(RE)CLAIMING BLACK GEOGRAPHIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S PLANTATION

by

RACHELLE S. BERRY

(Under the Direction of JENNIFER L. RICE)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation asks: How do Black geographies coexist with/in white supremacist landscapes? I argue that Black geographies are trapped in a cycle of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding. My argument builds on the Afropessimism, Critical Race Theory, and Black geographies literatures. First, I establish the University of Georgia and city of Athens complicit relationship in the building of Athens' white supremacist landscape that transformed the ancestral lands of the Creek Confederacy to today's Athens Clarke County. I then use the aforementioned literatures to understand my case study—Linnentown— a 20-acre Black community displaced with the help of federal, state, and local government institutions to make way for University of Georgia's luxury student dormitories. I use autoevocative ethnography, archival documents, and semi-structured interviews to show how Linnentown is an example of the cycle in which Black geographies remain trapped, so long as white supremacist institutions inhibit their building of economic and social power. First, I examine the ways that the city of Athens and UGA participated in the destruction of Linnentown. Secondly, I focus on remembering, and I show how Linnentown organizers and supporters made remembering Linnentown into a political project. Then, I focus on rebuilding and discuss how the work of recognition and redress will support the creation of Athens' Black geographies. Ultimately, my

dissertation shows how Black geographies are threatened under white supremacist landscapes, but through the political act of remembering we can redress destroyed Black communities by rebuilding Black geographies.

INDEX WORDS: Black geographies, Urban Renewal, Recognition and Redress, Linnentown

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to The Linnentown Project and my family and who has always supported me on this Ph.D. journey.

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CHAPTER 1

FINDING PRAXIS

At some point, everyone in academia must decide what type of scholar they want to be. For some, shaping social critique and ideas are all that is necessary for them to feel like they are producing a social good. For others, that is not enough; for those of us whose mere existence within academia is under threat, we have goals for changing the social conditions under which we live. Many radicals in academia, like myself, describe themselves as insurgents whose goal is commandeering university resources and institutional power for social change (Moten and Harney 2004). Fred Moten calls for us "to abuse [the university's] hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of" the university, and take on the role of what he calls the subversive intellectual (Moten and Harney 2004, 101). Subversive intellectuals use theory, pedagogy, and social movement history to inform our present work and the political goals that we push forward. We appropriate as many resources from the academy as we can for ourselves and for our communities until we are forced or driven out. However, sometimes we survive academia, even achieve some political goals, but not without significant personal harm and sacrifice.

I went from a scholar to scholar-activist, to a subversive intellectual in a very short amount of time during my Ph.D. program at the University of Georgia. I was set to be content as a high achiever, one day on the tenure track, teaching to my very few Black students and keeping my head in a book. This is, until I viscerally learned what the university truly is: an institution of

white supremacy committed to upholding its place as a producer of racial violence, segregation, and control. I learned that firsthand at the University of Georgia after it was revealed how my university desecrated the final resting place of previously enslaved African graves. In 2015, university officials uncovered the remains of individuals who were likely enslaved or formerly enslaved[1] under Baldwin Hall. The bodies of these likely enslaved people were found due to an expansion and renovation project planned on the once sacred site (see figure 1.1, Shearer 2018). It is the unfolding of this controversy that brought me to the research presented here, and as such, it is the place we must begin.

This chapter recounts the story of my transformation that begins with how a graveyard of slaves was found under a UGA campus building, and how this led me to the research that would become this dissertation. Community organizing around this event transformed me into a scholar deeply rooted in praxis. Praxis is the combination of theory and practice (Smith, M. K. 1999, 2011). If theory is a set of conclusions about a particular phenomenon and practice is how we perform based on an idea, then we can understand praxis as how we act based on a given theory or a set of theories (Smith, M. K. 1999, 2011). My praxis is informed by the Black radical theories that guide this research; these theories inform how I act in the world as a scholar, researcher, activist, organizer, and community member. The rest of this chapter shows how I found my own Black radical praxis that grounded me in the work of recognition and redress.

1.1 Unmasking UGA

I can never hear the words "Dignity & Respect" and not be disgusted. These words immediately bring me back to the height of my academic organizing against university officials

[1] I use this language of likely enslaved or formerly enslaved because the anthropologist dated the remains at a time when nearly all the African individuals living in Athens would have been enslaved, but there is a narrow chance the individuals were free or lived to see the end of slavery. We leave this ambiguity not to doubt the validity of the claims, but to remember that slavery was not a totalizing experience for all Africans during the antebellum years.

to bring to light their undignified treatment of Athens' Black community. "Dignity & Respect" is the way the University of Georgia President, Jere Morehead, and his administration claimed the 105 gravesites of likely enslaved or formerly enslaved individuals found under Baldwin Hall during its expansion were treated (Morehead 2019). It is the opinion of many in Athens' Black communities, UGA faculty and students, and historians of race and racism, however, that this was not the case (Lavine 2020[2]).

Figure 1.1 Archaeologists excavate for discovered grave sites outside of Baldwin Hall in Athens, Ga., on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015. (Shearer 2018)

[2] Here I am citing a documentary on Baldwin Hall and the universities response to the Black community. Multiple of Athens' Black leaders were interviewed in this video project and spoke liberally about their feelings about how UGA handled the Baldwin Hall situation. The documentary was uploaded to YouTube by its creator Joe Lavine in 2020 to be more accessible to the public.

In 1938, University administrators chose to have Baldwin Hall built directly on top of the slave side of the oldest cemetery in Athens, Georgia. In late 2015, an $8.7 million expansion project began at Baldwin Hall—an academic building named for the university's founder and home to the Anthropology, Sociology, Public and International Affairs, and Criminal Justice Departments (Mittlehammer 2021). During construction at the site, workers found a skull and a jaw that the Archeology department confirmed as human (Mittlehammer 2021). Shortly thereafter, over one-hundred gravesites were unearthed from under the building. The Baldwin Archaeological[3] report documents that physical anthropologists, Dr. Laurie Reitsema and Carey Garland, believed that ancestry would not be determinable in the field (Gresham et al. 2019, 326). Instead, the team waited over a year for DNA testing to officially establish ancestry (Gresham et al. 2019, 326). However, that did not stop Campus News from reporting that, based on a visual inspection by the university's consultant, the remains were believed to be people of European descent (Bill 2015).

This announcement did not sit well with Athens' Black communities who demanded DNA testing. Saunt and Berry (n.d.) explained "there were demands the university sponsor DNA tests on the remains to confirm what the Black community knew or suspected: these were the remains of formerly enslaved peoples from whom they potentially descended. The university agreed [to the DNA testing], but the process was slow." Indeed, DNA testing later confirmed the Black communities' suspicions. A report on Baldwin Hall provided by Southeastern Archeological Services, Inc. states, "of the 29 individuals with DNA evidence for ancestry, 28 have evidence for African ancestry, and three additional individuals have artifactual evidence for

[3] The full title of the report is Archaeological Exhumation of Burials in the Baldwin Hall Portion of the Old Athens Cemetery, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia and it documents in great detail the finding, exhuming, testing, and reburial of the remains found under Baldwin Hall.

African ancestry" (Gresham et al. 2019, 327). With this information, the campus reported in March 2018 that early onsite examination was wrong, and in fact, the DNA results revealed that many of the remains sufficient for analysis were of African descent (Campus News 2017). This revelation that the bodies found under the building at Baldwin Hall were indeed African did not give the campus pause on their plans for reburial at Oconee Hill cemetery.

After reporting the news of African ancestry, the campus sought to move on as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, Athens Black community grieved again after officially learning that UGA desecrated the final resting place of their enslaved ancestors (Lavine 2020). The Old Athens Cemetery closed in 1856 when the free African population of Africans numbered less than 20 people, which allows us to infer the remains found under the building came most likely from formerly enslaved people. (Gresham et al. 2019, 73). Anthropologists and historians from the university have researched what had become of the bodies on the south/slave side of The Old Athens Cemetery when construction originally began on Baldwin Hall between the years of 1937 and 1942 (Gresham et al. 2019, 73). The official Archaeologist report states there are many accounts of human remains being found during the initial construction, but no official account of any reburial (Gresham et al. 2019, 73). In fact, one historian claims that the remains had been thrown into the dump (Gresham et al. 2019, 73). These stories of indignity and disrespect had been whispered about in Black Athenians' folklore, but now they had confirmation with the discovery of additional remains in 2015.

1.2 Community Response

Michael Thurmond, an Athens native, former state representative, Georgia Secretary of Labor, and author of *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History*, held a press conference outside of Morton Theatre to publicly ask the university to listen to the Black leaders

of Athens before reinterring the remains in Oconee Hill—a cemetery that was close to the Old Athens Cemetery, but not one that held great significance as a resting place for Black Athenians (Shearer 2017a, see figure 1.2.). High level administrators at UGA and the University of System of Georgia felt that the issue of reburial should be handled quickly and logically, leading them to ignore the pleas for consultation from Black leaders (Lavine 2020; Field Notes 2020). The university buried the remains as close as possible to the original burial site and all together in

Figure 1.2 Michael Thurmond holds press conference outside of Morton Theater to voice concerns of the Black community. (Shearer 2017b)

individual wooden boxes in one massive grave. Athens Black leaders, such as Linda E. Davis, felt a kinship to the individuals that she felt would be honored by being buried in the Black cemeteries next to their descendants (Lavine 2020). Unfortunately, university administrators

remained steadfast in their plans to bury the remains quickly and quietly at their discretion. Greg Trevor, UGA's executive director for media communications stated:

> Based on historical accounts, both Old Athens Cemetery and Oconee Hill Cemetery were bi-racial from their inception. Oconee Hill Cemetery is the successor to Old Athens Cemetery, so it is the logical place to reinter remains from Old Athens Cemetery. These remains are being reinterred in a cemetery historically and geographically as close as possible to their original resting place. The site selected for their re-interment, at Oconee Hill Cemetery, will be marked by a stately granite marker that provides an account of their discovery and re-interment. (Campus News 2017)

Despite the Black communities call for inclusion and to slow down the process, the campus reburied the remains in a mass grave days after they announced the African ancestry of the remains. They transported the remains in moving vans without any community members present and buried them on March 8th, 2018 (Lavine 2020). Fred Smith, an important leader in the Athens Black community, looked on in horror from the other side of the locked gate of Oconee Hill Cemetery after receiving an anonymous tip that the reburial would happen that day (Lavine 2020). He watched solemnly as facility workers unloaded wooden boxes from a moving truck, until a worker obstructed his vision with a large truck (Lavine 2020, see figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Fred Smith view is blocked from watching the burial of the remains. (Shearer 2017a)

Greg Trevor defended the campuses position to not have a ceremony, procession, or audience because, "[they] didn't want it to turn into a spectacle" (Shearer 2017a). The "official" memorial event was planned two weeks later and included a few prominent African Americans from the community. The fact of the matter was, what happened at Baldwin Hall furthered the rift between UGA and Athens Black residents.

Multiple groups challenged UGA administration's mishandling of the Baldwin Hall controversy. The UGA Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate formed an Ad Hoc committee on Baldwin Hall to review how the university handled the situation (Schrade 2018). UGA's Student Government Association Senate passed a resolution calling for several

monuments on campus to honor and recognize slaves who worked on and built the university (Schrade 2018; see Appendix A). The History Department published an open letter citing the university's repeated missteps in the Baldwin Hall controversy. On May 31st, 2018, President Morehead responded by creating an 18-member task force that would meet over the summer to produce a plan to place a memorial on campus to honor the individuals discovered on the slave burial site at Baldwin Hall, "a move viewed by some as tacit admission that not enough had been done" (Schrade 2018). However, community members would continue to challenge the University's mishandling and missed opportunity for accountability about the role of slavery on the UGA campus.

1.3 Direct Action Committee Forms

On November 16th, 2018, a ceremony revealing the memorial at Baldwin Hall took place. Protestors, unhappy with the treatment of the Black community and continued lack of recognition about the university's relationship with slavery by administration, attended the ceremony. The protesters, including District 2 commissioner Mariah Parker, walked up on the stage, and silently held signs that read "UGA owned Slaves," "South Campus Used to be a Slave Plantation," and "UGA Presidents, Chancellors & Students Owned Slaves" (Barr 2020, see figure 1.4). Provocative as the signs may be, they provided much needed context, as none of the speeches that day acknowledged the truth of the matter, what a protester called the "material reality:" that the bodies found under the building were slaves. Mariah Parker put it succinctly:

> The university needs to acknowledge its role in slavery and the ways it continues to uphold white supremacy by not acknowledging that history or making amends for it. This gesture [the memorial at Baldwin Hall], while nice, is not enough. It's not going to bring justice to the descendants of the folks who are buried here. (Barr 2020)

At the end of the ceremony, Jere Morehead was asked by Joe Lavine, a local activist and documentary filmmaker, "will UGA acknowledge the history of slavery" (Lavine 2020).

Morehead responded blankly stating, “I am only here for the memorial today”—a memorial to enslaved people whose once final resting place was desecrated by university officials in the 1930s. This response is representative of the silence the university maintains in producing Black suffering through its participation in slavery, segregation, and ongoing systemic racism.

Figure 1.4. Still frame of protesters silently disrupting memorial ceremony (Stevens 2019).

A week after the protesters interrupted the Baldwin Memorial ceremony, I learned much of the story of Baldwin Hall at a stranger’s home in a meeting of Athens activists. I arrived early and was given reading material from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* about the African remains found under a building on campus, and how the university had ignored the Athens Black communities wishes and needs regarding consultation on what to do with their possible ancestors. Outrage filled my body as I learned of the reactionary and dismissive response that UGA officials took with Athens Black leaders. This, I learned, would be our leverage point; we

would galvanize the community around Baldwin Hall to make demands of the university. My first organizing meeting with this group began with watching video captured of the protest that happened the week before (as seen in Figure 1.4)

Initially I was impressed by their action and the group started discussing next steps. At one point I interjected, admitting I did not fully understand what happened or what we are doing, so I found it hard to speak about next steps. I was assured that if I just read this *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article, that I would be caught up. I told them I read it and it leaves more than a few questions particularly for this group, mainly: where is the *community* on this? I looked around and saw mostly White Athenians from the group Athens for Everyone, a non-profit organization for social justice, and Black UGA college students not from Athens. The main activist in charge assured me the community was on our side, but if that were true, I still wondered then why they are not here at the meeting where decisions and next steps were being made. A person then mentioned a letter some group members had begun drafting that would coincide with Joe Lavine's documentary about the Baldwin Hall controversy. (see Appendix B). I didn't know it then, but my participation in writing this letter to the President of the University of Georgia would change the trajectory of my academic career.

Clearly, the elusive "community" was code for Black Athenians—Black Athenians with whom I had no relationships other than through the UGA employees who cleaned the offices and classrooms in my building and did administrative work for very low pay. I would come to learn that few of us organizers—other than a white male UGA student—had any relationships either. My identity as a Black Athenian throughout my organizing career always felt unmoored. Some key pieces of my identity separated me from the Black Athenians we were planning to advocate for around Baldwin Hall. The first being that I am not from Athens or the south. Like many

Black transplants to Athens, I was brought to this city by a racist university and their racism did not stop me from attending or even give me pause. And lastly, my poverty, while long and enduring, was self-sustaining by my student status and temporary unlike many Black Athenians who were also paid low wages, for much harder work, by the university. These differences made alliances difficult, as I was told to never let Black Athenians know I would be leaving the city after I graduated. Another Black UGA student assured me that my questions about the missing Black community members would be answered at the next meeting when the group would be crafting its organizational "DNA"—that is, the group's story, structure, strategy, and culture. This process in organizing is called frontloading, whereby a small group of leaders from an organization craft a story about the group's principles, reason for organizing, mission, and strategy for success. I would learn much later a successful DNA could take months to craft, but we gave it only one meeting to discuss.

The DNA meeting was contentious to say the least. I came prepared with my best arguments for not focusing on making the campus marginally better for Black students, but on what the Black community requires of the campus. A task that could not be fully done without the community's presence. I quoted Robin D. G. Kelley's article, "Black Study, Black Struggle", on Black student activists to describe how to effectively struggle for justice especially at predominately white institutions. I wanted everyone to know that:

> the fully racialized social and epistemological architecture upon which the modern university is built cannot be radically transformed by "simply" adding darker faces, safer spaces, better training, and a curriculum that acknowledges historical and contemporary oppressions. (Kelley 2019, 156)

I begged them to not put their efforts into a place that will never love them, but to instead counter the white supremacist heteropatriarchy that allowed the conditions of Baldwin Hall and other acts of racialized violence to persist—a task I was struggling with myself. To my surprise, we

heeded that advice and with that the direct-action group was formed with our main target being the university, but the city and its police department were on the list as well.

1.4 Writing Out/side of Academia

Over the next few months, I plunged myself into Athens' activist scene. At times it was my only social outlet outside of the university, and for years it provided me my only connection to other Black people in Athens. I joined the board of Athens for Everyone, a local progressive activist group, with three other people of color who sought to transform an organization shaped by whiteness and masculinity. This work gave me purpose outside of academia. But in the end, Athens for Everyone showed me exactly how I did not want to organize. It was overprescribed by the creators, focused more on update meetings than meaningful change, and had no leadership to guide or take responsibility of the process by the time I joined the organization.

On the other hand, the direct-action group had leadership, a plan of action, and a purposefulness of winning concrete demands that the community had already made known. Our medium for airing our grievances became a one-page letter ending with a list of demands. We worked to create community buy in through direct relationships with community leaders who signed on to our letter (see Appendix B). As Joe Lavine finalized his documentary about Baldwin Hall entitled *Below Baldwin: How an Expansion Project Unearthed a University's Legacy of Slavery*, the group finished writing the letter that aired the grievances of the Athens Black communities around Baldwin Hall, the distancing of the university from their slave history, and the low pay of Black workers.

Months into the organizing, Joe hurt himself and asked me to take over the administration of the letter. I reluctantly took on this leadership role and worked with a small team to shape the piece into a manifesto of the failures of the university and the communities demands for

something better. We ended the letter with four demands: joining the consortium on universities studying slavery, a Black history museum, $15 minimum wage for all employees including contract, temporary and part-time workers, and free tuition for all Black students (see Appendix B). These were direct asks for Black students, Black workers, and Black community leaders. After the letter was finalized, we gathered support through direct signatures of prominent Athens leaders and organizational sign-ons to the letter. Through this emerged five community partners: Athens' chapter of United Campus Workers of Georgia, Economic Justice Coalition, Athens Anti-Discrimination Movement, Athens for Everyone, and Athens NAACP. We called ourselves the Coalition for Recognition and Redress.

Meanwhile, in the classroom I was working on a new project to create feminist classroom politics with the Athena Co-Learning Collective. We grappled with the contradictions of exclusion, whiteness, and masculinity as the building blocks of academic classrooms, and we did our best to confront the histories and processes of racial terror and discrimination that underpin higher education. As a group, we wrote our syllabus, picked our reading list, and designed our class activities (Athena Co-Learning Collective 2018, 2021, Rice et al. 2021). We wrote papers together and rejected the white Eurocentric canon that all students must read. In this class, the cutting-edge work that flips the cannon on its head written by women and people of color was never additional, extra, or saved for the reading group. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, Katherine McKittrick's groundbreaking book, was our theoretical center of gravity; a book I did not read in my Race and Space class because everyone else, who just happened to be white, already read it. *Demonic Grounds* helped me understand the world I lived in, and my role in building it. The book recentered the geographical struggles of Black people at the center of the creation of all modern geographies and showed how Black women

navigated spaces and found ways to speak and know themselves beyond geographies of oppression (McKittrick 2006). This class and my organizing work had me questioning the unfair pay in the department, the underpaid students, and why we spent half of the race and space class on the white critical theory canon. This was a key moment at which my activism and scholarship began to coalesce into new forms of theory and praxis.

At some point, all this organizing began pulling me away from my studies. At the time I wanted to study food; I had been obsessed with diets for years now and wanted to track the creation of them in the US. I had narrowed in on a group of pioneers in nutrition science who paved the way for creating a "pure way of eating" based on science. As I wrote my dissertation prospectus, this project looked more and more like navel gazing. At the height of the organizing with the Coalition for Recognition and Redress, my former advisor asked me to confront a simple truth, "if I wanted to be an activist," he said, "I didn't need a Ph.D." (personal communication 2019). At the time I had thought of myself as a scholar-activist and preferred for my academic work to be informed *by* my activism, not *on* my activism. Reconciling the importance of my activism outside of my studies with the fact that my graduate training was explicitly on the importance of the Black geographies I was trying to support, would become a critical juncture in producing the research presented here.

1.6. Activism and Academia Coalesce

The intensity and visibility of our activism around Baldwin Hall was most significant around April 2019. For weeks, all the cameras were pointed on us and our demands from the university. The premiere of the *Below Baldwin* documentary brought over 500 viewers to the Morton theater on March 31st. We had a discussion with 70+ community members about the demands of the letter on April 24th. We had over 100 students, faculty, and community members

outside of the university office demanding a public meeting to discuss our demands on April 29th (See figure 1.5.). The university brought the police to intimidate us, and university officials refused to speak with us when we followed up on a request for a meeting. The UGA president even responded directly to us via the local newspaper, and we responded right back (see Appendix C). We had what in the organizing world we call momentum.

Figure 1.5. Coalition for Recognition and Redress' April 10th protest. (Donovan 2019)

I also had momentum in my academic career. I was right on track; I was preparing for comps, writing my proposal, and received a grant to do my archival research. I just did not feel fulfilled by my academic work. I felt unsatisfied, as the project shifted from slave and Black people's diets to white nutrition scientists because of the lack of archive on the former and the

bountiful information on the latter. After the organizing was done, I was about to travel to some distant library in New York to do archival work. Seeking a way to link my activism with my scholarship, I asked my advisor at the time: should I switch my project to focus on my own organizing experiences fighting for racial justice at UGA? He said, "No and that it was not good to do work on your own university, that we had already had a meeting with Katherine McKittrick, the most renowned scholar in Black geographies, on the topic of food". I told him he was right, but I could not shake the feeling that this project, as interesting as it was, did not fit the scholar-activist I was becoming. To make matters worse, my research trip did not go as planned to say the least. The boxes I was looking for were not housed in Washington D.C., but in the Midwest somewhere. While traveling to these archives, I was almost arrested for driving without a license, even though my Georgia license was in hand. I hated the archival research I was tasked with. It was boring, tedious, and uninspiring. If only I had listened to my intuition, I would not have spent $4,000 of grant money proving to myself how much I did not want to do this work, and that my organizing lay the most fertile stories of institutions of white supremacy, as told from the mouths of Black Athenians I had come to know through organizing. Ultimately, I decided my project on food studies was not for me, and I began searching for a project that could bridge my activism and scholarship into praxis.

During a semester of mental anguish, soul searching, and ultimately switching to a new advisor, I was asked to be a part of a new organizing project by a friend familiar with my work with Baldwin Hall. I tentatively said yes, as I looked through an archive of unfamiliar documents from the city's vault about property acquisitions and eminent domain proceedings. Only after a brown bag meeting sponsored by Historic Athens, did I understand that multiple Black neighborhoods in Athens were victims of urban renewal, and that I was called to help share their

stories and continue fighting for redress and recognition on their behalf. This new project brought synergy to my life as an academic, scholar, activist, organizer, and community member. Working on this project as a part of my future research put my theoretical knowledge of Black radicalism to work for the benefit of Black communities. Finding praxis grounded me in work that calmed my unease of being a Black, queer, person in a hostile university system that was never made for me to thrive in.

Still unsure of what my project might be, I forged ahead as the group's community geographer hoping that this organizing would be integral to my new dissertation topic. Little did I know how much organizing around urban renewal in Athens would teach me about Black geographies in Athens and beyond. All the momentum around Baldwin Hall, and the lessons learned from organizing around the controversy, translated into tangible wins for one community effected by urban renewal in Athens. This dissertation will document and describe this process, as it takes place for the Linnentown neighborhood—a Black neighborhood of predominantly homeowners destroyed in the 1960s by urban renewal to make way for UGA student dormitories. Ultimately, in this work, I draw my experiences with Baldwin Hall that awakened me to the fraught nature of Black geographies to understand and describe what happened to Linnentown.

This dissertation asks, **how do Black geographies co-exist with and in white supremacist landscapes?** In the coming chapters, I argue that Black geographies within white supremacist landscapes are forced to go through a process of destruction, remembrance, and rebuilding to (re)create spaces that celebrate and further Black life and joy. I will demonstrate this process through a retelling of the ongoing fight for redress and recognition for Linnentown—a Black community destroyed by the city of Athens in the 1960s for university dormitories. This project

is only possible because of the community organizing work for recognition and redress that transformed me and others to focus our efforts as academics with community folks on local projects of Black Liberation. In chapter two, I introduce Linnentown, the University of Georgia, and the city of Athens, and orient them within the topography of Athens' white supremacist landscape, beginning with the violent removal of the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Creek nations. In chapter three, I share the methods I utilized, what questions guided me while doing this research, and what literatures my work builds from. In chapter four, I describe the specific mechanism of destruction that occurred through urban renewal and allowed for the erasure of Linnentown. In chapter five, I examine how remembering Linnentown became a political project dedicated to recognition and redress for Linnentown that all were invited to join. In chapter six, I describe how our work of recognition and redress supports the rebuilding of Black geographies. I conclude in chapter 7 with a brief reflection on our wins and the city and university's response in relation to the effort to rebuild Black geographies. Ultimately, the work of recognition and redress is still in progress and this dissertation shows it's a viable strategy to creating life-affirming Black geographies.

In this dissertation I will argue that Linnentown is an example of how Black geographies coexist with and in white supremacist landscapes. I argue that Black geographies in white supremacist landscapes become stuck in a cycle of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding because of white supremacist institutions that use their power to destroy Black geographies that support Black life and prosperity. I will show how we fostered a moment of possibility, so that a Black sense of place could develop through a political project of remembering Linnentown. Through this process of remembering we developed Black consciousness that ruptured into

action and focused us on recognizing and redressing Linnentown as well as creating new institutions of Black being that support life-affirming Black geographies.

Chapter 2

Creating Athens' White Supremacist Landscape

In this chapter, I introduce Linnentown, the University of Georgia, and the city of Athens, and orient them within the topography of Athens' white supremacist landscape. I begin with the historical maps and stories that show glimpses across time of the long-standing Black neighborhood that settled on Finley Street only a few blocks from the university—Linnentown. I then develop my use of the term white supremacist landscape to describe the living social and political landscape of settler colonialism. I develop this term—white supremacist landscape—by detailing how the Indigenous homelands of the Creek, Cherokee, and Choctaw nations transgressed into Athens' white supremacist landscape through two institutions of white supremacy—Indigenous removal and slavery. I will show how the history of both Indigenous removal and slavery is integral to understanding the power dynamics that allowed for a Black community to be removed by two of Athens most powerful institutions—the University of Georgia and the city of Athens.

2.1. The History of Linnentown

In the early 1900s, Black families began settling on Peabody Street and Linden Row in a 22-acre area bordered by Baxter Street, South Finley Street, and Church Street (Community Mapping Lab 2022). An 1874 map of Athens shows that Linnentown used to be a plantation owned by Judge Newton, most likely a member of the prominent Athens Newton family (See figure 2.1., Sanborn Mapping Company 1918). On this plantation, during the post-antebellum sharecropping years, freedmen and women likely would have rented homes and land on what

became Linden Row[4]. Historical maps show the growth of the neighborhood over time, and by the mid-1900s, the community included plumbers, electricians, beauticians, brick masons, and cooks and cleaning staff for the university—many of whom were homeowners (Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia 2021c). Former residents of Linnentown describe this as a tight-knit group of multi-generational families and neighbors, sharing community, working hard, and surviving the segregated south (Whitehead 2021).

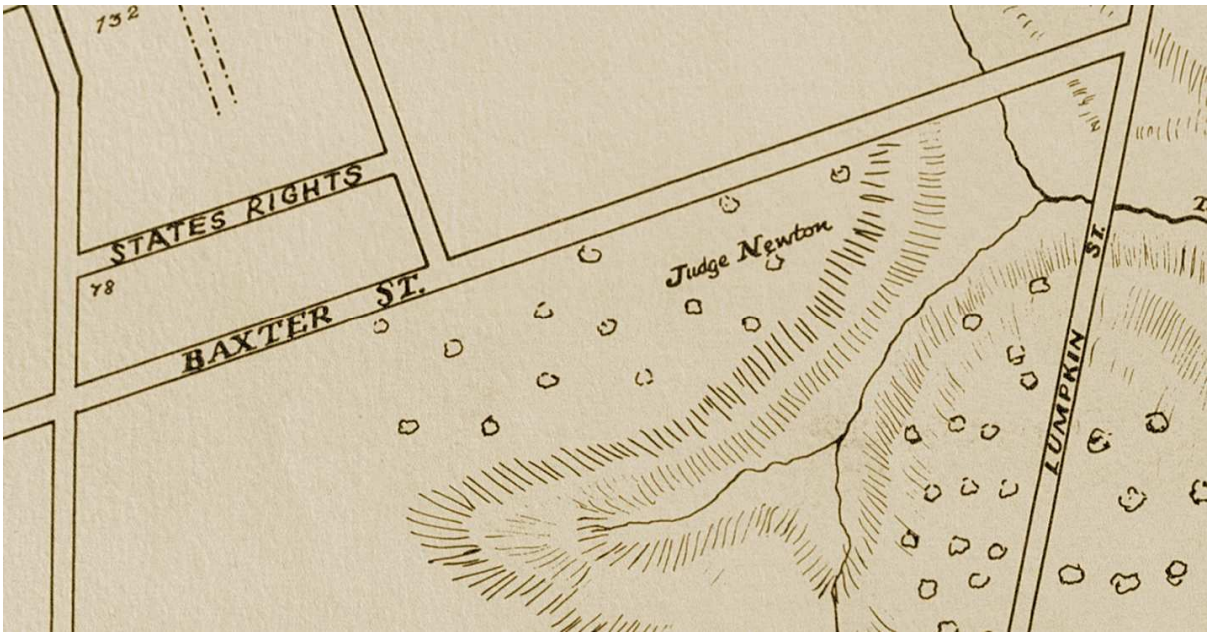


Figure 2.1. 1874 Map zoomed into to the show land where Finley St will be built (Thomas 1874)

At the time of destruction over fifty Black families called Linnentown home and it was well on its way to achieving middle-class status with the community being 62% owner-occupied (Shannon et al. 2022). The 1918, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show several homes on Linden

[4] Also known as Lyndon Row. I chose to use Linden as it is written as Linden on most maps.

Row, Peabody Street, and Finley Street, plus two schools (Sanborn Mapping Company 1918). These two schools that educated Black students in this area included: a private institution of learning for Black children, Jeruel academy/Union Institute, and a public school named Baxter Street Public School (Thurmond 1999). These locations, we assume, would have been chosen based on their proximity to the Black youth the institutions educated.

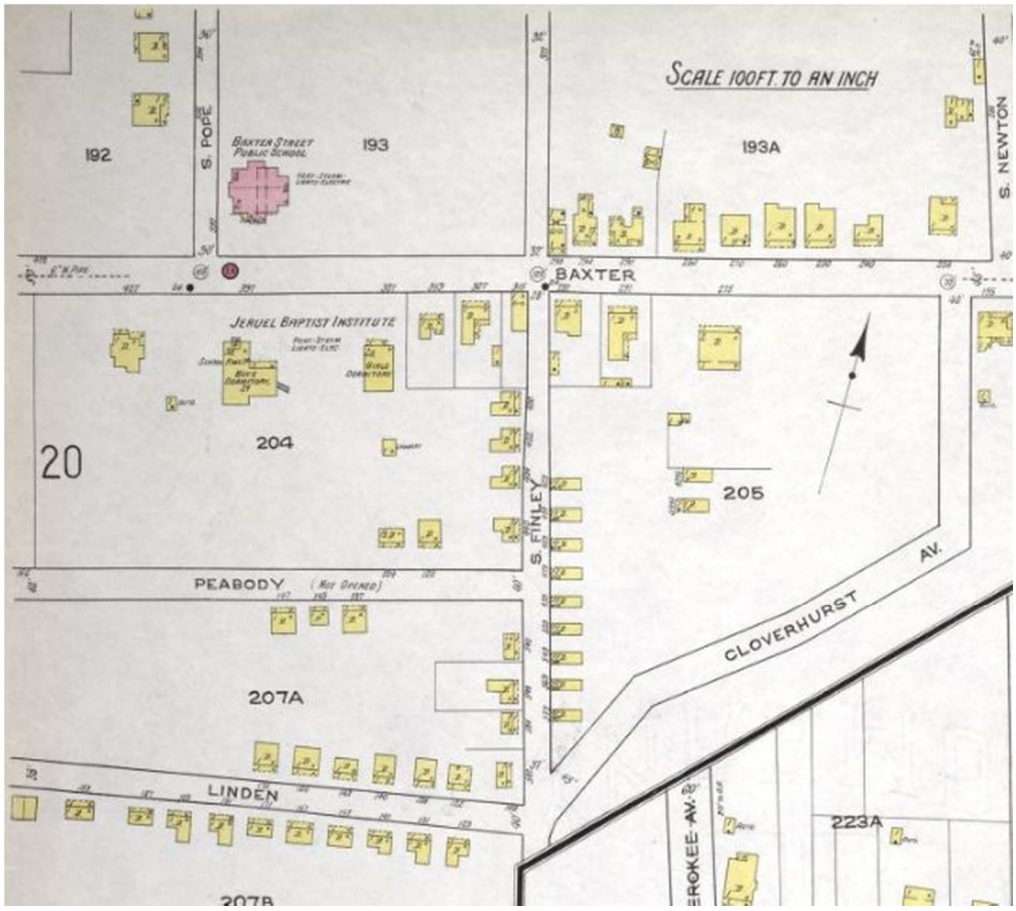
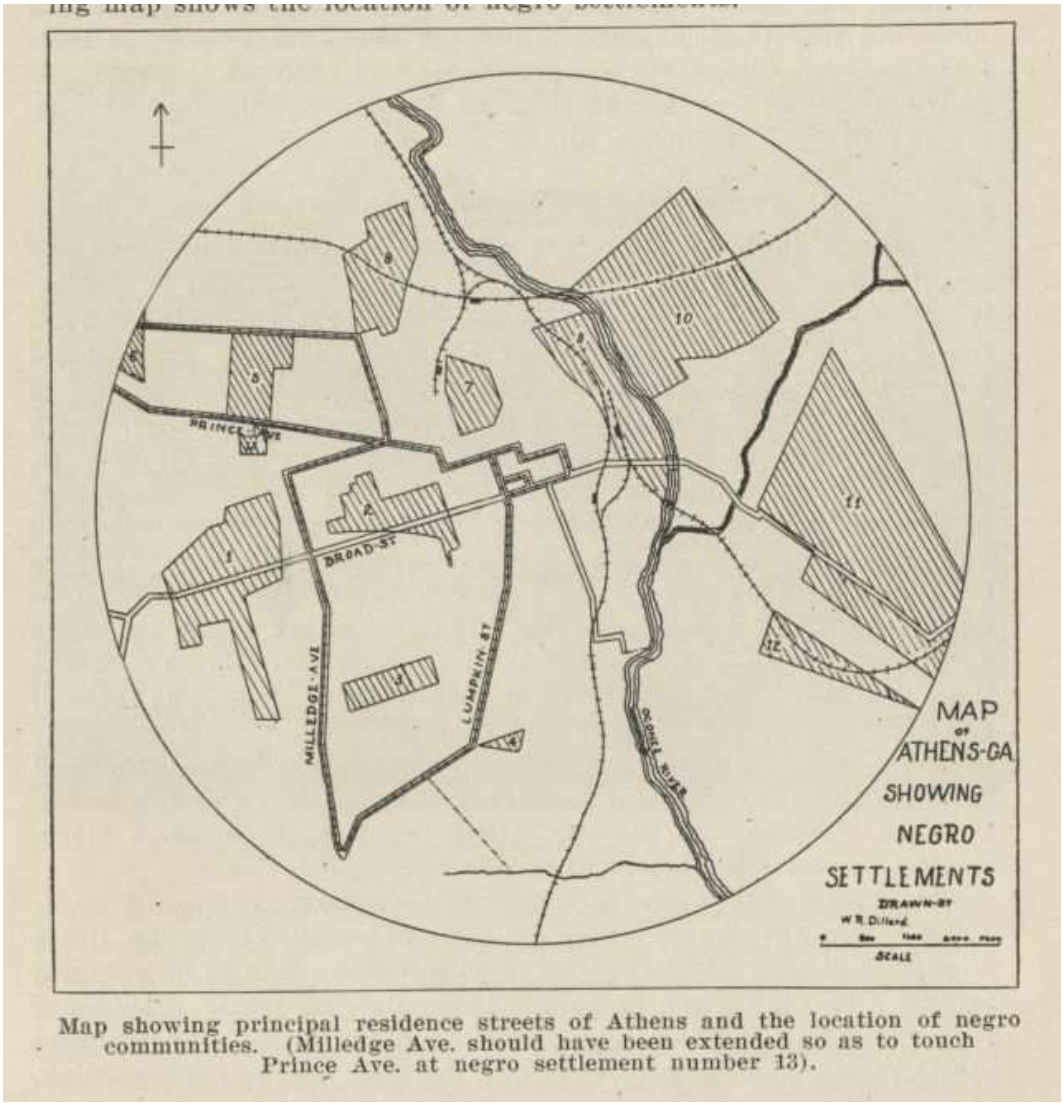


Figure 2.2. Section of the Athens' 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Sanborn Map Company 1918)



Map showing principal residence streets of Athens and the location of negro communities. (Milledge Ave. should have been extended so as to touch Prince Ave. at negro settlement number 13).

Figure 2.3. 1913 Map of Black communities (Woofter Jr. 1913)

Because of these schools Athens gained a reputation as a place where Black children could be educated (Thurmond 1999). In 1913, the Phelps-Stokes institute sponsored a study in Athens on the condition of urban Black neighborhoods. The research featured a map of Black communities including Linnentown which the researcher numbered as “Community 3” between Milledge

avenue and Lumpkin St (see figure 2.3.). These three maps together show that the neighborhood changed from a plantation to a Black community.

Stories from Linnentown descendants also tell of the established nature of the community. In an interview entitled "Athens' Urban Renewal (Negro Removal) Featuring. Geneva Johnson Blasingame," Ms. Blasingame recounts her family's arrival to Linnentown with Irami Osei-Frimpong (Osei-Frimpong 2019). Her grandfather, father, and uncles left Madison, GA in the 1940s after one of them angered a white man. Fearing violent repercussions, the entire family absconded in the middle of the night with whatever they could carry on their backs. The men walked over sixty miles until they reached Watkinsville, but eventually settled in Linnentown. In 1947, when Geneva was two years old, Mr. Johnson bought a house on 123 Linden Row. Her father eventually gained employment at UGA's Fine Arts building and her mother at Snelling Hall making eight dollars and seven dollars a week, respectively. Her father took pride in his home and fixed it up regularly; he built a fourth bedroom, a back porch, and a car port. The house sat on a two acres lot and had a beautiful garden near the creek.
The Johnson family was not unique in the care, time, effort, and money they put into their home and they, like many others in Linnentown, had no intention of selling or moving (Whitehead 2021). Linnentown residents came from plantations inside and outside of Athens and surrounding rural counties to live a more urban life where their children could be properly educated, and they could live peacefully within their Black community, however, the university had other plans for their land.

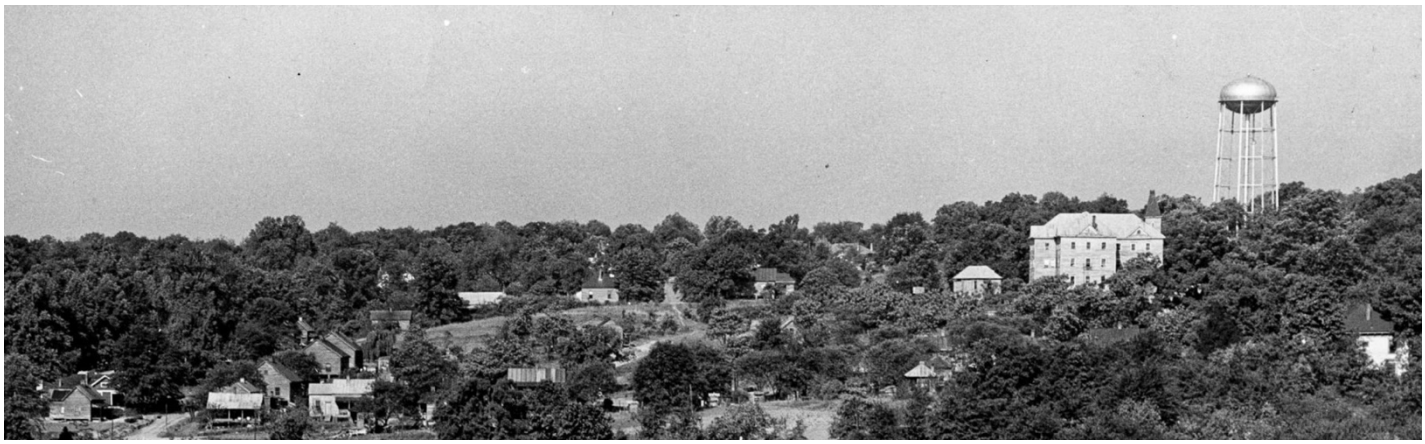


Figure 2.4. Image of Linnentown on the left (Athens, Georgia - City Records, 1860-1970)

2.2 UGA Removes Linnentown

In the mid-1900s, the University of Georgia, worried about their ability to provide housing for their growing student body and sought help from the federal government to provide urban renewal funds to build new luxury dormitories. Urban renewal refers to a broad set of policies on housing and urban redevelopment that began with the Housing Act of 1949 (Digital Scholarship Lab n.d.). Title 1 of this Housing act provided $1 Billion dollars of funding for clearing and redeveloping "slum" areas. While the stated goals of the initiatives were to provide better housing for the people living in overcrowded dilapidated housing, the effects were detrimental to many communities, especially Black ones. The Digital Scholarship Lab hosts a database called *Renewing Inequality: Family Displacements through Urban Renewal 1950 - 1966*. The website maps the extent of displacement created by urban renewal policies. They write:

> the program's local administrators turned homeowners into renters without delivering fair market value for seized properties…. the program came to an end in 1974, after approv[ing] over $13 billion worth of grants to over 1,200 municipalities. At least half of those cities executed projects that collectively displaced, at minimum, a third of a million families. (Digital Scholarship Lab n.d.)

The program effectively stole tens of thousands of people's homes and shaped today's profound inequality in homeownership rates (Digital Scholarship Lab n.d.). Linnentown held over fifty of those 300,000 families who had their intergenerational wealth stolen and was displaced from their neighborhood (Digital Scholarship Lab n.d.).

UGA administrators knew that enrollment was predicted to grow exponentially between 1960 and 1969. During that timeframe the student population tripled from about 7,500 to over 22,500, according to the UGA Fact Book (Stock and Keith Jr. 1969). Administrators at the university worried about where they would house these new students and felt that Linnentown was the perfect location to build three new luxury dormitories with the help of federal urban renewal funds (Community Mapping Lab 2022). As early as 1959, Ralph Snow, the city of Athens current mayor and Walter E. Keyes, an employee of The Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) office in Atlanta, sent letters back and forth that would begin the process of applying for urban renewal funds (Community Mapping Lab 2022). By 1960, the UGA Board of Regents that oversees the University System of Georgia, approved the construction of the dormitory facilities under the HHFA loan of $3,620,000 (Aderhold 1961). On November 6, 1962, the city of Athens approved a plan with the University of Georgia to acquire properties through eminent domain for their luxury dormitories and to then trade those properties that the University owned in the downtown area (Carter 2022).

As early as 1958, the University began buying up properties surrounding and inside of Linnentown, beginning with Ms. Doolittle's rental housing on Finley Street. A few years later

Mr. Johnson, Mr. Fred Brown, and other men attended a meeting where they learned the residents of Linnentown would be forced to sell. The next few years brought turmoil and destruction to the neighborhood (Whitehead 2021). Ms. Whitehead recalls, as a child, visualizing a "heard of elephants trampling toward [their] community; when they reached it, it would be destroyed, and there was no one in the entire city to steer them away from us" (Whitehead 2021, 59). Even as a teenager, Ms. Whitehead understood that a powerful apparatus had claimed their neighborhood and that nothing and no one would protect them. I will return to this story of Linnentown's destruction in chapter four.

2.3. Remembering Linnentown

It took a graduate student over fifty years later digging through the mayor's vault to share the story of Linnentown far and wide. In 2018 Dr. Joey Carter began working on an article about the low wages of Black workers in Athens. He stumbled upon information about Linnentown when he attempted to link low wages to the longstanding housing issues in Athens. An Athens Clarke County commissioner alerted Dr. Carter to the fact that the city had displaced multiple Black communities in the 1960s. After a few months of solo research, Dr. Joey Carter reached out for help from the Mayor of Athens Clarke County who hired a researcher through the Athens' Historic Society—Charlene Marsh—who digitized the Mayor's Project GA R-50 records from the Special Collections library. The name Linnentown was nowhere to be found in the Project GA R-50 files. After an introduction with Ms. Geneva Johnson Eberhart, Dr. Carter learned the name of the community. Ms. Geneva then introduced Dr. Carter to many more descendants including the now-leader of The Linnentown Project, Ms. Hattie Whitehead. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Carter reached out to me to join the Linnentown Project as a community geographer and organizer. I tentatively said yes, but it was at the Athens History society brown

bag lunch that I understood the archive of files was linked to an urban renewal project that removed a Black community. At the brown bag event, I knew Linnentown would be our next leverage point against the city and the university to continue fighting for recognition and redress.

Two years of research and political lobbying by the Linnentown Project—the topic of my fifth chapter—forced the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia to create a committee solely focused on redress for Linnentown. After a year of committee meetings, headed by Hattie Thomas Whitehead, the Athens' Mayor and Commission unanimously adopted the Linnentown Resolution for Recognition and Redress on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. A few days later the mayor publicly apologized on the steps of city hall on behalf of the city for the destruction of Linnentown. The Linnentown Project worked closely with Linnentown residents and County Commissioner Mariah Parker to draft the resolution setting in motion a path to redress that won political recognition. The descendant written resolution is the first official call for reparations in Georgia. The resolution represents the beginning of a wider political project to support and grow Black geographies in Athens. Research done by UGA faculty and students showed that Linnentown owners were underpaid 56% which amounts to about $4.5 million in today's dollars (Shannon et al. 2022). These are the basic elements of the story of Linnentown that I will analyze in subsequent chapters. But, to understand Linnentown one must understand how it is situated in a much longer history of racism and dispossession, perpetrated by the city of Athens and UGA, from its earliest days. That is, we must understand Linnentown as a more recent history linked to the history of settler colonialism in Georgia and Indigenous removal and slavery.

In the remainder of the chapter, I provide an essential background regarding the University of Georgia and its relationship to Indigenous removal and slavery. I begin with the

history of the pre-colonial settlement of North Georgia to honor and recognize the inhabitants of Turtle Island that suffered European invasion, colonization, and enslavement. It is imperative to return to the early history of Turtle Island to fully understand the creation of plantation geographies and Athens' white supremacist landscape that birthed the two institutions that worked to destroy Linnentown. Moreover, the story of present-day Athens-Clarke County shows the role of Indigenous removal and the forced labor of Africans in the creation of the city of Athens and UGA as white supremacist institutions.[5] Within that history lies what Katherine McKittrick (2006), founding scholar of Black and plantation geographies, calls a complicated history of interrelatedness that moves us from the racial violence of the plantation to the unlivable cityscapes that plague Black geographies.

[5] The city of Athens and Clarke County merged into a unified government in the 1990s.

2.4. European Contact to Indigenous Removal

Since 10,000 B.C., small nomadic groups of people lived and hunted in and around the lands that make-up present-day Athens-Clarke County (O'Steen, Ledbetter and Elliott 2017). In fact, 500 years before Christopher Columbus set sail for the Americas, the native inhabitants of

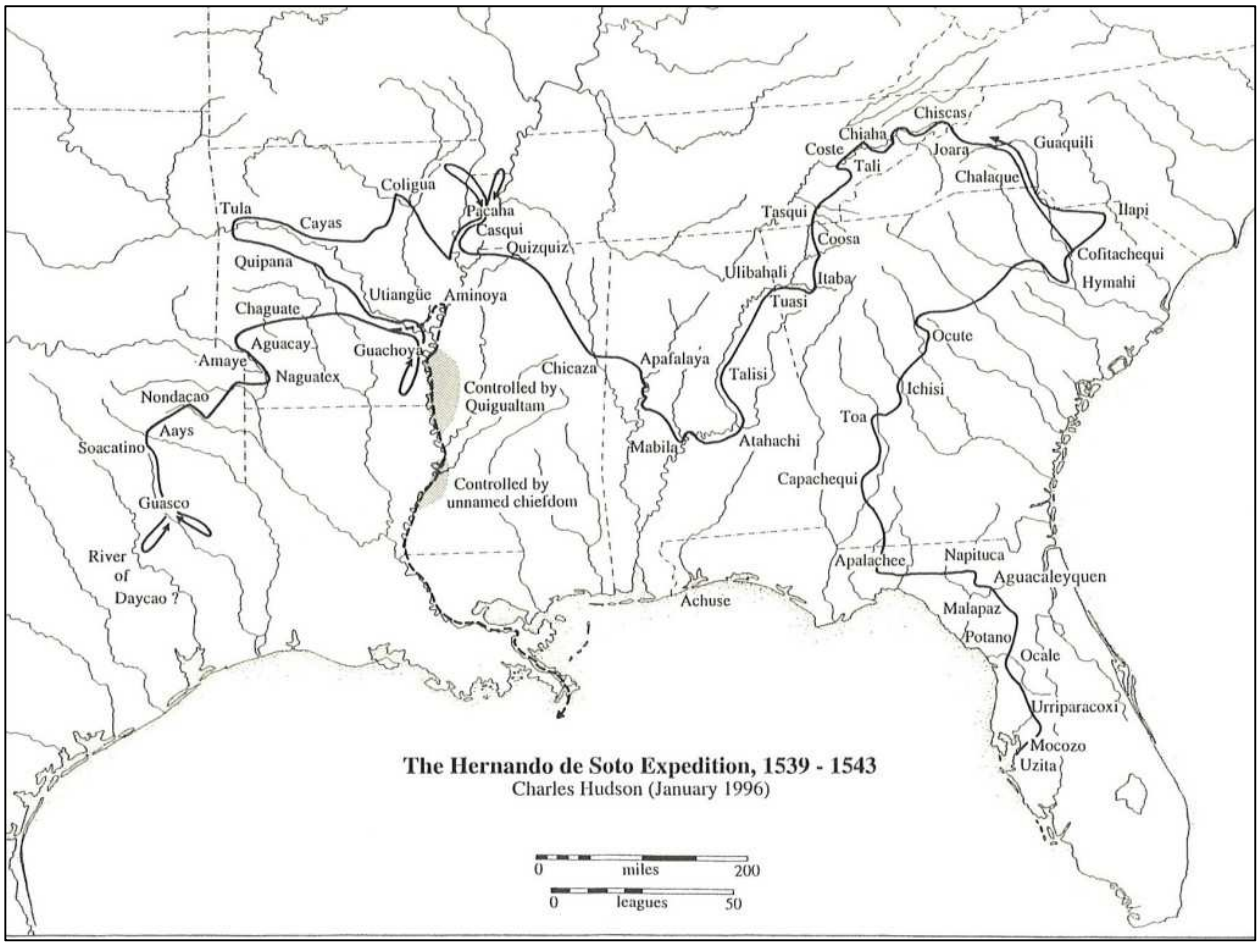


Figure 2.5. The route of Hernando de Soto invasion. Figure by Charles Hudson (January 1996) (Georgia Historical Society)

Georgia lived as agriculturalists in hierarchal chiefdoms where they built fifty-foot-tall mounds in the center of their towns and villages (Saunt 1999). It is estimated, pre-colonization, that over 24,000 people lived in over fifty towns and villages across Alabama and Georgia (Isham and

Clark, nd; Carlisle 2021). Documents from Hernando de Soto and his 600-member army's trek across the Southeastern lands of Turtle Island serve as the main written documentation of the many towns, villages, and farms that existed in the Deep South before European colonialism began in the mid-1500s (see figure 2.5.). The figure above shows a likely route that de Soto would have traveled during his invasion of the Americas and the names of the communities he encountered. The largest archaeological dig in the United States performed in present-day Macon, GA provided even more knowledge of the people of North Georgia. Spanish invaders, like de Soto, disrupted these Native communities, bringing terror and new diseases as they searched the lands for gold and jewels (Saunt 1999, 19). The National Park Service explains how:

> Hernando de Soto and other European explorers disrupted native society by stripping the villages of vital food crops and shelter, killing, and enslaving many Indians, and humiliating the chiefs, all of which led to political upheaval. [However] European diseases took the most toll on the natives who had no immunity. Thousands died as a result. (Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park 2022)

These mound building societies collapsed after sustained population loss most likely because of the destructive forces of European invasion (Saunt 1999, 22).

One group of Muskogee-speaking refugees, descended from these earlier societies, settled in the piedmont stretch of the Oconee River around present-day Athens. The Muscogee lived in matrilineal societies in either White (Peace) or Red (War) towns amongst a mixture of different clans (Saunt 1999, 22). While all towns participated in fighting in wars, the town's color distinctions organized political tasks of the society like law making, declaring war, conquering neighboring villages, and making military expeditions.

After European invasion, the Muskogee, along with other tribes in and around North Georgia, sought peace with the Europeans and readily traded with them bringing many changes

to the region. The material lives of the Muscogee and other tribes drastically changed during this century as tribes with guns and ammunition provided by Europeans moved into the area (Parmelee 2010, 88). Unfortunately, for those who settled around Northern Georgia the slave raiding Iroquois and Westos tribes destabilized the region. Those who were not enslaved and sent to the sugar plantations in the Caribbean fled to join those on the Chattahoochee River, the Cherokees in the protected mountainous region, and the Georgia Coast (Ethridge 2020). The refugees of these societies eventually reorganized into what is now the Muscogee Nation (at the time called the Creek Confederacy).

The European colonizers began to call all the Indigenous people of the Alabama and Georgia region "Creeks" and only recognized distinctions between the Lower and Upper creeks (Saunt 1999). The Upper Creeks lived around the Coosa and the Tallapoosa River basins, and the Lower Creeks lived along the Chattahoochee and Flint River basins (Saunt 1999). After becoming slave-raiding tribes themselves, the Lower Creeks on the Chattahoochee River moved to Georgia to be near the English trading post on the Ocmulgee River (near present-day Macon) (Parmelee 2010, 96). Guns, ammunition, and enslaved Natives made up most of the trade that happened between Indigenous tribes of the south and European colonizers in the 17th century (Ethridge 2020). These people became the center of the Lower Creek society, and they, with Yamasee and Shawnee slave raiding nations, repeatedly attacked the Indigenous groups of Florida who allied with the Spanish invaders (Ethridge 2020; Parmelee 2010, 97,106). In 1695, Florida Indigenous nations retaliated against the Creeks with the help of Spanish colonizers destroying Creek settlements (Parmelee 2010). In 1704, Governor Colonel Thomas Moore invaded Florida with Creek and other Indigenous allies destroying Florida villages, 13 Spanish missions, killing several hundred people, and capturing about a thousand slaves (Braund 1991).

Indigenous people of the Southeast became discomforted by the constant confrontations between Indigenous tribes at the behest of European colonizers. Many changes and disruptions, such as Indigenous slavery, the dwindling deer population, and the unfair debt practices imposed by the English brought discontentment amongst the tribes of the southeast (Parmelee 2010). These sentiments amongst Southeast nations led to the Yamasee Indian war of 1715-1717 (Parmelee 2010, 19). This war ended Indigenous slavery and solidified the use of African slaves imported from out of the country. European invasion uprooted the Indigenous way of life in this region.

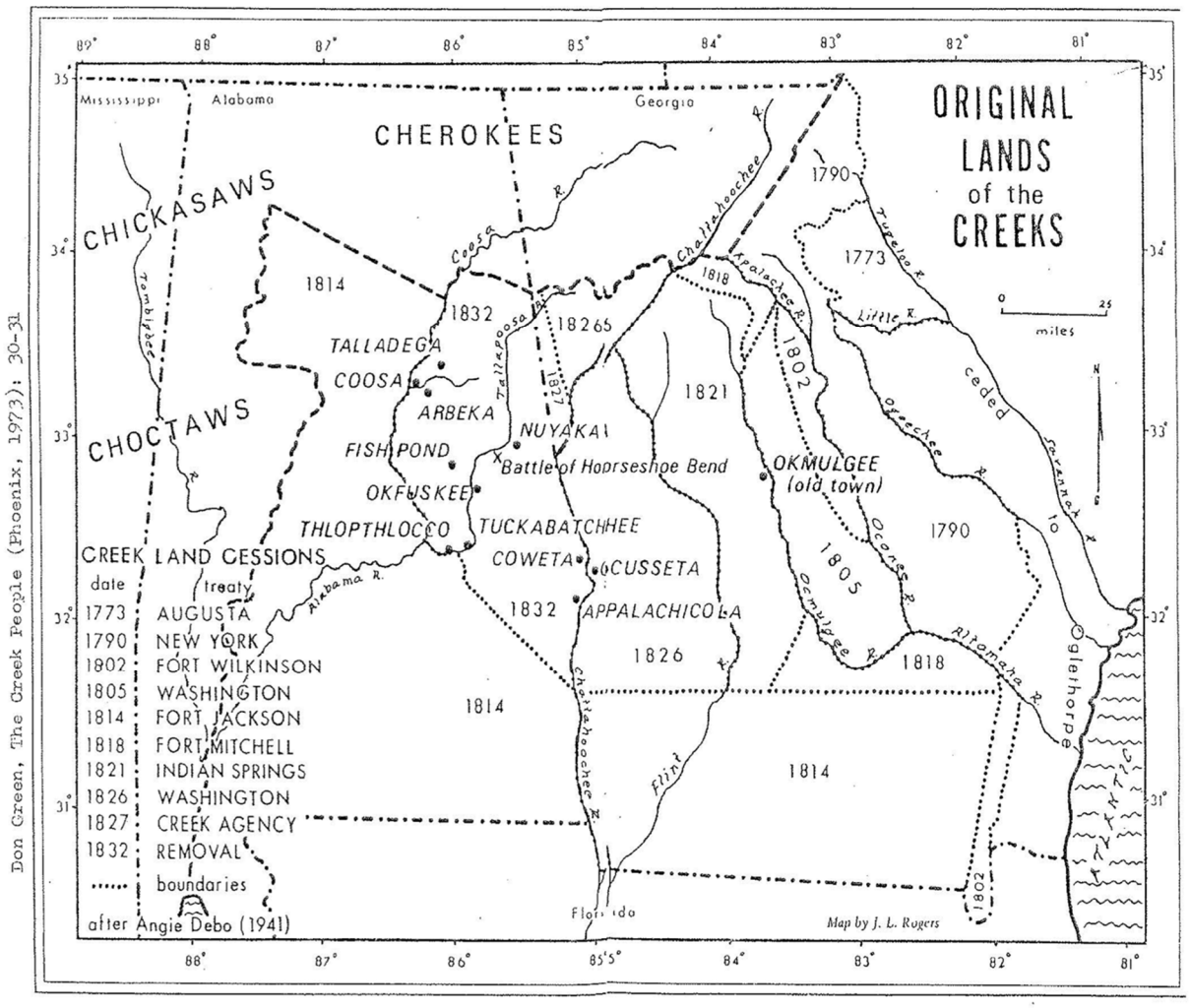


Figure 2.6. ("Mvskoke History: A Short Course for Muscogee Nation Employees")

In 1732, King George II signed the charter for the last of the thirteen British colonies—Georgia (Thomas 2009, 5). King George II made James Oglethorpe one of the twenty-two trustees that would govern the new colony. Oglethorpe sailed to Georgia with about 100 colonists to setup his base in Savannah. He quickly sought out the leaders of the Indigenous populations to create relationships that would help in the creation of future land negotiations and peace agreements (Saunt 1999). With over 100 years of diplomatic relations with different European leaders, the Creek nation came prepared to greet Oglethorpe. Eight ambassadors from Lower Creek towns visited Oglethorpe in 1733 and signed seven Articles of Peace and Commerce which precisely defined the geographic extent of their territory and described the lands they would maintain control over (Parmelee 2010)

By 1775, the white population numbered 18,000 and this population ushered in massive changes for the Creek Confederacy. Those changes occurred because of the influx of Europeans into their territories, the continuation of the dwindling deer population, the increasing number of cattle in Georgia, and the number of African slaves being brought into the region. Saunt (1999) argues that "the blockades and embargoes of the American Revolution, coupled with the decline in deer population, forced Creek warriors to pursue new economic activities including smuggling slaves across their land" (50). At first, the Creeks would adopt runaway slaves into their societies, but during the American Revolution a small group of mixed creeks set up a slave trade and began establishing plantations. The mixed or mestizo Creeks quickly climbed the ranks of the Creek society with connections from their matriarchal lineage in Indigenous clans, the understanding of European culture, and sometimes their father's wealth. Saunt (1999) argues that the mestizo Creeks ushered in a new order of things based in property because of their comfortability with the market economy, individual wealth, coercive power, and African slavery.

In October 1782, a band of Cherokees signed the Treaty of Long Swamp to settle their massive debts. This treaty ceded to the state of Georgia a large tract of land between the Oconee and Tugaloo rivers (Lamplugh 1972). At this time, the Oconee territory represented the American frontier, as the new nation had not traveled any farthest west into Indigenous territory. At the time, a mestizo Indigenous man by the name of Alexander McGillivray represented the political affairs of the Creek Confederacy (Saunt 1999). McGillivray disavowed the Treaty of Long Swamp and Augusta as "unjust" treaties, and additionally, he believed, "the constant incursions made into Creek territory by land-hungry Georgians served only to increase tension between the two" (Lamplugh 1972, 395).

In 1790, McGillivray traveled to New York to meet with President George Washington to negotiate the transfer of lands in exchange for wealth, goods, and education given to a select group of Creek men and their sons (Washington 1790; Saunt 1999). The Creek people who made this arrangement thought these men would be the ones who would usher in a new way of being for the Native that would model for the rest of the tribe how to live "civilized" like the white man (Saunt 1999). However, the lands the Creek men exchanged was not enough for the new Americans who wanted all of what is now Georgia. In fact, in the 1800s, the state of Georgia focused their policy on removing the Muscogee and other tribes out of Georgia and beyond the Mississippi River. By 1832, the Creek Confederacy ceded off the remainder of their lands in Georgia and Mississippi through multiple treaties (Muscogee Nation 202; see figure 2.6.); thus, severing the Creek's ties to Georgian lands and forcing them onto a new territory in Oklahoma (Muscogee Nation 2021). Figure 2.6 shows the slow progression of treaties that removed Indigenous tribes off their indigenous homelands from 1773-1832. The state of Georgia

completed the removal of the Creek confederacy in 1836 when the U.S. Army enforced the removal of more than 20,000 Creeks to their new reservation in Oklahoma (Muscogee Nation).

But why tell this history of Indigenous peoples in a dissertation about Linnentown? I believe to fully understand reparational justice and how to enact decolonial and abolitionist futures we must understand and reckon with our past. Settler colonialists invaded, enslaved, and removed members of the Muscogee Nation before using the same politics of displacement on Africans and Linnentown homeowners. Acknowledging the shared history of oppression links the justice claims of Africans and Indigenous peoples who may have been oppressed on the same land in both similar and different ways. The history of public education cannot escape the responsibility for the role they played in producing and justifying this racial oppression. In fact, the first public university to be chartered in the United States—The University of Georgia—is intimately connected to the removal and genocide of Indigenous people as I described above and will below, the enslavement and forced labor of kidnapped Africans, the Jim and Jane crow politics of lynching, forced labor prisons, sharecropping, segregation, and the focus of this study—the displacement and removal of Black communities for universities borne of white supremacy (Inwood and Martin 2008). Moreover, the University of Georgia continues the work of white supremacy by gatekeeping education for white students and sustaining future generations of white power, privilege, and prestige.

2.5. The March towards a Settler University

Fifty years after Oglethorpe began settling in the state of Georgia, European colonizers took steps to build the institution that is now the University of Georgia. In 1784, the Georgia legislature appointed a group of aristocrats to the Board of Trustees, a group that would oversee creating a college or a seminary system for the more common white men of the state (University

of Georgia 2017). The state offered forty thousand acres of land for the college to produce “a seat of learning” for the state (University of Georgia 2017). The aristocrats felt the common man needed guidance from religion and education to maintain order (University of Georgia 2017). Thus, the state legislature planned to put public funds and lands taken from the Creek Confederacy towards supporting their education. Abraham Baldwin, a Yale-trained lawyer from Connecticut who participated in writing the constitution, formed the Georgia Board of Trustees and wrote a state approved charter for the University of Georgia in 1785 (Smith 2018). Inspired by the declaration of independence, he wrote the University of Georgia charter to call for, “suitably forming the minds and morals of their citizens” to “regulate the manners, opinions, and instill a love of virtue and order in their countrymen” (Abraham 1785).

Figure 2.7. 1845 Painting titled View of Athens from Carr's Hill by George Cooke (Cooke 1845).

For sixteen years, the university only existed on paper, with Abraham Baldwin as the president of the yet to be built university. The university began to take shape physically after most of the land of what is now Georgia changed hands from the Creek Confederacy to white colonizers. After the treaties were signed with both the Cherokee and Creek Confederacy the

state began offering up to 200 acres of free land to all colonizers willing to live near the edge of America's westward frontier (Gigatino 2020). In the 1780s, Elijah Clarke a revolutionary war veteran, Georgia politician, and commissioner for Georgia's treaties desired a more rapid transfer:

> [Clarke] grew impatient with the failures of the national and state government to bring peace to the frontier and took matters into his own hands. He tried to form an independent republic, known today as the Trans-Oconee Republic, by seizing Creek lands on the Oconee frontier. At least twice, he became involved in plots to invade neighboring Spanish East Florida. (Davis 2017)

Clarke died in 1799 disenchanted with the settlement of Georgia, never seeing the complete removal of Indigenous people through the trail of tears or the Louisiana purchase. The state of Georgia continued to incentivize settlement in the frontier and rewarded revolutionary war veterans with very large tracts of land (Gigatino 2020).

The land of present-day Athens Clarke County was originally surveyed for William Few, who received 1120 acres from Governor Samuel Elbert in 1785 (Thomas 2009). He sold these lands after he became ill in 1799 and moved to New York (Thomas 2009). In 1801, A group of the trustees narrowed the search for where to place the university to five counties: Franklin, Hancock, Greene, Oglethorpe, and Jackson County (Thomas 2009). The group chose Jackson County which later that year was paired down to a smaller Clarke County–named after Elijah Clarke. At the time it was chosen to house the university, Clarke County was only a small trading settlement on the banks of the Oconee River called Cedar Shoals. After touring Daniel Easley's property, John Milledge a member of the trustees' location committee, bought 633 acres of land that he then donated to the university (Thomas 2009). Baldwin stepped down as University President and passed the role onto Josiah Meigs. Meigs moved into Easley's home—the only residence in town—and began recruiting students before he even finished construction

on his home. Meigs graduated the first class in 1804 in front of the construction of the campuses first building—Franklin College. Franklin College represents the beginning of an institution that would control the politics of Athens-Clarke County for several centuries to come. It cannot be overstated how the city of Athens existence is based on the demand created by the university and the lands taken from the Creek Confederacy.

In 1801, the only residence in town was Easley's, but by 1806 there were seventeen families living in Athens (Thomas 2009). That same year, the Georgia legislature officially incorporated the city. Over the next ten years, the campus, the county, and the city would grow in population. Moreover, the boundary between Creek land and Athens moved further west making the area safer for settlers. The agricultural economy started to take shape in this time and the number of slaves began to grow. Clarke County, which included Athens, Watkinsville, Salem, and other small communities had a county population of about 7,628 people with reports of about 1/3 of them being enslaved Africans (Thomas 2009). In 1820 according to the census, only 20 of the slaveholders in Clarke County had over 20 slaves, making them the upper-class in a society of planters, small White farmers, townspeople, enslaved Africans, and White students (Thomas 2009). In the next decades, the planters would introduce water powered textile factories into the county, so that they were not only profiting from growing the cotton but processing it as well.

2.6. Lives of the Enslaved in Athens and at UGA

It is also important that we tell the history and story of slaves who lived and worked in Athens, but it will not do justice to the full and rich lives enslaved Africans attempted to create for themselves. The details of their lives on plantations, on campus, in their churches, and secret societies is a struggle to make known, as enslaved Africans continued to stay in the background

of the documents on Athens and Clarke County. We do know that UGA made ample use of the hiring system for slaves. In truth, UGA never owned any slaves, and this allows for some distance to be made between the university and the institution of slavery. Rather, the university contracted slave labor using a hiring system; described below as:

> "a system in which a hirer would temporarily lease a slave from an owner. In doing so, owners generated revenue from their slaves' labor without having an investment in the actual work itself. Slaves were more likely to face weekly, monthly, or yearly hiring than being permanently sold. Each year, five to fifteen percent of the slave population was hired for outside work" ("Campus Slaves & Slavery").

Minutes from the Board of Trustees show the yearly expenses made through the hiring out system for servants that they billed to students (University of Georgia Board of Trustees 1828). The campus hired enslaved Africans to clean students' rooms, handle building maintenance and repairs, supplying water to the campus, and working in the Botanical Garden (African American Experience in Athens 2015). Enslaved people mostly did not live on campus; however, Prudential Committee Meeting Minutes tell of a "negro house" on Professor James Waddell's lot (Prudential Committee 1857). Moreover, enslaved people were prohibited from entering college buildings except for cleaning. In 1857, a letter in the *Southern Watchman* from Wilson Lumpkin defended the Baptist Church and the enslaved Africans that worshipped there (Wilson 1857). This was highly unusual but shows the agency of enslaved Africans to make places of refuge and worship while working in America's forced labor camps.

Few of the names of slaves that worked at the university are known but I will list here some of the ones we do know. Bill Hull worked as the college carpenter, while Dick Cary and

Sam Harris both worked as bell ringers on campus (African American Experience in Athens 2015).

Figure 2.8. Plaque *honoring* Pleasant Hull and other servants (Groundspeak, Inc 2022)

In the Demosthenian Literary Society Minutes, Louis is mentioned as having completed a "certain service" (African American Experience in Athens 2015). In the Prudential Committee Meeting Minutes, it shows that Patrick worked in the Botanical Garden (African American Experience in Athens 2015). Billy and Davy Hull worked on the campus as carpenters (African American Experience in Athens 2015). According to the *Annals of Athens*, Sam Harris worked as a bell ringer "made the fires in the professors' rooms, sometimes swept them out and was at the beck and call of every student in Old and New College" (African American Experience in Athens 2015). Alonzo Church's will names: Alfred Caroline, Elvir, Hanson, Louisa, and Sophia (African American Experience in Athens 2015). Pleasant Hull worked as a janitor and a bell ringer (African American Experience in Athens 2015). In May of 1951, the campus dedicated a

small plaque to Pleasant Hull that reads to a colorful and traditional bellringer and janitor typical in faithfulness and loyalty of many servants of the university (Groundspeak, Inc 2022, see figure 2.8). These are just a few of the many names of enslaved Africans forced to work on the University of Georgia's campus.

The few available first and secondhand reports of interactions between enslaved Africans and students on campus detail the violent and cruel treatment of students toward enslaved Africans. The faculty meeting minutes show how the students were reprimanded expelled and even arrested for attacking slaves that they did not own (African American Experience in Athens 2015). In more pleasant exchanges, students would participate in an informal slave economy purchasing turkey and fowl from enslaved Africans (African American Experience in Athens 2015). White students would sneak off to the "negro carnival or dances" after painting their faces in black face, even though the law and the university prohibited these interactions between enslaved Africans and White people (African American Experience in Athens 2015). In fact, the penal code shows slaves existed on campus and in Athens in full and complete ways. Laws existed to limit interactions, to keep order, and even *protect* enslaved Africans (Adams 1831). Some of those laws included a 9:15 pm curfew, prohibition of selling alcohol to a Negro, and of course prohibiting teaching a slave how to read (Adams 1831). However, one enslaved African man, Lucius Henry Hosley, who worked as a carriage driver, house servant, and gardener for Richard Malcolm Johnston, learned to read and joined the Methodist Church (African American Experience in Athens 2015). These stories constitute just a portion of the little we know of enslaved Africans in Athens and on the university.

Meeting minutes, wills, diaries, newspapers etc. demonstrate the property role that enslaved Africans were forced to play, but also provides glimpses of the human lives they lived

on campus, in Athens, and Clarke County (African American Experience in Athens 2015). The enslavement and forced labor of Africans in the city of Athens and Clarke County lasted several centuries. Institutions such as The University of Georgia and the city of Athens played a crucial role in governing, justifying, and validating the racial logics of African enslavement. It would take a biracial abolitionist movement working over 150 years to end the institution of slavery. However, the end of slavery does not end the power differential between previously enslaved Africans and the White men who continue to control the University of Georgia and the now Athens-Clarke County.

2.7. The Abolitionist Movement

1820 marks the time that talk of abolition—the end of slavery—started to circulate in America. However, the abolitionist movement began when the first Africans resisted being kidnapped and shipped to labor camps a world away. In fact, organized African resistance to enslavement forced the US and the British to abolish the slave trade in 1808 (National Archives 2022), but that did not stop some slavers from continuing to kidnap and sell Africans into the 1860s (National Archives 2022). European enslavers kidnapped upwards of twelve million Africans and sent them across the Atlantic to be sold as property (Mintz 2022). Four million of them had been trafficked to and forced to work on United States labor camps also known as plantations.

The Quakers represent the first organized European American group to resist slavery; they saw slavery as inherently violent and against God. The Quakers first divested from slavery themselves, outlawing their members from participating or profiting off slavery and then they commissioned the congress to abolish slavery in 1783 (Oregon Public Broadcasting 2014). Despite the Quakers requests the slave trade remained legal for the next two decades and racial

slavery continued for almost 100 more. The Quakers political resistance to slavery then moved from congress to the newly forming states.

Resistance to slavery also occurred in small ways on the plantation: “slowing work, feigning illness, breaking tools, sabotaging production work”, and stealing food (Sweet 2022). It happened in large ways with American slave revolts numbering anywhere from 9 to 250[6] from 1619 to 1861 (Sweet 2022). In the summer of 1831, Nat Turner went through the county of South Hampton and killed every white person his group came upon (Sweet 2022). After a few days a local militia put down Turner’s rebellion and then brutally punished everyone involved (Sweet 2022). While rebellions were rare, they did happen because slavery was unnatural. The most common forms of overt resistance were flight to “Native American communities, marshy lowlands like the Great Dismal Swamp along the Virginia/North Carolina coastal border, and, eventually, Canada and the free states of the American North” (Sweet 2022). Ultimately, the collective action of enslaved Africans removing their labor from the slaveholders who kidnapped them would be the form of resistance that ends the institution of slavery[7].

Abolition would not have been possible without the help of white men and women who dedicated their lives to ending the institution of slavery and founding the doctrine of abolition for white people. Impactful white thought leaders of this movement, people like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Angelina Grimke, and William Lloyd Garrison, all believed that slavery was a sin and became horrified with the violence of the institution and the complicity of their fellow countrymen (American Experience - PBS). In 1833 Garrison wrote the declaration of sentiments

[6] Seven revolts are well documented; however, others have been noted by historians and the exact number is unknown

[7] Slavery is still legal in the US today but only as a form of punishment through the criminal processing system. After slavery we see knew ways to criminalize newly freedmen to legally put them back into slavery under another name.

of the American anti-slavery society and formed a group dedicated to the end of slavery by non-violent means (Garrison 1852). While Garrison's group is the most famous his was not the only one. The Library Congress states:

> As the nineteenth century progressed, many abolitionists united to form numerous antislavery societies. These groups sent petitions with thousands of signatures to Congress, held abolition meetings and conferences, boycotted products made with slave labor, printed mountains of literature, and gave innumerable speeches for their cause. Individual abolitionists sometimes advocated violent means for bringing slavery to an end ("The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship")

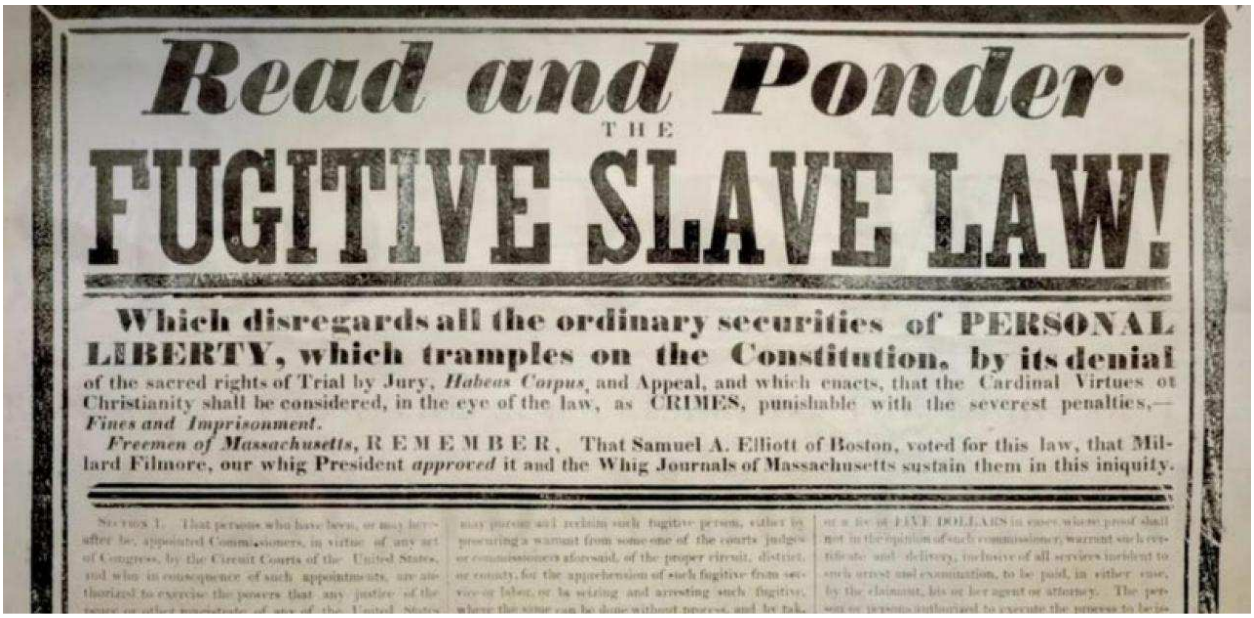
These efforts to spread abolitionism upset those in the slave holding south committed to slavery so much so that they threatened to jail abolitionists and even murder them.

White women like Angelina Grimke became some of the most prominent leaders of the abolitionist movement (Birney 1885). Angelina Grimke disgusted with her own proximity to slavery left South Carolina for Pennsylvania (American Experience - PBS). The violent backlash of Southern slavers to abolitionist literature forced Angelina Grimke to speak out against slavery (American Experience - PBS). Grimke, a daughter of one of the most powerful slaveholding families in South Carolina wrote, *An Appeal to the Christian woman of the South* (American Experience - PBS). This appeal to end slavery did not sit well with the slaveholding states and they vowed to jail her if she ever returned to South Carolina (American Experience - PBS). She went on an abolitionist speaking tour and even attracted mixed gender audiences, a frowned upon practice during that time for women. Even people within the abolitionist movement were upset by her success as women rarely spoke in public settings at this time. After Harriet Beecher Stowe felt the loss of a child, she empathized with enslaved mothers who had their babies ripped from their arms on a regular basis (American Experience - PBS). In March 1852, Stowe released *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a book, selling 300,000 copies in the US in the first year (American

Experience - PBS). She continued to petition to end slavery touring nationally and internationally and donating money for the cause.

Although dangerous, prominent African Americans also worked for the end of slavery. Sojourner Truth, Fredrick Douglass, and Harriett Tubman gained notoriety for their tireless efforts to end slavery. These African leaders absconded from their slave masters and joined the abolitionist movement. In 1826, Sojourner Truth escaped to freedom and felt driven by God to fight for the end of slavery. Truth traveled the county lecturing; she gave her most famous speech at the women's rights conference in Akron, Ohio later named[8] "Ain't I a Woman?" (Michals 2015). She worked with the Freedmen's Bureau helping freed slaves find jobs and build new lives. After meeting Garrison and speaking publicly about the ills of slavery, Douglass published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, *an American Slave*, in 1845 (Delombard 2001). Douglass began publishing his own abolitionist newsletter, the North Star in 1847 and eventually broke away from Garrison's non-violent philosophy after he realized that non-violent tactics would never end slavery and instead endangered all that supported its abolition (Garvey 1995). In 1849, Harriet Tubman fled the south using the already created networks of escape routes and safe houses we now know as the underground railroad (Michals 2015). Tubman went back to Maryland and freed dozens of people, including her family (Katz 2019). During the civil war, she was the first woman to lead a battalion on Combahee River freeing 750 enslaved Africans (The Maryland State Archives 2007).

[8] She never said Ain't I a Woman. It was added by a white woman who published the speech.



Read and Ponder

THE

FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW!

Which disregards all the ordinary securities of PERSONAL LIBERTY, which tramples on the Constitution, by its denial of the sacred rights of Trial by Jury, *Habeas Corpus*, and Appeal, and which enacts, that the Cardinal Virtues of Christianity shall be considered, in the eye of the law, as CRIMES, punishable with the severest penalties,— *Fines and Imprisonment.*

Freemen of Massachusetts, REMEMBER, That **Samuel A. Elliott of Boston, voted for this law, that Millard Fillmore, our whig President *approved* it and the Whig Journals of Massachusetts sustain them in this iniquity.**

2.9. A paper publicizes outrage at the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which required the return of runaways (Library of Congress)

Abolitionists attacked the many headed dragon of American slavery. Enslaved Africans stole themselves away to the northern states supported by a network of Black and white abolitionists. Orators and writers pulled on the heart strings of white men and women, made slavery a Christian issue, demonstrated how the practice stood in opposition to the ideals of the nation, shamed slaveholders for their penchant for violence, and showed how the slaveholding states held a monopoly of power over the entire government. The latter argument scared Northerners more than anything else, as the violence and power of the slave holding interests seemed unstoppable. These fears worsened as the Supreme Court consistently ruled in slave states favor and congress passed laws protecting slavery. The industrial North took up abolition because they needed to preserve their material interests in the Union and understood the threat of a slave economy that maintained agrarianism and stunted the progression of an industrial economy led by the Northern states. The politics of abolition transformed the city of Athens' white supremacist landscape, but the end of slavery did not end the power differential between

White and Black people. Moreover, the South used federal law to fight abolition only stoking the tensions that would lead to the civil war.

2.8. Rise & Fall of the South

In 1850, Congress passed five bills to settle regional disagreements over the state of American slavery which we call the compromise of 1850 (Drexler 2019). The fugitive slave law, a piece of the 1850 compromise required that slaves be returned to their owners, even if they were in a free state and penalized any person who helped an escaped slave (Lillian Goldman Law Library 2008). The act also made all government officials responsible for finding and returning, escaped slaves to their previous owners (Lillian Goldman Law Library 2008). The compromise allowed California to be let into the union as a free state while giving settlers in Kansas and Nebraska the opportunity to choose whether to have slavery or not, which led to violent clashes (Drexler 2019, Drake 2004). Between 1855 and 1859, Kansas pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces fought in a violent guerilla war in an event known as Bleeding Kansas, these battles significantly shaped American politics. The fight over Kansas and the remaining states that would join the union became the antecedent to the Civil War.

A student of UGA, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb (T.R.R. Cobb) wrote the longest pro-slavery treatise, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* (Brophy 2014). In this treatise he makes the argument that slavery was consistent with natural law and that law followed the slave wherever they went (Brophy 2014). In other words, he made the argument that the natural law of slavery trumped a state's right to abolish slavery within its borders (Brophy 2014). This treatise became one of the bases for the Dred Scott vs. Sanford decision that stripped runaway slaves of any rights to remain free and is cited many times within the case (Brophy 2014). A year later T.R.R. Cobb founded the University of Georgia Law

School with two other colleagues. He helped to establish the first Georgia code commission that wrote laws to support slavery and white supremacy, and even contained a presumption that all Africans should be considered slaves until proven otherwise. T.R.R. Cobb is not unique in this belief but instead represents the majority opinion on slavery in the city of Athens and at UGA during this time.

The Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case made it clear how much power the slaveholding states wielded. The decision affirmed that congress had no authority to prevent the spread of slavery. Supreme Court Justice, Roger B. Taney, argued in the case that Africans "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit" (Taney 1857). It stripped all Africans in America of any citizenship rights regardless of state law and had the potential to legalize slavery everywhere, overriding the rights of states who abolished slavery. The decision of the Supreme Court showed Northerners that the abolitionists were correct in the depths that the entirety of the United States' economy, government, and infrastructure was made for the benefit of slave holders' interests.

The Congress, the Supreme Court decisions, and Bleeding Kansas convinced John Brown that the only way to end slavery would be to take up arms against white people, go to the South, and arm enslaved Africans. On October 16, 1859, John Brown led a raid against a federal armory in Harper's Ferry. This escalation with the rise of the Republican party made it clear to the slaveholding states that the North would attempt to end slavery. The next year Abraham Lincoln won the election and within three months seven southern states–South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded from the United States.

Alexander Stephens, a graduate of the University of Georgia served as the vice-president of the confederacy. While he voted no to secede from the union, he supported the state's right to secede if the northern states continued to nullify the Fugitive Slave Act (Coates 2009). In 1861 Stephens delivered his infamous “Cornerstone Speech” in which he states:

> our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. (Coates 2009)

In other words, the Confederacy disbanded from the union to preserve White supremacy and slavery. This short-lived government failed for a variety of reasons, but the most important for this study is that enslaved Africans removed their labor from the confederacy and joined the Union to fight for their freedom (DuBois 1935). Three years into the civil war, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in which he declared all enslaved Africans in the rebel states free (DuBois 1935). When the war started, Lincoln did not intend to free the slaves and even publicly stated the preservation of the Union was the only reason for the war (DuBois 1935). W.E.B. DuBois in his book, *Black Reconstruction in America,* argues that this general strike of enslaved Africans forced Abraham Lincoln’s hand—after thousands of previously enslaved Africans fought for and supported the Union. Their efforts led to the signing of the emancipation proclamation and the removal of their labor from the confederacy led to the end of the Civil War (DuBois 1935).

The University of Georgia closed its doors in 1864 when most of its students joined the Confederate Army. Athens politically and materially served as a rebel stronghold during the Civil War and supplied the confederate with supplies. Alexander Stephens met with President Lincoln in February of 1865 and failed to bring a peaceful end to the lost cause of the South

(Bragg 2020). Union soldiers marched into Athens, freeing thousands of slaves on May 4th, 1865 and continued across the south. In early December 1865 the Georgia General Assembly ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ending slavery in the state. General John Pope supervised the Third Military District which included Georgia, Alabama, and Florida (Bragg 2020). The federal Congress refused Alexander Stephens and Herschel Johnson, as senators for Georgia because of their leadership roles in the confederacy. Pope ordered elections for Georgia's state convention where delegates would initiate a new state government and revise Georgia's constitution (Bragg 2020). The statewide registration shows that 95,124 whites and 93,457 Blacks voted in 1867 (Hester 2010). In Clarke County the racial voter registration for the constitutional convention documents that 880 Whites and 1,109 Blacks voted (Hester 2010). Two Black men, Alfred Richardson and Madison Davis won the election to represent Clarke County at the convention to the dismay and outrage of White Athenians (Hester 2010). Davis, Richardson, and other Black Republicans made a difference in the politics of Georgia and Clarke County, however White institutions would continue their efforts to destroy Black political agency. The next decades would bring much struggle, progress, and White backlash.

2.9 Conclusion

Over the years Athens' white supremacist landscape continued to grow, change, and adapt to maintain white supremacy. This dissertation is focused on what happened 150 years later in Athens Clarke County that mirrors this dance within Black politics. The fight for political power continues across time and space and brings small and big wins. The movement for Black freedom has yet to end the power differentials between White and Black people that define white supremacist landscapes. Athens power differential is rooted in Indigenous removal and slavery made the destruction of Linnentown not only possible but inevitable because of its proximity of

white institutions and its growing prosperity. The living social and political landscape of settler colonialism lives on in Athens white supremacist landscape and maintains the power structure that allows Black geographies like Linnentown to be destroyed.

CHAPTER 3

Theory and Methods

> *My history here was gone. Our schools are gone.... When you can't see yourself in the place of your origin, it is as if you are an invisible person. You don't have connections to anything. You don't own anything. You are just kind of floating there. When I look around my community, I don't see those places that hold value for me as institutions of my being" – Linda Davis (2019)*

I chose Linda Davis' words to open this chapter to ground us in the reality and materiality of Black life. In this chapter, I review the theories I engage with in this research that document and analyze Black lives and the ways Black people make space for living within white supremacist landscapes. Davis' insights characterize the overarching question of my research: **How do Black geographies co-exist within white supremacist landscapes?** Davis is searching for those Black geographies that reflect her history, her community, and her blackness. Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods independently and together paved the way for a generation of scholars, to do research on places like Linnentown, and to use geographic concepts of space and place as an analytical framework to understand the world from a Black vantage point. Specially, their work understands Black matters as spatial, as existing in the material world, and as real. Allen et al. (2019) summarizes their work as,

> alternative visions and articulations of space drawn from the experiences of ontological Blackness. Black geographies are both the ontological subject of study and an epistemological way of interpreting and interacting with the world that is particularly attentive to experiences and critiques developed within Black communities. (1004)

In this study I embrace both meanings of Black geographies; I use the term Black geographies to describe both the epistemological and materiality of Black geographies. These geographies live in relation to a network of white supremacist landscapes; white supremacist landscapes are

social, political, and cultural landscapes. Don Mitchell (2003) defines cultural landscapes as ones that have "specific sets of rights, specific juridical relations, and certain conceptions of justice that derived from people living in and on the land, working with it, and possessing it. In this sense the landscape represents the desires and needs, the customs, and forms of justice of the people who made them" (787). Mitchell (2003) goes on to say that "the physical environment reflects the political landscape" (787). Ontological Black geographies exists in a cultural landscape based in hundreds of years of white supremacy, described in detail for Athens and Georgia in the last chapter. Commitments to uphold white supremacy and racist power differentials have (re)occurred in every century since the formal end of slavery and colonialism. This feature of modernity perpetuates a cycle of white supremacist institutions destroying Black geographies, but this dissertation will show how through a process of recognition, remembrance and rebuilding, Black geographies can be reclaimed.

In this chapter, I focus on three distinct disciplines that my work builds from: critical race theory, Black geographies, and Afro-pessimism. These disciplines hold the theoretical concepts that shape how I understand my case study, urban renewal, and urban geographies from a distinctly Black vantage point. The three disciplines help me understand my case study—Linnentown—and what its destruction and process of remembrance means for Black geographies. I end with a discussion on the research methods I utilized to answer the following questions about Linnentown. These questions include:

1. How did the city of Athens and UGA participate in maintaining Athens' white supremacist landscape through the destruction of Linnentown?
2. How have Linnentown organizers and supporters made remembering Linnentown into a political project?

3. How has the work of recognition and redress supported Athens' Black geographies?

3.1. Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is a framework that exposes how American social and legal institutions continue the legacy of white supremacy through law (Bell 1975, 1980; Freeman 1977; Matsuda 1987, Cook 1990, Crenshaw 1998). The theory developed in the 1970s after BIPOC lawyers recognized the outcomes of the Civil Rights Act began to fall short of full justice, protection under the law, and integration into civil society for BIPOC people. Critical race theory grew out of applying a race conscious lens to critical legal studies and using radical feminism to critique equality under the law, while also responding to the radial Black movements of the 1970s within the discipline of law. Critical race theory has now expanded much further into other disciplines beyond the law and even inspired new theoretical perspectives based in race consciousness (Delgado and Stefancic 2012).

Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2012) juxtapose critical race theory with other conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses in their book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. They argue critical race theory "questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment, rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012, 3). One of the foundations of this theory is both the rejection of color blindness and the idea that the world is becoming more progressive over time. Instead, the theory understands the world from a race-conscious point of view. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) explain that a main tenet of the theory is that:

> racism is ordinary, normal, and embedded in society, and, moreover, that changes in relationships among the races (which include both improvements and turns for the worse) reflect the interest of dominant groups, rather than idealism, altruism, or the rule of law. (7)

This theory gave BIPOC scholars the permission to throw out the rulebook when understanding the most basic concept in the law—property. In the law, property has many definitions beyond just physical property. It is a right to possess, to exclude, and to take privileges from an entity that can be owned. For this dissertation I am most interested in the ways that Cheryl Harris' groundbreaking paper, "Whiteness as Property" (1993), explains the racial structure of property rights in land. In the paper, Harris shows how whiteness evolved from a racial identity into a form of property with its own sets of rights protected under American law. In writing about the Natives indigenous to the Southeastern lands in North America she says,

> Possession - the act necessary to lay the basis for rights in property - was defined to include only the cultural practices of whites. Although the Indians were the first occupants and possessors of their land, their racial and cultural otherness allowed this fact to be reinterpreted and ultimately erased as a basis for asserting rights in land. (Harris 1993, 1721)

In other words, under the law there is a precedent that racial and cultural otherness can be the basis for the dispossession of BIPOC land. During the 1960s' wave of urban renewal removing so-called "blighted," substandard homes became the logics that pushed Black communities out of city centers and supported city planners to dispossess them of their land and property. In *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Richard Rothstein (2017) writes about how the law created racial segregation in America. He writes that local governments used "slum clearance" to shift African American populations away from downtown areas (Rothstein 2017, 227). Rothstein (2017) argues further that,

> slum clearance reinforced the spatial segregation of African Americans as well as their impoverishment. This, in turn, led to further segregation because the more impoverished African Americans became, the less welcome they were in middle-class communities (228).

Rothstein shows how local governments, like Athens Clarke County, weaponized slum clearance via urban renewal, and in the case of Linnentown and many other cities, used federal funds to

remove Black communities from downtown areas. There are two logics at play that make urban renewal possible. First, there is the logic of whiteness as property that recognizes and maintains only the property rights of white people and the idea that Black communities are synonymous with slums and need to be removed from business districts, downtowns, and away from white people. These logics build a foundation for white intuitions to create systems to forcibly remove Black communities. With these concepts in mind, I ask **how did the city of Athens and UGA participate in maintaining Athens' white supremacist landscape through the destruction of Linnentown?** Answering this question will show how the law was used as intended, as a tool for UGA administrators and city officials to justify, fund, and forcibly remove Linnentown residents from their home and erase their community.

3.2. Black Geographies

Black geographies describe an interdisciplinary merging of scholarly work on the production of Blackness and the ways that production is tied to geographies that are both real and imagined (McKittrick and Woods 2007,7; McKittrick 2006; Allen et al. 2019). The term Black geographies was first coined by a gender studies scholar named Katherine McKittrick whose work continues to forge this area of study within geography from outside the discipline. The "Black" in Black geographies is not a signal of allegiance to Black studies. Instead, the body of work critiques the inadequate geographies used by Black and critical race studies as "bio-geographic determinism," (McKittrick and Woods 2007, 5), while also rejecting the geographic canon and turning human geography on its head to reinterpret key concepts of space, place, and their production from the vantage point of the Black subject (McKittrick and Woods 2007,7; McKittrick 2006). McKittrick (2006) defines Black geographies as both the "philosophical, material, imaginary, and representational trajectories; each of these trajectories, while

interlocking, is also indicative of multiscalar processes, which impact upon and organize the everyday" (7). In this study I adopt all four understandings of what Black geographies signifies as Black material spaces, as Black imaginative space-making, and a philosophical sub-discipline of human geography. Black geographies provide scholars with an analytical framework to view the world from a Black vantage point that understands Black matters as spatial matters (Allen et al. 2019, Woods and McKittrick 2007). In fact, McKittrick provided scholars, like me, a way to understand the production of space and place that is both separate from "the canon" and centers the geographies of domination experienced by Black people.

There are three key ideas that are important to Black geographies: disrupting the narrative of the ungeographic Black subject, ending the naturalization of the dispossessed and violated Black body, and producing a Black epistemology from Black ontologies. In McKittrick's groundbreaking book, *Demonic Grounds: Black Cartographies of Struggle,* she re-conceptualizes human geography for a new generation of scholars focused on the intersection of race and space using the geographies of Black women. Her work demonstrates the complexity of Black geographies that are spatial, relational, knowable, sayable, real, and imagined (McKittrick 2006, McKittrick and Woods 2007, Hawthorne 2019, Allen et al. 2019). McKittrick (2006) argues:

> "the relationship between black populations and geography—and here I am referring to geography as space, place, and location in their physical materiality and imaginative configurations— allows us to engage with a narrative that locates and draws on black histories and black subjects in order to make visible social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic" (x).

Here, McKittrick relies on Black subjectivity and histories to disrupt the fallacy of the Black "ungeographic" subject who arrives from nowhere and whose oppression is natural (McKittrick and Woods 2007). She finds geographies of the margins, ghettos, and the scholarly obsession

with Black bodies also naturalized the black subject as an unknowable, othered, marginal body that is merely gestured to when calling out the way things have been racialized. (McKittrick 2006; McKittrick and Woods 2007). Black geographies avoid these traps by beginning with Black ontologies and epistemologies and leaving space for new ways of being and knowing.

With Clyde Woods, McKittrick rails against overly simplistic geographies she calls "bio-geographic determinism" (McKittrick and Woods 2007, 7). Additionally, McKittrick admonishes scholars that focus on the spectacle of violence at the scale of the black body. She argues it naturalizes the violence Black people face and forecloses Black livability and paths towards Black futures not shaped by anti-Black violence. Black geographies may begin with Black ontologies of relationality between the oppressor and oppressed, but they don't end there. Instead, McKittrick (2006) demonstrates how to contend with the reality of anti-Black violence and center the way Black people produce their own spaces.

Ontological Black geographies were created within and beyond the plantation that concretized Black servitude, placelessness and constraint securing Black folks to "the geographic mechanics of the plantation economy" (McKittrick 2013, 11). Mckittrick argues plantation geographies represent "an uneven colonial—racial economy that legalized servitude and marked black bodies as without land, home, or ownership of self while normalizing racial violence" (Mckittrick 2011, 948). In other words, the logic of plantation geographies created the bifurcated racial categories of black dispossession and white freedom. Plantation geographies, like Athens, GA, continue this legacy of Black dispossession and white freedom within its geographies, economy, and material realities.

Within Black geographies is the concept of a Black sense place. Building off Doreen Massey, Mckittrick (2011) defines a black sense of place as the process of materially and

imaginatively situating historical and contemporary struggles against practices of domination and the difficult entanglements of racial encounter, while always leaving room to imagine and create spaces that celebrate and produce Black life. A Black sense of place is that drive to create and restore institutions of Black being. It is the map that will lead Black people to a place called freedom.

A Black sense of place is the ability and drive to create spaces, places and landscapes that are made for and by Black people. Within Athens, GA longstanding Black residents maintain their own sense of place by producing alternative geographies of knowing and being. The aforementioned Ms. Davis was not content with an Athens that did not maintain institutions of her being. Instead, she restored the Pilgrim and the Brooklyn cemeteries, two historical Black cemeteries that have been neglected unlike other cemeteries in town and on campus. I take these lessons and concepts from Black geographies to ask, **how have Linnentown organizers and supporters made remembering Linnentown a political project?** The Black geographies framework helps me understand how Black people create and defend the spaces and places they have made for themselves.

3.3. Afro-pessimism

Afro-pessimism is a conceptual framework and philosophical school of thought that exposes how Black people exist in a state of social death. Cunningham (2020) describes the concept of social death as,

> the experience of slavery as it has appeared across time and space—a slave is not merely an exploited person, but someone robbed of his or her personhood. For Wilderson, the state of slavery, for Black people, is permanent: every Black person is always a slave and, therefore, a perpetual corpse, buried beneath the world and stinking it up.

Sadiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* inspired Afro-pessimism as a school of thought and was further developed by Frank B. Wilderson III and Jared Sexton (Weier 2014, 419). In *Scenes of Subjection*, Hartman interrogates forms of domination, the scenes that the slave experiences domination in, and the ways the enslaved African was able to resist. From these scenes of subjection, she interrogates the concepts of civil society and what they mean to Black people still living in the afterlives of slavery. Hartman (2008) calls "the afterlife of property: skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment (6)." Afro-pessimism understands Africans as still waiting for emancipation from the status of non-personhood in civil society.

One of the newest additions to the Afro-pessimist canon is Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Sharpe (2016) asks the reader what happens when we stop being surprised by premature Black death and recognize the role Black death plays in creating and sustaining our modern life. The image below encompasses Sharpe's powerful description of Black life/geographies (Figure 3.1). She posits that we are still living in the afterlife of slavery and radical Black Feminist Study is the ship that will sail Black people to freedom. However, the unnavigable weather all around us represents anti-blackness and premature Black death blocking us from our destination. Wake work is the current representing acts of care both material and imagined pushing the boat towards freedom and away from the storms. Sharpe gives us this analytical framework of the wake to understand how African people across the diaspora struggle to care for one another in their afterlives of property. Sharpe defines the wake in three registers: a track left on the water's surface by a [slave] ship (disturbed flow), a watch or vigil held beside the body of someone who is dead, and the state of wakefulness or consciousness (Berry et al.

forthcoming). She argues for us to take on this analytic and enact wake work to care for Black people across the diaspora. She argues,

> at stake than is to stay in this wake time towards inhabiting a blackened consciousness that would rupture the structural silences that produce and facilitate, Black social and physical death... this positioning avails us particular ways of re/seeing, re/inhabiting, and re/imagining the world. She goes on to define wake work as an "ethics of care...an ethics of seeing and being in the wake as consciousness" (131) as necessary to "counter the violence of abstraction (Sharpe 2016, 130-131).

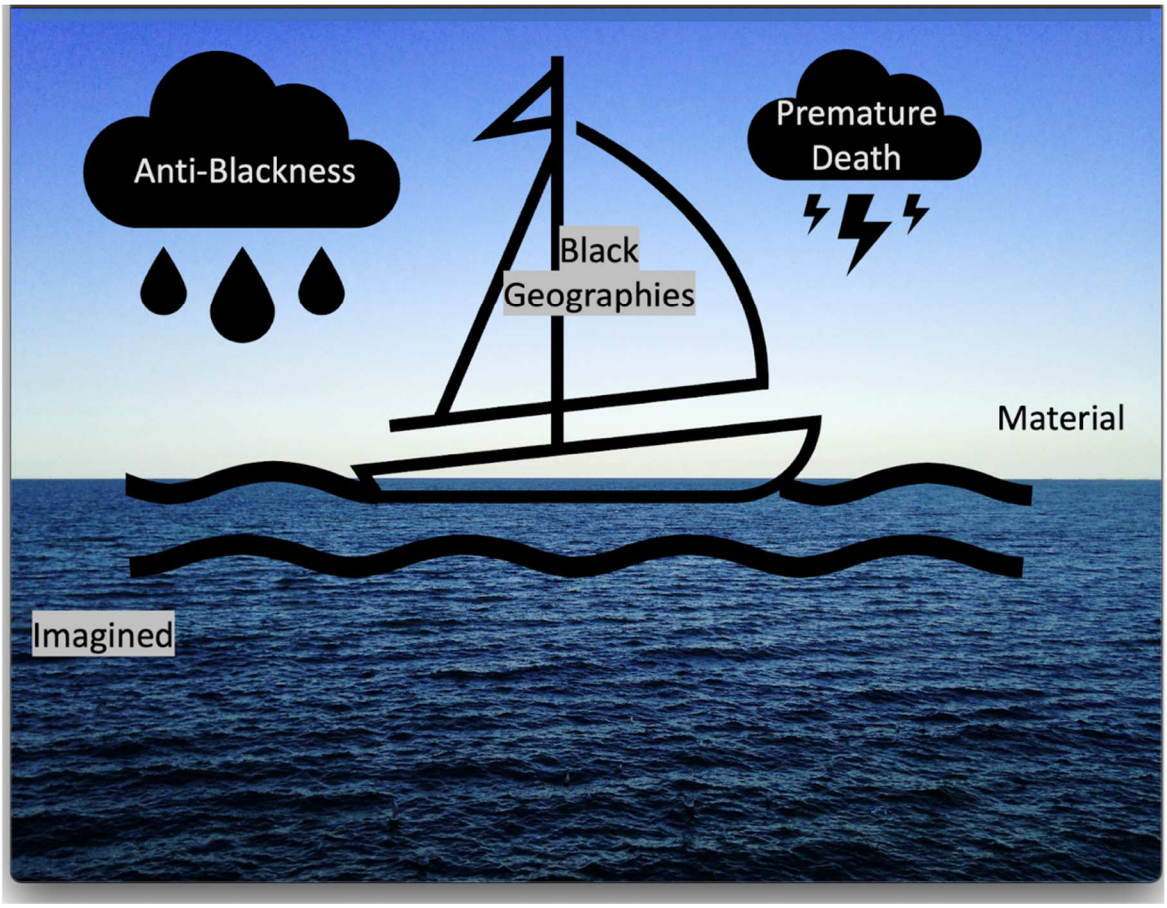


Figure 3.1. Visual representation of the wake work theory

For Sharpe, wake work is to "imagine new ways to live in the wake of slavery, in slavery's afterlives, to survive (and more) the afterlives of property... a mode of inhabiting and rupturing this episteme with our known lived and un/imaginable lives" (Sharpe 2016, 18). Importantly, this

requires attention and care. We must remember, reflect, imagine what she calls orthographies of the wake that "require new modes of writing, new modes of making-sensible" (Sharpe 2016, 113). Afro-pessimism helps me understand how the work of recognition and redress and Linnentown organizing represents wake work that produces a Black sense of place which supports the (re)building of Black geographies. With this theory I ask, **how has the work of recognition and redress supported Athens' Black geographies?** The wake work framework helps me recognize the actions of Black people to create spaces of care for themselves and their own community.

3.4. Cycle of Black Geographies

The goal of this dissertation is to understand how Black geographies coexist with and in white supremacist landscapes. Through my analysis of Linnentown described in detail in subsequent chapters, I find Black geographies become embedded in a cycle of *destruction*, *remembering*, and *rebuilding* as represented by the graphic below (Figure 3.2). Even when Black geographies support Black life and Black prosperity they are not seen as valuable under capitalist metrics and instead labeled as threatening by white institutions. These white institutions then use their power to destroy the threat that is Black geographies. While the physical Black geography may be destroyed, the Black sense of place that compelled Black people to build those places still lives within Black communities. Black consciousness eventually ruptures into action and those memories and imaginations of once living Black geographies become the fertile ground for a collective process of naming, rebuilding, restoring, and creating new institutions of Black being. Destroyed Black geographies may continue in new forms but the remembrance of those destroyed places supports the creation of new institutions of Black being. My case study will

demonstrate the cyclical process of destruction, remembrance, and rebuilding that is happening with Linnentown.

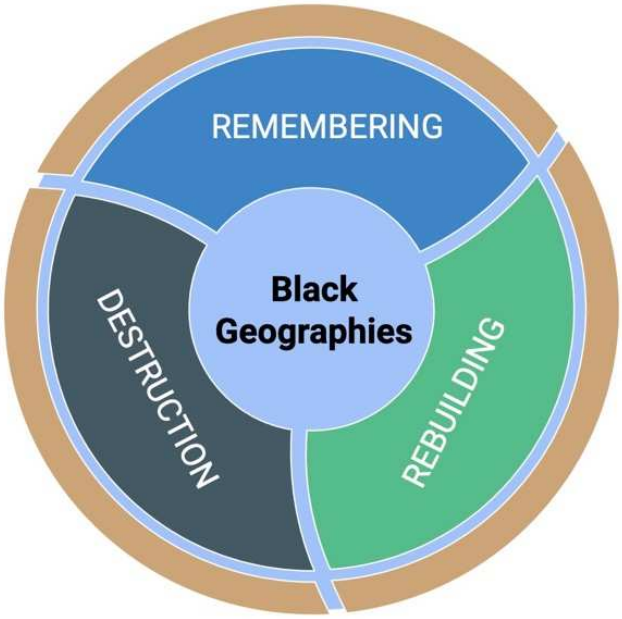


Figure 3.2. Visual representation of the cyclical process Black geographies exists in

3.5. Research Design

This dissertation utilizes a community-engaged Black feminist theoretical approach to address the research questions. As an organizer and a researcher, I have used my skills to do research that supports material outcomes and demands for Black liberation, self-determination, and community sovereignty. My praxis is informed by the Black radical and feminist theorists who understand the struggles of Black people and grapple with how we achieve freedom. Black feminisms are informed by the combination of organizing and theorizing about the position of Black women in a white supremacist society (Combahee River Collective 1983). A Black feminist approach finds theory within both the work of community organizers and scholars.

My activist work with members of Athens' longstanding Black community guided this project. I utilized the relationships I developed with this community through three and a half years of racial justice organizing in Athens, partially described in Chapter 1. This includes two central efforts: The Coalition for Recognition and Redress related to Baldwin Hall and serving as a community geographer in a resident-led project that centers on university-displaced Black residents from Linnentown. Through this work, I facilitated UGA's Community Geography efforts for the Linnentown community. These relationships have allowed me to understand Athens' Black community from my own standpoint as a Black transplant in the Athens' community.

This research draws on my own memories and experiences to help answer my research questions. My knowledge, as with all situated knowledges, is partial and is combined with data from archival and semi-structured interviews (Haraway 1988). Combining these methods did not uncover a single "Truth," but allowed me to share my understanding of Linnentown and its destruction, remembrance, and rebuilding of new Black geographies from different perspectives, as well as the lived experience of this place from a collection of Black residents' experience, including my own. Thus, data for this research will come from archival, ethnographic notes/experiences, and semi-structured interviews. **Table 1** provides an overview of my research design.

Research Question	Research Objectives	Methods
How did the city of Athens and UGA participate in maintaining Athens' white supremacist landscape through the destruction of Linnentown?	Determine the laws and practices of urban removal Document the process of removal Identify key individuals and institutions in the removing Linnentown	Archival Review: 1965 Housing Act, UGA Archives, City of Athens and UGA correspondence, Memoirs on Linnentown, Recorded Interviews Interviews: Linnentown Descendants
How have Linnentown organizers and supporters made remembering Linnentown into a political project?	Document how Linnentown descendants share the story of Linnentown and its destruction Identify key individuals and institutions that support Linnentown organizing Explore the desired outcomes of Linnentown organizing	Archival Review: Local newspapers, websites of relevant organizations, national media coverage, Memoirs on Linnentown, Recorded Interviews Interviews: Activists, Linnentown Residents, and Community Leaders Autoethnography: memory, notes, and writing
How has the work of recognition and redress supported Athens' Black geographies?	Identify practices of care that Linnentown organizers and supporters have taken to support Linnentown Document what concessions Linnentown organizers have won from the city	Archival Review: Memoirs on Linnentown, Recorded Interviews Interviews: Linnentown Residents Autoethnography: memory, notes, and writing

3.6. Archival Methods

Archival research methods allowed me to trace the creation and destruction of Linnentown from the experience of Linnentown residents, UGA administrators, and city officials. By carefully examining relevant archival materials—UGA and city officials' correspondence, Linnentown memoirs, recorded interviews, GA project R-50 files, and University meeting minutes—I documented the destruction of Linnentown. The archives paired with the ethnographic and interview method described below allowed me to show how the white supremacist logics of landscape are maintained through the destruction of Linnentown.

The university and the city of Athens are state institutions with a long history and assorted yet rich archive. Ann Laura Stoler writes about the opportunity these institutions provide in her book, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Stoler (2008) shows the order of things as seen through the record of archival productions that she pairs with ethnography. She argues, "ethnography in and out of the colonial archives attends to processes of production, relations of power in which archives are produced, sequestered, and rearranged. I reflect on colonial documents as 'rituals of possession,' as relics and ruins as sites of contested cultural knowledge" (Stoler 2008, 32). In other words, the colonial archive reflects the white supremacist landscape and can expose the logics that governed the institution. Stoler asks, "how oral and vernacular histories cut across the stricture of archival production and refigure what makes up the archival terrain" (Stoler 2008, 33). Here, Stoler (2008) describes the archive as a construction of power produced and maintained within the site of the institution. Stoler's work informs my historical approach to autoethnography that utilizes lived experience to interpolate the colonial archive. Additionally, organizers like myself challenge white supremacist landscapes through producing narratives that influence people to

disrupt the dominant discourse and status quo. Thus, alongside the colonial archive exists an alternative narrative created by myself and others to support Athens Black geographies and challenge Athens' white supremacist landscape that I utilized for data collection. Organizing letters and websites, Local online newspapers, Linnentown memoirs and speeches given at protests provide a counternarrative and logics that govern Black geographies. As Stoler points out, the archive alone is not a sufficient reference and supports my pairing of an archival data collection method with ethnography.

3.7. Auto-Evocative Ethnography

For this project, I have conducted an auto-ethnography of Linnentown project organizing by reviewing my notes, writing, experience, and memory of four years of organizing around Linnentown from January 2019 to June 2022. Ethnography can be defined "as a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, and representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience" (Willis and Trondman 2000, 5). Auto-ethnography evolved from ethnography as a type of reflexive focused ethnography that uses the personal experience to make meaning of moments from the researcher's affective experience. This approach to ethnography centers the researcher to emphasize that all data extraction is interpolated through the researcher as a research tool rejecting all attempts at objectivity. Anthropologists went even further developing what they call "evocative ethnography" to center affect in the retelling of what they and others have sensed and felt. Skoggard and Waterston (2015) define evocative ethnography as making room for, and holding onto, feelings and affect in its description and explanation. Consequently, the researcher's thoughts, emotions, memory, and affect comprise data that must be interrogated. This method is integral to understanding a Black sense of place

within a white supremacist landscape for this project. In evocative ethnography the ethnographer is not a mere recorder but the research tool. Thus, my affect while advocating for redress and recognition is integral to understanding this project; as are my conflicting identities as an Athens Black resident, community activist, student researcher, and my integral role efforts to recognize and redress Linnentown.

The organizing work I have done has put me front and center as a community geographer in a community-directed project—The Linnentown Project—that center university-displaced Black residents. I have been on over a dozen tours from 2018-2022 of Linnentown with different Linnentown descendants, I have sat in several closed meetings with Linnentown descendants, I have sat in meetings with Athens' commissioners and the Athens Mayor about the Linnentown-focused committee, and I have led students in engaging the Athens community on learning about Linnentown and supported the development and creation of a memorial for Linnentown. These experiences have allowed me to understand Athens' Black community from a unique vantage point and enriched this dissertation with a wealth of understanding on Linnentown.

3.8. Semi-structured Interviews

I held interviews with three key stakeholders that rounded out this project by bringing in the memory, thoughts, and experiences of Joey Carter, Hattie Thomas Whitehead, and Broderick Flannigan. These three interviewees represent the researcher, Linnentown descendant, and community member perspective that will add depth to my analysis. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that include a set of questions that are asked in a conversational style that follow the thoughts and responses of the interviewee. First, I interviewed Joey Carter because he started the research project and organizing for Linnentown. Secondly, I interviewed Hattie Thomas Whitehead because she leads The Linnentown Project and wrote her memoirs on Linnentown.

And lastly, I interviewed Broderick because he is an Athens native, artist, and community activist that organized around Linnentown. My interviewees provided a unique lens to my understanding of Athens' Black sense of place and the role Linnentown organizing played in further developing it and Black geographies. I also used interviews that had already been done and publicly posted by other community members. In college communities Athens' leaders get fatigued by being constantly interviewed. Thus, I relied on public released interview data to enrich this study with their lived experience without interviewing them again.

3.9. Analysis

Narrative analysis is the primary method I used to analyze the data I have collected. I chose this method because much of my data is told in the form of a story. This method of analysis rests on the understanding that the way we act in the world is based on the stories we believe and tell each other (Allen 2017). Narratives represent the building blocks of discourse that can be held by a variety of different actors and institutions. Using a narrative analysis, I identified key stories and framings that different stakeholders used to understand Linnentown that either maintained or challenged a white supremacist landscape in ways that inform Athens' Black sense of place. In chapter four I reviewed the Linnentown documents from the Athens's Mayor's vault regarding Project R-50, Hattie Whitehead's memoirs, and my notes from tours of Linnentown. I juxtaposed the different narratives found in these archives while sharing the story of Linnentown's destruction. I looked at how the story is structured by different actors, as well as "what functions the story serves, what is the substance of the story, and how the story is performed" (Allen 2017). In chapter five I used online news articles and my personal notes to show the different ways stories of Linnentown were shared with the greater Athens community and the effect those stories had in creating a larger political project of recognition and redress.

Narrative analysis helped me to identify how different social positions aligned with the narratives that uphold or dismantle a Black sense of place that builds Black geographies. In chapter six I showed the political nature of telling stories and their ability to create action. I look at four different ways that storytelling around Linnentown has led to building and supporting Black geographies.

3.9.1 Conclusion

I have designed this project to support the Black community of Athens. While the questions and the theoretical framework I am using are of my own design, this project is anchored to the community-directed organizing I do as an activist, UGA student, member of Athens' Black community, and a community geographer. These identities allowed me to experience three years of organizing for racial justice in Athens that will inflect this project with my knowledge of Athens historical present, its developing Black sense of place, and how these two things are related to Athens' white supremacist landscape. Moreover, my racial justice organizing created relationships with the folks intimately and actively involved with producing and maintaining of Athens' Black sense of place. These relationships with Athens' Black stakeholders give me the ability to tell a rich and dynamic story. However, telling this story is not enough, if it does not lead to Black Athenians' self-determination and community sovereignty. As such, this project will not only provide resources for preserving and telling Athens' Black history and building their sense of place, but it will also help researchers further understand the co-production of Black geographies within a white supremacist landscape.

Chapter 4

An Elephant is Coming: The Destruction of Linnentown

Violent appropriation, oppression, and displacement are tools of white supremacy going as far back as the Middle Passage. European slavers displaced Africans from their ancestral homelands, tribes, families, cultures, and even their own bodies. Sharpe (2007) explains, "[t]ransatlantic slavery was and is [THE] disaster. The disaster of Black subjection was and is planned; terror is disaster and 'terror has a history' (as cited in Youngquist 2011, 7) and it is deeply atemporal" (Sharpe 2016, 4). In other words, the terrorism that Africans face is not only planned, but is ongoing through time and space. Throughout Sharpe's book she shows the faithful repetition of the dehumanization of Africans structured by the slave ship that "ditto" within the archives of history, and in numerous quotidian disasters across the African diaspora (Sharpe 2016).

Drawing on this context, I argue that the destruction of Linnentown is one of many planned aftershocks in the afterlife of slavery, the inciting disaster—transatlantic slavery—makes Linnentown's destruction possible. Moreover, the demarcations and geographical divisions by race that we see today have been planned through both federal and local policy (Rothstein 2017). I will show how the housing policies associated with urban renewal labeled and treated Black communities as problems that needed to be removed when they were too close to white institutions of power. In this chapter, I document Linnentown's destruction by housing policies created and instituted at federal and local levels that sanctioned symbolic, and material acts of state violence against communities of color.

4.1 Displacement as Housing Policy

During the Jim Crow era, many white supremacists began trading white hoods for suits so they could enforce displacement and segregation through state sanctioned violence, housing policy, and law. This type of segregation is not created by circumstance or "personal choice," or what we call de facto segregation, but is known as de jure segregation that is created by laws like the National Housing Act of 1934. As a part of the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Housing Act into law on June 27th, 1934 to combat the housing crisis that emerged during the Great Depression. Roosevelt tasked his administration with "encourag[ing] improvement in housing standards and conditions [and] provid[ing] a system of mutual mortgage insurance" (United States 1934).

The institutions funded by the National Housing Act of 1934 created the housing market in ways that continue the afterlife of slavery, and the following will show how these institutions uphold a racist power differential between white and Black people. Specifically, when white legislators and administrators enacted housing polices, they did do so in support of racist housing practices that structured the segregated housing patterns that we see today (Rothstein 2017). After the Wall Street crash of 1929, the US experienced a foreclosure crisis causing about half of the homes in the US to fall into default (Gotham 2000; Aalbers 2008, 153). Before the 1930s, there was little involvement of the state in the US housing markets (Gotham 2000, 305). However, in response to this crisis President Hoover and President Roosevelt set up institutions and created policies that spurred national markets, including the creation of the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The HOLC and the FHA set the standards for mortgage lending that are still followed today. One notable change the HOLC and FHA made was to offer loans with fifteen-year lifespans (HOLC) and thirty-year

lifespans (FHA), instead of the more common standard five years that ended with a balloon payment that existed before these institutions were established (Sugrue 2014, 60). The HOLC mainly refinanced homes, while the FHA guaranteed long-term residential mortgages. The HOLC became the most prominent government agency to embody FDR's notion of an "empowered, self-sufficient, homeowning public" (Sugrue 2014, 60). The FHA, the HOLC, and eventually the Veterans Administration (VA) changed the face of mortgage lending by "decreasing the risk for lenders, lowering the interest rate for borrowers, increasing loan-to-value ratios, and increasing the loan maturity to 25 or 30 years" (Aalbers 2016). However, these changes did not equally benefit everyone who wanted to buy a home.

Linnentown residents will be quick to tell you that these changes did not benefit them. Linnentown descendant Hattie Whitehead remarked during a tour of what used to be Linnentown that Linnentown residents had limited funding options for purchasing homes because of segregated banks, very low wages, and limited financing options available for Black people (personal communication, 2019). It surprises even the few living Linnentown descendants that their neighborhood had 66% homeownership by 1950 because these institutions did not support Black homeownership in the same ways it did white homeownership (Whitehead 2022). The New Deal's institutional changes made it easier to buy a home for white people previously locked out of homeownership, however, it also kickstarted the development of a racist national housing market. These agencies funded suburbanization, white flight, urban renewal, institutionalized redlining, and loaned money for housing across racial lines so long as segregation was strictly maintained (Rothstein 2017).

In 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the 1959 Housing Act that included several changes to the country's national housing policy and funding for local projects (Eisenhower 1959).

Section 112 of the 1959 Housing Act provided matching loans that allowed universities across the United States to use urban renewal funds to finance the expansion of their campuses in the pursuit of removing so-called substandard housing (Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. 1974).

Before the legislation was signed, many universities pleaded with the federal government to support their expansion with funds provided by the upcoming Housing Act. For example, legal representatives writing in the interests of a group of universities seeking federal urban renewal funds wrote the following to federal legislators:

> I want to remind you that this is a period when the stress of enrollments is beginning to be most real and a time when we need to expand our facilities beyond anything we have accomplished within the last few years. I think you are all aware of the fact that this pressure is going to keep growing during the next decade, and to stop a program which is just getting under way nicely at a time when we are just beginning to reach the crisis, to us seems, frankly, rather incredible. There is no justification whatever for discriminating against publicly supported institutions by making them ineligible for future loans (Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. 1974, 474).

This plea worked and the changes made in Section 112 allowed for many universities to capitalize on these loans (Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. 1974, 705). In fact, universities took thousands of acres of once privately owned urban land with the three quarters of a billion dollars' worth of federal matching money provided through Section 112 (Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. 1974, 686). Section 112 is the catalyst that allowed universities, like the University of Georgia with the help of the city of Athens, to commandeer properties officials deemed as "*substandard*" (Shannon et al. 2022) With section 112 and eminent domain, the University of Georgia and the city of Athens forcibly seized Linnentown through urban renewal—a system of laws and practices I described in chapter two—despite their private property rights.

The US is built on the idea of private property being sacrosanct and the free market being the place where one obtains private property, as the *truest* avenue to exercise one's liberty. However, in practice, the right of eminent domain—the convention of the state taking private property for public good or use—has been consistently upheld in the US courts (Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. 1974). Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. (1974) argues that this conflict represents a considerable social tension between a legal system that recognizes the use of eminent domain on behalf of private institutions and a system of personal values that continues to place a premium upon the inviolacy of private property. I argue that tension disappears when the language of urban renewal marks Black neighborhoods as "substandard" and the project of the housing policy turns to removing "substandard" housing owned and rented by Black people. Here we can see Harris' conception of property where rights in property are annulled by the racial and cultural otherness of Black people. Rothstein (2007) argues that "slum clearance" was a tool to shift Black populations away from downtown business districts and that "by the mid-twentieth century, 'slums' and 'blight'— [the language of urban renewal]—were widely understood euphemisms for African American neighborhoods" (227). This sentiment is reflected in the Linnentown record and was held by the leaders of the institutions in charge of removing Linnentown from out of the shadow of the university.

4.2 The Removing of Linnentown

While the infrastructure of urban renewal was created at the federal level, the process was overseen by the state and enacted at the local level. Correspondence between William Tate, the UGA Dean of Students, and the Director of Future Planning at UGA shows the growing panic over the rising student population and the limited on-campus housing options. According to archival documents, as early as 1953, William Tate began contacting Senator Richard B. Russell

to ask for assistance with information on the college housing program (Athens, Georgia - City Records, 1860-1970). In this correspondence, he advocated for money to be made available for the building of luxury college dormitories. As mentioned previously, the pressure colleges placed on the Federal government worked. Charles Fels Special Projects Editor et al. (1974) argued that the "university spokesmen emphasized that the effect of the proposed legislation would be to take a measured step towards the solution of two problems that were of immediate congressional concern—*the elimination of urban slums* [a euphuism for poor Black neighborhoods] and the expansion of American educational facilities" (emphasis added, 705). However, I argue with Rothstein (2017) that the supposed race neutrality of his language betrays the other latent function of so-called slum removal, that is, forcing Black communities away from white institutions, neighborhoods, and business districts (Rothstein 2017, 227). This illustrates Harris' arguments on whiteness as defined by the right to exclude and how it shows up in the landscape.

CITY OF ATHENS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

October 14, 1959

Mr. Walter E. Keyes
Regional Administrator, HHFA
645 Peachtree-Seventh Building, N. E.
Atlanta 23, Georgia

Dear Mr. Keyes:

A group of city officials and University of Georgia officials have been discussing the need for an urban renewal project in an area adjacent to the University campus. We feel we have reached the point in our discussion where we need official advice and assistance from your agency. We would like to take this opportunity of inviting you, Mr. Mills and any other of your organization, to meet with us for lunch at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education on Thursday, October 22 at 1:00 p. m. Various city officials, President Aderhold, and others with the University will be in attendance at this luncheon.

We feel that we do have a mutual problem that urban renewal would correct and we trust that it will be possible for you to accept our invitation.

Hoping to hear from you by return mail, I am

Yours truly,

Ralph Snow, Mayor

RS:ko
CC: Hon. Julian Cox
President O. C. Aderhold

4.1. Letter from the Mayor of Athens to the Atlanta Home Finance Agency (Community Mapping Lab 2022)

UGA officials took full advantage of the passage of section 112. A month after the bill passed on October 14th, 1959, UGA President and Athens city officials wrote the Housing and Home Finance Agency to tell them about their closed-door meetings on the developing urban renewal project. In the letter the Athens Mayor states we—meaning the city and the UGA campus—"do have a *mutual problem* that urban renewal could correct" (Community Mapping Lab 2022, emphasis added, see figure 4.1). Additionally, in correspondence with Senator Richard B. Russell about the project, President Aderhold states the area involved is west of Lumpkin and would clear out the total slum area that now exists off Baxter Street. Again, the city of Athens and UGA administrators saw Linnentown as a problem, *a total slum area* that would be solved by removal with the help of federal urban renewal funds. Through the project's archives we know the delegation visited Columbus, GA to learn about their urban renewal project, garnered assistance from Senator Richard B. Russell, and petitioned the Board of Regents to write a resolution in support of the urban renewal plan. (Athens, Georgia - City Records 1860-1970) It took two years to go through all the steps to finish the application, but on June 14th, 1961, President O.C. Aderhold wrote to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for details on the fate of their application (Athens, Georgia - City Records, 1860-1970). By 1962, the project had been approved and $987,143 in federal funds had been allocated to build luxury dormitories for white students, however the acquisition of Linnentown properties began years earlier.

BLOCK 8
Parcel Number 1

Date of Acquisition - July 8, 1959
Purchase Price - $70,000.00
Description of Property at time of Acquisition - Known as the Edna Doolittle property, Baxter Street, Athens, Georgia, frontage 187' on Baxter Street, running back 277.5'.
Description and Date of any Action taken by the University to change the Property Since acquisition - None
Net Cost or Profit for any Demolition or Removal of Existing Facilities when Purchased - None
Date and Cost for any Site Improvement Work Since Acquisition (Including Rough Grading, Street Pavement and Installation of Underground Utilities - None

BLOCK 8
Parcel Number 8

Date of Acquisition - July 1959
Purchase Price - Included in Block 8, Parcel Number 1
Description of Property at time of Acquisition - Known as the Doolittle property, at the intersection of Cloverhurst Avenue and Findley Street, Athens, Georgia, frontage 412' on Findley Street, running back 140', frontage 200' on Cloverhurst Avenue, nine sub-standard buildings.
Description and Date of any Action taken by the University to Change the Property Since Acquisition - All buildings demolished 1960
Net Cost or Profit for any Demolition or Removal of Existing Facilities When Purchased - None
Date and Cost for any Site Improvement Work Since Acquisition (Including Rough Grading, Street, Pavement and Installation of Underground Utilities - None

4.2. Property Acquisition documents (Athens, Georgia - City Records 1860-1970)

While the language employed by city officials is telling, nothing is more informative than the treatment of Linnentown families during the destruction. In preparation for Creswell dormitory, the white-owned properties in Linnentown on Finley Street were acquired in 1959, long before any Linnentown residents knew their neighborhood was about to be declared an urban renewal zone (Whitehead 2021). Records show that Edna Doolittle lived on Baxter Street adjacent to Linnentown and rented several shotgun houses in Linnentown to Black families, including Ms. Hattie Whitehead's family. Her homes were bought outright by the city for $70,000 as show by the above figure (Athens, Georgia - City Records 1860-1970, see figure 4.2). In the early part of 1958, Ms. Edna Doolittle informed families living in her rental homes that the homes had been sold and they needed to move (Whitehead 2021). After the shock wore off, the Thomas family committed to staying in Linnentown and bought a lot on Peabody Street, an

adjacent street still in the renewal zone. The Thomas' put all their savings into building a new home and the community came together to make it happen. Ms. Hattie writes,

> *[B]ack in the 1950s, the 'Athens Banner Herald' highlighted new house styles, and layouts included in the magazine section of the Sunday paper. Dad asked Mom to pick a house that she liked. After a few Sundays had passed, my mother saw her dream house. It was a pretty big house compared to the three rooms we were currently living in. The new house had seven rooms: three bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, and bath. Mom cut this picture from the paper while we children sat at the table with her. We loved the picture of the house and looked at her in sheer amazement when she told us this was all Mr. Chill needed to build our house.*
>
> *Dad shared a picture with Mr. Chill and found out what materials he would need. Dad and Mr. Chill applied and received a building permit and were told the water and sewage on Peabody had been approved and would be installed by the time the house was completed. Afterward, they put a plan of action together as they sat on Mr. Chill's front porch. This plan included Dad hiring all the men in the community with construction skills, acquiring the permit and the materials needed, deciding on a start date for the build, and determining the approximate completion date.*
>
> *I remember standing in the driveaway one day, watching Mr. Chill walk from the backyard with workers in tow. Just as they reached the now-framed house. Mr. Chill started giving instructions. The men from the community whom my father and Mr. Chill hired to build our house were asking him questions, and he was answering and giving directions. Dad had made several trips to an office in City Hall inquiring about the water and sewage lines installation, and the employee working in the office there gave him the same reply each time: "We are working on it."*
>
> (Whitehead 2021, 35)

Even though the city planned on building Creswell and other dormitories in place of the Linnentown neighborhood, they still gave permits to the Thomas family and even wrongly told them they would be receiving water and sewer hookups. To have running water in the Thomas family's new home, they were forced to use the neighbors fire hydrant and pump in water through their kitchen window. This is what some may call the city planning version of planned obsolescence. Later, we will see how the same city services that the city failed to provide became one of the justifications the city used to label the community as a slum that needed to be removed during the property acquisition phase of urban renewal.

The Linnentown residents received no formal announcement of the urban renewal project before or after construction of the luxury dormitories. Ms. Hattie writes, "Not a single representative from the city of Athens or the University of Georgia came to inform our community…not a single letter, meeting, or phone call" (Whitehead 2021, 60). However, Ms. Geneva Johnson Eberhart remembers listening to her parents talk about an informal meeting that her father and some other men from the community would be attending about buying up their homes (Osei-Frimpong 2019). When he returned from the meeting Geneva's father told her mother that the UGA officials at the meeting said to him, "Snowball you don't have a choice, you are going to have to sell" (Osei-Frimpong 2019). After the men informed the community Bobby Crook remembers coming home and everyone was crying (personal communication 2019). He wondered if someone had died, instead, he learned the university was taking their homes and they would all be forced to move (personal communication 2019).

Sometime after in the Spring of 1960, a large sign appeared on Finley Street that read, University of Georgia Urban Renewal Area, Project No. GA R-50. Ms. Hattie writes, "this sign validated deep suspicions that spread throughout our community. UGA wanted the property for expansion" (Whitehead 2021, 57). After the sign came trucks, tractors, and heavy equipment that blocked driveways and created unsafe living conditions for the children walking in the neighborhood. For anyone still unaware the ditches on either side of the neighborhood were the wakeup call that more things were about to change in the Linnentown neighborhood (Whitehead 2021).

As mentioned, in order to receive urban renewal funds, the project required the removal of *substandard homes*. While Linnentown families demanded the city pave their roads and provide sewer and water hookups, the city refused to make these upgrades (Whitehead 2021). The lack of

amenities that the city refused to provide became one of the reasons 74% of the Black homes were marked as substandard (Shannon et al. 2022). However, even the Linnentown homes with running water and flush toilets in many cases were also marked as substandard. The city sent surveyors to fill out surveys on all the Linnentown homes. Ms. Whitehead's words reveal what documents from the archive could never make known about Black life in the face of white violence. Ms. Whitehead remembers,

> *Concerns were heightening again in the summer of 1961 when White individuals started knocking on doors, explaining that each household in the community needed to fill out a family survey form. One evening when I arrived home, I saw someone seated near Mom asking question after question and writing on a form. Mom had a perplexed look as she attempted to answer each question about our house and family:*
>
> - *How many rooms in the house?*
> - *How many adults and children live here?*
> - *What are the age and genders of your children?*
> - *What is your household income?*
> - *Where are you thinking of relocating?*
>
> *To that last question my mother replied, "East of Athens or outside of city limits".*
>
> *My sisters and brothers and I always referred to an elephant when we were in troublesome situations. An elephant had not only entered the community but was now inside our house holding us hostage. I felt as if that elephant were sucking all the oxygen from inside the room, for it was getting harder and harder to breathe as the questioning continued for what seemed like hours. We children were observing and being ever so silent while we anxiously watched Mom's facial expressions. When will questions end? We all wondered. Once the questionnaire was completed, Mom had a question of her own.*
>
> *What's the purpose of this survey and who's in charge of this project? She asked.*
>
> *The surveyor shrugged. I'm just completing the survey and will turn it in. Don't know who's in charge. With that the elephant slowly turned and left. We were all quiet for a while.*
>
> *"Well damn", Mom finally said, "I answered all those questions and did not get a single answer for the two questions I asked." She told us, "the paperwork had something to do with us having to move but she didn't know what the hell is going on, so we can prepare to move!" She exclaimed, "Why can't one person come here to communicate what is going on?" A feeling of total hopelessness came over me, something I had never felt before.*
>
> (Whitehead 2021, 47)

Block 9 Parcel 10
Structure Brick
Dwelling Unit 1 of 1
Site Address 175 Lyndon Rd Name of Family Head Charles Shaw

White ____ Owner Jones
Non-white ____ Renter ____

Eligible PH ✓
Non-eligible ____

Interviewed by H. Simmons Date 3/3/43
Checked by ____ Date ____

A. Structure Survey.
Fill in this section for EACH structure.

1. Use and type of Construction.
   a. No. of stories One
   b. Condition of structure
      Dilapidated ____
      Not Dilapidated ✓
   c. Type of Construction
      Frame ✓
      Brick ____
      Concrete Block ____
      Stucco ____
      Other ____
   d. Use of structure
      Residential ✓
      Commercial ____
      Industrial ____
      Public ____
      Mixed ____
2. If residence, state number of dwelling units. ____

B. Dwelling Survey.
Fill in this section for each dwelling unit in this structure.

	Yes	No
1. Is there inside this dwelling:		
a. Cold running water?	✓	____
b. Hot running water?	✓	____
c. A flush toilet?	✓	____
d. If "yes" in C is it for occupants exclusive use?	____	____
e. An installed bath or shower?	✓	____
f. If "yes" in e is it for occupants exclusive use?	____	____
2. Is this dwelling adequately heated? If not, state type of heating equipment Gas Heat	✓	____
3. Does this unit have electric lighting?	✓	____
4. Are all rooms provided with openable windows or other adequate means of ventilation?	✓	____
5. Is this dwelling in sound condition? (Check "no" if dilapidated)	✓	____
6. Determination by Enumerator:		
a. Standard if ALL items answered "yes" are checked.	____	
b. Substandard if ANY item answered "no" is checked.	✓	

4.3. Survey Form evaluating the condition of homes in the Urban Renewal Zone (Whitehead 2021)

Whitehead details a humiliating and frustrating experience that her mother went through participating in this survey with no explanation or understanding of when or how over forty Black families would move into the segregated Black neighborhoods across Athens. However, in most cases it did not matter how the questions were answered on the form. At the bottom of the form, it says standard and substandard. Substandard is to be checked if any item answered "No" is checked. As you can see on the form above the checks all say, "yes," but the home is still marked substandard (see figure 4.3.). 74%, most homes in Linnentown were marked substandard. However not everyone participated in this humiliating process. Some people refused to answer any questions and it is documented on their survey forms. Others told the surveyors that their homes were not for sale and that they would not be moving (Community Mapping Lab 2022). These acts of refusal showed the determination that Linnentown residents had while facing destruction of their little piece of Athens' Black geographies (Community Mapping Lab 2022).

Regardless of the condition of the homes, the white institutions were committed to labeling Linnentown a "slum area off Baxter Street" (Community Mapping Lab 2022). In fact, the name Linnentown does not exist in the entirety of the R-50 project files. After the city marked 74% of the Linnentown homes as substandard they condemned many of them and took them through eminent domain (Shannon et al. 2022). The archival records exist for 54 properties located in Linnentown that housed 171 individuals. The Community Mapping Lab has records for only thirty-nine Linnentown properties (Community Mapping Lab 2022). Of those 39 homes, 80% were condemned, and 24 amounting to 74% were marked substandard while only 56% of the homes outside of Linnentown were condemned and 55% were marked substandard (Shannon et al. 2022). The city was committed to condemning and marking the homes in Linnentown as

substandard to fit with the goals of urban renewal despite the condition of the homes or their failure to provide the city services that made it substandard under their guidelines (Shannon et al. 2022).

After each family went through a sale, condemnation process and/or eminent domain proceedings, the city underpaid Linnentown residents, and then forced the families who did not leave quick enough to pay rent. Ms. Hattie explains that the rent ranged from $15.00 to $86.25 per month and was used as a tactic to get families to move as quickly as possible (Whitehead 2021, 64). The city collectively paid Linnentown homeowners $214,830, that is $2,003,525 in today's dollars, for a 20-acre area of land that was in high demand (Community Mapping Lab 2022). The University admitted in their documents that the value of the land is $667,000, that is $6,121,768 in today's dollars (Shannon et al. 2022). The homes on the land were sold for as low as $2,010, $18,745 in today's dollars, and a high of $12,250, $114,244 in today's dollars (Shannon et al. 2022). Ms. Whitehead describes $2,010, the amount, Mr. John and Mrs. Julia Griffin received, as an insulting and paltry amount that could not buy them a new house at that time (Whitehead 2022, 64). The Griffin's received notice of the loss of their home via a torn piece of notebook paper that included the date by which rent would begin if they did not move (Whitehead 2022, 64). The family moved into a backhouse behind a white family they came to work for. To Ms. Hattie, this was a sign of the backwards movement this process was causing. The city paid a median price of $5,600 to Linnentown homeowners which amounts to $52,226 in today's dollar, while this amount is more than nothing it did little to help people without substantial savings or finance options acquire new homes (Shannon et al. 2022).

The notices of relocation began arriving in May of 1964, and by October many residents of Linnentown had left the community. Linnentown residents who stayed after Edna Doolittle sold

her shot gun houses on Linden row watched as the city destroyed their neighborhood. Construction crews dug deep ditches in front of homes that Ms. Hattie remembers having to jump over to get into her aunt's house after school. Christine Davis Johnson remembers her mother telling her, "[r]elax they are not going to hit our house" when the tractors started at 2 am in the morning almost every night (Hulsey 2020). Ms. Whitehead called this a tactic of intimidation that the university used to scare people out of their homes as quickly as possible. From the records we know that 35% of Linnentown residents were able to move into new homes in the segregated neighborhoods inside and outside of Athens, while four families including Hattie Thomas Whitehead's family moved into public housing. Four homes were saved from demolition and transported to other neighborhoods from Linnentown despite their substandard rating (Whitehead 2021). Whitehead (2021) laments that some families were too ashamed to let their neighbors know where they were moving because they were not going to good places. Bobby Crook's family was the last one to leave Linnentown. In figure 4.4 you can see his home in the shadow of Creswell Hall. The Crook family ran a bed and breakfast out of this home because segregation barred Black people from using the other hotels in the city. They refused to move until they found a new home that they could maintain their business within. By 1966, the community was gone and Linnentown lived on in the few properties that were saved and the hearts and minds of those who once enjoyed living in their neighborhood.

4.4 Conclusion

Throughout the third chapter of Ms. Hattie's book, "The Moment Everything Changed," Whitehead (2021) writes about visualizing elephants trampling her neighborhood. This is the perfect metaphor to describe the white institutions of power that destroyed Linnentown. These institutions weaponized the power of eminent domain not just to destroy Linnentown, but Black

4.4 Bobby Crooks' House with Creswell Hall in the background (Community Mapping Lab 2022)

communities across the United States. Urban renewal policies allowed state officials to destroy Black business districts, neighborhoods, and schools for roads, highways, government buildings and in this case a parking lot and student dormitories. The university and the students who live in those buildings benefitted from the mechanisms in place that removed this community with ease because University of Georgia officials wanted it. The elephant charging through Linnentown is the planned terror of white supremacy that destroys Black communities, Black families, and Black people for the needs and desires of white institutions of power.

In this dissertation, I argue that Black geographies, like Linnentown, go through a process of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding. In this chapter I show how two institutions—the city of Athens and The University of Athens—collaborated to destroy Linnentown with the help of the federal and state government. Finding fault in and being threatened by Black geographies is a defining feature of white supremacist landscapes. However, destroyed Black geographies are not forgotten or erased. They live on in the collective memories in those whose lives were nourished because they had access to those spaces. Those memories are powerful and when told can build a Black sense of place and a desire for rebuilding institutions that support Black life.

Chapter 5

Remembering Linnentown

As shown in the last chapter, white supremacist landscapes threaten the Black spaces within them, but as with all oppression, people resist in small and large ways. Linnentown homeowners refused to participate in answering intrusive questions from white people who barged into their homes asking questions, refused to pay rent for homes they once owned, and asserted that their homes were not for sale, and that they would not leave (Community Mapping Lab 2022). Three families even fought in court and won higher payments for their homes (personal communication, 2022). Stewart (2020) describes these actions as a method of reclaiming self-respect through *refusal*. Regardless of these acts of refusal, the elephant's path did not change and the Linnentown neighborhood had no way to protect themselves individually or collectively from being destroyed. This power differential is sustained by the white supremacists who created and maintained institutions like UGA that continue the work of creating, preserving, and validating white power and wealth.

Even with all that power there is one thing that the university could never take from Linnentown, the memory of their happy, intergenerational, tight knit, majority homeowning Black neighborhood. Linnentown residents never stopped remembering and sharing stories about the institution of their being that connected them to the Black geographies of Athens. This chapter explores how remembering Linnentown transformed from memories shared between Linnentown descendants to a political project for recognition and redress.

Geneva Johnson Eberhart told us that, despite the destruction of Linnentown, the memories of their neighborhood will always live in their hearts. This is the reality of Black

geographies that go through a process of destruction, remembrance, and rebuilding. Even though Black geographies are consistently destroyed by white supremacists and their institutions, Black people carry the memories and stories of institutions of their being and share them with whomever will listen. In fact, every time Bobby Crook made a new friend, he took them to Linnentown and told them what happened there because to understand him is to understand the beauty and tragedy that Linnentown is for him (personal communication, 2019). While Linnentown represents a happy neighborhood that many Black children called home, it is also connected to a major trauma that requires recognition and redress. I argue that remembering is political and The Linnentown project transformed the descendants' memories and the process of remembering into a political project; so that those memories could become the fertile ground that new institutions of Black being could be built from.

5.1. Fighting for Linnentown

While working on an article about livable wages at UGA, Melissa Link, an Athens-County commissioner, told Joseph Carter in 2018 that a neighborhood had been destroyed by the UGA campus in the 1960s (Carter 2022). The city did not preserve even the name of Linnentown in their records, so when Joseph began looking, he did not have a name associated with the neighborhood (Carter 2022). Once Joseph found the Project R-50 files, he knew he had stumbled on to something important. He began the research that laid the groundwork for the creation of The Linnentown Project and the Athens Justice and Memory Project. In this chapter, I will share how the remembering of Linnentown became a political project for Joseph Carter, myself, The Linnentown Project, the Athens Justice and Memory Project, The Community Mapping Lab, and Linnentown descendants, as we continued the fight for recognition and redress in Athens that for me started with organizing around the bodies under Baldwin Hall.

While the direct-action group I described in Chapter 1 was focused on Baldwin Hall organizing, Joey Carter began working with the Project-R 50 archive for months and interviewed Geneva Johnson and other descendants. In August of 2019, Joseph invited me to look at the archive he had scanned and asked if I would like to join this new project that would extend the direct-action work to focus more on the city. I agreed to look at it, but it was not until I attended the Historic Athens event in September 2019 that I understood what exactly I had signed up for and the important stories that needed to be told about Linnentown to continue to inspire action for redress. During the Historic Athens event, descendants spoke about how they came to live in Linnentown and the destruction and trauma they faced when the university came to destroy their homes. It was a somber event, but we were happy to be honoring a place that the community needed to know about. That same afternoon, I met Geneva Johnson, and she invited me to view her home, a Linnentown property that had been moved to a new location during urban renewal. At the time we thought Ms. Johnson's house was the only Linnentown property saved from destruction, but we eventually learned three other properties had been saved and moved to other parts of the city. Joseph was even able to speak to an elder from the Linnentown community that is still with us living in her original Linnentown property. Many of the children of the Linnentown homeowners still live in Athens-Clarke County or in the Atlanta area. This made organizing for recognition and redress possible with the people who experienced the destruction of Linnentown.

5.2. Winning Formal Recognition

In September of 2019, Joey Carter and I began meeting regularly to discuss how to get recognition and redress for Linnentown residents. With the help of Mariah Parker, a community

activist and County Commissioner, we decided we needed to draft our own resolution, like the letter that the Baldwin direct-action group galvanized around. We learned from a previous

5.1. Hattie Thomas Whitehead speaking at Historic Athens' brown bag lunch (Payne 2019)

city-led collaborative resolution focused on undocumented residents that the city will placate organizers and push them into supporting resolutions that do not fully represent their needs or demands. Learning from these past experiences, we sat down with the residents so they could write their own resolutions. We met at Ms. Hattie's home and sat in her parlor brainstorming what needed to be included in the resolution to tell the story of Linnentown. Almost a dozen Linnentown descendants filled the room and took up every seat in the place. We talked about what details they wanted to be included in the resolution to describe Linnentown, how they

wanted to describe the destruction and its effects, and most importantly, how the residents wanted to be redressed (personal communication 2019). The descendants cherished homeownership and wanted the high rate of homeownership to be highlighted, as well as the fact that the community was not a slum, but a thriving intergenerational neighborhood that could have become middle class had it survived into the present. This began the deliberate construction of how we remembered Linnentown that is opposite from how the documents in the Project R-50 files would have you believe.

By December 2019, we had co-written a resolution and we were ready to sit down with Commissioners Mariah Parker and Ovita Thornton to discuss a pathway to adoption (see Appendix F). They told us they would champion the resolution and would work to get it passed

5.2. Protest on the steps of the Athens City Hall (Lasseter and Drukman 2021)

and redress what happened to Linnentown. We met with other commissioners we thought would be supportive of the resolution. Some seemed more reluctant than others, but none of the commissioners initially wavered in their support for the resolution and redressing the harm that came to Linnentown. However, Jerry NeSmith and Russell Edwards broke rank with the other commissioners to show their discomfort with the resolution on a tour of Linnentown with Ms. Hattie and Bobby Crook (personal communication 2019).

Ms. Hattie, Joey, and I agreed that the resolution was finalized and that it could be shared via email to Ms. Hattie's commissioner, Jerry NeSmith, who had already pledged to support her. Shortly after Ms. Hattie took Jerry NeSmith and another commissioner on a tour of Linnentown. During the tour, as Ms. Hattie shared the trauma she experienced as a young girl during the tail end of the Jim Crow south, these white commissioners aired their frustrations with one line of the draft resolution; it read as follows:

> Whereas, instead of infusing money and resources into Linnentown for it to achieve middle-class status, the City of Athens and the University of Georgia perpetrated an act of *institutionalized white supremacy and terrorism* resulting in intergenerational black poverty, family separation, and trauma through the forcible removal and displacement of black families, and the accumulation of the majority of their wealth and political power within the University of Georgia and pockets of Athens white communities. (Carter 2018, emphasis added; see Appendix D)

This line tells no lies about what happened to Linnentown families, but for Commissioners NeSmith and Edwards, the urge to protect the university and the city's relationship with the university superseded the need for Linnentown descendants to unabashedly tell the truth about white supremacy at the behest of the university. To not lose these commissioners support, Ms. Hattie assured them that it would be reasonable to change white supremacy to racism if the language came off too strong. Regardless of this concession, both commissioners came out publicly against the project. Jerry NeSmith felt that he should take the resolution directly to the

University of Georgia and work on it with them to make it palpable for the university and easier for the commission to support. We refused this offer.

As we began building the capacity of the Linnentown Project to share the story of beauty and tragedy that is Linnentown, the group met one major roadblock: commissioners were afraid to show full support for fear of alienating the university. In a Red & Black article, NeSmith clarified that while "he supports the Linnentown Project [he] does 'not believe that the current language' of the resolution 'would be considered favorably by the commission'" (Lasseter and Drukman 2021). NeSmith's offer to take the resolution to university administrators is not the type of process that the leaders of The Linnentown Project had envisioned. Additionally, Russell Edwards came to our protest in January of 2020, and stood at the steps of the City Council on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to reiterate that he "disagree[d] with those that argued that the University of Georgia is a white supremacist, terrorist organization" (Lasseter and Drukman 2020). He argued that "the resolution contains some of that same language" and that while he "support[s] the intent of the resolution," he sincerely believed that "we might get more people behind it if it was better drafted" (Lasseter and Drukman 2020). He made his remarks to my speech where I reminded the crowd and Commissioner Edwards that day that UGA is a white supremacist organization that participated in Indigenous removal, slavery, and segregation, and that white supremacy is terror for the BIPOC communities that are forced to experience and live with the trauma of their actions. At that moment, white moderates stood in opposition to the Linnentown resolution on MLK Day to say you are moving too fast, asking too much, and pushing too hard. Unfortunately, more than the white male commissioners wavered in their support.

After obtaining support from the seven progressive commissioners, some of the Black commissioners wavered in their support as well. While some voiced concerns behind closed doors that the city could be sued if they co-signed the resolution, others were more vocal. When asked on the record if they supported the resolution Patrick Davenport said, “he supported a previously discussed version of the resolution but does not support its current form” (Lasseter and Drukman 2021). This statement confused us because no changes had been made since releasing the document. During a commission meeting on March 7, 2019, Commissioner Ovita Thornton told community members supporting the Linnentown project that she did not like the pressure of protesters pushing for passage of the resolution (personal notes 2019). In a closed door meeting she said, “I will never sign anything that says white supremacy,” even though months before the commission had signed a resolution condemning white supremacy (personal communication 2019). In that moment it felt like she agreed with the white commissioners without saying as much. At the Mayor and Commission meeting where the Linnentown resolution unanimously passed Patrick Davenport said that “he does not understand why Linnentown is ‘being put on a pedestal’ when there are more recent incidents of similar actions against Black communities and [he] went on to say he think[s] this ‘resolution is an insult to all

the people who have suffered grievances by the government'" (Allen 2021). Ms. Hattie, Joey, and I were surprised at the response that even the Black commissioners took when introduced to the resolution; we thought this would be easy for them to support. This experience demonstrated how the needs of Athens-Clarke County—a white supremacist institution—to be in good standing with the city's other main white supremacist institution—The University of Georgia. The city's need to maintain good relations between these institutions superseded the individual

5.3. Silent Protest at the Commissioner Meeting (Lasseter and Drukman 2021)

morality of the commissioners. Outside of their role as head of this institution these commissioners might unconditionally support Linnentown, but their priorities changed when they stepped into the city council building; they became the leaders of a white supremacist institution regardless of their skin color or political leanings.

In January of 2020, the resolution was released on our website and via Facebook. We took this public step because we had been informed that commissioners shared the draft resolution with Allison McCullick, the university spokesperson. We were prepared for a public response from UGA. Instead, McCullick sent a private email to the commissioners sharing their disagreements with the statements in the resolution. Athens Politics Nerd (2021) sums up their response as saying, "that some of the purchases were voluntary, that the homeowners were well compensated, that race had nothing to do with it, and that the urban renewal project was actually in the public interest." The UGA response even went so far as to mischaracterize the Linnentown neighborhood as "racially diverse," as if Linnentown was not destroyed before the end of formal segregation in the city of Athens (Athens Politics Nerd 2021). While the university's response to the resolution mirrors the response to the Baldwin letter, the university has since learned to not make headlines in their political disagreements with community members, especially ones as sympathetic as elderly Black community members. Instead, university administrators quietly lobbied commissioners to disagree with the resolution who would be sympathetic to them given their longstanding partnership.

After releasing the resolution, protesting on MLK Jr. day, and packing the January 2020 mayor and commission meeting, the Linnentown project leaders met with the mayor. During the meeting, the mayor paternally told us that, while he sympathized with the Linnentown community, the process of advocating is different than the governing process—the resolution would need to go through a formal committee process to be adopted into law. He distanced himself from his commission by stating that a resolution should be passed, but his focus was addressing both communities that were displaced by the R-50 project. A few months later, we had a second meeting with the mayor where he reiterated these sentiments again. Commissioner

5.4. Still image taken from video of the signing of the Linnentown Proclamation (ACC gov website)

Thornton agreed, and even brought Black ministers who she thought should represent the Black community with her. Joey, the descendants, and I made it clear we would not support a universal process, and that the committee should be focused on Linnentown and then be used as a model to support other communities. After I made this statement, Commissioner Thornton told me, "If I collect a paycheck from the university, that I had no *skin* in the game" (personal communication 2019). This comment enraged me and a fellow organizer pointed out how the reference to skin was a downgrading of my Blackness because of my relationship to the university. I responded by telling her that our association with this racist university is why we do this work. Ms. Hattie interjected to remind her this was not about me or about who pays my bills, but about Linnentown and that should be the sole focus of the committee. Commissioner Thornton felt justified in her my comments about my complicity with the university while ignoring she is compromised by her role as commissioner as a leader of Athens Clarke County. We left this

meeting knowing the fight was not over and we would have to continue to fight for what Linnentown deserved.

A few months later, police violently attacked peaceful student protesters during a June 2020 protest for George Floyd. As a liberal college town Athens had seen its fair share of political demonstrations but the police handled students protesting for racial justice with an unnecessary amount of force due to fears of a riot that had no chance of happening. Police tear gassed peaceful protesters arrested people for not dispersing and ran down Black and Brown protesters hiding from the police while white protesters were allowed to disperse to their cars. The mayor backed his police, even though the community felt the police response was disproportionate to the peaceful action. Everyone who was arrested that night was immediately released the next morning and had their charges dismissed. The police never admitted any wrongdoing, but the community backlash was fierce, and the mayor feared the repercussions affecting his upcoming election. A few weeks after things calmed down, the mayor met with Ms. Hattie. He asked her to promise that the outcome of the Linnentown community would be beneficial for the entire Black community of Athens. She assured him that it would be and with that the mayor allowed a committee to be created to redress Athens' urban renewal projects beginning with Linnentown.

About two years after we first debuted the resolution, Mayor Girtz put together a committee, named the Athens Justice and Memory project (AJMP). The committee is a resident-led effort "focused on addressing the history and impact of Urban Renewal in Athens-Clarke County" Athens Clarke County. On February 22, 2022, the mayor officially apologized for the city's role in destroying Linnentown on the steps of the city council building, and at the next

commission meeting a finalized draft of our original resolution was unanimously passed. The mayor wrote,

> the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County extends to former residents of Athens' Urban Renewal Districts, their descendants, and to all Athenians a deep and sincere expression of apology and regret for the pain and loss stemming from this time, and a sincere commitment to work toward better outcomes in all we do moving forward. (Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. 2021a)

This apology fulfilled the first resolution for Linnentown, but there was much more work to be done—the resolutions are discussed in detail in the final chapter. The mayor created the AJMP committee to:

> work with Linnentown residents, historians, economists and other stakeholders to atone for the removal of the Linnentown neighborhood for the benefit of those residents and their descendants, while providing a model process for coming projects with other residents whose neighborhoods were removed and destroyed, or whose lives were diminished in quality (Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. 2021c).

Throughout this time, we let the resolution speak for itself. We learned from the process with Baldwin Hall that we could frame the narrative with a strong opening statement. Joey Carter put in a lot of work to make sure that the resolution had every claim cited. In fact, seven pages of footnotes follows the resolution to protect the movement from any people disputing the fact of the matter. We remembered Linnentown by capturing the Linnentown experience from the descendants in a political format we knew could be translated into political action for the redress of Linnentown.

5.3. From Touring Linnentown to Writing Linnentown

Another way the residents remembered Linnentown is through the tours that Ms. Hattie and Mr. Bobby Crook would give. The first few tours focused on the segregation, destruction, and trauma, but Ms. Hattie quickly understood that people including myself did not understand the strength of Black neighborhoods during that time. I went on many tours with Ms. Hattie, and

I watched the development of the tours firsthand. After she took on the mission of representing Linnentown and helping people understand how far it was from a slum, her approach to giving the tour completely changed. Ms. Hattie's tours changed to make you feel like you were in the neighborhood. She helped you visualize the beautiful gardens filled with elephant ears and pear

trees, the card playing, and the playground Ms. Hattie's brother made by himself for all the children to play in.

The tour consisted of a walk starting at Finley Street, going up to the parking lot, across Church Street, and down Baxter Street and back to Finley. The most developed version of the tour took about an hour. On Finley Street, she would point out where her family lived in the shotgun houses next door to her aunt and grandmother. Casually bringing in those details shares the intergenerational character of the neighborhood. She pointed out where the large sign that confirmed that Linnentown sat in the middle of the University-led urban renewal zone was

erected. This was the first-time residents of Linnentown had and official notice of what was happening to their neighborhood, Ms. Hattie would say. Then she would move to the entrance of the parking lot and tell of how the community built her new home after they moved out of the rental housing. She would highlight how skilled the men were in her neighborhood including Mr. Chill who acted as an architect for segregated Black communities. As she walked up the parking lot, she would tell stories about some of the people in the neighborhood who maintained beautiful gardens, played cards with the community, and held bible study for children. The depth that she could describe the members of her community let participants know the level of interaction and interdependence this community had. At Church Street, she would explain how you could see the 50-yard line on Sanford Stadium from Mr. Bobby Crook's home and that it served as the community home because of its size. She would explain the Crooks were the last family to leave, and that they witnessed homes being burned, knocked over, and had to navigate dangerous giant ditches. As we made our way back down to Finley Street, she would stop at the sign about Union school that is hidden by the bushes. A school she believes would be a Black private school today had it not been closed and destroyed. The tour ends with a plea to not only support Linnentown, but to pay attention to what your elected officials are doing and to speak out if you think it is wrong.

Ms. Hattie held many tours in 2019 and 2020, but at some point, she realized that she could never give enough tours to spread the story of Linnentown across the county and throughout Georgia. This is when she decided to write her memoirs in a book. The book took her about a year to write and details her life in the Linnentown community before destruction, the terror her family experienced during destruction, how her family broke up because of the stress, and how she began organizing for redress and recognition. The book, entitled *Giving Voice to*

Linnentown, includes many more stories than what she could fit in an hour-long tour. As shown in the last chapter, many details give the nuance of the violence that these residents experienced. But the book makes one thing very clear: they were a happy, resilient, interdependent, hardworking group of neighbors who loved and protected one another. The book includes the same documents I cite here from the R-50 project archive and tells the story of destruction from the stance of a bewildered Black community. As I wrote this dissertation, Ms. Hattie worked hard to collect enough donations to give away 500 of her books to school-age children in Athens. Through both giving the tours and writing her memoirs, Ms. Hattie has invited us all to remember Linnentown as a happy Black neighborhood that was destroyed by the city in service of The University of Georgia.

5.4. Mapping Linnentown

5.6. Image of mapping exercise with Linnentown descendants (Community Mapping Lab 2021)

As the organizing picked up around Linnentown, we knew Linnentown needed to be visualized. In Spring 2020, Joey Carter and I met with Dr. Jerry Shannon to see if his community mapping class could create some visuals for The Linnentown Project. We gave him access to the archive, and he told us he would consider making Linnentown the topic of his classroom. I met with Dr. Shannon a second time and told him which map products we needed. After easing some fears that the students would not be able to understand the context of the project, Dr. Shannon agreed to make Linnentown the topic of his class. This class began the process of using community mapping to visualize Linnentown and digitized the different parcels that made up Linnentown properties.

The class provided the first meaningful interaction for Linnentown residents with University of Georgia students. Many of these students most likely lived or had lived in the same dormitories that the Linnentown community was destroyed to create. These interactions began with the archive, but also included a focus group style community mapping event (see figure 5.6). Joey Carter and I visited the class to look through the archive with them and there we noticed how often the home surveys were wrongly marked as substandard by the city's criteria. Over the course of a few weeks, we planned for several of the residents to visit the students and speak about their neighborhood and shape the maps that the students were making. During the meeting, the descendants showcased the depth of familiarity they had with their neighborhood. They could still remember where every resident lived, where every walking path was located, and where every barrier segregated them from their white neighbors. The picture below shows the digitized version of different paths and names of residents written on the map. Linnentown descendants that I had never heard say more than a few words spoke liberally about their neighborhood that day to students who were captivated by their stories.

The students took up the project of visualizing Linnentown. The class continued to work on relocation maps, making changes to the main map of Linnentown, and their final projects.

5.7. Present-day Satellite image of Linnentown (Community Mapping Lab 2021)

The students took the Linnentown descendant's memories and visualized them in their final projects. The final projects presented by the students showed the depth of engagement the students took with the archive and the focus group to understand the Linnentown descendants and their experience of destruction. Ms. Hattie seemed overjoyed by the student presentations and spoke about how there are no maps of Linnentown and very few photos and how their projects give life to their memories of Linnentown. This class was able to realize a latent goal of The Linnentown Project—to engage UGA students in supporting Linnentown.

5.5. Conclusion

The Linnentown Project took the memories of Linnentown descendants and shared them with the community. We engaged in ways that made remembering political; we made the process of remembering Linnentown a political project that the entire community could engage in. Community members joined this political project by touring, reading, and fighting for Linnentown to be formally recognized and redressed. Students in Jerry Shannon's class also participated by mapping Linnentown and visualizing the community for descendants in ways they had never seen before. The Linnentown Project spread the memories of the descendants in ways that supported a larger political project to rebuild Black geographies. In more recent months, community members have taken on even more projects to remember Linnentown spurred by our initiatives including a quilt project, a detailed story map, a play, and a school curriculum. Black geographies, like Linnentown, go through a process of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding. In this chapter, I have laid out only some of the ways that Linnentown has been remembered in service of a larger political project of recognition and redress for past harm. These remembering lays the building blocks of creating more Black geographies that support Black life.

CHAPTER 6

(Re)building Black Geographies

In this dissertation I have shown how Linnentown is an example of how Black geographies coexist with and in white supremacist landscapes. I argue that Black geographies in white supremacist landscapes become stuck in a cycle of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding because of white supremacist institutions that use their power to destroy Black geographies that support Black life and prosperity. In a moment of possibility, a Black sense of place can develop through the remembering of these destroyed Black geographies. Through this process of remembering, Black consciousness is developed and then ruptures into action and the community begins naming, rebuilding, restoring, and creating new institutions of Black being.

In this final chapter, I examine one component of this process, the final stage of the cycle, the rebuilding of Black geographies. The rebuilding of Black geographies within white supremacist landscapes takes more than telling stories, in fact, it takes the building of political power; power that is used to create and secure Black geographies. In the following pages, I will access four attempts to support and create Black geographies meant to redress the harm done to Linnentown and Athens' Black Community made possible by the Linnentown organizing explained in the previous chapters. I will show the fruition of Linnentown organizing that has led or may lead to the preservation and rebuilding of Black geographies. These projects are in their early development phases and only one has been adopted by the Athens Clarke County Mayor and Commission–the Walk of Recognition which includes the Linnentown Mosaic. I will speak the most comprehensively and thoroughly on the Linnentown Mosaic because I was the most

involved in that project and it is the furthest along into being completed. While these projects are just ideas at this moment, they are ideas that may lead to the building of Black geographies.

6.1. Understanding the Linnentown Resolution

We begin with the Linnentown Resolution; the resolution was the first step in developing a plan of action for redressing Linnentown. After describing the harm done to Linnentown residents, the resolution ends with eight ways to redress the Linnentown community. These eight resolves include: (1) an apology, (2) an on-site wall of recognition, (3) determination of the total amount of intergenerational wealth lost and annual budgetary recommendations for reparational projects, (4) designation of Linnentown properties as historical markers with the National Register of Historic Places, (5) creation of a local Center on Slavery, Jim Crow, and the Future of Athens Black Communities co-funded by UGA, (6) exploration of policies regulating property acquisitions and land swaps between the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County and the University System of Georgia, (7) a request to the Georgia government to establish an authority on Recognition and Redress to formally atone for the harms done to Black communities, and (8) sending the resolution to a number of Georgia officials in state government. The Athens Justice and Memory Project is tasked with providing a model process for creating projects of atonement and working to make each resolution a reality.

We created these resolutions at a Linnentown project meeting in Ms. Hattie's home in October 2019 with first and second descendants, Joey Carter, and me. The Linnentown descendants felt an apology should be the first step in recognizing the harm done and the commitment to changing the relationship between the city and Athens's Black communities. When the city announced the resolution, the mayor issued an apology on February 22, 2021 for

the city's role in urban renewal projects that destroyed two Black communities, most notably Linnentown.

The second resolve came from a desire of Ms. Hattie to have the family names of the homeowners displayed with a star on a wall in what used to be Linnentown. I will describe in detail how we developed this idea into an onsite art installation paired with signage to educate and remember Linnentown. The third resolve originally called on the city to "fully fund a revolving, interest-bearing account for Linnentown descendants" with the loss intergenerational wealth to be controlled by the descendants as a version of direct reparations (Carter, 2020). For legal reasons this changed from the former to annual budgetary recommendations that support Black geographies in the amount of intergenerational wealth lost. Dr. Jerry Shannon, Dr. Richard Martin, and Aidan Hysjulien recently concluded their analysis of Linnentown's economic loss and presented this analysis to the committee during their June 2022 meeting—something I will describe more below. At the time this was written, the city is currently discussing with the Athens Justice and Memory Project how the city will allocate the loss financial payment. The Linnentown Project felt that the surviving Linnentown properties should be preserved and recognized as a piece of Athens' history especially after a descendant almost lost her home over a dispute with a neighbor. The committee has been focused on other resolutions and has not discussed the historical preservation of Linnentown properties as of the writing of this dissertation. The fifth resolve, a Center for the study of Black History, is a demand brought over from the Baldwin Hall organizing. The group agreed that a designated place to tell the story of Athens' Black geographies from slavery to now would help to atone for the harm done to Black people. Ms. Hattie has worked hard to put together a group to plan out how the Black History Center will run and is working diligently with the city to make it happen at the time this was

written. The sixth resolve is to create policies that oversee land swaps with UGA and their property acquisitions to make sure that what happened to Linnentown cannot happen again. This to my knowledge has not been discussed by the committee.

The city accomplished the seventh resolve through the creation of the Athens Justice and Memory committee in February 2022. While we initially imagined the committee having more power, Linnentown descendants serving as the leaders of these projects and directing the use of their loss intergenerational wealth is the most that we could receive. The last resolve was completed after the commission passed the resolution and it was sent out to the list of Georgia state politicians and US senators. In the remainder of the chapter, I will more thoroughly analyze four of the resolves: the apology, economic analysis, the walk of recognition, and what we are now calling the Center for Black history. For each resolution, I will describe at what stage the city is in its completion, how it supports the creation of Black geographies, and how it falls short.

6.2. Analyzing the Resolutions

As previously stated, the apology came with the creation of the committee and announcement of the resolution in February 2021. The stated reason for the apology is the two urban renewal projects that the mayor claims was for progress, but had the unfortunate outcome of displacement that, "resulted in the loss of generational wealth, particularly for Black Athenians" (Athens-Clarke County, 2021a, see Appendix E). The apology acknowledged how the city participated in urban renewal projects that destroyed Black communities. It also recognized the pain and harm the city caused, rendering visible the violence done to Black geographies within white supremacist landscapes. The apology is an appropriate gesture, but they are only words in a proclamation. In the proclamation, the mayor admitted that the process of displacement in the College Avenue area is happening again. The proclamation states, "the

College Avenue area is again under redevelopment with the explicit intent to utilize a more welcoming and engaging process and an outcome that permanently displaces no current residents" (Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. 2021a). The hope is that the city recognizes their role in the displacement of Black communities and creates a different relationship between the city and Black geographies; one that supports, invests in, preserves, and most importantly does not destroy Black geographies. This change would need to be a sustained effort that happens across different institutions of the government and is not ended by a change in administration. Additionally, a commitment to protecting Black geographies may put the city at odds with the university, which the Linnentown organizing demonstrated can be untenable for city commissioner. While the apology is the first step of recognition it is symbolic, and we can only hope that the action of not displacing and destroying Black geographies follows.

6.3. Linnentown's Monetary Losses

In Spring 2022 Mayor Kelly Girtz chose UGA economist, Dr. Richard Martin, and community geographer, Dr. Jerry Shannon to conduct an economic analysis regarding lost wealth through the destruction of Linnentown. The report found two estimates for financial losses due to underpayment: $4,027,789, based on recent home sales, and $3,062,842 based on fair prices across neighborhoods (Shannon et al. 2022). For Linnentown residents who bought homes in other parts of Athens, the report found that they lost $994,586 from lower appreciation due to relocation. The report estimated a total monetary loss of $5,022,375 (Shannon et al. 2022). This report is building the foundation for financial support of Black geographies and again renders visible the stolen intergenerational wealth. The Linnentown Resolution calls for making:

> annual budgetary recommendations to the Mayor and Commission for operational and capital projects to provide equitable redress, including but not limited to affordable housing, economic development, telecommunication services, public transportation, and public art as redress for past harms caused by urban renewal and to foster future

> reinvestment in historically underfunded and impoverished neighborhoods in Athens-Clarke County (Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia 2021b).

This is meant to be a trial run of participatory budgeting where residents would control a piece of the city's budget. Participatory budgeting is the compromise for direct repayment to Linnentown residents. Because of Georgia's gratuities clause the city is not allowed to use state funds to give residents reparations. The gratuities clause prohibits Georgia officials from using tax dollars to donate, offer a gratuity, or forgive a debt or other obligation of a private entity or individual (Exercise of Power 2020). Because of this clause the recommendations from the Athens Justice and Memory Project serve as a substitute for direct repayment.

There are several ways the economic analysis and budget recommendation builds and preserves Black geographies and there are a few ways it falls short of that goal. The economic analysis provides more evidence of the financial loss of Linnentown's intergenerational wealth that could have been invested in Black businesses, homes, institutions, and personal development. This analysis may serve as a basis for reparations or projects that have reparational outcomes. The recommendations are still being discussed, but as of the writing of this dissertation the suggestions include a mortgage down payment assistance program, home repair grants, and funding for the Black History Center. These suggestions, if implemented, will support the creation and preservation of Black geographies. To have a specific effect on Black geographies, I would suggest bounding the areas that the down payment and home repair grants to Black neighborhoods and only for people with certain incomes as reported by the individual. While these suggestions may be supportive of Black geographies, it is not direct repayment of financial losses.

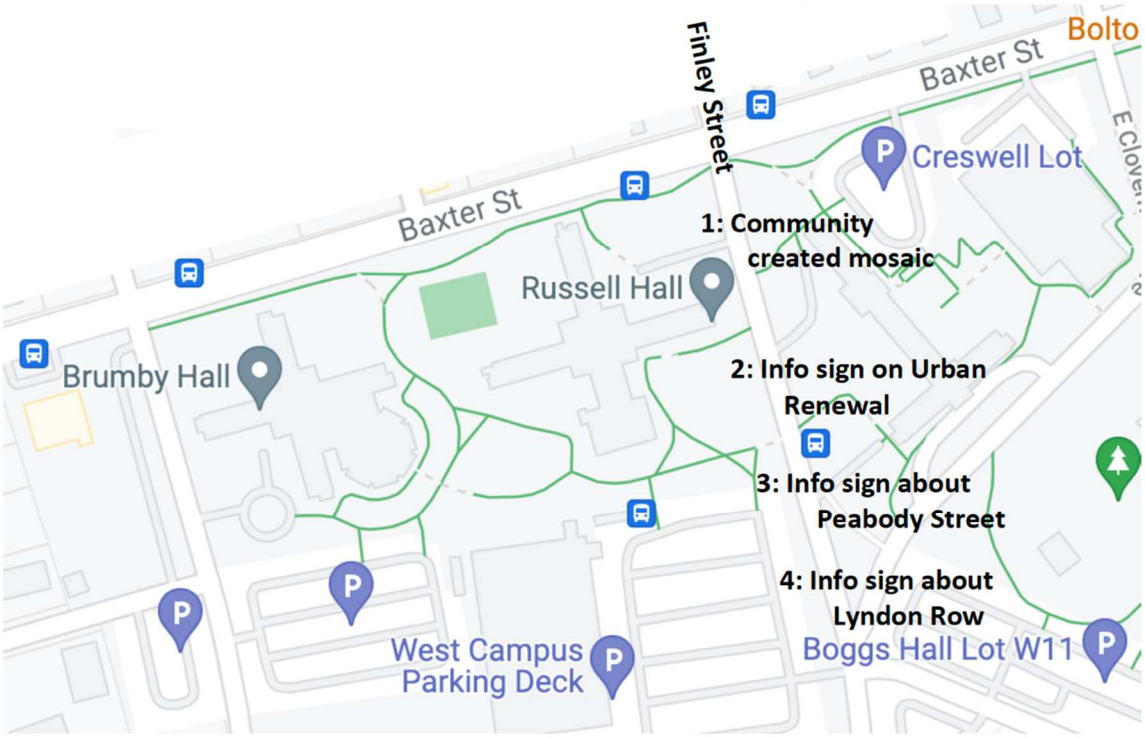
The analysis is limited by its internal logics of capitalist value. The economic analysis conducted quantifies property value loss but does not include the true value of a life-affirming

Black geography for Black people. Additionally, the analysis does not account for the compounding interest that the loss wealth could have accumulated. The analysis focuses on what is valued under white supremacy—the single-family home—and not the social networks, gardens, fruit trees, neighborhood relationships, community-made playground, smokehouses, or the safety, connection and love the neighborhood provided for Black families. Linnentown was invaluable to the Black people of Athens and its value cannot be determined by *respected analytical practices* one might use to find a number that quantifies the total loss to Linnentown families. While the economic analysis can and will be used for reparational projects that support Black geographies, the process falls short of direct repayment and the analysis is limited by capitalist metrics of value that do not consider the trauma or the true value lost with the destruction of Linnentown.

6.4. Honoring Linnentown through Art

After the mayor created the Athens Justice and Memory Project, Ms. Hattie created sub-committees to work on the different resolves. While not officially on the committee, I was asked to assist Dr. Jennifer Rice with the subcommittee on the Wall of Remembrance, along with Broderick Flanigan and Bobby Crook. We were tasked with considering the ways that Linnentown could be remembered through an on-site memorial. After several meetings and exploring what other cities have done to memorialize Black neighborhoods, we proposed what became known as the "Walk of Recognition" (WOR) (see figure 6.1.). The WOR is a four-point memorial consisting of one community art piece and three historical signs along Finley Street south of Baxter. The WOR is a public history, culture, and art walk inspired by Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, GA, where signs and a mural of Representative John Lewis honor the civil rights legacy of the neighborhood where Martin Luther King Jr. lived. The Linnentown WOR signs and

the art installation were proposed to be put between the sidewalk and street in what is called the "right of way," which is owned by the city, and would make sure the project would not require the participation or approval of UGA administration.

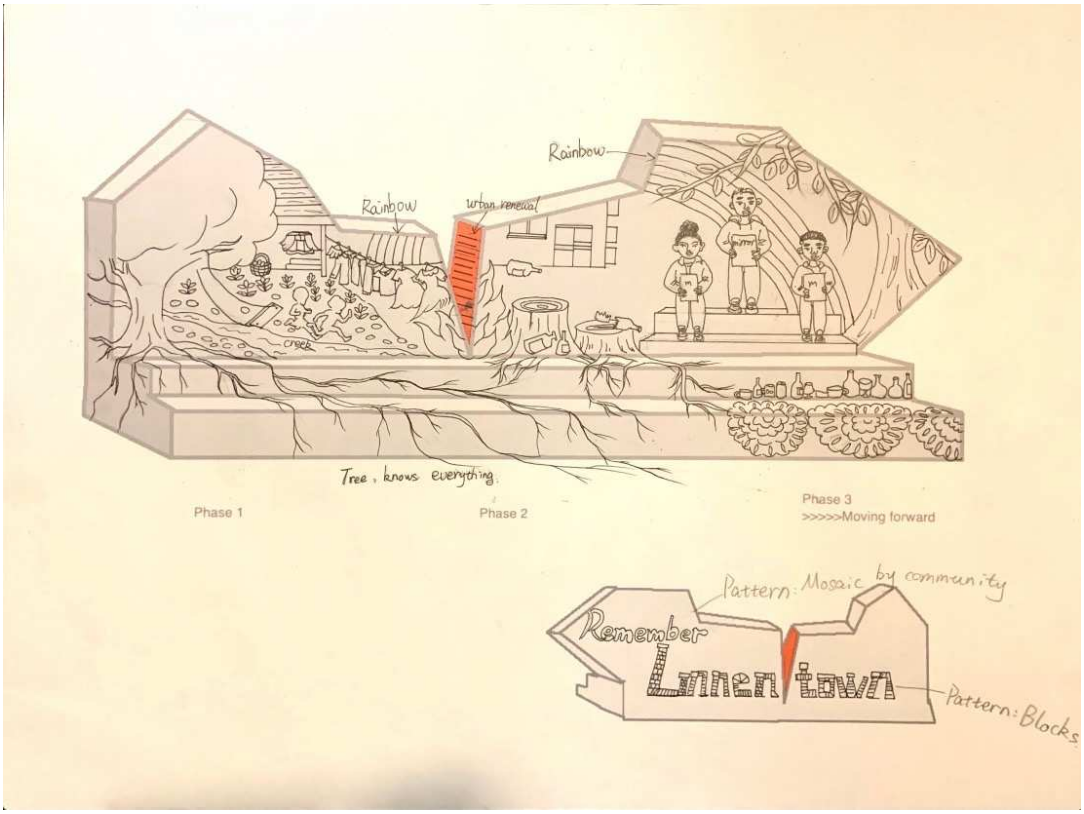


6.1. Four Stops on the WOR (personal communication 2022)

Continued discussions between the JMP, city representatives, and the WOR subcommittee ultimately led to a collaboration with Dr. Lynn Sanders-Bustle on a participatory, community generated mosaic to serve as the art installation in the WOR. Drs. Rice and Bustle convened a graduate class in Fall 2021 to help design the art piece that would both honor the legacy of Linnentown and mourn its destruction. The class had about 18 graduate students from a variety of programs. Dr. Bustle, an artist trained in creating mosaics through social practice, taught the class the principles of social practice and prepared us to create a Linnentown mosaic

made with and by the community, while Dr. Rice taught the class about urban geographies, racial justice, and community engagement. The class split up into teams and worked on the different aspects of the proposal for a mosaic for Linnentown. The teams focused on design, construction, community outreach, social media, and storytelling. Over sixteen weeks we learned and implemented the principles of social practice as a form of art making. We studied about Linnentown and The Linnentown Project through visits with Ms. Hattie, Bobby Crook, and Joey Carter. The class took an onsite tour and documented the site for the mosaic to be placed. This grounded us in the process of creating a proposal design to honor Linnentown.

The class held two workshops with the community to teach about Linnentown, engage them in social practice art making, and receive input on the future design of the mosaic. We collected input in a variety of ways not only for the design of the mosaic but the wall it would be placed on.

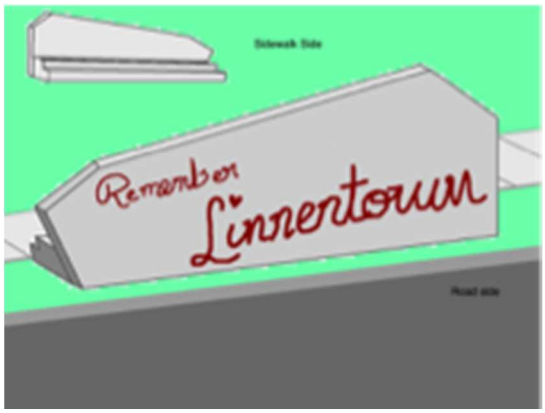


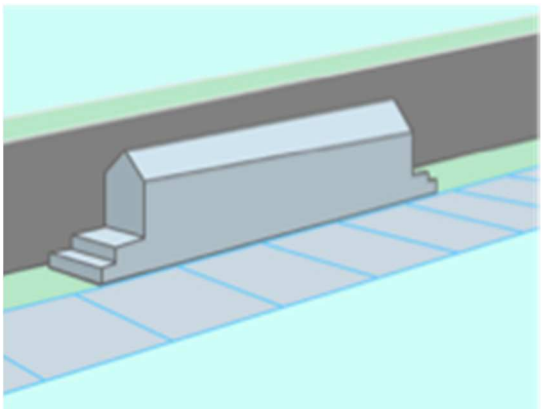
6.2. Proposed Design (personal communication 2022)

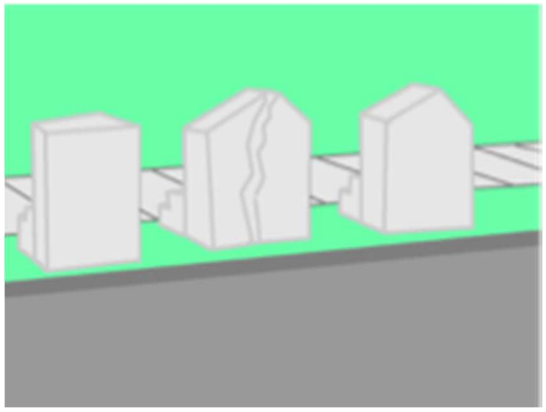
We set up the workshops into different stations where people could vote on their favorite wall design, lay out felt symbols on a wall, sculpt clay, and add to a word cloud. All of this plus the conversations we had at these events created the basis of the design students came up with. The class then sat down with Linnentown descendants to understand what they wanted to see in the mosaic design. Additional designs were created, and Linnentown residents and their descendants commented on what they liked like about the design and what more they wanted to see. After this class ended, Dr. Bustle designed and facilitated workshops with school-age children in making clay medallions that would go into the mosaic. Dr. Jennifer Rice presented the design to the Athens Justice and Memory committee on June 25, 2022, and the committee

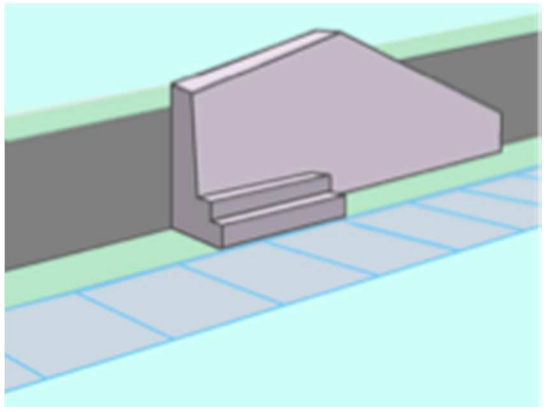
decided to find a project manager who would take the design elements and materials from Drs. Bustle and finish the process of creating the signs and mosaic.

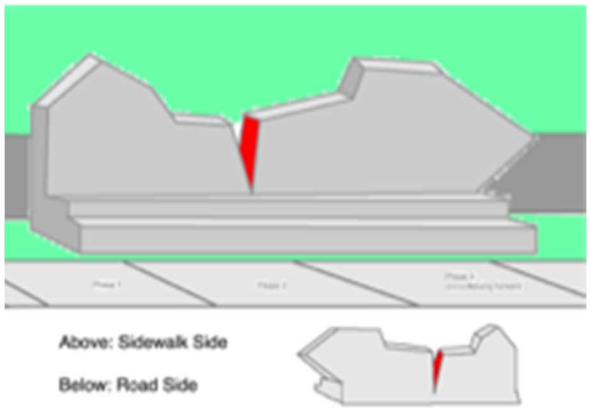
The signs and art installation fulfills a demand for recognition directly from the residents and I have worked hard to make it a reality. The signs and the mosaic represent the reclaiming of space back from UGA and declaring it Linnentown in a way that directly confronts UGA within its landscape. The signs will continue to teach about Linnentown, and the creation of the mosaic creates further opportunities for learning and conversation. The signs and mosaic will add to a growing number of changes to the UGA's landscape with the other monuments that show how Black geographies have always existed at the center of urban life. Regardless of all this, public art and signage is not reparations, it can only continue tell the story of harm that requires direct repayment. Some fear that if the mosaic and signs are built that will end the redress process and the actions of redress that are more than symbolic and make material changes for Black people will never be accomplished. Moreover, if that were to happen then the only people who would receive monetary compensation would be the contractors and artists who create the mosaic and signs. While the mosaic and signs are important to recognizing Linnentown and telling the story of destroyed Black geographies they fall short in the creation of Black geographies that support Black life and prosperity.

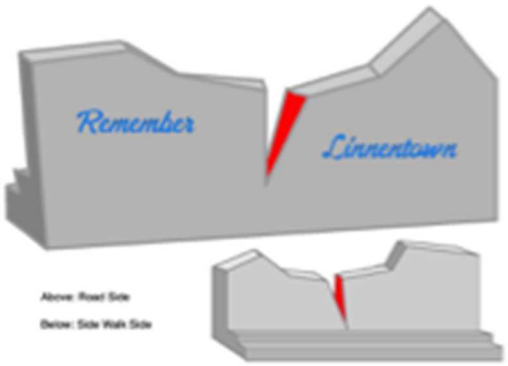












6.3. Different wall designs (personal communication 2022)

6.3. A Place to Remember

The Center for Black history is an idea first established by the History Department as a research center for slavery at UGA. The History department felt that it was their responsibility as historians and educators to publicly tell the story of slavery in Athens. The direct-action group took on this demand for a research center for slavery as one of its three demands. The university refused and instead provided one research grant for a single study. The history department has continued this work on slavery and building the capacity of research on slavery at UGA. The center being proposed by the Linnentown Project would be a place to gather to remember Black geographies and learn their histories. Moreover, it would recognize multiple acts of destruction and harm to Black geographies beyond Linnentown. The center would be an addition to Athens' Black geographies, where Black people could connect and rebuild.

As mentioned above, the idea of an Athens Black History Center was included in the Linnentown Resolutions adopted by Athens Clarke County. As with the other resolves, this is not direct reparations and does not change the material lives of people who were the most impacted by Linnentown's destruction. To date there has been more emphasis on the building that the center would be put in than how the archive will tell the story of Black Athenians. The center does not have an archive or a plan to build one nor does it have a funding base to pay for administrative costs. The plan as of now is to use Linnentown's underpayment funds to support the construction of the Costa building that will be placed downtown, a place where Black people still deal with segregation and discrimination. This to me feels like a lost opportunity to support Black geographies with the addition of new buildings or renovations to old buildings in their own spaces. However, the center does render visible Black geographies that have always existed at the center of urban life like Linnentown.

6.5. Using Linnentown to build Athens Black Geographies

In this chapter, I analyzed four of the resolutions: the apology, economic analysis, the Walk of Recognition, and the Center for Black history. Each resolve of the resolution recognizes or redresses the harm done to Black geographies in specific and broad ways. They all render visible a destroyed Black geography, while some will support the building of new Black geographies. However, they all for short of direct repayment that could change the material lives of those most harmed by Linnentown's destruction. All these projects are under the control of the city government and can be easily derailed by their oversight and participation. This lack of control allows for these resolutions to be easily co-opted at best and never implemented at worst. Moreover, a new administration could change the direction, membership of the committee, or wholly disband it. The state legislature could outlaw what the city is doing. The administration under the Mayor & Commission could delay and derail the project. While political constraints prohibit direct repayment, this lack of control limits the efforts for recognition and redress being made by this committee.

The goal of recognition and redress is more than telling stories and acknowledging harm. It is about making Black people whole through restoring what they have lost financially and materially and recognizing the emotional and spiritual cost that can never be repaid. We must set our sights on rebuilding what was lost: Black geographies. Rebuilding Black geographies is important because they are the sight of reprieve for Black people within white supremacist landscapes. They comprise the spaces where Black people can comfortably experience joy, love, and connection; be seen as fully human in a world that treats us like we are anything but. The goal in working with the city is to break the cycle that white supremacy has locked Black geographies into of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding. The JMP committee is a reminder

of the historical role that the Athens government has played in the process of destruction and a commitment to break that cycle. However, even as the committee works to rebuild and support geographies, the city is displacing Black people who live in the other urban renewal site a part of the R-50 Project. The constraints of working with the city while frustrating is a means to end; an end to the city-led destruction of Black geographies. Ultimately, Black geographies are being rebuilt because of the organizing for recognition and redress. Fighting for specific instances of recognition and redress is a viable strategy to support Black geographies and I hope that this work will break the cycle of destruction, remembrance, that requires rebuilding.

Chapter 7

Towards Life-Affirming Black Geographies

In July of 2022, as I was writing up the findings of this dissertation, my advisor called me with an important update about our work on the Walk of Recognition. The University System of Georgia (USG) had contested the ownership of the right of way at Finley and Baxter Street to stop the building of the mosaic. The letter from USG claims that the right of way where the mosaic was to be built had never been officially conferred to the city of Athens by USG after construction of the dormitories located there now. Thus, USG, and by extension UGA, reasserted the land rights received by taking Linnentown land in the first place to stop the creation of a memorial that would expose the university's violence to Black geographies within its own landscape. University administrators weaponized the land holdings the university forcibly seized through a racist and violent urban renewal process to assert their power once more over Black geographies. With this power, USG and UGA can stop our largest endeavor in recognizing and honoring Linnentown, the mosaic on Finley St. While disappointing it is not surprising that University of Georgia continues to assert the power that they have accumulated to make sure the many stories of their violence go untold.

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how within white supremacist landscapes, white institutions like the University of Georgia have been vested with economic power, social power, and the power to exclude. The University of Georgia has used this power to destroy Linnentown, stop the remembering of Linnentown in their landscape, and halt the building of an art piece that would reclaim a tiny bit of Linnentown back for the descendants and Athens' Black community. In this final chapter, I close out my argument and finish with my concluding thoughts on where

to go from here. I describe this dissertation's main argument in relation to the literatures I am engaging with, how my research has contributed to the field, and what future work can still be done.

7.1 The Argument

The overarching question that guided this research is how do Black geographies coexist with/in white supremacist landscapes? To coexist would mean to live in peace with each other especially as a matter of policy. There is no peace for Black geographies with/in white supremacist landscapes because of the unequal power dynamics and the threat of destruction by white institutions. As I have shown, Black geographies have been, and continue to be, at constant threat of destruction. Athens, Georgia and UGA have yet to make coexistence a reality. Rather, I argue and demonstrate through my case study, that Black geographies is stuck in a cycle of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding. The move to destruction is imminent when the actions of people in those geographies threaten white institutions within white supremacist landscapes. The mosaic project threatened the University of Georgia's image, so administrators used its power and made us reconsider how to honor Linnentown. Projects much smaller in scope, including changing the name of the street and painting the street have been proposed. These changes will have much less impact to the university's landscape, and while they do name Linnentown, they will not render visible the harm done by the university in the ways that the Linnentown mosaic would have revealed. To rebuild Black geographies and reclaim space within white supremacist landscapes, it will take the building of economic and social power to move from remembering to rebuilding. Moving from remembering to rebuilding will not be easy and there will continue to be major setbacks. Linnentown organizing is only one of many battles

in the fight to build political power for Black people in Athens that will break the cycle of destruction, remembering, and rebuilding.

This research is interdisciplinary by design and intersects with three theoretical traditions including Critical Race Theory, Black geographies, and Afro Pessimism. The work adds to Critical Race Theory by showing the impacts of racist regimes of the past that manifest in our landscape today. This research places public education institutions as products of settler colonialism and direct actors in the building and sustaining of white supremacist landscapes. This research takes the concept of urban renewal that is commonly understood as disproportionately affecting Black communities and recasts it as a tool of removal targeted specifically at Black communities that dare to exist at the center of urban life. The research shows how CRT's theoretical claims about property and whiteness work on the ground including how BIPOC property rights are unrecognized by white institutions and then systematically dismantled. Additionally, this research shows how white institutions use "race-neutral" laws to discriminate against Black people and continue the practice of excluding BIPOC communities. Ultimately, my research demonstrates how housing policy serves as another tool in the work belt of white supremacy wielded by state institutions including universities of higher learning.

Additionally, this dissertation adds to the discipline of Black geographies by shedding light on the destruction and remembering of a contiguous Black geography, that supported what I am calling life-affirming Black geographies. Linnentown existed as a life-affirming, more humanely workable geography built by the Black people of Athens that in part shielded Linnentown residents from the vagaries of living in a white supremacist landscape. My work demonstrates that when we remember we built refugee spaces before, we are spurred to build them again. In this dissertation, I argue that remembering is transformed into a political act but

remembering cannot be the final stage of the process. I believe remembering should be tied to rebuilding, recreating, and reimagining; we should expect disappointment when remembering is not tied to material change for Black communities. Ultimately, I argue it will take the building of political power to make the move from remembering to rebuilding and part of the process is politicizing acts of remembering.

These acts of remembering and rebuilding are wake work. And here I want to return to the analytic of the ship given to us by Christina Sharpe. Linnentown is just one of the projects happening in Athens that is a part of the wake work that pushes us towards life affirming - Black geographies. Wake work is work that seeks to contend with the imagined and material conditions of Black being. The imagined conditions include how we see ourselves in the past and where we see ourselves going, while the material conditions are the resources, institutions, and structures we build that support our communities. This is why remembering is political. By saying and knowing Black being we chart a course towards making life affirming - Black geographies a material reality for Black futures. This demand for recognition and redress that started with Baldwin Hall organizing also represents the currents that push the ship that is Black geographies away from the storms that represent anti-Blackness and premature death. To let these stories of Black geographies go unremembered and Black erasure to continue allows the racist narratives about Black people and their communities past and present to be the only ones known, told, and believed. By saying and knowing Black being past and present we challenge white supremacist narratives about Black geographies.

7.2 Future Work

This project adds to the body of work on Black geographies and urban renewal. It also shows a unique way to use autoethnography, spatial analysis, and scholar activism to do

community engaged research. My work is done in the tradition of Bill Bungee in the creation of community engaged scholarship that supports Black geographies. I believe that more geographers need to engage in community geography work that supports the communities that they live in. For too long geographers have gone far and wide to study people they have no relationships or commitments to.

The Linnentown Project continues to work diligently on recognition and redress. I plan to document the political acts of remembering in the academic literature and conferences as best I can to further spread the story of Linnentown. I have maintained my relationships with Linnentown descendants, and I am following the actions of the Athens Justice and Memory Project. There is more work to be done on the life histories of the Linnentown descendants, university and community relations, and the work of recognition and redress in the South. This study is just one of many that adds to those areas of study. I will be pivoting my work to Greenville in my new position as an Assistant Professor at East Carolina University, as I do prefer a scholar-in-place relationship. Greenville shares many similarities to Athens as a college town that also had an urban renewal project that destroyed a Black neighborhood. While I cannot recreate the same movement in Athens, I will use it to guide what type of research I choose to do.

7.3 Notes on Scholar-Activism

I did not call for recognition and redress from the university and Athens-Clarke County with the intent of building my academic career around that work. In fact, I rejected scholar-activism at first and felt my academic work should be separate from my organizing. I was afraid of the consequences of being deeply embedded in a community that I was actively observing and would one-day leave. However, when I realized I was being pulled in two different directions, I

choose the work of recognition and redress to guide me. Praxis rooted me in a tradition of Black radicals working within the university for the good of Black people. I am glad I made that choice because while the Linnentown organizing will forever be centered around some key actions that I took the Linnentown project would have been done with or without me. My actions while central to how the organizing unfolded are not bigger than the project of recognition and redress that is happening in Athens.

The Baldwin Hall and Linnentown organizing is one of many acts of wake work happening in Athens' white supremacist landscapes. By participating in Athens' wake work I learned about how universities function in relation to BIPOC communities which only confirmed the need for antiracist scholarship within the university that calls out these institutions and misappropriates university resources to support wake work. I hope I can continue this work inside and outside of academia. By engaging in the work of recognition and redress I have gained and ethic of how to be in academia that will inform my entire career.

7.4 Considerations

From a research design standpoint, there are a few limitations of this study. This dissertation is rooted in my own experience of organizing for Black liberation. It is not replicable or objective; and it was never meant to be. This work is intimately tied to my political goals of Black liberation. In retrospect, free flowing interviews were not the best research method for this project. My interviews largely confirmed events and feelings on topics I already knew and did not greatly add to the research. A better method for this study would have been focus groups where I could have had people discuss what the organizing meant to them. However, autoethnography and archival methods gave this dissertation more than enough to work with.

7.5 Call to action

Despite the many reservations and critiques I have of universities, I still find value in institutions of higher learning and scholarship. However, there is a certain ethic that I, as a Black abolitionist feminist, must have to exist within the hostile halls of academia. Many subaltern groups in academia move through their hallways with a different ethic and purpose than their white colleagues. We need to make space for BIPOC, queer, disabled, immigrant, and trans people to exist in academia as they are to create better learning environments for both BIPOC students, staff, and educators. All too often we are disciplined to act like our white counterparts instead of being our full selves. Our ethics must go beyond the classroom; moreover, we need to be active members of the communities that our universities reside in. Professors need to come down from their ivory towers and engage not as saviors, but as neighbors in the local politics and educational institutions of the cities they work in.

To UGA specifically, uninspiring monuments and renaming colleges after Black students will not change the culture of racism and white supremacy that rears its ugly head every year on the campus. Only a comprehensive zero tolerance policy for bullying and harassment based on protected classes will show that the campus is serious about ending white violence against BIPOC and Jewish students. Raising the wages slower than inflation every year does not support the low paid Black staff and facilities workers that keep the university running and instead only provides them crumbs for the essential work they do. Ignoring the history of white supremacy on the campus does not change the material reality that UGA was and continues to be a white supremacist institution and only the people who run it have the power to change that. It is time for universities to apologize and create material change to atone for the role they played in

furthering settler colonialism and white supremacy. Universities need to become an active participant in anti-racist movements by changing their relationships with the cities they reside in and its community members, and the students they serve.

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APPENDIX A

Student Government Association Resolution

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Student Government Association

Resolution 31-13

A Resolution to Honor and Memorialize Enslaved Peoples at the University of Georgia

Authored by: Senator Jessica Douglas, Campus Life for Access & Opportunity

Sponsored by: Senator Alexis Watson, At-Large; Senator Johanna Mercurio, At-Large; Senator Jessica Story, Grady College of Mass Communication; Senator George Alexander, At-Large; Senator Samuel Bryant, At-Large; Senator Ali Elyaman, Campus Life for Community Involvement

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia was founded in 1785 in Athens, Georgia during the period of southern slavery; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia was constructed and maintained by an extensive network of slave labor[1]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia Board of Trustees official minutes contains, at minimum, thirty-nine mentions of purchasing slave labor[1]; and,

WHEREAS, there is extensive archived documentation on student interactions with enslaved peoples, including using blackface as mockery, as well as several assaults and a maiming of University slaves[2, 3, 4]; and,

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[1] Augustus Longstreet Hull, "Descriptions of College Servants, Annals of Athens: pages 174-177," *Digital Humanities*, https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/items/show/158.

[2] University of Georgia Faculty, "Altercation between Mr. Paterson and Mr. James Hull over Treatment of Enslaved Man, Faculty Meeting Minutes, Vol 3: pages 105-106," *Digital Humanities*, https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/items/show/120.

[3] University of Georgia Faculty, "An Attack and Cruel Treatment of Enslaved People by Students, Faculty Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1: page 15," *Digital Humanities*, https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/items/show/96.

[4] University of Georgia Faculty, "Attack of an Enslaved Person by a Student, Faculty Meeting Minutes, Vol. 3: page 2," *Digital Humanities*,

WHEREAS, the University of Georgia benefitted from the labor of slaves, including the few whose names are known: Dick Cary, Davy Hull, Billy Hull, Sam [Harris] Watkins, Bishop Lucius Henry Holsey, Lewis "Old Tub" of the Christy family, Louis of the Demosthenian Literary Society, and Alfred, Caroline, Elvir, Hanson, Louisa, and Sophia of the Church family[1, 2, 3, 4, 5]; and,

WHEREAS, slave labor on campus was tasked with cleaning student apartments, whitewashing buildings, toting water for the University, maintenance, construction on the buildings, and doing odd jobs for faculty members and students at their discretion[1]; and,

WHEREAS, there lies a monument across from the Arch that honors Athenians who served in the Confederate Army and a plaque at the entrance of North Campus that pays tribute to the Confederacy, which fought to keep Black bodies enslaved; and,

WHEREAS, the chapel bell, now an icon and beloved tradition of the University of Georgia, was originally used to denote religious services, emergencies, and class changes, for which slaves Dick Cary and Sam [Harris] Watkins were utilized as two of known the bell-ringers[5]; and,

WHEREAS, many buildings across campus are named after presidents and founders of the university, most of whom are known to have owned slaves which were used in tasks benefitting the University, including, but not limited to, Abraham Baldwin, Alonzo Church, Moses Waddel, and Andrew Lipscomb[6]; and,

WHEREAS, many community members and students do not feel as though the University of Georgia adequately, publicly acknowledged its past entanglement with slavery, nor acknowledged the substantial contributions that enslaved peoples made towards the establishment and success of the University; and,

WHEREAS, the mission of the University of Georgia is to "foster the understanding of and respect for cultural differences necessary for an enlightened and educated citizenry"; and,

WHEREAS, renowned universities such as Harvard University, Brown University, Columbia University, Princeton University, Rutgers University, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, Washington and Lee University, George Mason University, William and Mary

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https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/items/show/97.

[5] University of Georgia Faculty, "Enslaved People and UGA," *Digital Humanities,* https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/people.

[6] Reed, Thomas Walter. *History of the University of Georgia,* 1949, http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi-bin/ebind2html.pl/reed_c01.

University, and Georgetown University have all implemented memorials, dedications, and/or programs that acknowledge their university's history as it pertains to slavery[7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]; and,

WHEREAS, fellow southeastern colleges such as the University of Mississippi, the University of Alabama, the University of South Carolina, Furman University, Clemson University, and Wesleyan College have all publicly recognized their past involvement with slavery through research, plaques, public transparency, and/or involvement in "Universities Studying Slavery," a multi-institutional collaborative program[13, 14]; and,

WHEREAS, at the University of Georgia, only 7.7 percent of the student population identify as Black or African American, while the state of Georgia has one of the highest state populations of Black and African American people, totaling 31.4 percent[15]; and,

WHEREAS, in the spring of 2018, leaders of the African Student Union, the UGA Chapter of NAACP, and several other leaders of Black student organizations voiced their personal support and the support of their peers towards a University effort to acknowledge slavery and honor the enslaved peoples held and utilized by the University;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the 31st administration of the Student Government Association, will, on behalf of the student body, stand publicly in support of further honoring the history of enslaved peoples at the University of Georgia; and,

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[7] Pazzanese, Christina. "To Titus, Venus, Bilhah, and Juba." *Harvard Gazette*, 13 Feb. 2018, news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/04/to-titus-venus-bilhah-and-juba/.

[8] University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. "Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice." *Brown University Committee on Slavery and Justice Home*, www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/.

[9] Columbia University. "Home." *Columbia University and Slavery*, columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/.

[10] Associated Press, Cmaadmin. "UNC-Chapel Hill Opens Up Records About Ties to Slavery." *Diverse*, 16 Nov. 2005, diverseeducation.com/article/5105/.

[11] Ballinger, Sarah, et al. "Introduction." *Omeka RSS*, exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/introduction.

[12] "University of Georgia Overview." *COLLEGEdata*, NACAC, www.collegedata.com/cs/data/college/college_pg01_tmpl.jhtml?schoolId=975.

[13] Universities Studying Slavery, University of Virginia, 2014, slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery.

[14] Plaques Contextualizing Slavery and Enslaved Labor on Campus to be Unveiled (Ole Miss): http://slaveryresearchgroup.olemiss.edu/plaques-contextualizing-slavery-and-enslaved-labor-on-campus-to-be-unveiled/

[15] Karuga, James. "10 States With The Largest African-American Populations." *WorldAtlas*, 18 Apr. 2016, www.worldatlas.com/articles/us-states-with-the-largest-relative-african-american-populations.html.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage the University of Georgia to, in collaboration with the University's and Athens' Black and African American community leaders, construct a permanent, physical monument on North Campus dedicated to all enslaved peoples held and utilized by the University of Georgia and serving as a permanent reminder of their sacrifices and struggles made on behalf of the University of Georgia and the lasting contributions they have made towards the foundation and continued success of the University; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage the University of Georgia to dedicate the chapel bell in Dick Cary and Sam Watkins' names, so that students and community members may know the names of those slaves whose records were maintained and know the legacies that Cary and Watkins made towards a landmark of the University; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we encourage the University of Georgia to join the many universities that are already members of the multi-institutional collaborative project Universities Studying Slavery (USS), which was organized through the University of Virginia, in order to contribute our own research and experiences as well as to learn from those of our peers; and,

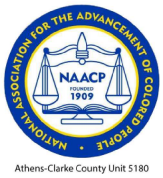
THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, we encourage University of Georgia to become a model within higher education for research and transparency as it pertains to our involvement with slavery, ensuring that, for generations to come, the enslaved peoples of the University of Georgia will not have been held in vain and that their memory shall live on with proper respect, intentionality, and honor through whatever means necessary.

APPENDIX B

Direct Action Group's Letter to the President of UGA

An Open Letter to University of Georgia President Jere Morehead

Calling for Recognition and Redress for UGA's Legacy of Slavery



Athens-Clarke County District 2 Commissioner Mariah Parker

Athens-Clarke County District 3 Commissioner Melissa Link

Athens-Clarke County District 5 Commissioner Tim Denson

Clarke County Board of Education District 1 Member, Greg Davis

Clarke County Board of Education District 7 Member, Dr. LaKeisha Gantt

Clarke County Board of Education District 8 Member, Dr. John Knox

Clarke County Board of Education District 9 Member, Dr. Tawana Mattox

Dear President Morehead,

We, the undersigned members of the Athens community, including University of Georgia staff, faculty, and students; Athens organizations; elected officials; and community stakeholders write with deep frustration over your administration's grossly inadequate response to collective requests that UGA recognize and redress its legacy of slavery in concrete ways.

When the most recent remains of enslaved people were uncovered during the Baldwin Hall expansion project in 2015, we in the Athens community and at the University of Georgia were presented with a significant opportunity to reflect on the University's legacy of slavery, set a plan for reparations, and heal collectively. Now, over three years later, it saddens us to look back and see that instead of taking advantage of this opportunity, your administration restricted input from the Black community, resisted meaningful proposals for repair, and neglected the University's history of slavery.

When it was announced that the remains belonged to people of African descent, many Black community members went into a grieving period. Fred Smith, Sr. and other community members requested that the reburial of the remains be open to the public, so that he and others could be a part of the solemn moment. Instead, your administration facilitated a secret, closed reburial. Linda Davis requested that the remains be reburied in a historically Black cemetery with their descendents. Instead, your administration reburied them at Oconee Hill, a historically White cemetery with a record of abusing Black graves. Alvin Sheats requested that the University grant reparational scholarships for descendants of slaves that worked at UGA and for Black Athenian high school students. You responded by saying that the University does enough for Black students. The denial of these thoughtful requests displays a deep and troubling disregard for the community that was most impacted by the reburial.

Faculty and students experienced administrative pushback for similar requests. UGA faculty proposed a Center on Slavery to study, recognize and exhibit the University's history of slavery. Vice President of Research David Lee said that it was not relevant and that it was "beyond the scope of resources." The UGA Student Government Association passed a resolution to call for a monument on north campus "dedicated to all enslaved peoples held and employed by the University of Georgia." UGA administrators and advisors pressured student leaders not to pass it, and the outgoing SGA president vetoed the resolution on his last day in office.

Despite your administration's continued efforts to literally and figuratively bury the University's legacy of slavery, the current social and economic conditions in Athens make this legacy impossible to ignore. This University was built by enslaved people, both in terms of labor and in terms of capital leverage. Today, as the largest employer in Athens, UGA plays no small role in our community's 38% poverty rate. While Black people were once enslaved to cook, clean, and maintain the University of Georgia for no wages, now Black people cook, clean, and maintain

the University for poverty wages.[1] The truth of this lasting legacy is distorted on campus. While over 20 slave owners and segregationists are honored with buildings, former workers like Lucius Holsey, Dick Cary, Davy Hull, and Sam Watkins, to name a few - are invisible on campus.[2]

Only a thorough accounting of UGA's participation in the institution of slavery and concrete actions to repair the ongoing damage caused by slavery can begin to make our community whole. It is past time for your administration to act on the requests of its community and use its institutional power as Georgia's flagship university to make positive social change in our city. This means standing up to the Board of Regents, educating donors, and advocating for the redress this community deserves.

We call on UGA to fund and celebrate efforts to recognize and redress its full history in three specific ways:

1. Issue a public statement taking responsibility for UGA's role in white supremacy and fully fund the faculty-proposed Center on Slavery[3] as a first step toward researching and telling the whole story of UGA's role in slavery and Black oppression, a legacy which persists to this day.

2. Guarantee full-tuition, all-fees-included scholarships for descendants of the enslaved people who worked on UGA's campus and for every African-American student who graduates from a public high school in Athens as a first step toward redressing the longstanding reparational debt that UGA owes to the African-American community and the local public schools in Athens.

3. Implement wages of at least $15/hour for all full-time and part-time/temporary UGA employees as a first step toward sufficiently supporting workers, especially Black workers who are disproportionately underpaid at UGA. As the largest employer in Athens and the flagship university in Georgia, UGA sets a standard for wages across the community and the state. The current inadequate wages fuel poverty in Athens' Black communities, and UGA must do more to address the massive racial wealth gap.

These demands chart a course for UGA to confront and take responsibility for its complicity in slavery and the enduring harm it inflicts on Black community members, staff, faculty, and students today.

We, the undersigned, stand united in these demands until they are met, and we will continue to fight until we achieve full recognition and redress for this legacy of harm.

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[1] Black people make up 5% of UGA faculty, 7% of UGA administrators ($144,551 median annual salary), and 44% of UGA Service and Maintenance workers ($27,005 median annual salary).
[2] SGA Resolution 31-13 offers a positive first step in honoring these legacies.
[3] Proposal from the Working Group for the Study of Georgia Slavery and its Legacies at the University of Georgia

With that, we'd like to formally invite President Morehead and his fellow administrators to publicly respond to these 3 requests on April 24th, when we will be holding a community Town Hall at Lay Park from 6pm-8pm. Food and childcare will be provided.

Co-Signers (as of 4/15/19 @ 12:22pm)

Community and Student Organizations

Athens NAACP
Economic Justice Coalition
Athens Anti-Discrimination Movement
Athens For Everyone
United Campus Workers of Georgia
Dignidad Inmigrante En Athens
Young Democratic Socialists of America in Athens
Undocumented Student Alliance
Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity, UGA Chapter
Students for Justice in Palestine, UGA Chapter

Public Officials

Mariah Parker, Athens-Clarke County District 2 Commissioner
Melissa Link, Athens-Clarke County District 3 Commissioner
Tim Denson, Athens-Clarke County District 5 Commissioner
Dr. LaKeisha Gantt, Clarke County Board of Education District 7 Member
Dr. John Knox, Clarke County Board of Education District 8 Member
Dr. Tawana Mattox, Clarke County Board of Education District 9 Member
Greg Davis, Clarke County Board of Education District 1 Member

APPENDIX C

Morehead Response to Baldwin Hall Organizing

While I am disappointed, I am not surprised by the wildly inaccurate claims made in the letter submitted to my office yesterday by a small group of local activists. The University of Georgia handled the Baldwin Hall matter appropriately, and our response actually went far beyond what is required by the law. However, it is clear that a few individuals, obviously driven by a personal agenda, continue to try to leverage this issue and expand it to promote their own causes.

Let me restate, for the record, that once the first remains were discovered on the construction site in November 2015, we immediately contacted the appropriate authorities. We followed the guidance of the State Archaeologist's Office in every step of the process, including selection of Oconee Hill Cemetery as the site for reinternment. We hired an external

Despite what some might claim, our faculty are free to pursue research of their choosing and to seek external grants for support. The libelous claim in the letter that I would ever have said, "The University does enough for Black students," is equally preposterous. I care deeply about the University of Georgia, our faculty, staff and students, and I remain committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for every member of our community.

We are in the midst of a fundraising campaign to benefit the institution, and we are actively raising funds for scholarships that meet legal requirements. While we are not permitted to provide race-based undergraduate scholarships, we have created 400 need-based Georgia Commitment Scholarships over the last two years. These scholarships are transforming lives across the state by enabling students with significant financial need the opportunity to attend the University.

Going forward—with the support of our governing board, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents—I will remain focused on advancing the mission of this institution as I have done tirelessly for the last six years.

Sincerely,

Jere W. Morehead

APPENDIX D

Linnentown Project's Draft Version of the Resolution

Resolution in Support of Recognition and Redress for Linnentown, its Descendants, and Athens Black Communities Harmed by Urban Renewal:

Whereas, as early as 1900, Athens black families began to settle in a twenty-two acre area called "Linnentown" bordered by Baxter Street, South Finley Street, and Church Street on what used to be Judge Newton's plantation land; and

Whereas, by 1960, Linnentown grew to nearly forty black families and was a burgeoning and self-sustaining black neighborhood consisting of skilled members of the Athens community including plumbers, electricians, beauticians, brick masons, housekeepers, and cooks; and

Whereas, Linnentown families were tax-paying residents with decent, albeit low-paying jobs who were building up generational wealth through the ownership of and investment in real property and durable goods; and

Whereas, with ample evidence, Athens local government and the University of Georgia have a long history of targeting black communities for forced acquisition and urban redevelopment, e.g. as early as 1920, the University of Georgia Board of Trustees allocated $25,000 to purchase a tract of unspecified black-owned properties "for the protection of [university] property and the safeguarding of the young women in [the university's] charge," and in 1950, a city planning map shows Linnentown as specifically targeted for urban redevelopment; and

Whereas, between 1962-1966, the University of Georgia collaborated with the City of Athens to destroy Linnentown in the name of 'slum clearance' in order to erect the three 'luxury' dormitories--Brumby, Russell, and Creswell Halls--by means of the urban renewal program called the "University of Georgia Urban Renewal Program" or "Project GA R-50," which operated concurrently with the "College Avenue Redevelopment Project" or "Project GA R-51," both of which were federally funded through Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and

Whereas, Linnentown properties were forcibly seized by the City of Athens through eminent domain for as little as $1450 and families were displaced to public housing or sporadically throughout the City of Athens; and

Whereas, through intimidation, weaponized code enforcement, inequitable property value assessments, controlled demolition by fires, forced tenancy and rent, tokenized black representation, invasions of financial privacy, and paternalistic relocation policies, Linnentown was effectively erased without a trace by the City of Athens and the University of Georgia; and

Whereas, by 1966, the City of Athens sold all Linnentown properties to the University of Georgia for as little as $216,935, and by 2019, the University's current land value plus improvement value of this property totals $76 million for a return on investment of 35,000% with an annualized return of approximately $8.8 million (11.6% per annum); and

Whereas, instead of infusing money and resources into Linnentown for it to achieve middle-class status, the City of Athens and the University of Georgia perpetrated an act of institutionalized white supremacy and terrorism resulting in intergenerational black poverty, family separation, and trauma through the forcible removal and displacement of black families, and the accumulation of the majority of their wealth and political power within the University of Georgia and pockets of Athens white communities; and

Whereas, recently Athens-Clarke County Mayor Kelly Girtz publicly stated that properties in Linnentown "would be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars each if preserved in their original locations, and an asset those families would have been able to rely upon to build wealth"; and

Whereas, while a total of 176 black families compared to 122 white families were displaced by both Project GA R-50 and R-51 between 1962-1974, which shows that a disproportionate number of the Athens black population were affected by urban renewal in Athens, Georgia, urban renewal also strategically and intentionally targeted black communities like Linnentown for displacement and erasure; and

Whereas, the activist James Baldwin said, "Urban renewal is negro removal," the violently bureaucratic erasure of Linnentown is a key example indicating larger patterns of the collaboration of public institutions of higher education and government officials which reflect the legacy of slavery and black displacement in Athens, Georgia and in the United States.

Therefore let it be resolved by the Mayor and the Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia that:

The Athens-Clarke County government issue a public statement of acknowledgement for its collaboration with the University of Georgia to destroy Linnentown and other established black communities through urban renewal, and to hold public fact-finding hearings in order to investigate the harms, past and current, caused by urban renewal to Athens area black communities.

The Athens-Clarke County government, in partnership with Linnentown residents, recognize the history and legacy of Linnentown and its descendants through the installation of an on-site 'Wall of Recognition.'

The Athens-Clarke County government seek partnership with the University of Georgia, after specific amounts of loss of intergenerational wealth has been determined, to fully fund a revolving, interest-bearing account for Linnentown descendants to repair incurred material and immaterial losses through urban renewal, and to create an endowment supporting educational scholarships for Linnentown descendants.

The Athens-Clarke County government designate any and all relocated Linnentown structures with historical markers and register them with the National Register of Historic Places.

The Athens-Clarke County government, through the Office of Inclusion and Diversity, seek partnership with the University of Georgia to fund a local Center on Slavery and the Future of Athens Black Communities.

The Athens-Clarke County government create policies regulating property acquisitions by and land swaps between ACC government and the University System of Georgia, including but not limited to policies requiring additional fees in lieu of taxes for any property acquisition by public entities.

APPENDIX E

Athens Clarke County's Apology to Linnentown

APOLOGY IN RECOGNITION OF ATHENIANS DISPLACED BY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS

WHEREAS, the former City of Athens entered into agreements with the United States Government in the 1960's to create two Urban Renewal Districts, centered respectively on Baxter Street and College Avenue; and

WHEREAS, these two districts featured several hundred residents who were displaced during the decade that followed; and

WHEREAS, despite the intent and expression of "progress" provided at the time, this displacement resulted in the loss of generational wealth, particularly for Black Athenians; and

WHEREAS, social connections, proximity to family, work, leisure education, and entertainment were all lost or diminished by this displacement; and

WHEREAS, Athenians and the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County are together working toward recognition and remedy for past injustices; and

WHEREAS, this includes the present Linnentown Memory and Justice Committee and will expand to include recognition of other neighborhoods that have been lost; and

WHEREAS, the College Avenue area is again under redevelopment with the explicit intent to utilize a more welcoming and engaging process and an outcome that permanently displaces no current residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County extends to former residents of Athens' Urban Renewal Districts, their descendants, and to all Athenians a deep and sincere expression of apology and regret for the pain and loss stemming from this time, and a sincere commitment to work toward better outcomes in all we do moving forward.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Athens-Clarke County to be affixed this 2nd day of February 2021.

_____

Mayor Kelly Girtz
Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

APPENDIX F

Athens Clarke County's Linnentown Resolution

1/19/21

Resolution in support of recognition and redress for Linnentown, its descendants, and Athens-Clarke County Black communities harmed by urban renewal; acknowledging the City of Athens' collaboration with the University System of Georgia in the destruction of the Linnentown community and the displacement of Black property owners through urban renewal; supporting the establishment of memorials and historical places in honor of Linnentown; supporting the allocation of funds in the annual budget for the economic and community development of historically impoverished communities; calling on the Georgia General Assembly to establish a formal body to address the legacy of slavery and segregation in the State of Georgia and to determine the appropriate forms of material redress:

WHEREAS, as early as 1900, Athens Black families began to settle in a twenty-two acre area called "Linnentown" which was bounded by the currently existing Baxter Street, Church Street, and South Finley Street, and formerly contained the unpaved Lyndon Row and an unpaved portion of Peabody Street on what used to be Judge Newton's plantation land;[1]

WHEREAS, from 1900-1960, Linnentown grew to fifty Black families and was a burgeoning and self-sustaining Black neighborhood consisting of skilled members of the Athens community including plumbers, electricians, beauticians, brick masons, housekeepers, and cooks;[2]

WHEREAS, Linnentown families were tax-paying residents with decent, albeit low-paying jobs who were building up generational wealth through the ownership of and investment in real property and durable goods;

WHEREAS, in December 1954, Linnentown property owners petitioned the City of Athens to pave Lyndon Row in its entirety and install a street light.[3] By January 1955, the Mayor and City Council approved an ordinance to pave Lyndon Row, and by February 1959, approved additional ordinances to pave Peabody Street, South Finley Street, and Church Street in their entirety, which would have upgraded water and sewage infrastructure and enhanced general accessibility for all Linnentown residents, thereby improving their lives and property values. These ordinances were not followed and the improvements were not implemented for Linnentown residents;[4]

WHEREAS, the Housing Act of 1949 established the Federal Urban Renewal Program, which disproportionately affected Black Americans across the United States between 1950-1971;

WHEREAS, in 1959, the Housing Act was amended to allow universities and colleges to participate in the Federal Urban Renewal Program without providing housing for displaced communities;

WHEREAS, between 1959 and 1961, University of Georgia President Omer C. Aderhold corresponded with several local, state, and federal officials, especially Athens Mayor Ralph Snow, University System of Georgia Chancellor Harmon Caldwell, and United States Senators Richard B. Russell and Herman Talmadge to request that they leverage political power for the

University System of Georgia to obtain a federal urban renewal contract with the City of Athens to "clear out the total slum area which now exists off Baxter Street [i.e. Linnentown]";[5]

WHEREAS, the City of Athens and the University System of Georgia have a history within Black communities of acquisition of property through eminent domain for the purposes of urban redevelopment, e.g. in 1920, the University of Georgia Board of Trustees minutes allocated $25,000 to purchase a tract of unspecified Black-owned properties "for the protection of [university] property and the safeguarding of the young women in [the university's] charge,"[6] and then in 1950, a city planning map shows Linnentown as specifically targeted for urban redevelopment;[7]

WHEREAS, from 1962-1966, the University System of Georgia contracted with the City of Athens to demolish Linnentown in the name of 'slum clearance' in order to erect three 'luxury'[8] dormitories—Brumby, Russell, and Creswell Halls—by means of the urban renewal program called the "University of Georgia Urban Renewal Program" or "Project GA R-50." This project operated concurrently with the "College Avenue Redevelopment Project" or "Project GA R-51." Both projects were federally funded through the former Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) which was superseded by the current department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD);[9]

WHEREAS, the City of Athens seized Linnentown properties through eminent domain for as little as $1450 and families were displaced to public housing or sporadically throughout the City of Athens;[10]

WHEREAS, through intimidation,[11] weaponized code enforcement,[12] inequitable property value judgments,[13] controlled demolition by fires,[14] forced tenancy and rent,[15] tokenized Black representation,[16] invasions of financial privacy,[17] and paternalistic relocation policies,[18] Linnentown was effectively erased without a trace by the City of Athens and the University System of Georgia;

WHEREAS, by 1966, the City of Athens had sold all Linnentown properties to the University System of Georgia for $216,935,[19] and by 2019, the University's current land value plus improvement value of this property totaled $76 million for a return on investment of 35,000 percent with an annualized return of approximately $8.8 million (11.6 percent per annum);[20]

WHEREAS, instead of investing money and resources into Linnentown for it to achieve middle-class status, the City of Athens and the University System of Georgia perpetrated an act of institutionalized white racism and terrorism resulting in intergenerational Black poverty, dissolution of family units, and trauma through the forcible removal and displacement of Black families, and the accumulation of the majority of their wealth and political power within the University System of Georgia and the City of Athens;[21]

WHEREAS, a total of 176 Black families compared to 122 white families were displaced by both Project GA R-50 and R-51 between 1962-1974, which shows that a disproportionate number of the Athens Black population were affected by urban renewal in Athens, Georgia and

that urban renewal strategically targeted Black communities like Linnentown through dispossession and erasure;

WHEREAS, between 1959 and 1974, over 70 universities and colleges in the United States received federal funding for urban renewal, including the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Georgia Tech University, and the Medical College of Georgia, which displaced 324 Black Americans in the State of Georgia from 1961-1974;[22]

WHEREAS, in the words of the activist James Baldwin said, "Urban renewal is negro removal,"[23] the erasure of Linnentown is a key example of larger patterns of collaboration between public institutions of higher education and federal, state, and local government agencies to seize and dispossess Black-owned properties, which reflects the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow in both Athens, Georgia and in the United States at large;[24]

WHEREAS, on September 14, 2019**,** Athens-Clarke County Mayor Kelly Girtz publicly stated that properties in Linnentown "would be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars each if preserved in their original locations, and an asset those families would have been able to rely upon to build wealth";[25]

WHEREAS, in 2019, Congress passed H.R. 40 "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act" which establishes a commission to examine the socio-economic effects of slavery and to consider appropriate remedies;

WHEREAS, between 1989 and 2020, at least seven municipalities (Asheville, NC; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; District of Columbia; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; and San Francisco, CA) and seven state legislatures (California, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Texas) have adopted resolutions acknowledging the legacy of slavery and calling for reparational remedies for the lasting effects of segregation and racial violence; and[26]

WHEREAS, this resolution results from research funded by the Athens-Clarke County Mayor's Office through an internship provided by its *Community Improvement Program* grant and fully supported by *The Linnentown Project*, which is a community-led project headed by former Linnentown property owners to celebrate the history of Linnentown and to educate the Athens community about the legacy and impact of urban renewal in Black communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, let it be resolved by the Mayor and the Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia that:

Section 1. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County acknowledges the fundamental injustice and resulting harm to Linnentown and other Black communities as a result of urban renewal by the City of Athens and the University System of Georgia.[27]

Section 2. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, in partnership with Linnentown residents, shall seek to establish a partnership with the University System of Georgia to recognize the history and legacy of Linnentown and its descendants through the installation of an on-site 'Wall of Recognition.'

Section 3. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County shall, with the approval of the Commission, direct the Linnentown Justice and Memory Committee to determine the total amount of intergenerational wealth lost to urban renewal and, under the Committee's advisement, shall, for as long as the Committee exists under its charge, make annual budgetary recommendations to the Mayor and Commission for operational and capital projects to provide equitable redress, including but not limited to affordable housing, economic development, telecommunication services, public transportation, and public art as redress for past harms caused by urban renewal and to foster future reinvestment in historically underfunded and impoverished neighborhoods in Athens-Clarke County.

Section 4. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County shall designate as historic any and all relocated Linnentown structures, erect applicable historical markers, and apply to register them with the National Register of Historic Places.

Section 5. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County shall seek partnership with the University System of Georgia to create and co-fund a local Center on Slavery, Jim Crow, and the Future of Athens Black Communities.

Section 6. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County shall explore policies regulating property acquisitions by and land swaps between the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County and the University System of Georgia, including but not limited to policies requiring additional fees in lieu of taxes for any property acquisition by public entities.

Section 7. The Mayor & Commission of Athens-Clarke County urges the Georgia General Assembly to establish an Authority on Recognition & Redress for the purpose of formally acknowledging Black communities harmed by slavery, Jim Crow segregation, redlining, and urban renewal in the State of Georgia; and to determine the appropriate forms of compensation to redress the loss of intergenerational wealth and property as the result of historically discriminatory policies and practices.

Section 8. The Mayor & Commission of Athens-Clarke County requests that Mayor Girtz deliver copies of this resolution, upon adoption, to Governor Brian Kemp, Georgia State Senators Bill Cowsert and Frank Ginn, Georgia House of Representatives Spencer Frye, Houston Gaines, and Marcus Wiedower, United States Representative Jody Hice, United States Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, the University System of Georgia Executive Director of Government Relations Casey Tanner, and the University of Georgia Vice President of Government Relations Toby Carr.

SO RESOLVED, this ____ day of _____, 2021.

APPROVED:_____
Kelly Girtz, Mayor