individual consideration as to avoid "obscure[ing] the significance of a historic site in our effort to remove reminders of a time when the city government endorsed white supremacy." These debates mimicked those that had previously taken place as various groups and individuals battled over stewardship of metro-Atlanta's history, interpretation, and usage.³⁵⁷

In November 2017, the Confederate Monument Advisory Committee released a report outlining its recommendations. The committee addressed seventeen streets within city limits named in association with the Confederacy but left thirty-two other streets "intended to honor a Confederate figure" to the discretion of later committees. The recommendation called for the renaming of streets honoring Confederate General Robert E. Lee, Stephen Dill Lee, a Confederate soldier and early leader of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and Howell Cobb, president of the Provisional Confederate Congress. The process for changing street names was also amended so that renters have a say and the percentage of voters needed for approval was reduced to 50 percent. The list of recommendations also called for the removal of the Peace Monument in Piedmont

³⁵⁷ "Summary Position Paper on Confederate Monuments Advisory," The Coffee Group, 30 October 2017 and Charlie Crawford of the Georgia Battlefields Association 1 November 2017 (Accessed 13 January 2018) <https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/mayor-s-office/executive-offices/advisory-committee-on-city-of-atlanta-street-names-and-monuments-associated-with-the-confederacy>

Park and Peachtree Battle Monument in Buckhead, though both suggestions caused some backlash. Additionally, the committee recommended erecting a monument or historical marker at the Five Points MARTA Station, where a slave auction house once stood, and in Piedmont Park, where Booker T. Washington delivered his famous 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech. These are just a few of the monuments and street names addressed in the Confederate Monument Advisory Committee's thorough report.³⁵⁸

More recently, state politicians chimed in on the status of Stone Mountain. In 2017, Stacy Abrams, a Democrat and Minority Leader of the Georgia House of Representatives, wrote online, "We must never celebrate those who defended slavery and tried to destroy the Union... the visible image of Stone Mountain's edifice remains a blight on our state and should be removed." In contrast, Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle felt, "we should work together to add to our history, not take from it." The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported perhaps the most surprising opposition—former Atlanta mayor and civil rights activist Andrew Young. Young stated, "I think it's too costly to refight the Civil War. We have paid too great a price in trying to bring people together." As these divergent opinions reveal, control of history in metro-Atlanta's public landscape remains as continuous—and unsettled—as ever.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ David Pendered, "Confederate icons to come down in Atlanta, pending support from city council, mayor," *Saporta Report*, 13 November 2017. <https://saportareport.com/confederate-icons-come-atlanta-pending-support-city-council-mayor/>; Pamela Miller, "Atlanta Confederate Monuments Advisory Committee meetings set," <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/atlanta-confederate-monuments-advisory-committee-meetings-set/G2OscbX5pi12GAoCU6i5UK/>; Adrienne Haney, "Atlanta's Confederate monument advisory committee holds second meeting," 11 Alive News, 2 November 2017. <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/atlantas-confederate-monument-advisory-committee-holds-second-meeting/85-488099552>

³⁵⁹ Lorraine Boissoneault, "What Will Happen to Stone Mountain, America's Largest Confederate Memorial?" *Smithsonian*, 22 August 2017. (Accessed 30 August 2017) https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-will-happen-stone-mountain-americas-largest-confederate-memorial-180964588/?utm_source=smithsoniandaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20170822-daily-responsive&spMailingID=30286840&spUserID=NzY1MjY2ODI3OTcS1&spJobID=1102601479&spRep

One thing has become clear though, that interest in civil rights tourism has grown. In 2018, as part of the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, the King Center and Georgia's Division of Tourism collaborated to create a self-guided tour of important places around that state. *Georgia's Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Trail* highlights twenty-eight sites around the state including the MLK statue at the State Capitol in Atlanta, which was unveiled in August 2017. Other sites included on the tour include the Albany Civil Rights Institute in Albany, the Dorchester Academy Boy's Dormitory in Midway, First African Baptist Church in Dublin, and the Prince Hall Masonic Temple in Columbus. The creation of this tour remains an important moment of inclusivity that has added more diverse narratives to the state tourism industry's inventory of destinations.³⁶⁰

Also in 2018, the U.S. Civil Rights Trail was unveiled on Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. The trail identifies historic landmarks in fourteen states—mostly southern with the exception of Kansas—where “activists challenged segregation in the 1950s and 1960s to advance social justice.” The U.S. Civil Rights Trail took nearly two years to produce after former NPS director Jonathan Jarvis urged “historians to document surviving civil rights landmarks.” The campaign website now highlights over 130 sites and offers an “immersive experience” for those unable to travel to the actual destination. The trail boasts sites in three cities in Georgia—Albany, Atlanta, and Midway. Although

[ortId=MTEwMjYwMTQ3OQS2](#); Staff Reporters, “The Week: After Charlottesville, eyes turn to Stone Mountain, *AJC*, (Accessed 18 May 2018) <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/the-week-after-charlottesville-eyes-turn-stone-mountain/kR4u7ofQmbQxF82DrFbmeK/>

³⁶⁰ “Georgia Tourism Launches ‘Georgia’s Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Trail’” Georgia Department of Economic Development. 9 April 2018 (Accessed 24 April 2018) <http://www.marketgeorgia.org/article/georgia-tourism-launches-georgias-footsteps-of-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-trail>; “Georgia’s Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Trail,” ” Georgia Department of Economic Development (Accessed 20 June 2018) <http://www.exploregeorgia.org/article/georgias-footsteps-of-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-trail>

the trail developed by the Alabama Tourism Office, Georgia’s deputy commissioner of tourism noted the “joint efforts by Georgia State University and Travel South to make the trail a national initiative.” The Atlanta based Travel South USA—whose founder was Georgia’s first tourism director William “Bill” Hardman—currently oversees the administration of the trail through the U.S. Civil Rights Trail Marking Alliance, funded by each member state’s tourism department.³⁶¹

In Atlanta, Tom Houck—a civil rights activist in his own right and longtime driver to King family—now runs the Atlanta Civil Rights tour company. Houck offers both public and private three-hour guided civil rights tours of Atlanta. Aside from the more famous sites like that run by the National Park Service and King Center, he takes tourists to the site of the Atlanta Student Movement Rush Memorial Church, South-View Cemetery where John Wesley Dobbs is buried, Paschal’s Restaurant where “politicos helped elect” Maynard Jackson, and the SNCC freedom house. Between 2016 and January 2018, Houck told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* he had taken over 20,000 tourists on his Saturday public tour.³⁶²

Although various actors and organizations in metro-Atlanta have attempted to reshape the public landscape in the mid-to-late twentieth-century, the use of history—and at other times nostalgia for the past and legendary myths—remains problematic. While

³⁶¹ United States Civil Rights Trail, “Background on Establishing the U.S. Civil Rights Trail,” <https://civilrightstrail.com/app/uploads/2018/02/CRT-Background-Overview.pdf> (Accessed 20 June 2018); Jay Reeves, “Southern states join to promote civil rights tourism,” *Associated Press*, 14 January 2018 (Accessed 20 June 2018) <https://www.apnews.com/65c188db42cb4c0d98c0fd65a6fe332c>; Anastacia Ondieki, “Civil Rights Trail targets tourists- 14- state path sketches from Kansas through the South to Washington, cover over 130 landmarks,” *AJC*, 14 January 2018, B1; United States Civil Rights Trail, 2018. <https://civilrightstrail.com/> (Accessed 20 June 2018).

³⁶² Atlanta Civil Rights Tours, “About the Tour,” <http://civilrightstour.com/about-the-tour/> (Accessed 20 June 2018); Renata Sago, “Civil rights tourism sees more demand and destination,” 12 January 2018 <https://www.marketplace.org/2018/01/12/life/civil-rights-tourism-sees-more-demand-and-destinations> (Accessed 20 June 2018)

initiatives to address Lost Cause imagery and the creation of new tours have helped, there are plenty of private sites around metro-Atlanta that still utilize “southern heritage” to allure tourists. In 2018, Governor Nathan Deal reported that tourism—one of the four divisions of the Department of Economic Development—has a \$60.8 billion impact on the state’s economy and employs more than 400,000 people. With tourism having such a large impact on the state economy and the renewed activism from groups like Black Lives Matter Movement, debates about the use of the past will undoubtedly continue as metro-Atlantans—like others across the South—grapple with questions of power and whose “heritage” will be reflected within the public landscape.³⁶³ At least for now, tourists to metro-Atlanta can gaze at the gigantic Confederate carving as they climb Stone Mountain, and then, tour Sweet Auburn and celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

³⁶³ Georgia Department of Economic Development, “Deal: Tourism Industry Generates Record \$60.8 Billion Economic Impact,” 23 January 2018. <http://www.marketgeorgia.org/article/deal-tourism-industry-generates-record-608-billion-economic-impact> (Accessed 24 April 2018)

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APPENDIX

A State of Georgia, City of Atlanta, and Metro-Atlanta Population

Census Year	Total State Population	Total City of Atlanta	Atlanta White Population	Atlanta Black Population
1950	3,444,578	331,314	209,898	121,285
1960	3,943,116	487,455	300,635	186,820
1970	4,589,575	496,973	240,503	256,470
1980	5,463,105	425,022	137,879	282,911
1990	6,478,216	394,017	122,327	264,262
2000	8,186,453	496,142	200,374	263,665

* Racial populations will not equal total City of Atlanta populations because at different census years there were various “other” or “mix” categories too.

Source: Compiled from Dataset(SE), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau; US Census Bureau, Georgia: 2000, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics; U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics of Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, Characterization of the Population, General Population Characteristics, Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, General Population Characteristics Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, 1960 General Population Characteristics Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, 1950 General Characteristics Georgia

B Population of DeKalb County

Census Year	Total Population in DeKalb County	White Population	African American Population*
1960	256,782	234,370	22,171
1970	415,387	357,536	56,877
1980	483,024	344,254	130,980
1990	545,837	292,310	230,425
2000	613,323	214,685	358,381

*Classification of data changes between censuses. For these using “white alone” and “Black or African American alone” data.

Source: Dataset(SE), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia: 2000, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics; U.S. Census Bureau, Characterization of the Population, General Population Characteristics, Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, General Population Characteristics Georgia; U.S. Census Bureau, 1960 General Population Characteristics Georgia ; U.S. Census Bureau, 1950 General Characteristics Georgia

C Percent of Things Most Enjoyed at Stone Mountain Park

CATEGORY	METRO-ATLANTA*		OTHER GEORGIA		OUT-OF-STATE	
	1965	1968	1965	1968	1965	1968
Mountain	15.6	14.9	13.3	19.6	26.6	26.7
Scenic Beauty	19.8	18.7	11.5	13.7	8.2	14.0
Skylift	13.3	10.0	13.8	14.6	26.6	20.8
Railroad	16.6	3.3	31.6	20.0	26.0	15.5
Everything About Park	9.8	7.6	7.1	5.4	9.2	7.6
Picnic, Camping, Carillon & Swimming	5.9	19.3	2.2	14.1	1.8	14.0
Civil War & War in Georgia Program	5.2	1.6	3.4	5.4	11.5	6.2
Six Other Categories Combined ***	26.5	20.3	26.5	20.2	24.6	17.7

Source: William B. Keeling, Polly W. Hein, and Stone Mountain Memorial. *A Survey of Visitors to Stone Mountain Park*. Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia 1969.

- * At the time of survey, Metro-Atlanta was defined by the Atlanta Regional Commission as Cobb, Clayton, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett Counties.
- ** Visitors could choose from 18 categories. Percentages do not equal 100% because guests could mark more than one category.
- *** These 6 categories include: Plantation, Game Ranch, Care and Planning of the Park, Riverboat, Auto Museum, and Motel. Each of these categories individually accounted for a miniscule proportion compared to other categories.

D Percent Distribution of Visitors' Residence

RESIDENCE	1965	1968
Atlanta*	53.6	51.8
Other Georgia	29.4	15.9
Out of State	17.0	32.3

Source: William B. Keeling, Polly W. Hein, and Stone Mountain Memorial. *A Survey of Visitors to Stone Mountain Park*. Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia 1969.

E Percent Distribution of Visitors by State and Regions

STATE and REGION	1965	1968
Southeast	67.7	72.1
Alabama	13.8	11.2
Arkansas	0.4	0.4
Florida	21.5	21.1
Kentucky	2.3	2.4
Louisiana	3.1	2.8
Mississippi	2.6	2.9
North Carolina	4.2	12.6
South Carolina	9.6	7.9
Tennessee	7.2	8.1
Virginia	2.5	2.5
West Virginia	0.5	0.2
Great Lakes	10.6	11.1
Mideast	8.4	7.2
Southwest	4.4	3.2
Far West	2.9	2.0
Plains	2.5	2.0
New England	1.9	1.4
Rocky Mountains	0.1	0.1
Foreign Country	1.5	0.9

Source: William B. Keeling, Polly W. Hein, and Stone Mountain Memorial. *A Survey of Visitors to Stone Mountain Park*. Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia 1969.

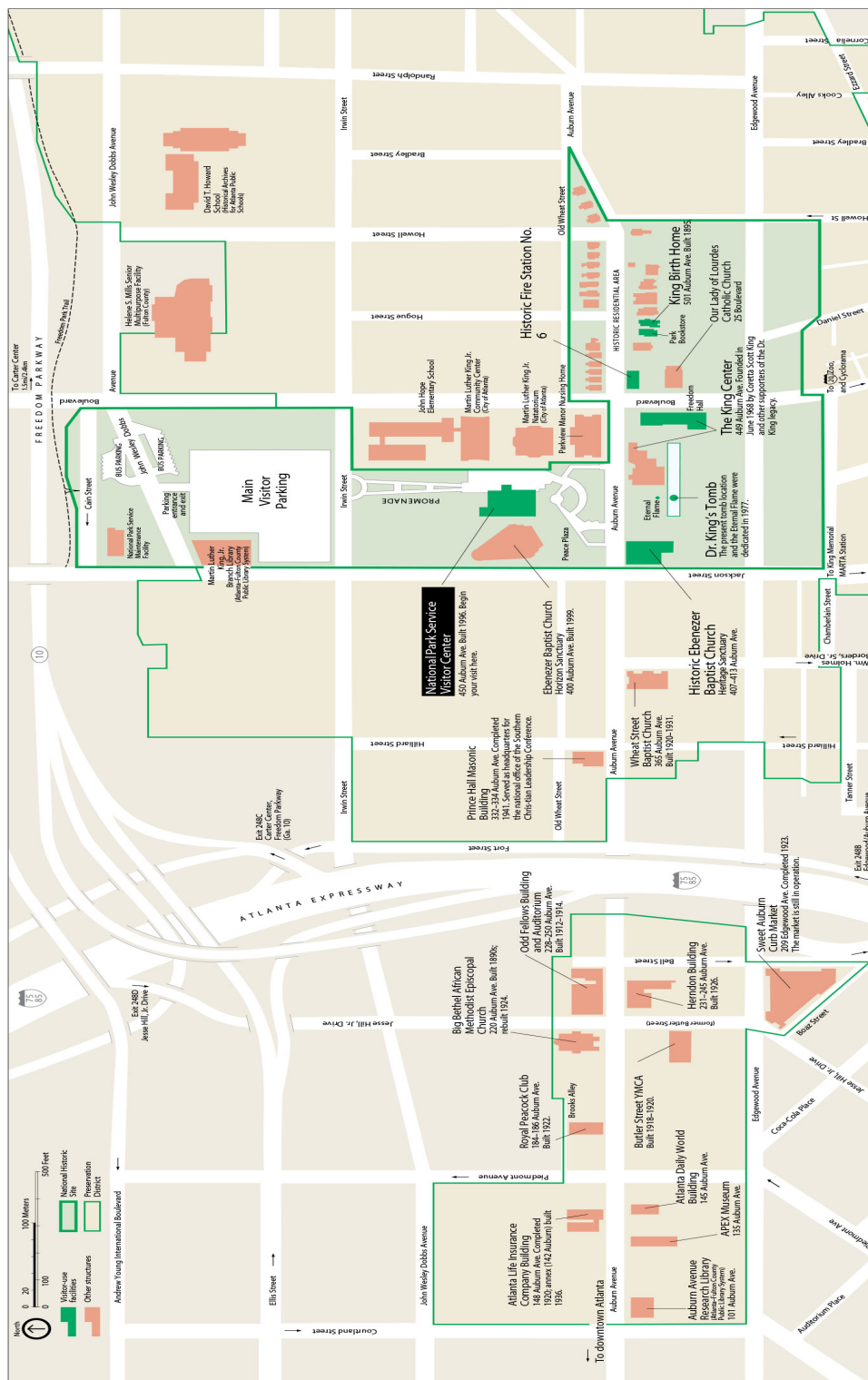
F Tourist Reason for Travel to Georgia, 1961

REASON	GEORGIA RESIDENTS	OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENTS
General air of relaxation and fun	41.7	54.9
View scenery	36.3	53.7
Beaches & Swimming	38.3	37.3
Visit historical place	10.9	34.9
Fishing	31.1	13.4
Picnicking	32.4	23.9
Visit State Parks	14.3	20.3
Engage or watch sporting event	14.4	17.9
Visit National Park	5.9	14.9
Boating or Water Skiing	30.3	10.2
Dancing & Night life	4.8	7.8
Attend Convention	9.0	7.2
Camping	9.6	3.3
Hunting	5.7	1.2
TOTAL TRIPS SAMPLED	1153	335

Source: William B. Keeling, *The Georgia Travel Industry, 1960-1968*. Travel Research Study #11. (Athens: Division of Research, College of Business Administration, University of Georgia, 1969), Table XX1 & 55.

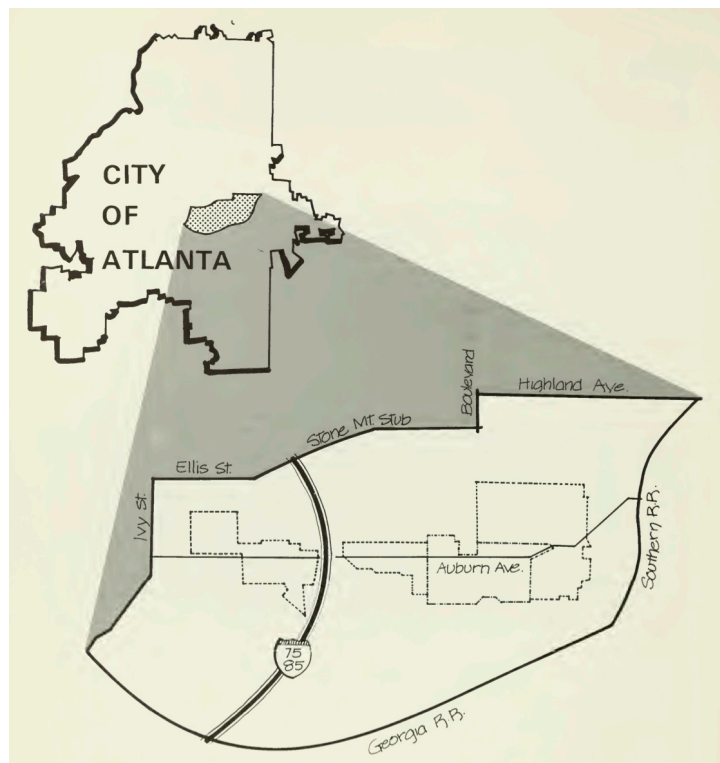
*Percentages do not equal 100 percent because traveler could choose more than one

G Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District



Source: National Park Service, *The 2006-2011 Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Strategic Plan*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2011), iv.

H National Park Service “Impact Area”



Source: National Park Service, *Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia: general management plan, development concept & environmental assessment* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 18.