

Appendix: Student Reflections

Sewanee Mid-term Student Reflections:

What were the two most valuable aspects of the trip to Atlanta in terms of enriching your understanding of the issues and questions addressed by the course?

Seeing another archive and learning more about the research process was helpful and eyeopening. It's always good to learn more about and observe another group's approach. The material itself was very cool as well.

Honesty, Stone Mountain was probably the most important aspect in terms of making me question how we as a society deal (or don't deal) honestly with our past. Seeing the light-show from the point of view of someone taking a class on racial reconciliation was absolutely mindblowing; it was such a blatant example of how NOT to present history. I believe that this was very important for the class to see so that we could more honestly present our own project.

Dr. Knight's lecture at the AUC Library and our visit to Stone Mountain. Dr. Knight's lecture about slave historiography was illuminating and enlightening and made me excited about the work we were doing with our own archives. Stone Mountain was a sad reminder of the cultural battle we're fighting in large part in regards to an accurate historical portrait of the South, the Civil War, and slavery.

For me it was just physically being at a HBCU. It was really an eye-opening experience. It made me aware of the contrast with Sewanee

The most valuable aspects of the ATL trip was being able to see their archives and realize that we at Sewanee have almost more and open access to our archives. I also really enjoyed the trip to Stone Mountain. I feel like it opened up a lot of dialogue for the class and that everyone had something to say about it.

The discussions and lectures with Morehouse and Spelman professors working on the same issues as this class. Also the tour of historical places in Atlanta that helped paint a picture of what these historical black colleges have come up against in the past.

I was not able to attend the first Atlanta trip.

I think that the lecture by Dr. Knight on slave inventories in the south was very relevant to our own archival project. I also really enjoyed going to Stone Mountain with our class.

1.) graveyard tour -- seeing ATL narratives with an eye to (local as well as national) history for its own sake 2.) Stone Mtn -- seeing history as advertisement.

The class trip to Atlanta was designed, in part, to facilitate interactions and dialogue with students from Morehouse and Spelman. Please evaluate its effectiveness in meeting this goal.

It was effective, given the amount of discussion time we had, as far as interacting with students from Morehouse. Obviously, we weren't able to visit Spelman, but I feel that the idea of cooperating and sharing ideas with students from other universities is extremely important, and I wish that classes in other departments would do the same more often.

Of course, there were no Spelman students, but I thought working with the Morehouse students was absolutely wonderful. We were all able to engage and talk and getting their perspective was invaluable. I don't think the trip would've been the same or as impactful without that dialogue.

Well... there were only a few students there, but I thought that we had some good conversation and interactions. We compared notes on our campus environments. I saw as two students come to the realization that they went to rival high schools. It was neat, but I honestly feel that the real impactful experience was just walking around their campus, more so than any specific conversation I had with one of the students.

As stated above, I feel like it was almost only the Sewanee kids doing a lot of the talking and answering questions...

I was not able to attend the first Atlanta trip.

Since there were only about four Morehouse students, it was a little difficult to start a dialogue. It felt mostly separated up until our trip to dinner, which was enjoyable.

8/10 -- great discussion, really cool, knowledgeable students, but I wish we'd been able to meet Spelman students as well. Plus, since there were so few Morehouse students and 9-10 of us, I did feel a little anxious that they might feel crowded.

Please briefly explain your answer to the previous question about inter-campus visits.

It would have been nice to have had more time with the Morehouse students, but we had a pretty good conversation over dinner about personal experiences, things we'd learned in class, and current events.

As I said, the visit was fun and enriching and invaluable to the ideas wrestled with in the course. However, I think the field trips should be mentioned in the course abstract if offered again.

We have two more.... tbd.

Studies of Slavery: Midterm student reflections and essays

I do feel that inter-campus visits are very nice, but in the future maybe some more planning and making sure that there is a good group of students from both or all colleges present.

I feel they were delightful and necessary for perspective of what the students are learning about this campus.

Haven't been able to attend one yet, so I don't think I can really make a recommendation. Although the field trip was enriching, I do wish it had more explicit correlation with our class material and discussion. As I stated earlier, activities such as Stone Mountain were enriching, but the cemetery visit didn't seem as applicable.

Sewanee's isolation (physical and demographic) isn't conducive to seeing how current campus culture/history/etc relates to nearby institutions' on a personal basis. Physically visiting other campuses forces (in the best way) us to engage with other colleges' histories and present cultures. It provides useful perspective and stimulating, relevant discussion. I think these trips are vital to the greater part of the learning I have done in this course.

In terms of the questions and issues addressed by the course, how relevant and helpful was the class presentation project executed in conjunction with artist Vesna Pavlovic?

It would have been nice to have known that the class included an art-based project, perhaps in the class description; I feel like a few students were caught unawares. As an artist, however, I really enjoyed the project. It was refreshing to have a creative take on what could have been based solely on analytical archival research.

I was skeptical at first and for a long time, but the project ended up working wonderfully. In the end, I thought it culminated all of the ideas we were working on into a stunning somber display that really told the story in the way we wanted it to. I think it made the course unique and, looking back, was invaluable.

I must say, the project caused more confusion and frustration than it should have. In the end it seemed to all come together though! I still have mixed emotions about its effectiveness, but the more I think about it, the more I like how it blurred the lines between art and history. It helped break down the idea that the only impactful form historical analysis takes is academic literature.

The presentation was extremely helpful. Being able to see something come out of just a few hours in the archives turn into something so well put together was amazing.

It was impactful to certain members of the community I hope. So they can see what we have been doing with our research in the archives.

Studies of Slavery: Midterm student reflections and essays

I think that examining the archives was really interesting, and gave us a useful insight into the lives of the people who inhabited Sewanee in its early years. I'm not entirely sure if Vesna's artistic style was necessarily the best way to present our findings, as most of our artifacts were not really visually interesting.

I think that by far, the presentation was the most helpful to understanding Sewanee's history of slavery and race. It was great to see how students interpreted and interacted with archival material.

Ultimately, very helpful -- it was good to have a firsthand experience in organizing a historical engagement project, and I'd say that even if it had gone poorly. It was nerve-wracking to not know what we were doing half the time, and nerve-wracking to have to coordinate a group project across a dozen people, and nerve-wracking that Prof. Pavlovic was not a specialist in African-American, 1800s American, or any other imminently relevant subfield (this said, I don't want it to seem like Prof. Pavlovic's guidance was not helpful or relevant, only that this was a source of uncertainty). It definitely helped me interact with and trust the other students in the class a lot more. 9/10.

Please summarize the value to you of the presentation project in relation to the questions and issues core to the course.

People don't care about history unless it directly related to their lives or they can find some way of connecting on a personal level with people who history affected. By using the names and ages of those enslaved by John Quitman in a memorial setting, we 1) brought them out of the archives and into the public eye and 2) gave the viewers/listeners a way of forming an emotional connection to history by imagining who these people might have been, and even more importantly, imagining one's self in their position.

Taking materials out of the archives and into the public view is fundamental to reconciling Sewanee's present with our past. We can say that the university was founded by slaveholders and traders all we want, but being able to show a bill of sale for a human being with the signature of one of the founders on it, there doesn't need to be an explanation. The document speaks for itself.

Again, I was skeptical, and definitely out of my comfort zone as an artist, but it turned out great. It was confusing and seemed disordered at first, but when it all came together, the questions and issues each group was working with created a great project. We were all working with our own ideas brought on by the archives and the presentation was a creative way in displaying them.

believe that this presentation was very valuable to this class and the questions that we have been raising. Being able to present to the public and other Sewanee students was such a valuable thing.

Studies of Slavery: Midterm student reflections and essays

I don't know how valuable the presentation part of it was, but I guess we have to show the results of our findings to the public somehow.

One large question/issue I've been grappling with throughout this course is how to make the larger Sewanee population recognize and care about the subject matter of our class. I think the presentation was an effective manner of exposing these issues to the wider community, which was incredibly valuable.

Although it was touched on in the last response, I do think the presentation was very important for our class, and for the Sewanee community more broadly.

Very good for teaching me how to prioritize and present sometimes-conflicting issues pertinent to Sewanee's history.

HHIS221: History of African Americans to 1865

Fall 2018

Field Trip Precis

The partnership with the University of the South and Spelman College was designed to have students accumulate new historical information, explain the relevance of studying history, and apply learning in the classroom to real world settings. Write a one-page, single-spaced essay that (1) describes the key facts that you learned about slavery and the University of the South and (2) evaluates the overall quality of the field trip. If you believe that the project had value, then explain how you would make improvements. The essay is due on **Monday, November 12, 2018.**

November 12, 2018

History of African-Americans to 1865

Dr. Knight

Reflections on The Trip to Sewanee University

The trip to Sewanee University gave Morehouse students the opportunity to see how the legacy of slavery continues to live in the present-day. The university was founded to be the premier institution for the southern United States and was backed by the Southern Episcopal Church. The church gathered bishops from all 10 states from North Carolina to Texas in order to represent these different states throughout the formation of the university. Sewanee's official stance is that the university had no official involvement with slavery since it did not officially open its doors until 1868. This is untrue. Though it was not open to students, the university began formation around 1856 when 300 of the wealthiest people in the South pledged money to the university. The initial endowment totaled \$1.2 million, which was the largest among any U.S. institutions of higher education at that time. It is clear that the university would not have had the financial means to open its doors to students in 1868, if not for the 40,000-50,000 slaves held in bondage by its early donors. In addition to the financial support, slaves were also forced to help physically build parts of the campus. When bishops moved to Sewanee, they typically brought their slaves with them. These slaves cleared the land on which the university sits. They also built roads and structures, though which structures and how long they were used is unclear.

One goal of the university and its backers was to prove to the world that a slave-based civilization was progressive, modern, and Christian. Sewanee was supposed to represent the wealth and prosperity that slavery provided to elite white Americans. This is displayed by the unique geography of the school and the original plans for cultivating the land. The Sewanee area was selected, in part, because Tennessee touches seven other states. Within three days' time, people were able to travel to the campus from as far as North Carolina and Texas. There was also a major railroad nearby. The area around the campus was and remains picturesque, and the high elevation made diseases that were common at the time (like malaria) difficult to spread. These are all attributes that made the mountainous forest in which Sewanee was built attractive to its elite, white backers. The university's founders' plan was to develop the mountain and turn it into a sort of resort for elite, southern, white planter families, which would have made the school and the surrounding area a bastion of racism and classism for Christian slave owners.

The slave owners who provided the financial backing for Sewanee to open, played a large role in the establishment of the school's mission. John Smith Preston, one of the major initial investors in the university, appeared to establish that the university's mission was to preserve slavery when he gave a speech at the laying of the school cornerstone. He asserted, "no manifestation of fanaticism since the world began ever exhibited such a concentrated lie as that which is raising its hollow outcry against the system of slavery as it exists in the southern states. And it is because of its hollow falsehood that we must be the better prepared to refute scandal, and resist its aggressions". It appears that Preston believed that the university of the South would be a valuable tool for the preservation of slavery. A part of the original cornerstone, at which he made this declaration, is touched by every incoming student after signing the university honor code. This is certainly one of the most apparent ways that the legacy of slavery lives on at the University of the South, and questions surrounding whether artifacts like this should still be used or even kept was certainly a big area of contention during the trip.

Though there were certainly times throughout the trip when I felt uncomfortable, I do think it was impactful and something that future students will benefit from. Many Morehouse students, like myself, were not raised in environments where it is easy to observe the lasting effects of slavery. This trip gives students the opportunity to do this while considering how these effects can impact the political/racial climate on college campuses. As a philosophy major, I found the discussion I had on cognitive dissonance with Professor Williams and the larger discussion on whether or not institutions should be retaining artifacts tied to slavery/the Confederacy to be incredibly thought-provoking. The trip allows students to consider some of the major themes discussed in class in a setting that feels closer to slavery than our regular classroom at Morehouse. Though I did enjoy myself and gain a lot from attending the trip, I believe the trip can be improved. I believe for certain discussions, participants should come prepared by reading a text like the article Spelman students mentioned (titled "How Southerners Talk About Their History" or similar). Everyone beginning the discussion with the same framework in mind may lead to more fruitful and less tribal conversation. Also, I believe informing students of the professor's goals for the trip before it starts is helpful. After I spoke with you and learned about your goals, I was better able to focus. I also enjoyed the trip a lot more because I knew I was gaining what you hoped I would. Overall, the trip was a great experience and I believe you should take classes in the future.

11/14/18

History 221

Dr. Knight

Precis #5

The history collaboration project between Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Sewanee: The University of the South reached its next chapter with the Atlanta University Center contingent of students visiting the Tennessee based-campus on the first weekend of November 2018. Key facts on the school's role in the institution of slavery were revealed in a quick synopsis given by the hosting history professor, such as the noteworthy fact that the land was paid for by the universities benefactors' who had their wealth directly derived from labor undertaken by enslaved Africans. Also, the Episcopal Church, despite its reputation as a mainline Christian and progressive attitudes towards America's social problems also had direct ties to the institution of slavery and its role in establishing the academic institution that bears the name of Sewanee.

The field trip had better scholarly value than the first installment of the collaboration series, because it placed greater responsibility on studying an academic institution's personal connection to history. The historical tension between our respective academic reputations made vigorous and at times heated conversation inevitable since the historically black institutions were founded after the abolition of the institution of slavery, while the predominantly white institution hosting us has deep aforementioned connections to the institution of American chattel slavery. What I would do to make it better would have been a collaborative assignment as done in the AUC archives with the slave trade database; small group discussion and research combined with a central archival task; it would have facilitated healthier conversation through fact finding instead of devolving into tribalism and alleging the sensibilities over the University Of the South and whether or not they are going about the "right way" in discovering and owning the institution's role in slavery. Also, there should have been a requirement that you must attend successive events; those who did not attend the first session at the Woodruff library archives, Oakland Cemetery and Stone Mountain theme park contained a rather close minded view of white americans, predominantly white institutions, and handling of the "oppressor" role. This close mindedness, according to conversation by Morehouse classmates as well as my own personal thoughts that I maintained while listening to the dispirited debate suggest that small group collaboration set up by Sewanee would have been much more productive for scholarly purposes. Therefore, this must be done in future collaboration with other academic institutions, especially when intellectually interacting with predominantly white institutions on such a sensitive subject such as chattel enslavement of Africans. Also, I felt Sewanee failed to give a bigger backdrop to years between now, with heightened awareness on historical roles of slavery and the actually deeds that were performed centuries ago; a much more detailed sense of history would have eased any tension points that could have risen amongst the debate. Overall, these collaboration projects are a good baseline to use in building annual collaboration activities.

History of African American to 1865


Dr. Knight

The Power of Writing the Narrative

History, is a narrative of the past, that aids in structuring reform for the future. This is especially evident in the case of The University of the South, an institution, followed by a conflicting narrative created by the men of the Confederate States of America. The university serves two purposes. The first one being, that it's a college with an emphasis on academic achievement, and scholarship. The second being, the university's memorial like nature that highlights and continues the legacy of the Confederacy. During our visit, as a class, I initially questioned the importance of being there. I couldn't understand why it was important for us as black scholars to concern ourselves with a college tied to a history like that. A narrative exclusive to those who wrote it. Noninclusive of the stories and the experiences of the people who I descended from. It's one of the purest forms of historical oppression. By excluding the history of people you can limit the knowledge of ancestry. Ultimately making it more difficult for the descendants of the "forgotten" people to embrace their origin. Origin is crucial to identify, it's what makes history worth studying. Conflicted with thoughts of anger at the lack of information about the enslaved people in Suwanee, I built a wall of mistrust toward the students in Dr. Register's class. So for the majority of the trip, I felt a need to question how genuine and dedicated the students were to "unveiling" the hidden truth about the origins of their university, and the forgotten stories of the enslaved people living in the area.

Buildings named after prominent individuals associated with the Confederate, memorials built with the purpose of honoring "brave and virtuous" generals in the Confederacy, and a lack of acknowledgment and willing ignorance by administrators. These are all realities faced by the University of the South. During the tour, we had the opportunity to see some of these things first hand. The most interesting thing I learned about was a memorial built in honor of a Confederate general. In 1940, the United Daughters of the Confederacy asked permission to build a memorial honoring Edmund Kirby Smith, a general that led Confederate forces during the civil war. There's a plaque that lies on the back of the memorial. This plaque refers to former Confederate generals as well as slaveholders with high regard. Even going as far as referring to them as, "enlightened, brave, virtuous." After recently coming under fire about the importance of such a memorial, the University of the South repurposed the memorial as a pillar commemorating the anniversary of the university's refounding.

Despite the bothersome nature of Suwanee and it's deeply rooted legacy of Confederate ties, I valued the opportunity to gain perspective, and learn of a history that I would've been otherwise ignorant to. The trip was educational and I really enjoyed the opportunity to bond with other scholars and exchange the things I've learned with other students.


Dr. Knight
HIS 221, Section 01
November 12, 2018

Sawnee and University of the South Past

Morehouse College, Spelman College, and University of the South all came together to learn new historical information about the University of the South. Morehouse College students and Spelman College students came together to talk to the University of the South's class about the ways oppression has affected the enslaved black people who helped build Sawnee and could have possibly helped with the building on the University of the South. Morehouse College, Spelman College, and University of the South discussed the ways that enslavement affects black people and the ways to solve racism in the United States. As college students from all schools, we also talked about the ways that the University of the South was founded for the expansion of chattel Southern slavery.

On Friday of coming to University of the South; Spelman College, Morehouse College, University of the South were in conversation of how the University of the South why, how, and when the University was founded. We learned that the University was officially founded right after the Civil War in the year 1868, but unofficially founded before the Civil War happened. The most prominent figure of the Episcopal Church in the Southern part of the United States, came up with the idea to open a University in the South to up hold chattel slavery and the faith of the Episcopal Church. With the idea for the University of the South, the only problem was getting the economic support for the University. The head Bishop of the Southern Episcopal Church found the funding through the 300 of the wealthiest plantation owners that were part of the Episcopal Church. Morehouse College students and Spelman College students learned the reason that they chose Sawnee as the place of the University was to get away from the summer heat like places like Mobile, AL, Nashville, TN, and New Orleans, LA; and let it be a prominent place where the wealthiest southern plantation owners lived at. The plan for the University did not take off, because of the Civil War happening. When the University of the South was officially founded, the plan for the University to be the place for the expansion of slavery was dissolved. The only true reason for the official founding was to keep the charter and the land.

The Saturday of November 3rd, Morehouse College students and Spelman College students returned to The University of the South, we learned more about the College and took the tour of campus. Eventually, we found out that each building was named after Confederate generals. We also found that their Church on campus had problematic pictures on the stained glass, which showed White Southern elitism and the disadvantages of what enslaved black people did for the University of the South and Sawnee. Prior to the three weeks of Morehouse College and Spelman College coming to the University of The South, we found out they had a stained glass picture of the Confederate Flag, but was taken out without anybody knowing the reason. Going to the University of the South's archives we found many things that were related to the history of slavery, which connects to the University of the South. Morehouse College and Spelman College students found out that the archives had a chair that was built by a enslaved person, which the Pope use to sit in. The chair that was built by an enslaved person opened a heated discussion about the chair's purpose being at the University of the South's archives, and whether or not we should keep problematic history. We ended our discussion with both Morehouse College and Spelman College students understanding and disagreeing with University of the South's position to keep problematic history.

The overall quality of the field trip was overall good, I liked every adventure that the trip had to offer. The trip opened my eyes to seeing that some white people actually want to fight oppression in America. It was a good overall learning experience for Morehouse College, Spelman College, and University of the South.

The Trip to the University of the South at Sewanee allowed students from Morehouse and Spellman to learn of Sewanee's history and original purpose. Like many institutions of higher learning, Sewanee has a history connected to slavery in the United States. However, what set Sewanee apart is that preserving the institution and practice of slavery was explicitly in Sewanee's purpose for existing. In response to growing sectional tensions and abolitionism in the north, wealthy southern planters deliberated on how to best preserve the slave-owning culture in the South. This deliberation came from fears Southern elites had about the power of northern ideas that were at odds with chattel slavery. The increased publication of anti-slavery newspapers and organizations during the mid-1800s caused Southern planters and slaveholders to loathe sending their heirs north. The solution was presented by a cohort of ten southern Episcopal bishops, who envisioned Sewanee as a city on the hill for the continuation of slave-owning society and culture. The original founding of Sewanee on Monteagle Mountain by Leonidas Polk in 1857 was financed with an abundance of slave money. Financial contributions included John Armfield of Franklin and Armfield, one of the largest slave trading companies in the United States. John Armfield's contribution, among others, would have made Sewanee one of the wealthiest institutions of the era, rivaling even Harvard. However, the Civil War would quickly upend the plans of the original founders.

With the Emancipation Proclamation, Sherman's March to the Sea, and blockades causing Southern plantation owners to hemorrhage money and cotton; money that had been pledged to Sewanee prior to the war quickly dried up or inflated beyond use. However, despite the turbulence of a war that saw founding member Leonidas Polk killed by cannon fire, Sewanee's purpose was not lamented or renounced, only altered. Sewanee's purpose postbellum was to offer refuge for the memory and spirit of the Confederacy, both by harboring its leaders and by giving them a sheltered space to recount their legacy. After the second founding in 1868, the school came to be the employer of a number of ex-confederate officers. This wave of hires was reflected by efforts to turn Sewanee into a repository of memories that valorized the Confederacy. This aim is reflected in the number of buildings and markers dedicated to leaders of the Confederacy. While some of the sites that commemorate the Confederacy and its symbols have quietly disappeared, such as the battle flag that once adorned All Saints Chapel, others remain on buildings or academic halls. Dr. Register's current work involves exposing the history behind these buildings and edifices to engender discussion on campus about what should be done with them.

The trip as a whole was incredibly beneficial, not only did we have the opportunity to be told the intimate details of an institutions history, we were able to interact with professionals engaged with the discovery of that history. There were, however, a number of moderately hostile discussions. This hostility may have stemmed from discomfort that some of the visiting students had with being at Sewanee. The discomfort of being in an unfamiliar space and discussing issues of slavery and history cause some to have very personal and emotional reactions. To better facilitate productive discussion, it should be required that all students who are interested in any of the trips must go the first event at the AUC archives. This will provide a

space and time to have a discourse over a less controversial subject, as well as to foster cordial and collegial relations between the student groups. If there is an opportunity to augment the trip, I would add time for a workshop for Dr. Register to present his methods for uncovering Sewanee's history. It would be of great help to aspiring historians to witness his process and reveal the problems he has faced with regard to his research.

HHIS221: History of African Americans to 1865

Fall 2018

Precis 2

The North Carolina Runaway slave advertisements

(<http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS>) provide a window into not only black resistance strategies but also other areas of the early African American experience. Using at least ten advertisements from the runaway slave advertisement database, write a one-page, single-spaced essay that explores two or more patterns of the black experience that you discovered in the evidence. Also, use Clayborne Carson's text to provide context. The precis is due by 11am on **September 17, 2018**.

Alternative assignment: The AUC Archives, Oakland Cemetery, and Stone Mountain Park serve as repositories of public memory. Write a one-page, single-spaced essay that compares how they present the past. Consider the similarities or tension between the three sites. The precis is due by 11am on **September 19, 2018**.

9/18/18

Dr. Knight

History 221

Precis #2

Public memory spaces exist as a means of preserving history to the fullest extent possible. These spaces exist in physical forms such as libraries, museums, national parks, and archives. This past Saturday, alongside guests from the University of the South, exploration of public memory was done in earnest amongst three different public memory spaces; the Atlanta University Center archives, the historic Oakland Cemetery, and Stone Mountain Park. The quality of curation must be separated into different categories, namely dealing with presentation biases, archival content accuracy, and accessibility. The first space, the Atlanta University Center archives, is the one space that deals with bias and archive accuracy in the most professional manner out of all three sites. This was evident during the scheduled collaboration activity between Morehouse and Sewanee students, when the archive curator managed the activity in the fairest, most academic manner possible. The presentation quality of the archives would be the highpoint of the day's events, as the descent into inaccuracy and presentation carelessness hastened with each successive public memory space visit. The historic Oakland cemetery, while the most accessible of all three of the sites due to no admission charge upon entry, traded accessibility for historical accuracy. The guided tour presentation presented either a professional guide trained in presentation of historical memory, or an elderly "volunteer" tour guide. This would be evident as our group learned later upon departure to Stone Mountain that the latter presenter was a malignant Confederate history sanitizer. The lack of admission charge was rather symbolic, representing the coin flip between apologist leaning presentation or a professional historical presentation. The last site, Stone Mountain themed park, represented historical negligence and the least accessible site on our journey. Stone Mountain is the site of the reincarnation of the Ku Klux Klan during the height of the Jim Crow era, as well as Confederate romanticism, with the infamous confederate equestrian carving in full view as a laser show full of forced nationalism, confederate apologia, and advertisement saturation was on display.

The tensions between the three public memory spaces manifest amongst the three areas of they occupy: one of scholarship towards changing the status quo, the next, if properly executed, can be one of learning from the negative past, and the other that haphazardly tries to rationalize "the good and the bad" by mishmashing them together. Public memory spaces can be vital to learning and internalizing historical facts, but who is behind the presentation of those spaces matters most importantly; if the curator is a negative actor, propaganda is simply being spread from a public memory space, not history.

September 19, 2018

History of African Americans

Dr. Knight

The Great Triumvirate: AUC Archives, Oakland Cemetery, and Stone Mountain Park

The AUC archives, Oakland cemetery and Stone Mountain park are all repositories of public memory help people understand the past. More specifically, they shed light on slavery and the issues surrounding it. The AUC archives project focuses on the institution of slavery itself, the Oakland cemetery and Stone Mountain Park are dedicated to the Confederacy. Examining the context of these repositories reveals that they were created for different reasons. Black people created the AUC archives project, while the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association played a large role in populating the Oakland cemetery and white southerners put on the laser show at Stone Mountain Park. These three groups have different views concerning slavery, the Confederacy, and the Civil War. Therefore, their repositories have different messages. Comparing how the AUC Archives, Oakland Cemetery and Stone Mountain Park present the past proves that the past created tension between people that still exists today.

As mentioned above, the subject of the AUC archives project was the institution of slavery. It featured financial documents and letters from slaveowners, as well as images of slave life and black soldiers. Since I arrived late to the exhibit I missed a lot of information, but I will say it exposed the hypocritical nature of slavery. On financial documents and records like the "List of Negroes at Garden Hill" slaves are just names that are sometimes accompanied by price tags. Slaves are mere pieces of property who are dehumanized to the point where their entire existence is defined by their financial value. Further, it is interesting that although slaves were so prized financially, most slaveowners did everything possible to lower their slaves' value. Brutalizing, overworking, underclothing and underfeeding slaves surely made them less valuable, as did not providing them with adequate medical care. Doing these things also lowered the lifespans of slaves. Perhaps the profit slaves generated for their owners made up for their mistreatment, but it seems slaveowners should have considered better protecting their investments. Contrasting this treatment with the way slaveowners advertised their slaves when attempting to sell them makes their hypocrisy apparent. In these advertisements, slaves are praised like they are their master's children or a higher up someone is sucking up to. The hyperbolic language used to describe their skills and physical traits makes them sound like superhumans. There is a disconnect between the literature and reality, and the AUC archives expose this disconnect. Lastly, this hypocrisy can be applied to the Confederacy. Confederates fought for their rights while denying slaves any rights.

Members of the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association did not see any hypocrisy in the Confederacy. Being wealthy white southern women, they supported the Confederate cause and had husbands and family members who fought in the Civil War. The purpose of their organization was to provide proper burials for deceased Confederate soldiers and commemorate the Confederacy in general. These ladies all supported slavery and probably viewed blacks as inferior beings. Their goal with the Oakland cemetery was to glorify the Confederacy. Touring the cemetery confirmed this goal. Countless Confederate soldiers have granite tombstones, and the cemetery also contains Confederate monuments including the Confederate obelisk and the Lion of the Confederacy. Moreover, many of these tombstones and monuments have ornate

features like shrouds. The Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association used the Oakland cemetery to celebrate the Confederacy and its cause, and thus celebrate slavery as well. It is survived by the producers of the Stone Mountain park laser show who celebrate the Confederacy in their show.

The backdrop of the Stone Mountain park laser show is a Confederate memorial of General Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis. Based on this, it is clear the show's producers are pro-Confederacy. During the show, lasers projected onto this memorial and played a scene depicting these three individuals riding horses, battling Union soldiers and surrendering. Upon surrendering they break their swords, which splinter into the Union and Confederate states and merge together, creating a unified America. Subsequently, General Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis recede into the memorial, taking off their hats and putting on faces of grief and despair. Their expressions are understandable, but it was interesting to see how the show's producers portrayed them and how the audience reacted to this portrayal. These three figures were presented as heroes whose cause was justified and righteous. When they were battling the producers played triumphant music and the audience applauded, but when they surrendered the producers played somber music and the audience was silent. Not only are the show's producers pro-Confederacy, their audience is too. Just like the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association, they celebrate slavery by celebrating the Confederacy.

While the AUC archives, Oakland cemetery and Stone Mountain park are all repositories of public knowledge, the former tears down slavery while the latter two uphold it by glorifying the Confederacy. This is where the tension between people mentioned in the introduction comes into play. Many living people have strong feelings about the Confederacy--both positive and negative-- and these feelings create conflict. A good example of this is the current debate on Confederate statues. Leading to violent protests, the destruction and/or removal of Confederate statues, the reemergence of white supremacists and even deaths, the Confederate statue debate is a major source of contention. The AUC Archives, Oakland cemetery and Stone Mountain park reflect these feelings, and these feelings have existed since the Civil War. Therefore, they prove that the past created tension between people that still exists today.

The AUC Archive, Oakland Cemetery, and Stone Mountain Park all serve as repositories of public memory, but they serve in different ways and to different ends. The repositories are spaces with intentional, specific purposes beyond the presentation of images or documents. All three serve either in sum or in part, to reflect, inform, intrigue, or manufacture consensus.

The AUC Archive is a diverse collection of articles, documents, and pictures that touch on a broad array of events pertinent to the African-American experience. The primary goals in the curation of this archive are to expand the raw knowledge base of those who interact with it, and to create sufficient intrigue for further questions. As a knowledge repository, the archive offers a myriad of primary sources that the public can examine to settle questions of fact or to draw broader inferences about historical phenomenon. For example, going to the archive and pulling a record of enslaved persons who were on a South Carolina plantation in the late 18th century and cross referencing them with an oral family history may confirm the location of ancestors at a specific time and place. This informative interaction with memory does not immediately involve the transformation of understanding about broader historical questions. Such questions may include the economic trends that influenced which crops a slave owner developed, or how political upheavals caused fluctuations in the price of the enslaved on the auction block. Taken individually, the raw data available in the AUC archive is best suited to answering questions of fact. However, the wealth of data available is sufficient to intrigue a visitor to analyze multiple sources and place individual documents into conversation with each other or a historical context in a reciprocating pattern. Reading and analyzing sources begets questions, which brings about more reading and analysis. Provided there is enough relevant data, what was a query about a South Carolina plantation can be placed inside an economic context within the post-revolutionary era. As a repository, the AUC Archive exists as a public service for expanding our knowledge base by placing data in context. Other repositories may be able to elicit emotion, but the power to inform and intrigue is unique to the archive.

The Oakland Cemetery is somber in visual tone and is a somber place of reflection on one of the bloodiest wars in American history. The cemetery holds thousands of war dead from the Confederate states, and is a physical testament to the scale of the war's devastation. While the cemetery does offer an opportunity to inform by way of name and death dates listed on the headstones, the arrangement of data does not lend itself to the comparative interaction available at the archive. Viewing the headstones may intrigue a visitor to question why a specific person decided to join and fight in the confederacy, but to answer that question they will have to pursue resources beyond the boundaries of the cemetery. The Oakland Cemetery is a public place of remembering the human costs of the Civil War. It presents the effects of the war in the most explicit fashion possible, with little interpretation done by the markers. The space for intrigued reflection available at the cemetery is not shared by the monument at Stone Mountain Park, its purpose is separate.

Among other attractions, Stone Mountain Park features a massive monument of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis standing 400 feet above the ground. Expressly

created for the commemoration of Confederate leaders and associated organizations, the relief sculpture on Stone Mountain serves to interpret memory for the public and manufacture consensus. The depicted interpretation of the Confederate leaders as stalwart, valiant heroes in the relief and in the media presentation provides little historical context, no indications as to their motivations, and few facts of their deeds or lifespan. While the other repositories of public memory offer information to create understanding with facts, the Stone Mountain relief can only give form to existing beliefs or interpretations of the visitor. The AUC archive provides data on persons who lived in bondage, and the Oakland cemetery holds thousands of war dead to be viewed in their final resting place, but Stone Mountain has scant historical information. Because it has no broader information attached to it, Stone Mountain's function is to manufacture a consensus that confers the attributes implied by the relief and media onto the three people depicted in the mind of the viewer. Stone Mountain stands separate from the purposes of the other two repositories of public memory despite having the Civil War as a common subject.

While the purposes of the Oakland cemetery and AUC archive have some overlap in attempting to inform and intrigue the public, Stone Mountain's dearth of contextual information has little to offer. While Oakland cemetery and the AUC archive serve the public by offering concrete information that forms further questions, there is not enough historical substance on Stone Mountain to contribute beyond the notions the visiting public brings.