RECLAIMING THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE: RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL, 1951-2018

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ABSTRACT

Charlotte Fryar: Reclaiming the University of the People: Racial Justice Movements at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1951-2018 (Under the direction of Seth Kotch)

This dissertation examines how Black students and workers engaged in movements for racial justice at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1951 to 2018 challenged the University’s dominant cultural landscape of white supremacy—a landscape in direct conflict with the University’s mission to be a public university in service to all citizens of North Carolina. Beginning with the University’s legal desegregation, this dissertation tells the history of Black students’ and workers’ resistance to institutional anti-Blackness, demonstrating how the University consistently sought to exclude Black identities and diminish any movement that challenged its white supremacy. Activated by the knowledge of the University’s history as a site of enslavement and as an institution which maintained and fortified white supremacy and segregation across North Carolina, Black students and workers protested the ways in which the University reflects and enacts systemic racial inequities within its institutional and campus landscapes. To oppose institutional anti-Blackness, Black students and workers constructed a counter-history of the University as determined by the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, which operated against the dominant narrative of the University’s reputed liberalism.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary methodology from oral history and public digital humanities, this dissertation uses a dual critical geography and critical race theory framework to
analyze how students and workers have organized to challenge the University’s anti-Blackness. This dissertation contends that Black students and workers organized to create, contest, and reclaim specific spaces within the University’s campus landscape, directing the institution towards a yet-unrealized future as a place of humanity, dignity, and equity for all campus actors. This dissertation explores several spaces of resistance on the campus—the South Campus dormitories, Lenoir Hall, Manning Hall, Upendo Lounge, the Black Cultural Center, the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, the Cheek-Clark Building, Saunders Hall, and the Confederate Monument and Unsung Founders Memorial in McCorkle Place—to provide a groundwork for conceptualizing ways in which future campus organizers can utilize the legacy of past racial justice movements to orient the University towards reparative justice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is not enough to say that this dissertation would not exist without the generosity of the former students, faculty, and staff who invited me into their homes and offices to talk with me about their time in Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill would not exist as it does now (or might in the future) without them. It has been one of the great privileges of my life to document their stories and share their contributions to racial justice movements in Chapel Hill with others. Every time I asked myself why am I doing this? during the doubtful process of writing, I returned to their stories for an answer. Every alumnus of the University owes these individuals and their peers thanks. I will go first. Thank you Omololu Babatunde, Chris Baumann, Donelle Boose, John Bradley, Shannon Brien, Blanche Brown, Michelle Brown, Renee Alexander Craft, Mars Earle, Chris Faison, Reginald Hildebrand, Carol McDonald, Tim McMillan, Tim Minor, Erica Smiley, Michelle Thomas, and Taylor Webber-Fields.

What a blessing to have worked with such excellent committee members during this process! I am glad to have had Seth Kotch serve as the advisor for this dissertation. His eye as an editor is as sharp as his conversational candor, and this work is better for his refusal to accept easy narratives about our shared hometown’s mythologies. Rachel Seidman stewarded me into the Southern Oral History Program not once, but twice—first, as an undergraduate intern, where I was spellbound by the potentials of oral history, and years later, as a field scholar, where I remained mesmerized. Altha Cravey offered feedback on early forms of this project before there were words on the page and brought her dedication to social justice and spatial literacies to the work. During my freshman year, I took my first course in American studies with Tim Marr,
whom I have since come to know as one of the most enthusiastic champions of student scholarship in Chapel Hill. Dan Anderson has approached this work with a joyful curiosity that I aim always to emulate. Thank you all.

Other faculty and staff deserve special commendation here. In a meeting in her office my sophomore year, Marcie Ferris placed the seed of doctoral studies in my mind, and in part through her generosity, that seed sprouted. Anne Whisnant always worked with me as a colleague and friend, rather than a young graduate student, and from her, I learned to question any institutional structure that appears inviolable. Stewart Varner served as a committee member during my first years in graduate school, and I am grateful for his mentorship during that time.

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Through the eight years I was a student at Chapel Hill, there have been people who have always provided critical feedback and loving encouragement. I am so glad that I asked
Grace Tatter to be my freshman roommate. It has been a wonder to be Grace’s friend over the last decade and to witness our mutual interests in racial justice and education travel together. Samantha Luu has been a dear friend in everything from sixth grade frog dissection to fellowship applications; her devotion to racial equity in education and health care is deep within this work. To friends and colleagues who read drafts, took phone calls, answered tweets, and went to Linda’s after seminars, thank you. Jasmine Jackson-Irwin, Meredith Hamrick, Emily Myers, Jaycie Vos, Trista Porter, Meredith McCoy, Kimber Thomas, Danielle Dulken, Michaela Dwyer, Malina Chavez, Pam Lach, Jessica Kincaid, Elizabeth McCain, Anna Faison, Mairse Mazzocchi, and Blanche Brown are incredible women, and I am proud to have worked with them over the years in Chapel Hill.

Thank you to my family. I never supposed that my sisters—Caroline Fryar and Elizabeth Avalie—and I would ever all be students in Chapel Hill at the same time, but it happened! What a strange benediction to share as adults this place where we were born. My parents, James Taylor Fryar and Kathleen Gibson, have given me many gifts, but perhaps most relevant to thank them for here are our family’s deep roots in North Carolina and shared curiosity in all things common but unnerving. Annie Dillard Dog entered my life as I began work on this dissertation, and she has been a comically loyal companion in everything from early morning editing sessions to writing break hikes along the Potomac River. I met Eli McCrain my first day of college, right outside of Hinton James. Our partnership has been a wellspring of joy, knowledge, humor, and ethics. His dedication to his own studies steadied me through each stage of this process, and my memories of our time in Chapel Hill together grounds this work. How exactly shall I phrase it? My gratitude for his care for me and my work is prolific.
PREFACE

This primary form for this dissertation, in which I suggest potential readers experience it, is a documentary website, uncofthepeople.com. The text of this document can be read there with accompanying oral history clips, audio-visual materials, archival materials, and embedded footnotes. This preface is an essay that accompanies the documentary website form of this dissertation and contains multiple references to the digital aspects of this dissertation.

In my last year of undergraduate study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I participated in an oral history project interviewing white male alumni of the University, who in the mid-1960s led a movement to protect the right to free speech on campus. Their movement, organized around the goal of overturning what became known as the “Speaker Ban”—a law which forbade communists, self- or state-identified, from speaking on the campuses of North Carolina’s public universities—occurred in the years immediately after a heightened period of civil rights demonstrations and protests in Chapel Hill. Narrators explained to me and my colleagues at the Southern Oral History Program (SOHP) that conservative state legislators had designed the Speaker Ban to punish the University for its liberal approach to civil rights. The reputation of the institution had been damaged by the law, they explained, and the only way to reestablish its status as a progressive university would be to challenge the law and expose it as right-wing inanity.¹

¹ Interview with John E. Greenbacker by Charlotte Fryar and Alexa Lytle, 2 March 2013, N-0013 and Interview with Hugh Stevens by Charlotte Fryar, 11 April 2013, N-0018 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
The narrators’ characterization of the University as a beacon of liberalism in the South, distinctive for its racial tolerance, commitment to free expression, and the absence of anti-Black violence aligned with the major histories of the institution I read, but it did not mirror what I saw on campus, particularly after I returned for graduate school in the fall of 2014. That year, I witnessed the University’s administration, leaning on its progressive reputation, use the language of tolerance and civility to undermine a movement led by Black student organizers against anti-Black violence within the University’s culture and campus. As I discussed this contemporary movement with white peers and faculty members, many of whom believed the organizers did not understand the University’s liberal traditions, including the history of student activism around the Speaker Ban, I returned to a question still lingering from those interviews: what was the true relationship between the legacy of Black-led social movements in Chapel Hill and white students’ and administrators’ obsession with restoring and maintaining the University’s liberalism?

The idea for this dissertation began with the moral partition between the University’s reputed liberalism, its treatment of Black students and workers, and white students’ and administrators’ support for a form of institutional liberalism which permits, and even directs institutional racism. As I began to learn the long history of Black students’ and workers’ leadership of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill, I turned, at the direction of Black alumni I interviewed, to the physical landscape of the campus to understand how organizers made sense of their own legacy in place. With an increased comprehension of the spatial elements of these movements, I better understood my own spatial experience of Chapel Hill, which has always been predicated on the privileges I have as a white, straight, cis-gendered, able-bodied woman. I understand my experience within the campus landscape, an experience I share with so many
others, to be primarily directed by the persistent fact of the institution’s white supremacy, a cultural condition which the institution’s liberalism serves to mask. In this dissertation, I have sought to advance a history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, orienting these narratives within the landscape where they first were created, from McCorkle Place to South Campus. In doing so, I seek to remap the experience of the campus landscape for an audience of Chapel Hill citizens, approximately seventy-five percent of whom are white.²

James Baldwin famously explained in the New Yorker in 1962 that “whatever white people do not know about Negroes reveals, precisely and inexorably, what they do not know about themselves.”³ This dissertation is predicated on a similar explanation: because white Chapel Hill citizens do not know the history of Black freedom striving that suffuses the campus landscape, they do not know or will not recognize their own history of investment in the institution’s anti-Blackness. Sociologist and educator Robin DiAngelo explains that anti-Blackness is “rooted in a lack of historical knowledge and an inability or unwillingness to trace the effects of history into the present.”⁴ By tracing the history of Black student- and worker-led racial justice movements in Chapel Hill into the present, my goal in part is to impel white people to recognize how their investment in liberal narratives of racial tolerance, non-violence, and civility supports and maintains white supremacy. It is also my goal to provide potential actions for us, a collective of campus actors, to take towards reparative racial justice for past and present Black Chapel Hill citizens.


⁴ Robin DiAngelo, White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 94.
This essay is an account of my dissertation process in pursuit of these goals, highlighting the tensions between academic and public work, and scholarly evaluation and public assessment. This essay is also a reflection of my commitment to transparency and accessibility to my research processes. It operates within this digital space as a brief documentation of my methodological processes, which I hope can serve as a provisional step towards a future when the practices and values of public digital humanities and oral history are integrated without dilution into the structures of universities, particularly in regard to graduate education and standards for knowledge production. It also gives contextual attention to the sources upon which this dissertation relies and digital tools and platforms on which it is built.

**Oral History Methodology**

This dissertation utilizes an interdisciplinary methodology from both oral history and public digital humanities and is designed for an audience of former and future Chapel Hill citizens and campus organizers. It is a product of consultation with oral history narrators (twenty interviewees, all former or current students, faculty, and/or workers) and a digital praxis that aims to address the needs of its audience in its design, framework, and content. This methodology aims not only to interpret the histories of racial justice movements at the University, but also to facilitate narrators’ stated goals to communicate their experiences within past racial justice movements with future organizers and for future organizers to reclaim histories of resistance in Chapel Hill.

The methodology of this dissertation has been informed by the notion of a “usable past,” that is, the concept that histories can and ought to contribute to the creation of a collective consciousness, perhaps particularly when available institutional histories offer no “living value”
for the questions we struggle with in the present. Oral history provided the most useful and obvious methodology to counter ineffectual institutional histories, which largely serve to uphold white supremacy by protecting narratives of institutional liberalism. The oral history narrators for this project collectively created a counter-narrative to what the institution has termed “student activism,” histories that support a theme of racial progress through assimilation and community-building.

The institutional narratives of “student activism” can be found in the institution’s archives, which includes the dozens of archival collections housed in University Archives in Wilson Library, as well as hundreds of interviews with administrators and faculty that largely comprise the University History projects of the SOHP Interview Database. In these documents the histories of “student activism” are visible largely in materials and stories that illuminate administrative responses to Black-led movements. Because Black students and workers were overwhelmingly excluded from the University’s dominant culture, their stories were never included as a significant part of the University’s history, and thus were not documented in institutional archives. Before the addition of several essential collections donated or digitized in the last decade (and dozens of powerful oral histories conducted by other students with former campus organizers), one of the only places to look in institutional archives for information on Black student organizing was in a series of slim folders in several Chancellors’ papers, titled “Campus Disorder,” “Negro Students,” and “Student Discipline.” Anti-Blackness is, therefore,

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6 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

7 See Office of the Chancellor, J. Carlyle Sitterson; Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
one of the constitutive values the University enacts in institutional documentation of its own history.

The idea that oral history can supplement or contradict such hegemonic institutional histories is not new, but for this dissertation, the operation of oral history as a counter-narrative to institutional archives was a crucial element, not just of the development of a methodology, but for the continued development of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill. Despite the University’s erasure of Black experiences from institutional histories, Black students and workers continued to construct and share with each other an informal counter-history of Chapel Hill, which operated against a dominant narrative of the University’s reputed liberalism, and served as a model for future movements. The counter-history of resistance to institutional anti-Blackness in the late twentieth century had not been substantially recorded, documented, or archived, but nevertheless, it remained a part of continued efforts to build racial justice campaigns through everyday counter-storytelling, challenging the hegemony of institutional archives.

By conducting oral histories, I aimed to record, document, and archive a part of this counter-history, with a goal to democratize access to these dynamic histories of resistance to anti-Blackness. As I contacted potential interviewees, I described to them the framework and goals of a potential oral history interview, one of which was archiving their stories in the Southern Oral History Program Interview Database, which is part of the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library. I explained to interviewees that in this online institutional archive, current and future students could access their interviews, listen to their stories, and perhaps, even be motivated to organize for social change in Chapel Hill. In my explanation, I placed what oral historian Linda Shopes calls the “archival imperative” of oral history within my oral
history praxis: a merging of practice and theory that uses narrators’ personal experiences as a starting point for conversation to build a shared understanding of institutional oppression and resistance to those oppressions.\textsuperscript{8}

This practice lies somewhere between two traditions in oral history to view the interview either essentially as a document or as a text. The “archival imperative” is central to documentary oral history, which focuses on preserving the interview and recording “what happened.”\textsuperscript{9} In the textual oral history tradition, the words of interviewees and “the ways these words are deeply implicated in structures of meaning that refer outward to broader cultural constructions” are the focus of analysis.\textsuperscript{10} As Shopes and other oral historians have explained, there is no way to employ oral history methods without considering intersubjectivity or the fundamental experience of aurality, nor is there a way to co-construct an interview text without attention to its historical contexts. Most oral historians practice their method somewhere between these two traditions, and the ethical struggle between them remains the most consistently trodden ground in the field.\textsuperscript{11}

From my perspective in the interviews, I understood myself to be present not just as an interviewer, but as a representative stand-in for current and future students at the University. Oral historian and Chapel Hill organizer Della Pollock explains this situational fact and feeling,  


writing that “the interviewer is him/herself a symbolic presence, standing in for the other, unseen audiences and invoking a social compact: a tacit agreement that what is heard will be integrated into public memory and social knowledge in such a way that, directly or indirectly, it will make a material difference.”12 The shared implicit agreement that our interviews could “make a material difference” was emphasized by narrators’ agreement to participate in an oral history interview largely because of the “archival imperative” of our future conversations.13 I learned in initial phone calls and emails that narrators’ consent to be interviewed had little to do with their interest in the research project or the SOHP, and had almost everything to do with their wish to see their stories become part of the institutional archive, where, crucially, future students, faculty, and workers might access them. But the “archival imperative” of our conversations also presented a potential ethical problem: what would archiving these interviews in an institutional archive mean for the possible co-optation of Black students’ and workers’ stories by the institution? Would these interviews, within which some narrators clearly state their anger and hurt from the way they had been treated by the University, be used by the institution in a performance of its own anti-racism?

Several narrators considered these questions with me in our interviews. In December 2017, I shared the following exchange with Omololu Babatunde, an organizer in the movement for Hurston Hall in the mid-2010s:

Omololu Babatunde: “I don’t think people realize even when they are trying to get something out there, that the way that they’re doing it may still be in cooptation of a violent structure of how we are supposed to relate to each other.

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Charlotte Fryar: Yeah, and I want to—I mean, if there’s anything that I worry about or feel quaky about in this process it’s the archival process, because you do become part—this interview, if you want to sign the papers I have, it will become part of the Southern Historical Collection.

OB: Which I’m really—I want that to happen.

CF: Okay.

OB: Like, I’m someone that believes deeply in archives specifically because I know the power they hold...And it’s very painful, this process, but I want to participate in sharing my voice, because even though a lot of my name is attached to a lot of things, like in a lot of articles, they’ll be like, “Omololu said—,” and I didn’t say that, or I did say it, but that’s only a piece of what I said. So I like this idea of an interview, because I get to say in relationship to you and what you’re asking, investigating, a full sense of what happened, and I’m really done being chopped up and parsed out by white institutional spaces, and if I’m going to be in there, then I feel like I have to come to terms with the fact that without my consent, I have been placed in an archive of sorts. Without my consent, I have been held and ossified in a type of history.”

Omololu explains in this exchange the way in which good-intentioned people, in their attempts to document movements for social change, can still participate in the co-opting of narratives of Black students’ and workers’ resistance to the institution’s persistent anti-Blackness, such that histories of Black resistance to white supremacy become histories of racial progress. Institutional appropriation of Black student- and worker-created narratives suffuses the history of racial justice movements. Speaking to Scalawag in January 2019 about the toppling of the University's Confederate Monument, Taylor Webber-Fields, an organizer in the Hurston Hall movement, explained clearly the phenomenon of institutional plagiarizing:

“Carolina is going to co-opt that story as their story...A story of triumph over history. It’s going to come out that they were somehow supportive of it…I would encourage folks to record your

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14 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
history. UNC will have a whole other story, a whole other spin.”15 In our shared interviews and in public conversations with other writers, Omololu and Taylor describe the way in which the institution can appropriate the goals and strategies of student and worker-led movements to support institutional claims to ideological and racial diversity, in effect performing anti-racism without enacting it.

Incorporating these oral history interviews and narratives of resistance in an institutional archive presented a potential avenue through which the institution might co-opt their stories. In consultation with several narrators, I decided to move forward with processing interviews to archive with the SOHP, but the potential threat of institutional appropriation remains present, particularly as the University seeks a tidy end to the student organizing that led to the total removal of the Confederate Monument from campus in January 2019. While debating the issues presented by possible institutional appropriation, I sought a more precise methodological tradition to move this project from institutional power structures (that is, as much as I could manage for this dissertation as I remained an employee and student of the University).

Eventually I found a methodological home for this project in the concept of oral history practice as a “public or civic enterprise” and “a medium for public engagement with the past.”16 It has been and remains the goal of this work, in sharing these oral histories on this website and in the SOHP institutional archive, to make clear the relational connections between what Shopes calls the “‘I’ of the interview and the “we” of the rest of the world.” Thus, the oral history methodology employed in this dissertation seeks to share the interview “outward into the public


arena,” refusing to occlude the cultural processes that shaped the interview or the potentials for civic engagement with the counter-histories created by narrators. 

**Public Digital Humanities**

This approach to oral history as a civic-minded methodology found a partner in public digital humanities, the methodological intersection between “public work, digital work, and humanities work.” 

This definition is intentionally vague, suggesting that public digital humanities work is focused far less on the product outcome of scholarship, and more so on the possibilities of conversation that might arise as part of the research process. This focus on process, rather than product, is often incompatible with the academic purpose of scholarship, particularly dissertations, which are usually focused on the interpretative and methodological contributions scholars offer to the future and growth of their discipline. 

My interest in public digital humanities as a methodology for this dissertation has not solely been towards the production of research in new forms, but also the ways in which “the digital reshapes the representation, sharing, and discussion of knowledge.” Therefore, portions of this website, the archive, in particular, constitute knowledge re-production, and the digital platform itself exists as a way to distribute knowledge production and reproduction. The portions of this dissertation that constitute reproduction should not be evaluated as ancillary, and instead, should be assessed as

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equivalent to the written text, which, for the time being, continues to be the standard of scholarly knowledge production.

Public digital humanities offers a flexible methodology that will continue even after this dissertation’s scholarly evaluation. By “using the digital [the dissertation platform] to learn from the public [a]s a listening practice, one that yields more efficacious and engaged public humanities work,” this dissertation relies on public input to potentially contribute to movements for social change. Historian Sheila Brennan explains in her essay, “Public, First,” that “doing any type of public digital humanities work requires an intentional decision from the beginning of the project that identifies, invites in, and addresses audience needs in the design, as well as the approach and content, long before the outreach for a finished project begins.” I recognize the process of this project to be “more public” at certain stages of work than others, proving the difficulties inherent in attempting to make a public digital humanities project that reaches the necessary goals of demonstrating knowledge production required of dissertations within the standard timeline of graduate education. The tension between public input and the strain of time was particularly pronounced during the last stages of producing the website, during which I made innumerable design and organizational decisions that might have changed the interface dramatically if those decisions had been made in concert with multiple people.

There are significant limitations to the ways in which public digital humanities can build the capacity for users to organize for social change, and it is naive to suppose that public scholarship is always a public good. Because public digital humanities is an ever-evolving nexus

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of practices, it is important to say here what this dissertation is not. It is not community-engaged nor collaborative in its methodologies and products, which would rely on the flexibility of an open timeline, which dissertations are not conducive vehicles for. As Wendy Hsu explains in “Lessons from Public Humanities from the Civic Sphere,” the public digital humanities process “requires a much longer time scale, one characterized by what Rita Felski has described as ‘painstaking inquiry.’” But the methodology of this dissertation did allow in some ways “for the public to participate in the design and development of a project.”23 As I spoke with narrators, I asked them what tools, digital or otherwise, they might have utilized in the past or in the present to better understand the legacy of past racial justice movements. Narrators drew out charts and detailed their dream toolkit for organizing against white supremacy, ideas which informed the organizational scheme and outline for this website.

For example, in our March 2017 interview, Renee Alexander Craft, a former organizer in the Black Cultural Center movement and current faculty in the Department of Communication Studies remembered:

“So it’s [the University] like a maze you’re moving around, and you need a guide every once in a while to say, ‘Nope. We’ve been down that way. Don’t go there. That’s a dead end. We need to go this way, because we’ve never done that before.’” So, just both voices and help with institutional memory so you have a sense of closed and open doors and can move appropriately and effectively.”24

Craft’s description of the University as a maze informed the creation of the distribution of tags for organizations across archive and map posts, which show which organizations across the


24 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
campus have been consistently involved in movement-making across the decades. Though the use of these tags does not constitute a clear visualization of “closed and open doors” across the institution, it does provide users with a sense of which organizations have been continually active in racial justice movements at the University, operating as “open doors” for social change. This dissertation makes only limited claims to be a public digital humanities project, though the ideal continues to inform the process of this dissertation.

Sources

The primary sources this dissertation relies on reveal as much about what stories the University preserved as it does about stories the University silenced. University Archives, in particular those few collections which document student life and movement-making in Chapel Hill, have been invaluable resources. If not for the staff of University Archives’ commitment to sourcing and digitizing collections that document histories of Black student and worker-led organizing, this dissertation could not have been completed. For example, without access to the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History Records, donated, indexed, and digitized by January 2016, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to tell in any detail the history of the Black student-led movement to create the free-standing Stone Center. In these records—unlike those of the Chancellor at the time, Paul Hardin, which operate as a counter-text to the Stone Center records—researchers find the perspective of student leaders of the Black Cultural Center movement. But even despite the tremendous efforts from the staff of University Archives to increase access to collections related to student activism and the Black freedom
struggle, there remain major absences, particularly around the “everydayness” of Black student life.

Two major student publications—Black Ink and The Daily Tar Heel—provide some documentation of the lived experience of Black students and workers in Chapel Hill. Black Ink, as the publication of the Black Student Movement, supplied the most valuable primary source material for this dissertation to tell a history of Black freedom striving, focused on the everyday actions taken by Black students and workers to resist institutional white supremacy. For example, at the start of my research, I had not intended to look at the history of South Campus as the primary location for on-campus housing for Black students, because it did not pertain to the project’s focus on major social movements. But as I read through Black Ink, the issue of housing segregation on South Campus remained a constant through three decades of reporting by and for Black students, revealing the necessity to write about the University’s role in perpetuating housing segregation.

The Daily Tar Heel, the major student newspaper for over a century, also served as an indispensable resource, documenting the procedural facts regarding involvement of faculty and staff in student-led movements. However, The Daily Tar Heel consistently provides coverage of events relevant to the interests of white students, sometimes at the expense of reporting on events relevant to Black student life, and it has often served as a platform for white students and faculty to share their racist beliefs. For example, this bias towards white perspectives, many of them racist, is clear when comparing coverage of the move of Upendo Lounge within Chase Hall in The Daily Tar Heel and in Black Ink.

It is a mistake to assume that archival or newspaper records tell a complete story, which is why this dissertation relies on oral histories with former students, faculty, and workers to tell the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill. As described earlier in this essay, oral history interviews and later conversations with narrators profoundly shaped the organization, content, and purpose of this dissertation. Narrators, in explaining how their movements relied on the work of previous movements, referred constantly to the campus landscape to explain how they made sense of the legacy of their organizing. By the time I had completed just five interviews, I had learned to understand the campus landscape as racially bounded and movements happening within the campus landscape as spatially-oriented. This dissertation’s spatial organizational scheme is a product of these early oral history interviews. Narrators shaped the subject material of this dissertation more than any other source; I could not have told the history of the Fishbowl or Upendo Lounge without hearing stories from alumni who knew and cared for those spaces. Narrators proposed potential objectives for this project that I had not yet considered, and their ideas eventually shifted the purpose of this dissertation from a vague goal of documenting past racial justice movements towards a determined objective of compelling white people to understand the moral imperative of disinvesting from the University’s white supremacy.

Digital Platform and Tools

This website is built on a WordPress platform, which provides more flexibility for hosting and data storage than other common content management systems. I did not use the University’s WordPress web publishing service (web.unc.edu) for several reasons. First, I remain concerned about institutional co-optation of student narratives of resistance against the institution; building this site on a platform not owned by the University provided one way to
remove this work from institutional ownership claims (although there are multiple other ways in which the institution may claim ownership over the narratives this project advances). Second, I needed to ensure long-term access to the site, which was not guaranteed on the University’s web publishing service. And third, I also needed to use multiple WordPress plugins (a piece of software that can extend functionality or add new features to a WordPress site), which the University’s web publishing service does not allow for.

The archive visualization is built using one of these plugins, Content Views, which allows users to build a grid or list of WordPress posts that operates independent of the website theme. I did not use a scholarly digital archive platform (e.g. Omeka, Collective Access). These archive platforms, built for scholarly audiences, insist on a rigid exhibit structure which displays on what in general I perceive as a tedious interface. Using a WordPress plugin, rather than Omeka, required me to establish my own set of metadata standards and build my data set within the WordPress infrastructure, rather than simply importing it into a platform like Omeka. Content Views is simply a different way to display posts in WordPress; it does not offer the functionality to export post data in a useful way nor does it offer support for digital preservation workflow. These are changes that I have made independently of the archive platform, but ultimately, this extra work has been worth it to create an interface for the archive data that is simple, attractive, secure, and linked to other parts of the project.

The digital items and metadata for the archive are compiled from oral history interviews, archival collections, and digitized publications. For the oral histories I conducted, I transcribed and indexed the interviews, clipping segments from the interview audio file which described specific campus spaces, major events, significant individuals, or reflected on the spatial legacy of past movements. I approximated three to four clips for each interview, but some interviews are
of course, longer or more descriptive than others. During archival research, I took photographs (with my iPhone and unprofessional hands, so shadows and blurs are present) of documents relevant to my research questions and organized these documents by archival collection in Zotero, a reference management software. University Archives also scanned and digitized a number of folders in certain collections, creating images which I downloaded at a high resolution. Throughout the process of saving and organizing images of documents, I used a consistent naming schema.

At the end of my time in the archives, I duplicated the documents in another Zotero folder, and tagged them with numbers one through three to specify how well they supplied demonstrative evidence for certain arguments, illustrated through photographs or drawings certain spaces or individuals, or provided exceptional documentation of racial justice movements. Documents tagged with one were added into the final data list; documents tagged two were reviewed one more time for inclusion in the final data list; and documents tagged three were not incorporated. The decisions I made about what documents to include in this archive follow my own interests and biases, as well as my desire to reproduce and share documents which illustrate the remarkable legacy of Black student- and worker-led movements. There are thousands of documents which I photographed but did not include. The archive is not a comprehensive catalog of all pertinent documents and interviews; it is a collection curated by one person.

The metadata schema I established for the archive is based on, but not a duplicate of, the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, a basic set of fifteen elements for describing digital resources. I established this schema with an audience of former and future students in mind; certain elements of the Dublin Core Metadata Set, such as Language or Format, would be
obvious to users. Some of these more obvious elements are present in the data files for the archive, but not in the WordPress posts accessible to users. For certain data facets, such as Document Type, I developed a concise number of broad categories into which documents could be organized. Document and Excerpt Descriptions are sourced in part from the text of essays.

The Map is built using an ArcGIS Story Map, a simple web application that allows users to combine geographic data with narrative text, images, and audio-visual materials. I am able to access ArcGIS through University Library’s contract with ESRI, which permits users with a university login to use ArcGIS mapping tools. My use of ArcGIS, therefore, is bound to my connection to the University; I will lose access to my ArcGIS account in early 2020. Though I have concerns about the underlying software or platforms connected to the institution that this project might rely on, I chose to use ArcGIS largely because the alternatives for free mapping tools are so limited and restrictive. Story Maps provided the simplest interface with the greatest flexibility for data input and inclusion of text and images.

Location data for the map is compiled from transcripts of oral history interviews. I indexed each transcript for location data, compiling a list of approximately eighty campus and town spaces, including buildings, meeting rooms, bars, and private homes mentioned by narrators. The purpose of the map is to orient users within the racialized campus landscape. With this purpose in mind, I pared down the index list of locations to include approximately fifty buildings and spaces in Chapel Hill that relate across multiple scales and decades to the history of racial justice movements. The decisions I made to abridge the spatial history narrators’ provide is, of course, subjective, and users who might wish to learn more about spaces on the campus and in town for organizing and socializing can listen to oral histories with former students and workers to broaden their own spatial perspective of movement-making in Chapel
Hill. Like the archive, the metadata schema I established for the Map is based on the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set for geographic data.

While the reality of the map meets it intended, albeit finite, purpose to orient users within the racialized campus landscape, I am skeptical of the map as an interface for visualizing the division between white institutional power and Black student and worker power on the campus landscape. Specifically, I remain dubious of layering counter-narratives within the normative representation of cartographic space as bound and fixed, as this map currently does. In its current form, the map cannot differentiate between spaces that represent power relations across multiple scales, nor does it fully take up the task laid out by Kim Gallon in her call for Black Digital Humanities to “highlight how technology, employed in this underexamined context [Black studies or Black geographies] can further expose humanity as a racialized social construction.” The map represents a tension in a public digital methodology between building for our public(s) and building for our subjects; in its current (March 2019) iteration, the map may orient users within the racialized campus landscape, but does not illustrate the ways in which the campus is racially constructed, with Black students and workers forced beyond the University’s cultural boundaries. While the inclusion of narratives of resistance may be one way to destabilize the limiting representations of cartographic space in the map, I recognize it does not operate in a way for users to re-conceptualize the racially bounded space of the campus or imagine ways to subvert the subject of Black alterity.

26 Denis Wood, and John Fels, John Krygier, Rethinking the Power of Maps, (New York: Guilford Press. 2010).


Conclusion

This essay has been a brief accounting of my dissertation process and a way to practice my commitment to honesty regarding the strengths and flaws of the current (March 2019) form of *Reclaiming the University of the People*. As part of that commitment to honesty, I will conclude this essay by stating that I have known from the beginning of this process that there would inevitably be limitations on my ability to understand and interpret Black-led social movements at the University because I experience the institution from my perspective as a white woman. Throughout this process, my goal has been to compel white people see the work of eradicating anti-Blackness in the University’s culture as their responsibility, refusing to permit a passive form of support for past social movements as constitutive proof of white people’s disinvestment in institutional white supremacy. It is my hope that this dissertation can become a resource for organizers to challenge white supremacy in Chapel Hill and that other writers will build upon the research presented here to help guide the University towards a future of reparative racial justice.

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<td>Black Cultural Center</td>
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<td>BSM</td>
<td>Black Student Movement</td>
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<td>CHAT</td>
<td>Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth</td>
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<td>FLP</td>
<td>Freedom Legacy Project</td>
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<td>HKA</td>
<td>University of North Carolina Housekeepers Association</td>
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<td>OWEC</td>
<td>On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign</td>
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<td>RSSC</td>
<td>Real Silent Sam Coalition</td>
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<td>SAW</td>
<td>Student Action With Workers</td>
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<td>SEAC</td>
<td>Student Environmental Action Coalition</td>
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<td>SSHT</td>
<td>Students Seeking Historical Truth</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSOCC</td>
<td>Southern Student Organizing Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC</td>
<td>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</td>
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INTRODUCTION

At the celebration of the bicentennial of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on October 12th, 1993, CBS news anchor Charles Kuralt delivered an address to the crowd of state dignitaries and alumni gathered in Kenan Memorial Stadium. Speaking for all “Tar Heels born and Tar Heels bred” on the anniversary of the founding of the nation’s first public university, Kuralt asked the audience to consider “what is it that binds us to this place as no other?” Describing some of the most enduring and beautiful images of the campus, Kuralt explained that “it is not the well or the bell or the stone walls. Or the crisp October nights or the memory of dogwoods blooming,” but instead that “our love for this place is based on the fact that it is, as it was meant to be, the University of the people.” The epithet “the University of the people” has since been utilized by the institution to assert its commitment to operate on behalf of the public good for all citizens of North Carolina, perpetuating a widely-held view of the University as a public institution directed by a shared civic ethos. For many of the University’s alumni and the state’s citizens, the phrase “the University of the people” evokes the campus’s verdant beauty and liberal values, matched in spirit by the institution’s devotion to pursue *lux et libertas*—light and liberty—across the state and beyond.

Donelle Boose, a former racial justice organizer on the campus, saw the institution in a different way. “This beautiful place is built on some very ugly things,” she said. “What do I do

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Charles Kuralt’s speech at University Day, 12 October 1993 in the Charles Kuralt Collection, 1935-1997, #04882, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
with that? It is what it is, but what do I do about that? How do I function? What do I do differently?”  

This dissertation examines how Black students and workers engaged in movements for racial justice at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1951 to 2018 have answered Boose’s questions for themselves, and in answering them, challenged the University’s dominant cultural landscape of white supremacy—a landscape in conflict with the University’s mission to be a public university representative of and in service to the state of North Carolina. It is not the University’s perfunctory assertion that it operates as a public good for North Carolina’s citizenry, but instead the dynamic legacy of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill that have organized to oppose the University’s white supremacy that is responsible for any claim, however untrue, that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill presently operates as “the University of the people.” By examining how Black students and workers organized to move the University towards a yet-unrealized future as an institution that operates in accordance with its epithet, this dissertation orients future campus organizers towards a potential future for Chapel Hill as a place directed by a culture of reparative racial justice.

Creating a Cultural Landscape of White Supremacy

Whiteness is central to the development of space within the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Geographers Aubrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake explain that whiteness is “the normative, ordinary power to enjoy social privilege by controlling dominant values and

31 Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451 in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter, all cited interviews are in this collection and are abbreviated as such.

institutions and, in particular, by occupying space within a segregated social landscape.”

This dissertation employs Kobayashi and Peake’s definition of whiteness to understand how the University’s cultural landscape of white supremacy operates to sustain a racial hierarchy in which Black identities are excluded or limited. The University, as a predominantly white institution, is structurally invested in “protecting the privileges of whiteness by denying communities of color opportunities” for economic advancement and cultural power. The University’s whiteness is predicated on excluding Blackness. “The University of the people,” as it has been utilized by the University, has always meant the University of white people.

The defining feature of the University's cultural landscape is not just whiteness but white supremacy. In his book, The Racial Contract, philosopher Charles Mills argues that white supremacy, the “sociopolitical economic system of domination based on racial categories that benefits those defined and perceived as white,” is never acknowledged as “the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.” Therefore, to understand the past and present cultural landscape of the University, its white supremacy must be named. Doing so, education scholar Robin DiAngelo argues, “makes the system visible and shifts the locus of change onto white people, where it belongs. It also points us [white people] in the direction of

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the lifelong work that is uniquely ours, challenging our complicity with and investment in racism.”

My use of the term white supremacy to describe the University’s cultural landscape is extended to an audience of Chapel Hill citizens (seventy-three percent of whom are white) to help white people see the work of eradicating racism at the University as our obligation, instead of shifting responsibility, as this dissertation will show has been done historically, to Black students and workers. To support this goal, this dissertation makes visible how white people’s “possessive investment in whiteness” has built a dominant culture within which Black Chapel Hill citizens—including Black students, workers, faculty, and town residents—are excluded from the University’s cultural landscape. By citizen, I will always mean a member of a town or community, not a person in possession of legal citizenship. This includes permanent year-round residents of Chapel Hill as well as individuals who live in Chapel Hill only during the school year (e.g., undergraduate students). I do not capitalize white, designating it as a social and cultural construct which is used to assert racialized social groups as deviant or property. I do, however, capitalize Black to reference the name of a self-determined “racialized social group that shares a specific set of histories, cultural processes, and imagined and performed kinships.”

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The white supremacy of the University’s cultural landscape is determined by its racist institutional practices, which in turn, are shaped by the University’s dominant culture in a feedback loop. Geographer Richard Schein explains part of this loop in the introduction to *Landscape and Race in the United States*, writing that “racial processes take place and racial categories get made, in part, through cultural landscapes.” Relying on the theory of racial formation, which posits that race is a dynamic and fluid social construction, Schein uses the term “racialized landscape” to describe the evolving relationship of mutual production between cultural landscapes and racial formation through institutional processes and social categorization.  

This dissertation adopts Schien’s term “racialized landscape” to explain how the University’s cultural landscape serves to support its racist institutional processes and likewise, how its institutional processes contribute to the continued development of a white supremacist culture. We can therefore understand that the white supremacy of the University’s cultural landscape both produces and is produced by what geographer Daniel Trudeau calls the “territorialized politics of belonging,” an institutional process that has racially bound the campus landscape in ways that “enforce exclusion and discrimination.”

By considering the University’s multiple and layered landscapes, this dissertation recognizes that any landscape is “part of a process of cultural politics,” in which a landscape can be studied both as an object of analysis in itself and as a process of creating a shared institutional

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culture. To differentiate between these two methods of cultural landscape analysis, I use the terms “campus landscape” to describe the built environment—i.e., buildings, monuments, memorials, and other physical spaces—and “institutional landscape” to describe the processes at work in creating a shared culture of white supremacy within the institution. Together the campus landscape and the institutional landscape of the University coalesce to create its cultural landscape of white supremacy.

Examining the University’s institutional landscape within a wider study of its cultural landscape creates the conditions to consider the “routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies” which maintain white supremacy. Attention to the University’s institutional landscape also allows for necessary scrutiny to be applied to public assumptions about institutions such as the University, particularly their status as “the more enduring features of social life,” supposedly inviolable and impartial. By attending to both the campus landscape and the institutional landscape of the University, this dissertation examines how and in what ways white supremacy manifests itself within Chapel Hill and how Black students and workers have organized to challenge it.

**Black Freedom Striving In Chapel Hill Before 1951**

The majority of prior histories of the University celebrate the institution’s championing of liberalism, academic freedom, free speech, and progressive politics, rather than interrogating

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its foundation in white supremacy.48 John K. “Yonni” Chapman, scholar of the early Black
history of the University, explains that these previous histories, in their trivialization of the
legacy of racial justice movements, supply a harmful ideology which “bends our minds in ways
that conform to the persistent norms of white supremacy that still permeate our culture.”
Chapman argues that this distorted history has “two major failings with respect to racial justice
and a realistic understanding of black freedom and the university today. First, such histories have
suppressed the story of the University’s leading role in promoting slavery and white supremacy.”
Second, these histories fail “to examine African-American contributions to the university and the
impact of the black freedom struggle.”49 Historian Jeanne Theoharis explains what is at stake in
the maintenance of false or incomplete histories of racial justice movements in that they become
“a key linchpin in the idea of an almost postracial America…In this version…injustice is
aberrational and once revealed is eliminated in a country built to move past its mistakes.”50 By
diminishing the power and scope of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill under the dominant
narrative of the institution’s liberalism, the University has consistently abused its responsibilities
as a public institution of higher education.

This dissertation counters a portion of these inaccurate histories of Chapel Hill, beginning
with the desegregation of the University by Black students in 1951, and explains how Black
students and workers resisted the University’s racialized landscape by challenging its racist

48 Major histories of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that focus on these themes include William D.
Snider’s Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004; William S. Powell’s
The First State History: A Pictorial History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992; and Charles J.

49 John K. Chapman, Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960, (Ph.D.

50 Jeanne Theoharris, A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History,
(Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), xxi.
institutional processes. Although the history of the University prior to 1951 is not a focus of this dissertation, it provides essential historical context that future organizers would continue to reference as movements for justice have advanced. A short summary, referenced largely from Chapman’s dissertation, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, is provided here. In the first decades of the University’s history, the institution’s attorneys acquired dozens of enslaved persons as escheated property along with real estate, receiving a commission on the sale of humans, which they passed on to the treasurer of the University’s Board of Trustees. Enslaved persons constructed the University’s built landscape, building the first dormitory, library, academic buildings, and the campus’s iconic stone walls. Through the extraction of labor from freed but uncompensated or poorly compensated Black people post-Emancipation, the University continued to develop and maintain the campus.

Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Black citizens of Chapel Hill provided a majority of the University’s non-administrative labor, working as janitors, carpenters, cooks, housekeepers, and groundskeepers. Black people provided the capital and labor necessary to create, sustain, and strengthen the University for which the institution has paid no restitution.51

The University of North Carolina, as one of the premier colleges in the American South for elite white men, was a leader in the national collegiate movement to establish an academic rationale for white supremacy and the continued enslavement of Black people.52 Historian Craig Steven Wilder explains in his groundbreaking book, *Ebony and Ivory: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities*, that more than using Black people to “raise


buildings, maintain campuses, and enhance their institutional wealth,” American colleges and universities in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, “trained the personnel and cultivated the ideas that accelerated and legitimated the dispossession of Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans.” Following Emancipation, the University’s leadership and alumni led the white supremacist campaigns that suppressed Black freedom striving and laid the foundation for North Carolina’s Jim Crow society, which remained entrenched in Chapel Hill until at least the 1960s.

In the wake of Jim Crow’s ascendency, North Carolina became a leader in the New South movement, heralding a vision of progressive economic and social reforms in education, welfare, and labor that could transform the national image of the South from a rural retrograde society into a modern industrial region. As the fervor of social progressivism and industrialization took hold of North Carolina, the University became a crucial tool for implementing a new order of white southern liberalism, defined by “improving the quality of life for working-class southerners through unionism, improving race relations by…openly condemning white-on-black violence; pushing for more public funds for black schools; and greater interaction between the leaders of the black and white communities.” While the University received national commendations for its liberal approach to “race relations” through the 1920s, it continued to support and sustain the state’s Jim Crow social order which it had helped establish at the turn of the century. And as North Carolina expanded its progressive reputation through the 1930s, its

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flagship university, under the leadership of one of the South’s most famed white liberals, Frank Porter Graham, remained one of the most influential institutions in the South which supported and engaged in the systematic subjugation of Black people.55

Through the 1930s and 1940s, several Black North Carolinians, notably human rights activist Pauli Murray, attempted to enroll at the University, presenting the institution with the opportunity to live up to its liberal reputation and become the first white institution of higher education in the South to desegregate its student body. But the University refused Murray’s and her peers’ applications, confirming its allegiance to Jim Crow. In 1949, Black law students from Durham’s North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University), a group which eventually included Floyd McKissick, Harvey Beech, James Lassiter, and J. Kenneth Lee, filed a lawsuit seeking admission to the University’s School of Law. After the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Sweatt v. Painter, et. al. in 1950, the case wound its way through the courts, and in 1951, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in favor of the plaintiffs. Although the University appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, their request to hear the case was denied.56

McKissick, Beech, Lassiter, and Lee entered the University’s School of Law in the summer of 1951. The University admitted Edward Oscar Diggs to the Medical School that fall. Later when referring to Diggs’s enrollment, the University described itself as the first white university in the South to “voluntarily” admit a Black student, ignoring the centuries-long history of refusing the enrollment of Black and Native people.57 In 1954, following the Supreme Court’s


decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the University returned to court, ultimately failing in their effort to block undergraduate desegregation. In the fall of 1955, Ralph Fraiser, John Brandon, and LeRoy Fraiser became the University’s first Black undergraduate students, though none chose to finish their degree at Chapel Hill, in part because of the discrimination they faced while enrolled there. David Dansby became the first Black undergraduate student to graduate from the University in 1961, though he later reflected that during his time in Chapel Hill, he was regarded as “pretty much a pariah.”

Because the desegregation of the University had not been marked by violence as in other southern states, North Carolina’s white citizens largely commended the University for the civility and order with which the process of desegregation had been conducted. However, this process revealed the University’s commitment to “resist the dismantling of Jim Crow for as long as possible” in its refusal to use its power during the expanding civil rights movement to commit to racial justice. Although the state had developed by the 1950s a reputation as an “inspiring exception to southern racism” which was manifest in its flagship university, historian William Chafe explains in his landmark book, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, that in reality, “North Carolina’s progressive image existed side by side with social and economic facts that contradicted profoundly the state’s reputation.”

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For North Carolina’s public K-12 schools, the Pearsall Plan, a moderate policy framework for gradual desegregation, allowed the state to argue that its protracted and localized plan for desegregation was simply a way to reduce the potential for violence, rather than a modern policy mechanism used to stall the efforts of civil rights campaigns across the state. Likewise in higher education, the University was revered across the nation for its modern and non-violent approach to desegregation, supposedly marking the institution as one “free of the bigotry and close-mindedness associated with the Deep South.”61 But in fact, the University’s slow desegregation process, conducted through the courts and without regard to the wellbeing of the Black students who eventually enrolled, continued a now centuries-long process of the institutional exclusion of Black people from the intellectual and cultural life of the University.62 The University may have desegregated, but it has never used its power to fully integrate.63

**Challenging the Anti-Black Institution**

This dissertation begins with the history of Black students’ and workers’ resistance to white supremacy at the University after the institution’s legal desegregation, demonstrating how the University consistently sought to exclude Black identities and diminish any movement that challenged the University’s white supremacy. Activated by the knowledge of this history of the University as a site of enslavement and as an institution which produced and maintained the structures of Jim Crow, Black students and workers protested the ways in which the University

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reflects and enacts systemic racial inequities within its institutional and campus landscapes. Operating from this same historical context, this dissertation demonstrates that the University is not just a predominantly white institution with a difficult racial history, but an institution defined by its continued practices of anti-Blackness.⁶⁴

I use the term “anti-Blackness” to describe the ways in which cultural processes that “allow a social recognition of the humanness of others systematically excludes this possibility” for Black people.⁶⁵ Robin DiAngelo explains that “most fundamentally, anti-blackness comes from deep guilt about what we [white people] have done and continue to do; the unbearable knowledge of our complicity with the profound torture of black people from past to present.”⁶⁶ In this way, we can understand contemporary anti-Blackness as directed by the legacy of past anti-Blackness. Within the institution, anti-Blackness is reproduced in two main ways: “the extraction of labor from the Black body without engaging the body as a laborer, but as property, and the mechanisms (e.g., stereotypical narratives) that institutions use to police, control, imprison, and kill.”⁶⁷ Black students and workers opposed both of these institutional processes in their own movement-making, organizing against the ways in which the institution expects and extracts the labor of Black Chapel Hill citizens, while simultaneously operating to control and contain their identities and bodies.

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To oppose the University’s anti-Blackness, Black students and workers constructed a counter-history of Chapel Hill which operated against the dominant narrative of the University’s reputed liberalism, and served as a model for their movements as they organized towards both a refiguring of the campus landscape and the institutional landscape. This counter-history, crafted over decades and in segments by campus organizers, challenged the hegemonic cultural landscape of white supremacy. As education scholar Carmen Montecinos writes, “the use of a master narrative to represent a group is bound to provide a very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American…and so on…”68 To negate the master narrative of the institution’s liberalism, student organizers engaged in counter-storytelling, which critical race theorists Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yasso explain is a “tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege.”69

Through counter-storytelling, students and workers connected with the legacies of their predecessors within the context of their own movements, while also “challeng[ing] the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center.”70 This dissertation, therefore, not only documents a history of racial justice movements beginning in the mid-twentieth century, but also interprets how successive campus movements used the historical legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill to inspire and guide their own vision for a broadly transformed campus and institution. My use of the term Black freedom striving, rather than Black freedom struggle, is informed by


Chapman’s definition of the term as “any effort to survive or resist the ways that white supremacy limits and denies African-Americans,” encompassing “the actions of individuals, as well as collective struggle” and highlighting the power of everyday and individual acts of resistance to white supremacy.71

Although the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill is significant, there is no constant progressive trajectory of increasing justice for Black citizens. But the movements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have succeeded in transforming certain spaces within the campus landscape. As historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage explains of these efforts to transform the campus, “the civic landscape of the South looks the way it does because of both persistent inequality etched and erected in public spaces and dogged efforts to revise the same terrain.”72 Thus, the University’s campus landscape now displays a stark division between white institutional power and Black student and worker power, the latter as physical representations of the achievements of past racial justice campus movements.

“Diversity Without Justice”

Despite some changes, the broader landscape of the University remains dominated by white supremacy, a persistent cultural condition supported by institutional processes which provide the foundation for the University’s current cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice,” which Yonni Chapman argues, “ensures the power of the past to continue shaping the future.” The institution has never committed to active anti-racist policies, while speciously


stating its dedication to diversity, non-discrimination, and inclusion. Under the power of the “diversity without justice” paradigm, progress towards a total refiguring of the institutional landscape of the University in pursuit of racial justice is unstable, as is the physical landscape of spaces within the campus that support Black Chapel Hill citizens.\footnote{John K. Chapman, \textit{Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960}, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.}

Operating within this paradigm, the University celebrates the racial diversity of the student body while simultaneously containing and eliminating spaces created by Black students and workers, and ignoring and destroying movements which contest the institution’s anti-Blackness. This dissertation adopts feminist theorist Sara Ahmed’s understanding of institutional diversity, in which “diversity becomes about changing perceptions of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of organizations.”\footnote{Sara Ahmed, \textit{On Being Included: Racism and Diversity In Institutional Life}, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 34.} Therefore, the institution’s endorsement of the racial diversity of the student body is solely for the benefit of whiteness, an example of what the critical legal scholar Derrick Bell termed “interest convergence,” in which white institutions only support desegregation if there is value for institutions in doing so.\footnote{Derrick A. Bell, “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” \textit{Harvard Law Review} \textbf{93}, No. 3 (Jan 1980): 518-34.} Through the logic of interest convergence, the University uses the rhetoric of diversity to reproduce white supremacy, rather than seeking to truly alter the whiteness of the institution.

By refusing the institutional narrative of increasing racial justice for Black Chapel Hill citizens, ostensibly to be seen in the diversity of the institution, this dissertation situates the racialized landscape of the University not within the past, but in the present, highlighting the
inconsistency between the institution’s support for diversity and the white supremacy of the University’s culture and campus. This inconsistency is evident in institutional enrollment data: in 2018, the percentage of Black students enrolled at the University fell to 7.8 percent, marking the smallest percentage of Black students at the University in thirty years. This small minority now walks to class surrounded by glossy banners hanging from the marble columns of administrative buildings that display primarily non-white faces, images supplied by the institution to support their superficial claims to be a racially diverse institution.

The seventy-year history of racial justice movements that this dissertation examines is supported largely by oral history interviews with former students, workers, and faculty who engaged in or supported these movements. These individuals attended, taught at, or worked for the University over a half century and gave their interviews to the Southern Oral History Program. To these narrators, this dissertation is deeply indebted. Individually and collectively, narrators describe an institution defined by a pervasive culture of historical denial of the subtle forms of racism that have persisted at the University long after its desegregation and relate the history of the movements that organized for the University’s transformation towards racial justice. Narrators explain the ways in which the University operates to contain the dissemination of histories of Black freedom striving and repress attempts by students and workers to build on the progress of their predecessors. But narrators also reveal the ways that they and their peers successfully utilized the legacies of prior movements to continue to organize towards the creation and contestation of specific campus spaces, and eventually, towards the reclamation of the University as a place directed by the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill. In

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sharing their efforts to create, contest, and reclaim space in Chapel Hill, narrators challenged the culture of historical denial at the University, constructing their own narratives to oppose the dominant public perspective of the University as a beacon of liberalism.77

**Spatial Organizing Frameworks: Creation, Contestation, Reclamation**

Over the past two centuries, Black workers created a series of Black spaces on campus to support their communities within and against the cultural landscape of white supremacy, and beginning with their arrival on campus in 1951, Black students engaged in the same practice.78 In their oral histories, narrators together chart a series of these Black-created spaces, what education scholar Frank Michael Muñoz calls “counter-spaces, formal and informal, social and academic spaces, created and inhabited by marginalized individuals…critical sites of resistance to insidious racism on college campuses.”79 These counter-spaces, as theorized by Daniel Solórzano, Miguel Ceja, and Tara Yosso, serve as “sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained.”80 The stories of these Black-created counter-spaces are a crucial portion of the counter-history that Black students and workers crafted to oppose the public perception of the University as merely a predominantly white institution, rather than a white supremacist

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institution. bell hooks in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* explains the way in which Black people within white institutions inevitably create Black spaces: “Black folks…who enter universities of privileged cultural settings willing to surrender every vestige of who we were before we were there…must create spaces within the culture of domination if we are to survive whole, our souls intact. Our very presence is a disruption.”

These spaces constitute what critical race theorists Gloria Ladson-Billings and Jamel Donnor describe as the “liminal space of alterity,” that is, in the context of Chapel Hill, a space at the edges of a white supremacist culture within which Black identities and experiences are created, and from outside of which white people maintain a boundary defined by white supremacy. But these counter-spaces of Black alterity were not solely sites of subjugation, but rather, they engendered experiences through which Black students and workers could move “beyond the normative boundary of the conception of Self/Other” and begin to challenge the ways in which white supremacy controlled the cultural landscape of Chapel Hill. Space creation for Black students and workers thus became the first major organizing approach utilized by campus organizers to challenge the institution’s white supremacy.

Although Black students and workers continued to organize to create informal Black counter-spaces, they eventually sought to directly contest spaces which symbolized and enacted racist institutional processes across the broader cultural landscape. Within this organizing framework, the built landscape, understood by Black students and workers as a reflection of the white supremacy of the cultural landscape, became a specific focus as students organized against

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81 bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 147.

particular spaces across the campus. Organizers targeted monuments, public art, and building names as manifest representations of the institutional white supremacy they sought to expel from Chapel Hill. As the principal organizing framework for racial justice movements shifted from space creation to space contestation, increasing numbers (but never a predominance) of white students began to assist movements previously supported largely or only by Black Chapel Hill citizens. The transition between these two organizing frameworks—creation and contestation—does not follow a linear timeline, but in general, earlier Black student- and worker-led movements focused on space creation, which later gave way to multiracial movements which contested how the University represented and enacted white supremacy across the campus.

A new organizing framework, beginning in the late 1990s, then subsiding, and now intensifying since 2015, has emerged as a synthesis of both space creation and contestation. As Black students and workers have enacted this third organizing approach of reclamation, they are conceptualizing the University’s racialized landscape not as a selection of spaces to create or contest but as a place to be reclaimed from the institution itself, utilizing the long legacy of past racial justice movements to do so. Reclamation, as an organizing framework, can be understood as an assertion of ownership of the University as a place and all relational notions the sense of that place holds, separate from the creation of counter-spaces, which does not necessarily infer the effect of the institution’s history on the capacity for ownership, and also distinct from the contestation of spaces of white supremacy, which does not involve the assertion of ownership. The University’s white supremacy operates to prevent Black ownership in all forms—ownership of the self, place, and history. Thus, reclamation, as a radical approach to place-based action, simultaneously orient “collective attention towards both what is not here in the present moment
and towards a means of getting there in the future.”

The initiation of this new organizing approach has necessitated the development of a new sense of place for Black students and workers within the University.

The primary sense of place for Black people at the University as described by many oral history narrators prior to this shift squares with geographer Katherine McKittrick’s definition of a Black sense of place as “not a steady, focused, and homogeneous way of seeing and being in place, but rather a set of changing and differential perspectives that are illustrative of legacies of normalized racial violence that calcify, but do not guarantee, the denigration of Black geographies and their inhabitants.” In this formulation, Black people within the place of the University experience the legacies of past and present anti-Black violence, which, in the case of Chapel Hill, does undertake to denigrate Black geographies (e.g., Black student and worker created counter-spaces) and their inhabitants. Therefore, the formation of a new sense of place, oriented around the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, is imperative, if students and workers are to clearly view themselves as actors against the oppressive anti-Black conditions of the institution.

As organizers have developed this understanding of the University as a place determined by the legacy of Black freedom striving, they have begun to assert ownership over the University, reclaiming the history and place of the University as their own. McKittrick explains that “Black diaspora struggles can also be read, then, as geographic contests over discourses of

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Ownership. Ownership of the body, individual and community voices, bus seats, women, ‘Africa,’ feminism, history, homes, record labels, money, cars, these are all recurring positionalities…these positionalities and struggles over the meaning of place add a geographic dimension to the practices of black reclamation.”

Ownership, then, has become a crucial aspect of the discourse of place-making which calls for Black students and workers to reclaim the University in co-ownership with all campus actors. Reclamation is the organizing approach which positions organizers as emplaced actors in Chapel Hill, able to fully utilize the legacy of the past to reclaim their right to self- and place-possession from the anti-Black institution. To reclaim in this way—by asserting ownership over the place of the University—repels the white supremacy of the institution, and provides a critical direction forward for future campus organizers, which this dissertation seeks to outline and examine for future implementation.

**Chapter Summaries**

The histories of Black freedom striving at the University are permeated by the histories of the multiple places that the University surrounds and occupies, significantly the Town of Chapel Hill. Although this dissertation is focused primarily on Black student-led movements for racial justice, the damaged relationship between the University and the Black communities within the Town of Chapel Hill and Orange County requires attention to movements led by the University’s Black workers, many of whom were and are citizens of Orange County and descendants of enslaved persons in Chapel Hill. In examining Black student- and Black worker-led movements, this dissertation insists on the importance of “the gordian knot that ties race to class and civil rights to workers’ rights” and the entwined nature of women’s activism and Black freedom.

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striving. However, it does not pretend to be comprehensive in its discussion of the entanglements of racial justice movements with those for gender equality and labor activism.

Although non-Black Chapel Hill citizens of color have challenged racist institutional processes of exclusion at the University, contributing significantly to Chapel Hill’s powerful histories of resistance, this dissertation is primarily concerned with movements led by Black students and workers. This attention to the experiences of Black students and workers at Chapel Hill is intended not to ignore the experiences of other citizens of color, but to examine how one racialized social group has challenged white supremacy and pointed potential ways forward for other racialized social groups to seek justice in Chapel Hill. This dissertation also holds a specific focus on organizing led by undergraduate and graduate students and low-wage workers, and discusses only minimally the activism of faculty and administrative staff. This focus necessarily limits the scope of this study, and therefore, not all contested spaces on the campus are discussed.

In order to describe both the histories of specific campus movements and the ways in which students and workers utilized the legacies of their predecessors, this dissertation is organized by the specific spaces within the campus landscape that organizers sought to create, contest, or reclaim. Divided into nine chapters that advance in a loose chronology from the desegregation of the University by Black students in 1951 to the recent toppling of the University’s Confederate Monument in 2018, this dissertation explores spaces of resistance that

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87 Other spaces that might be considered in future studies include the Student Body Statue, the Campus Y, the Latinx Education Research Hub in Peabody Hall, the American Indian Center in Abernathy Hall, among other spaces.
stretch the length of the campus landscape, from its southernmost dormitories to its northernmost academic quad.\textsuperscript{88} The varied length of these chapters should not suggest a difference in significance of the usable pasts of certain spaces over others, but rather that the histories of certain spaces—particularly Black student created spaces—have not been thoroughly documented in primary source materials.

This dissertation begins by exploring the legacy of the \textit{South Campus} residence community as the predominant location for on-campus housing for Black students and the significance of the conversations surrounding that legacy in the creation of future Black counter-spaces. \textit{Lenoir Hall and Manning Hall} considers the 1969 Foodworkers’ Strikes led by Black female low-wage workers and supported by members of the Black Student Movement, and describes efforts to commemorate the strikes in the early 2000s, examining the strikes as a movement that sought to both contest and create spaces. \textit{Upendo Lounge} and \textit{The Fishbowl} detail the histories of both spaces as social and academic hubs crucial to the creation of a community for Black students from the 1970s through the 1990s, explaining the way in which the University oversaw their eventual abatement as spaces essential to the social lives of Black students. \textit{The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History} explores the student movement that created a free-standing Black Cultural Center, the relationship between the space now and the legacy of that movement, and the role of the Stone Center as an institutional academic counter-space for Black students.

\textsuperscript{88} Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the monument that most University community members know as “Silent Sam,” as the Confederate Monument. In referring to the monument by its colloquial nickname, “Silent Sam,” individuals aid in the continuance of a sexist stereotype of women. A legend states that the Confederate soldier atop the monument, which carries no powder box, will only shoot off his gun if a woman who is a virgin walks by. Without a powder box, the soldier will theoretically never shoot. The nickname detracts from the significance of the fact that the nation’s first public university had on its campus a monument to student veterans who fought against the United States and for the continuance of the enslavement of Black people.
Beginning in the 1990s, the organizing approach of racial justice movements began to shift from efforts to primarily create Black counter-spaces towards campaigns that sought to contest spaces of white supremacy and/or reclaim them from the University. *Cheek-Clark Building* tells the history of the housekeepers movement of the 1990s from its origins to a successful settlement with the University, with attention to the housekeepers’ bold excavation of the University’s history with enslavement and demands for symbolic and material reparations from the institution. It also explores housekeepers’ approach to using histories of Black resistance to reclaim space on the campus. *Saunders Hall* tells the stories of the various student organizations which formed to contest the academic building named to honor William L. Saunders, the former Grand Dragon of the state’s Ku Klux Klan, charting how each successive student organization used the work of prior organizations to demand that the University remove Saunders’s name from the building, and eventually, reclaim the space from the institution. *McCorkle Place* explores the memorial dialectic between two monuments—the Unsung Founders Memorial and the University’s Confederate Monument—and the student movements that identified that dialectic. It explains how student movements organized for a transformation of the space of McCorkle Place towards the reclamation of the University as a place owned by all campus actors. A final chapter explores potential future policies for enacting a paradigm shift towards reparative justice at the University, including the establishment of a truth commission, the creation of a counter-campus, and the delivery of material reparations to past and present Black Chapel Hill citizens.

Together, the history of campus movements for racial justice across these spaces demonstrates that Black students and workers are responsible for any claim that the University may make that it operates as “the University of the people.” But despite some successes in
challenging white supremacy, the University’s cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice” continues to operate to ensure that white supremacy dominates the University’s cultural landscape. Even as Black students and workers have successfully created and contested specific spaces within the campus, loss or dilution of the power of other spaces of resistance has occurred. The predominance of the institution’s white supremacy remains largely static, even as opposition to the University’s practices of anti-Blackness within its cultural landscape has recently increased. While under this cultural paradigm, movement towards an expansive refiguring of the University into a place of reparative justice can be slow, if not regressive. But without recognition of the history of the Black students and workers who have continued to envision and guide racial justice movements, we, as historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explains, “undermine our will to address the inequalities and injustices that surround us now.”


CHAPTER ONE: SOUTH CAMPUS

One campus myth freshmen at the University learn their first semester is that the South Campus dormitories are modeled after prison housing. This fallacy highlights a general precept that the concrete high-rises of Hinton James, Morrison, Ehringhaus, and Craige Residence Halls in the South Campus residence community are, at best, not the most desirable campus housing, and at worst, a space of containment and punishment. In 1980, less than thirty years after the desegregation of the University by Black students, the University’s student newspaper *The Daily Tar Heel*, reported on a housing pattern they described as a “common knowledge” issue: “For the most part, blacks live on South Campus and whites on North Campus…People can juggle figures as long as they want but that is the simple fact. In many of the dormitories on North Campus that average 200-300 people, only three to five of those are black—and that estimate is probably too optimistic. The vast majority of Blacks who attend Carolina live on South Campus in three high-rise dormitories—Hinton James, Morrison, and Ehringhaus.” Black students who attended the University from the 1970s through the 2000s reported living in the South Campus dorms for most of their years in Chapel Hill. “We all stayed in E-house [Ehringhaus],” John Bradley, class of 1994, explained. “You never really realize until you get here that ninety percent of the African-American students are all on South Campus. So it’s like, wow, we’re all in one place. I

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didn’t even know there was a North Campus. I just thought North Campus was where the academic buildings were...You never really realize that difference, but there’s a racial segregation there as well.”

South Campus was an informal counter-space, created by Black students, beginning in the early 1970s, to serve as powerful community space for themselves within and against the white supremacy of the University. This chapter argues that South Campus, as a Black student-created counter-space, developed to challenge certain anti-Black institutional processes, setting a crucial precedent for other future acts of space creation; at the same time, the University operated to control Black students within the space through overt discrimination and neglect. Because South Campus operated continually through at least the 2000s as a counter-space for Black students, it is an essential space to examine, and its history illustrates a number of crucial themes—the enactment of anti-Black institutional policies, white students’ complicity in maintaining white supremacy, and the ways in which the University operates to maintain segregation while appearing to desegregate—that emerge throughout the history of racial justice movements at the University.

**Creating a Geography of Exclusion**

Segregation in campus housing had been a practice at the University long before *The Daily Tar Heel* identified the North-South Campus housing pattern. When the first Black students desegregated the University in the summer of 1951 following a lawsuit from the NAACP, the four male law students lived on an entirely separate floor of Steele Building, at the time a residence hall on North Campus. One of these former students, Floyd McKissick, described the experience of living in segregated campus housing his first semester: “I stayed in a

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93 Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.
cubicle where the other Black students were supposed to stay and did stay sometimes during the day time. Many of them [other Black students] didn’t want to at night. So I was alone there. And they [white students] would come in and they’d put a Black snake in my drawer, a dead Black snake, in my drawer on my shirts. They would put water on your clothes...You’d get a letter every day from the Ku Klux Klan telling you that you’re in the wrong place and what’s going to happen to you. You had a lot of threats.”

Black students were not only segregated by housing, but also were unable to attend athletic events by order from the University’s Chancellor, Robert House, who claimed that football games were “social occasions,” implying that Black and white students should not spend time together socially. McKissick resisted these Jim Crow restrictions throughout his career, including his time in Chapel Hill, notably jumping into the campus pool to “integrate” one of the University’s most prized athletic spaces for its white students. The institution’s establishment of explicit housing and social segregation in the 1950s established what geography scholar David Sibley termed a “geography of exclusion” for the institution’s Black students who lived within the campus landscape. By segregating Black students from the social and living spaces of white students, the institution used “negative interaction and nuanced forms of social pressure” to

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94 Interview with Floyd McKissick by Bruce Kalk, 31 May 1989, L-0040.


96 Interview with Floyd McKissick by Bruce Kalk, 31 May 1989, L-0040.

contain Black identities as separate from the whiteness of the cultural landscape, setting a precedent that the institution would continue to follow in housing future Black students.98

The ensuing generation of Black students at the University shared McKissick and his peers’ experiences with the racist policies that produced the institution’s “geography of exclusion.”99 Many Black students who attended the University in the 1960s described either being assigned no roommate at all for their freshman year or having their assigned white roommate move out upon learning they were to live with a Black person. For many Black students, already socially isolated on the campus, the experience of living alone exacerbated that feeling of isolation.100 Karen Parker, the first Black woman to graduate from the University, chose to live with a white student her senior year, 1964 to 1965. “If you were a white and a Black living together,” she recalled, “they sent your parents a form, like, ‘My daughter, Karen Parker, Negro, has permission to room with Louise Ambrosiano, white,’ and her parents got the opposite ones. Our parents signed it.”101

In the fall of her senior year, Parker discovered that her roommate had been punished by the University for choosing to live with her Black peer, by losing one of the few social privileges permitted for female students. “They punished her,” Parker described. “She was not permitted to


100 Interview with James Womack by Charlotte Eure, 2 March 2016, N-0048.

101 Black male students who wished to live with white students reported receiving the same form. See: Interview with James Womack by Charlotte Eure, 2 March 2016, N-0048; Interview with John Sellars by Alex Ford, 8 November 2015 N-0042; Interview with Larry Poe by Devin Holman, 3 March 2016, N-0041.
go off campus.”102 These experiences demonstrate how the University operated to control the conditions under which Black and white female students could participate in the social life of the University before the end of in loco parentis policies in 1969.103 But Black female students, including Parker, faced what activist Frances Beal called “double jeopardy,” in which they experienced not just racism and sexism together, but an amplification of both types of discrimination from the institution.104

Parker, along with David Dansby and a few anti-racist white students, participated in Chapel Hill’s civil rights movement, which was led primarily by Black Chapel Hill students from Lincoln High School. Parker was jailed twice for her demonstrations of civil disobedience, and threatened by the University’s Dean of Women, Katherine Carmichael, for her unfeminine acts of resistance to anti-Blackness. The main objective of the movement in Chapel Hill from 1960 to 1964 was to desegregate the town’s private establishments, but largely because the University refused to use its power in the town to expand Black civil rights, Chapel Hill was not legally desegregated until the passage of the federal Civil Rights Act.105 Thus, although the University was no longer explicitly quarantining Black students to a separate floor or dormitory,

102 Interview with Karen Parker by Kadejah Murray, 3 March 2016, N-0046.

103 Interview with Sharon Rose Powell by Pamela Dean, 20 June 1989, L-0041.


their policies in regards to housing and the Black Chapel Hill community produced the same segregating effects for the first generations of the University’s Black students.106

By instituting exclusionary policies for Black students through the 1950s and 1960s, the University ensured that it would be almost two decades (1969) after the legal desegregation of the institution before the number of Black undergraduates on campus reached one hundred—only one percent of the total undergraduate population, though Black citizens at that time constituted twenty-five percent of North Carolina’s population.107 After 1951, as the University tried and failed to obstruct its own desegregation, administrators utilized the institution’s outsized political power in the state to enact a series of policies that would have the effect of discouraging an influx of Black graduate students at the University. Administrators, particularly University Vice President William D. Carmichael, worked with the state legislature to strengthen graduate programs at North Carolina College to provide greater incentive for Black students to enroll at a Black college instead of attempting to enroll at the University. The commitment to “program duplication”—creating the same academic programs at the state’s Black college and white University—helped considerably to slow the process of desegregation at the University and relieve institutional fears that the University would be “flooded” and “inundated” by Black students.108


Establishing the South Campus Housing Pattern

South Campus, an area now delineated from the North Campus as the landscape between Kenan Memorial Stadium and the Dean Smith Student Activities Center (better known as the Dean Dome), experienced a construction boom through the 1960s as several high-rise dormitories were constructed to house the growing numbers of incoming students. The new dorms would be known as the South Campus residence community, though that entire area of the campus encompassing dorms and other buildings was known to students as South Campus. The terms for the residence community and this area of campus were and are interchangeable. Craige and Ehringhaus dormitories were completed in 1962. Craige Residence Hall was built to house graduate students, though undergraduates also lived there. Although it was constructed at the same time as the other three dormitories, it did not follow the same housing pattern as Hinton James, Ehringhaus, and Morrison until the 1980s, when it became a majority-undergraduate dormitory.


“Hinton James is unique in the negative sense,” The Daily Tar Heel wrote in 1973. “A place seemingly miles from Franklin St., [Hinton] James is huge, impersonal, and prison-like...Of the approximately 1,000 students who live in [Hinton] James, half are male, and half are female...about 450 residents are black, an increase of about 200 over last year.”

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Most white students did not consider the South Campus dorms to be a favorable location to live. Contributing to white students’ preference for North Campus was the fact that the South Campus dorms were further away from the main campus, the rooms were smaller, and the number of Black students housed there was greater. A student who lived on North Campus

109 Craige Residence Hall was built to house graduate students, though undergraduates also lived there. Although it was constructed at the same time as the other three dormitories, it did not follow the same housing pattern as Hinton James, Ehringhaus, and Morrison until the 1980s, when it became a majority-undergraduate dormitory.


expressed this widespread white view of South Campus, asking *The Daily Tar Heel* in 1974, “[Hinton] James? There are a lot of weird people down there aren’t there? A lot of blacks?” But for Black students, the South Campus dorms had several positive attributes. South Campus was close to the main social gathering space for Black students, Upendo Lounge, and most importantly, it was where they continued to find one another’s company. As a result, by as early as 1973, Hinton James had firmly established “a reputation for housing blacks.” Because of this reputation, the dorm also earned several derogatory nicknames, including “the Ghetto,” “Congo Towers,” and “the back door to the southern part of heaven.” The prior description in *The Daily Tar Heel* of the South Campus dorms as “prison-like” and the myth that the dorms are modeled on prison housing takes on a particularly damaging resonance considering that these dorms housed a large number of Black students, the group that the institution most sought to control and police.

Despite gaining a reputation as Black dorms, Hinton James and the other South Campus dorms were never majority Black residence halls. In fact, the South Campus dorms were, by the early 1970s, the most racially integrated space on the campus, both because the student body remained overwhelming white and because the number of Black students living in the South Campus dorms was so high compared to other residence communities. Although only thirty-five percent of Hinton James’s residents were Black in 1974, the dorm housed the largest number of Black students compared to other dorms. That year, Black students made up 6.1 percent of the

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114 Letter from Hinton James Residence Hall Staff to Residents, July 1975 the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40124, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
total student body, with 853 Black undergraduate students enrolled.\footnote{This percentage includes graduate and professional students, as well as undergraduate students.; Enrollment Statistics, 1974-1975 in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40301, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.} Housing administrator Colin Ruston explained the ratio between the numbers of Black students enrolled and the numbers of Black students living on South Campus to the University Student Television campus news show, \textit{Campus Profile}, stating “there is integration to a great extent anywhere there are black kids on campus.”\footnote{“Race Relations on Campus: A Special Campus Profile Presentation,” \textit{Campus Profile}, Episode 77, UNC Student Television, 14 November 1988, <http://www.uncstv.com/shows/campus-profile-episode-77>.} But regardless of the actual numbers of Black students living on South Campus, white students and administrators regarded the dorms as a site of Black self-segregation.\footnote{Amy Brnen, “Dorm racial situations considered,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 13 October 1983, 4.}

This view on the housing pattern of South Campus as determined by Black students’ choices willfully ignored the reality that white students continued to self-segregate in both the North Campus dorms and off-campus, often after living their freshman years in the more integrated South Campus dorms. Because the University’s guarantee for on-campus housing for freshman pushed the majority of upper-class students into off-campus housing, it is clear that white students were not totally motivated by race in their decision to move from South Campus.\footnote{Tony Mace, “Freshman housing requirement raises annual ‘axe’ over students,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 27 February 1978, 1.} But regardless of white students’ motivations, this policy and practice meant that while Black students living on South Campus beyond their freshman year often spent multiple years living in an integrated housing space, white students usually spent less than one year living in integrated housing and some spent no time at all in integrated dormitories. “Morrison, Craige, 115

\footnote{“Race Relations on Campus: A Special Campus Profile Presentation,” \textit{Campus Profile}, Episode 77, UNC Student Television, 14 November 1988, <http://www.uncstv.com/shows/campus-profile-episode-77>.}
Hinton James and Ehringhaus can boast large multi-racial populations,” *The Daily Tar Heel* explained in 1983. “As a result, any white or black student on South campus lives in a more diverse, more challenging environment.” And while many Black students understood that integrated housing would not solve the issue of racial discrimination on the campus, most students engaged with the issue believed, as Black Greek Council president Terry Allen stated in 1983, that “integration may be a start.”

This housing pattern between North and South Campus also continued through an intentional lack of engagement with the issue from the University’s housing administrators. In 1965, at the same time that the South Campus dorms were constructed and the number of enrolled Black students was beginning to increase by more than single digits each year, the University permitted the construction of a privately-owned off-campus dormitory, which allowed students the opportunity to live off campus their freshman year if they did not want to be assigned to a University-owned dorm. Granville Towers was first designed to house only graduate women, though it soon expanded to house undergraduate women in the East Tower and men in the West Tower. Therefore, Granville Towers, the first off-campus dormitory, provided alternative housing for many students who would otherwise be assigned to live on South Campus and were willing to pay more than twice the on-campus rate per semester for their room and board. The economic barrier for Black or white students moving to Granville

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121 I suspect that Granville served initially as housing for primarily white women in order to operate as a protective space for them against the perceived sexual threat of Black men, who would presumably live in the same dormitories on South Campus, but I did not find primary source evidence to support this claim.

Towers was considerable and contributed to Granville’s almost immediate attainment of its enduring status as a dormitory for wealthy white students.

By October 1966, the second semester that Granville was open to undergraduates, the University chapter of the NAACP charged the privately-owned dormitory with “discriminating against Negroes.” Although the charges brought by the NAACP—moving white students out of rooms where they were assigned to live with Black students—were similar to experiences shared by Black students who lived in University-owned dorms, the University was not directly responsible for the charges of discrimination in Granville. Housing Director James Wadsworth, responding to charges of discrimination in University-owned dorms, explained that “there’s definitely no discrimination in the housing office of the University…If anything, we lean over backwards to give proper accommodations to non-whites.” Concerning questions about Granville and other off-campus housing options, Wadsworth explained, “We don’t handle that.”

Although many white students surely chose to live in Granville Towers for its convenient location and amenities, the reputation created by Granville Towers as a white haven provided a choice for white students who did not want to live with their Black peers. By allowing for the construction of a privately-owned dormitory which kept out Black students through discrimination, expense, and reputation, the University supported the choice for white students to self-segregate, while later questioning Black students who chose to live together on South Campus.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the framing of the housing segregation issue as one determined solely by student choice allowed the University to disengage from the issue entirely.

123 Ernest Robl, “NAACP Accuses Granville of Bias,” The Daily Tar Heel, 4 October 1966, 1.

James Condie, the director of University Housing in 1980, told The Daily Tar Heel that “as long people were living, for the most part, where they wanted to, the split of Blacks and whites was not a problem.” Through the 1980s, University Housing held firm in their stance that the housing pattern which continued to place a majority of Black students on South Campus and permitted white students to segregate themselves on the North Campus and off-campus was simply a result of students’ housing choices, and not, at least in part, a result of administrators’ refusal to intervene in the issue. This approach followed a national movement towards a passive practice of “benign neglect” in racial matters, spearheaded in the 1970s by former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an advisor to Presidents Johnson and Nixon. For the University, “benign neglect” of racial issues, including the pressing matter of housing segregation, was a necessary policy in order to ostensibly better focus on issues that benefited all students, instead of considering what barriers prevented Black students from moving to North Campus.

University administrators employed the same tactic with regard to Black student recruitment and enrollment. The University System (consolidated in 1972 to include the state’s sixteen four-year public colleges and universities) struggled through the 1970s and into the mid-1980s to meet federal mandates from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare’s Office for Civil Rights (HEW-OCR) to comply with desegregation policies, which would require, among many policy mandates, that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill


increase Black student enrollment to 10.6 percent of the student body. Despite reports that the University was working to enact federal policy with “good faith efforts,” they failed to meet the mandate by the 1986 deadline by almost 3 percent.128 After witnessing the University’s negation of mediation towards a desegregation plan, Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray, who had been refused admittance to the University in 1938 and forty years later, been offered an honorary doctorate at the University for her contributions to human rights, refused to receive the conciliatory honorary degree. “To accept the honor from the university at this point,” she explained, “would be interpreted as acquiescence in its unwillingness to comply with the federal government’s demand for more thoroughgoing desegregation.”129

Administrators ignored student claims made in depositions to HEW-OCR that Black freshman were assigned disproportionately to South Campus, and instead, continued to argue that students’ choices alone had established the pattern of housing segregation.130 By arguing that the creation of the housing pattern had been directed by student choice, the University effectively switched from their early endorsement of de jure segregation, supported by explicitly discriminatory housing policies, to de facto segregation, which “emphasizes the power of individual action and decision-making and veils the deep influences of policy and politics.”131


130 Deposition of Rosalind R. Fuse for HEW-OCR Investigation, 1979 in the Department of University Housing of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40129, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The University similarly updated its admissions policies in the mid-1960s towards “color-blind admissions,” which both “enhanced the University’s reputation as a liberal institution willing to make changes in the name of equality,” and “crippled the efforts of activists committed to increasing black student enrollment.”\(^\text{132}\) The University’s use of the rhetoric of choice, non-discrimination, and color-blindness echoed the national movement through the 1970s and 1980s, led by white political and social elites, towards slow if not totally static, desegregation efforts.

By embracing these coded and non-racialized terms, the University, along with dozens of other white institutions, could state their support for desegregation without committing to policies that would lead to integration. Through the 1990s in the local Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools, for example, the rhetoric of diversity and colorblind universalism created the conditions for white parents in Chapel Hill (many of them faculty and administrators at the University) to engage in opportunity hoarding on behalf their white children, maintaining the status quo of racial inequity in the towns’ public schools, desegregated in name only.\(^\text{133}\) Likewise, the University’s adoption of a false \textit{de facto} logic through the promotion of the rhetoric of student choice allowed them “render invisible the policies” that left the spaces for white self-segregation on the North Campus unquestioned and threw into suspicion the community that Black students had built for themselves on the South Campus.\(^\text{134}\) This intentional lack of engagement through acceptance of the myth of \textit{de facto} segregation deepened the divide between white and Black


students over housing and supported the incomplete narrative of Black self-segregation on the South Campus.

“If I had to live on North Campus, I wouldn’t go here.”

Through reporting in *The Daily Tar Heel*, Black students explained that they continued to live on South Campus because they wanted to “stay with friends on South Campus.” Some Black students liked that the South Campus dormitories were arranged by suite style, rather than by floor, thereby decreasing the number of individuals one might interact with and “confin[ing] the interaction” with racist white students. Antoine Foxworth told the newspaper in 1983 that “I applied for all south campus dorms because I wanted to segregate myself. I saw the numbers of whites on north campus and the ratio scared me. I thought I wouldn’t be able to relate to people there.” *Black Ink*, the publication of the major organization for Black students, the Black Student Movement, supported a community-based explanation of the pattern, writing that “Blacks discovered that they liked the halls in which they first experienced the University, so they decided to stay there.” In 1991, Miessa Stowe told *The Daily Tar Heel* plainly, “If I had to live on North Campus, I wouldn’t go here.” The same year, University Housing reported that sixty-seven percent of Black students lived in one of the four South Campus dormitories. Only


fifteen percent of Black students lived in dorms located north of South Road, which The Daily Tar Heel termed “the Mason-Dixon line of UNC.”¹³⁹

Black students explained their dislike of North Campus for a number of reasons. Some had encountered racial discrimination while living on North Campus, while others simply felt uncomfortable there, believing that they were not wanted in that part of the campus. It is also likely that as Black students learned the history of the University’s campus as a site of enslavement, they did not wish to live in the older North Campus dormitories that had been constructed using the labor of enslaved Black men. Former vice chancellor of University Affairs Harold Wallace explained the desire to not live on North Campus as a matter of tradition. Black students, Wallace said, “could not claim that their elders had lived in the North Campus residence halls which have long and nostalgic histories only for some white students.”¹⁴⁰

With all of these explanations placed into context with housing data from the 1980s and 1990s, it is clear that South Campus was not a site of isolated segregation working against the interests of Black students, but rather a space for the social community of Black students. South Campus became the first informal social counter-space on the campus, crucial for Black students in that it “afforded African American students with space, outside of the classroom confines, to vent their frustrations and get to know others who shared their experiences of microaggressions and/or overt discrimination,” and served as a space in which to simply socialize with other Black students.¹⁴¹ The explanation for the housing pattern that identified South Campus as a location of


Black self-segregation ignored this important status of South Campus as a counter-space for Black students.

For most white students, there was little benefit to them to engage with the issue of housing segregation. By refusing to question their own motivations for self-segregation, white students made what scholar George Lipsitz termed “a possessive investment in whiteness.” By not questioning the fact of segregation, white students continued to populate the centrally-located and much larger dormitories on North Campus, an obvious advantage to them made by investing in the perpetuation of housing segregation.\textsuperscript{142} Only a few white students publicly engaged with this issue, and many championed a solution that would randomly assign Black students to the North Campus dorms where some dorms housed less than three Black students for every three hundred white students. This proposal, besides demonstrating disdain for the autonomy of Black people, also disregarded the reality that Black students preferred South Campus because of the social support they found there.

Through the 1980s, a few progressively-minded white students argued against the idea of randomly assigning Black students to the North Campus dormitories as the only apparent solution to the issue of housing segregation. “North Campus has nothing comparable to the Upendo Lounge,” senior Anna Giattina wrote in \textit{The Daily Tar Heel} in 1983. “It has a limited number of black residence assistants and black students, and it lacks the ‘built-in’ support system, which has established itself over the years on South Campus.” Instead, Giattina argued, if the University wanted to have more integrated housing, University Housing should “create a comprehensive plan for increasing the recruitment of minority RAs and housing staff,” and

“create a black support system on North Campus as an incentive for blacks to move to North Campus.”\textsuperscript{143} While Giattina’s policy proposals acknowledged that Black students needed spaces in which to find support from one another, her policies, which received much support from progressive white students interested in the issues of integration and diversity, required little effort on the part of white students to question their own motivations for self-segregation.

Other proposed, supposedly progressive policies forwarded by white students and faculty refused to challenge the entrenched institutional culture of white supremacy, in which Black students were continually excluded from the dominant culture of the campus. Giattina, along with other supporters through the 1980s and 1990s, argued for various iterations of “a pilot project on interracial/cross cultural housing…with equal numbers of blacks and whites,” though this kind of interracial interaction was already happening within the integrated South Campus dorms.\textsuperscript{144} In the early 1990s, individual Black students took up the task of “integrating” North Campus, inspiring the student-operated Residence Hall Association (RHA) to create a “Racial Diversity Program” in 1992. Through the program, a small number of rooms were reserved in North Campus dormitories for Black students, and through the mid-1990s the number of Black students living on North Campus increased, though minimally. Despite some shifts in Black student housing towards North Campus, data through the late 1990s confirms that the South Campus dorms remained where the majority of Black students lived. Conversation regarding the reassignment of Black students to the North Campus dorms continued through the early 2000s, after the RHA quietly stopped its Racial Diversity Program.\textsuperscript{145}


\textsuperscript{144} Anna Giattina, “Potential for integration exists,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 21 September 1983, 6.

Each of these proposed and implemented policies supported the institution’s “diversity without justice” cultural paradigm, in that they would have the effect of increasing the racial diversity of all housing spaces across the campus, but only by controlling Black students by directing them where they were to live.146 A political cartoon in *The Daily Tar Heel* in 1983 summarizes the anti-Blackness at work in these policies: “Q. What could be worse for UNC Blacks than continued segregation on South Campus? A. ‘Integration’—and isolation on North Campus.”147 Although the University continued to regard the North-South Campus housing pattern within a *de facto* segregation logic, even supposedly progressive policies, offered by well-meaning white students and designed to increase diversity in housing, were steeped in the white supremacy of the institution, in which Black students could be transported across the campus, cargo in the institution’s pursuit of the appearance of diversity.

**Legacy of South Campus**

A 2002 article from *The Daily Tar Heel* reported that “roughly half of UNC's black students live on campus while less than a quarter of white students live on campus,” citing “socioeconomic issues and an active campus community” as the key reasons for this discrepancy.148 Although the article complicates the dominant historical narrative of South Campus as a site of Black self-segregation, it does little to support a narrative of South Campus a crucial site for the building of a community of Black students. That the University never sought to challenge this perception as false confirms how the institution operates to repress narratives

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147 Sherrod Banks, “Integrating some truth into the ‘DTH’,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 4 December 1984, 8.

which record histories of Black resistance. Although University Housing no longer publishes public data about the racial demographics of each residence community, students who attended the University in the last decade describe the same pattern of Black students choosing to live on South Campus, but not necessarily in the same high-rise dorms. “When I was going to school, it wasn’t in law that Black students live in South Campus,” Omololu Babatunde, a member of the class of 2015, remembered, “but all the Black students I knew lived in Rams Head [Village]. No one lived off campus— some did, but most lived in Rams, which is right up the street from HoJo [Hinton James].”

The continued legacy of the North-South Campus housing pattern, as defined by the segregation of Black students rather than the creation of a Black student community, supplies a clear illustration for how the institution acts or, in this case, purposefully does not act, to exclude Black students from the campus culture and landscape to protect the white supremacy of the institution. But despite the misunderstood legacy of South Campus as a site of Black self-segregation, the significance of the social community built by Black students on South Campus demonstrates the power in the creation of counter-spaces. South Campus existed as one of the first counter-spaces created for and by Black students, representing the “institutionalized mechanisms that serve[d] as a protective force for these students and allow[ed] them to maintain a strong racial sense of self.”

By supporting the false causality between housing choices made by Black students and campus segregation at the center of de facto segregation, the University supported a public narrative of Black self-segregation, instituting a method of neglect and

149 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0449.

prejudice it would repeat throughout the history of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill.

South Campus, as a site for counter-space creation, challenges to white supremacy, and anti-Black institutional policies introduces many of the issues crucial to understanding how Black students sought to transform the cultural landscape of the University.
CHAPTER TWO: LENOIR HALL AND MANNING HALL

In the fall of 2005, the Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth (CHAT), a student organization devoted to using the history of the University to support ongoing struggles for justice in Chapel Hill, circulated a petition. “We ask that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill establish a definite process…to commemorate the historic 1969 Lenoir Cafeteria workers’ strike, by, among other things, placing a plaque honoring the workers, their leaders, and their allies on the front entrance of Lenoir Hall,” they wrote to Chancellor James Moeser.151 Members of CHAT were not the first students activated by the legacy of the Foodworkers’ Strikes, a movement to improve the working conditions of the mostly Black female workers who cooked, cleaned, and served food to students and faculty in the University’s dining halls. Chris Baumann, a white student and member of the class of 1993, was inspired to organize with Black low-wage housekeeping staff in the 1990s after seeing a documentary about the Foodworkers’ Strikes, Women on the Front Lines. “We were starting to have meetings at the old Black Cultural Center and at one of the meetings, [the housekeepers] came and they showed the video of the 1969 cafeteria workers strike,” Baumann remembered. “And for me, I had always admired the

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151 Petition from CHAT to Chancellor James Moeser regarding Lenoir plaque in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
civil rights movement and you hoped if you had been there in the [19]60s, you would have done the right thing. And so, for me, it was put up or shut up. Now’s your chance.”

The stories of Baumann’s political activation and CHAT’s petition drive demonstrate how the Foodworkers’ Strikes of 1969 have operated as a crucial narrative in counter-storytelling for generations of organizers at the University, who have drawn on the legacy of the Foodworkers’ Strikes as a model for forceful protest against institutionalized injustice. Two buildings on campus, where most of the actions of the movement occurred, illustrate how Black workers, supported by Black and white students, contested a space of oppressive institutional power and created their own space of community resistance. Lenoir Hall, the central dining facility on the North Campus, became the site of dramatic conflict between students, administrators, foodworkers, and police, demonstrating for future campus movements how to transform a space by contesting the ways in which white supremacy operated within it. Manning Hall, the former home of the School of Law located behind Lenoir Hall, became the space that foodworkers and their student and faculty supporters created to gather together during the strikes. This chapter argues that the history of Lenoir and Manning Halls during the Foodworkers’ Strikes reveal how the University ignores Black students’ and workers’ contestations of institutional power structures and eliminates spaces of community created by Black students and workers, two methods of reproducing the institution’s anti-Blackness. The history of these spaces also reveals how the Foodworkers’ Strikes became such a potent story for future racial justice movements, providing a dynamic, successful model of how to challenge the University’s white supremacy.

152 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
The First Strike

Oppressive employment conditions for the foodworkers and a series of layoffs in the Pine Room, the dining area on the bottom floor of Lenoir Hall, catalyzed movement towards a strike in 1968. While Lenoir Hall was and remains the central dining hall on the campus, foodworkers also worked in Chase Dining Hall, located on South Campus, and the Monogram Club, a private dining facility located in the current Jackson Hall on North Campus. Elizabeth Brooks, who worked in the Pine Room and became one of the leaders in the strikes, reported in a 1974 interview that during this time, management across the dining halls and in particular, Director of University Food Services, George Prillaman, cut workers’ paychecks, created inefficient work schedules, and refused to give raises or promotions to Black workers. “He would stand in the back of the room and he would just watch over us,” Brooks described. “He made us feel like we were being watched at all times...He made us feel like we were just a like a bunch of slaves.”

As their organizing got off the ground, foodworkers sought the support of students and faculty. In October 1968, foodworkers presented to Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson a list of grievances, including receiving below-minimum wage pay, being forced to work split shifts (which required them to spend time on campus without pay), and working under white supervisors who treated them with discriminatory attitudes. The foodworkers formed this list of grievances with the help of Preston Dobbins, Reggie Hawkins, Jack McLean, and Eric Clay, all members of the Black Student Movement (BSM), the student organization which became the strongest ally for the foodworkers. In November 1967, Black students at the University

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153 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
154 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
created the BSM by voting to shutter the campus chapter of the NAACP, considered by Preston Dobbins, the BSM’s new president, to be too “antique” to effectively support the needs of Black students and workers.155

The BSM was a part of a national social movement led by Black students at both white and Black colleges and universities across the country from the late 1960s into the early 1970s. Martha Biondi, in her history of this movement explains that organizations like the BSM, “challenged fundament tenets of university life,” insisting that “public universities should reflect and serve the people of their communities.”156 Drawing on the rhetoric and political analysis from the rising national Black Power movement, the BSM, from its very beginning, connected the movement for Black student rights with Black workers rights. And as the BSM became more involved in the foodworkers’ movement, the organization kept their focus on the workers and the Black community of Chapel Hill, arguing for self-determination for Black workers at the University. Ashley Davis, a graduate of 1972 and member of the BSM, explained this focus and argument clearly: “Our role was to support and give assistance [to the foodworkers] and it was that from the beginning to the end. Support and assistance.”157

In December 1968, the Black Student Movement also issued a list of demands to the administration, prominently including the need for better working conditions, pay, and treatment for Black non-academic employees. Other demands included the establishment of and support for a Department of Afro-American Studies, the recruitment of Black faculty, and that the

155 Interview with Preston Dobbins by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, 4 December 1974, E-0063.
157 Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.
University use its power to alleviate issues in the Black community of Chapel Hill related to housing and public sanitation (all of which remain ongoing issues at the University). While ignoring the requests for meetings from workers, Chancellor Sitterson, after six weeks, provided a patronizing response to the BSM’s demands, asserting that the “University cannot, in policy or practice, provide unique treatment for any single race, color or creed; to do so would be a step backward.” Sitterson’s response exemplified a strategy that the institution would continue to employ with Black students and workers who disputed the anti-Black institutional processes through which the University operated. Because the BSM highlighted racial difference rather than ignoring it, the University’s administrators marked the BSM as a delinquent organization, antithetical to the inherent liberalism of the institution, which in turn, the BSM argued was a facade that served only to protect institutional white supremacy.

Although administrators had made false promises to workers in the past regarding improved working conditions, a core group of seven foodworkers—Mary Smith, Elizabeth Brooks, Esther Jeffries, Elsie Davis, Sarah Parker, Verlie Moore, and Amy Lyons—asked for one more meeting. In early February 1969, administrators agreed to meet with the foodworkers again to discuss potential solutions to payroll issues, but at the meeting’s conclusion, administrators once again proposed no real changes either to pay or to working conditions. “We had lost all confidence in them,” Brooks described. “We had just gotten to a point where we

158 Black Student Demands in the Black Student Movement of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40400, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

159 Chancellor Sitterson Response to Black Student Demands in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Joseph Carlyle Sitterson Records #40022, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

160 J. Derek Williams, “‘It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore:' Foodworkers' Strike at Chapel Hill, Spring 1969,” (Master’s Thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 79; Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.
didn't trust any of them. Because we caught them all in lies. None of them had told us anything that they had really followed through with.” On Friday, February 21st, Prillaman commanded Brooks to do a job that was not part of her regular duties, speaking to her in a demeaning way. “I told him that it made no difference to me, because it wasn’t slavery time anymore and regardless of what he told me, I still had a choice,” she explained. “I could do it, or I didn't have to. So this was something that added to the strike.”

On Sunday evening, two days later, Elizabeth Brooks and Mary Smith led a group of foodworkers in the Pine Room on strike. Foodworkers set up and prepared their counters as usual, but when their supervisor opened the doors of Lenoir Hall to let in students, the foodworkers sat down at the dining tables, refusing to respond to their supervisors, who attempted to cajole the workers into resuming their posts. Elizabeth Brooks recounted that their supervisor “looked at us and he said, ‘What on the world is going on,’ and so somebody said, ‘We are on strike’….it almost frightened him to death.” In their decision to go on strike, the foodworkers directly challenged a central anti-Black belief through which the University operated: “the Black is not a relational being but is always-already property…whether or not an individual owns them.” By refusing to be treated as fungible bodies in service to the institution, the foodworkers opposed the institutional processes which denied them their humanity and thus, their right to a living wage.

161 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
162 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
On Monday morning, approximately one hundred foodworkers were absent from their posts in the dining halls in Lenoir Hall, Chase Hall, and the Monogram Club. Only Lenoir Hall remained open, though the BSM worked in shifts to block the food service lines to slow down use of the cafeteria. Through the remainder of February, the foodworkers and their supporters rallied, holding speaking events outside Lenoir Hall and garnering the support of students, faculty, and community members. “We had high school students, that came over and had rallies. We had also college students, from other colleges to come over and have rallies and to speak at rallies for us,” Brooks described of the outside support.165 Although a handful of workers, intimidated by Prillaman’s threats of mass firings, crossed the picket line and returned to work, support for the striking workers’ cause continued to grow, particularly among liberal-leaning white students. Beginning in March, members of the Campus Y, the New University Conference, and the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), three white student organizations, began to stage “stall-ins” in the service line of Lenoir Hall.166

**Contesting White Supremacy in Lenoir Hall, Creating A Counter-Space in Manning Hall**

White students, overall, did not support the strike, not just because it disrupted their dining routine but because it fundamentally disputed white claims on the cultural landscape. On March 4th, several white students aggressively broke through the SSOC stall-in and a fight erupted. One of the SSOC Boycotters emptied ammonia in one part of the dining room and another needed fifteen stitches after being hit on the head with a sugar dispenser.167

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165 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
166 Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.
Approximately fifty members of the BSM, fifty white supporters, and twenty-five Black Chapel Hill non-student citizens entered Lenoir Hall during the fight and began to overturn chairs and tables, and the University’s administrators dispatched riot-equipped Chapel Hill police to empty and close Lenoir Hall. In this demonstration, considered by many participants to be the pinnacle of the first strike, protestors directly contested the space of Lenoir Hall and the ways in which it represented the institutional power structures which denied the foodworkers their humanity by treating them as property, from which labor could be extracted. By attacking the institution’s anti-Blackness designated by Lenoir Hall, the demonstrators advanced the method of contesting space on the campus, which would become a crucial organizing approach for future students.

At the beginning of the strike in February, members of the BSM reserved Manning Hall as a general meeting place for the strikers and their supporters. Black students and workers transformed Manning Hall into a space of respite from the picket lines and security from the police and other antagonistic groups. It served until its forced closing as a social counter-space for the protestors, which would “counter the hegemony of racist and other oppressive ideologies and practices of the institution and its members.” In the front lobby of the building, the foodworkers’ organized a “soul food cafeteria,” serving fried chicken and french fries to the boycotters of the dining halls in exchange for contributions to the strike. “By running the

168 J. Derek Williams, “‘It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore:’ Foodworkers' Strike at Chapel Hill, Spring 1969,” (Master’s Thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 115-117; Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974.


cafe,” said Ashley Davis, “they made enough money that we were able to pay every worker $35 a week,” which made up about half of the foodworkers’ lost weekly wages.\(^{171}\) The BSM also created a donation fund that served as an additional source of income for the striking workers.\(^{172}\)

Following the closing of Lenoir Hall, foodworkers and their supporters met in Manning Hall with their new attorneys, Julius Chambers (an early Black graduate of the University’s School of Law and Adam Stein, who encouraged them to form a union. The UNC Non-Academic Employees Union formed on March 5th, with a formal series of requests: a minimum wage of $1.80 per hour, time-and-a-half pay for overtime work, and the appointment of a Black supervisor.\(^{173}\) In Manning Hall, Black workers and students created more than a headquarters for their movement, building a space which operated, though only temporarily, as one of the first gathering spaces on the campus for a community of Black workers and students. Although it has been somewhat diminished in remembrances of the first strike, it is crucial in constructing a history of the Foodworkers’ Strikes and the longer history of Black freedom striving on the campus to understand how Manning Hall operated as an essential counter-space for Black workers and students to validate each other in their cause.

Because of the BSM’s involvement in the strike, University officials and other public administrators were more concerned, following the closing of Lenoir Hall, about student disruptions and demonstrations than the grievances of their employees. At nearby Duke University in Durham, fifty Black students had taken over the administration building in early

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\(^{171}\) Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.

\(^{172}\) Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.

\(^{173}\) J. Derek Williams, “‘It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore’: Foodworkers’ Strike at Chapel Hill, Spring 1969,” (Master’s Thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 120.
February, and efforts led by state police to oust the students led to a melee of tear gas and police violence against the students. When North Carolina Governor Bob Scott intervened in the Chapel Hill strike on March 6th by calling for the deployment of the National Guard to Durham (in case they were needed to quell any violence that might erupt in Chapel Hill), he and other University officials were likely considering the events at Duke and the potential need to subdue any demonstrations of direct action led by Black students.¹⁷⁴ To ostensibly keep order on the campus and to reopen Lenoir Hall for breakfast, five squads of state Highway Patrolmen, ordered in by Scott and dressed in riot gear, lined the north and south entrances to Lenoir Hall, while picketing continued. This dramatic escalation of police presence fragmented the University community, inciting division between students, faculty, and staff as they sided either with the protestors or with the University’s administration.¹⁷⁵

With student support of the strike so significant and visible, the public perception of the strike was not of a movement for better treatment and pay for Black low-wage workers but a violent display of Black student protest.¹⁷⁶ Still fearful that the University of North Carolina would become the next site for a student take-over of the campus like those at Duke University that February or Columbia University in 1968, Governor Scott ordered the arrests of any students who refused to vacate Manning Hall. Campus police evacuated eight students before storming the building and shuttering its life as a counter-space for Black students and workers. In an


¹⁷⁶ Strike Chronology and Conclusion, compiled by Buck Goldstein, in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40124, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
address to students the following day, Sitterson, acting on a view of himself as a liberal leader of a progressive institution, praised Black students for their “dignified manner” in the evacuation of Manning Hall, lecturing them on the need for civility over disruption in future discourse. The closing of Manning Hall on March 13th as the headquarters for the Black workers and students was a representative example of the University’s willful elimination of Black-created spaces on the campus for the sake of maintaining liberal order, though the legacy of Manning Hall as a critical counter-space against the institution’s anti-Blackness would serve as a precedent for future Black students in creating their own counter-spaces. 177

The University’s administration, particularly the University System President Bill Friday and Chancellor Sitterson, were eager to end the strike as soon as possible after the dramatic show of police intimidation, and they began working with the foodworkers’ union and their legal representation towards a settlement. The first strike officially ended on March 21, 1969 after the University, working with Governor Bob Scott, agreed to pay $180,000 in back pay and raise hourly wages from $1.60 to $1.80 per hour. This pay increase affected not just foodworkers at the University but other state employees “subject to the State Personnel Act in similar categories,” who earned less than $1.80 per hour. 178 John Sellars, a member of the BSM and graduate of 1971, explained the significance of the settlement, stating, “we were focusing on the cafeteria workers, but that also included the laundry workers, the janitors and maids, groundskeepers, anyone who was employed by the UNC operations department who wasn’t

177 J. Derek Williams, “‘It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore:' Foodworkers' Strike at Chapel Hill, Spring 1969,” (Master’s Thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 207.

getting treated fairly.” Following their victory, the foodworkers and their supporters held a rally on Polk Place. Howard Fuller, a Black Power activist and recent founder of Durham’s Malcolm X Liberation University who had been a vocal supporter of the strikes, spoke to the crowd, stating that the University had “finally begun to see that a student has the right to say something and that workers have the right to be treated like humans.”

The Second Strike

That May, the University, in an effort to distance itself from a reprisal of events that winter, signed a contract to turn over the operations of the dining halls to a private company, SAGA Food Services. By the end of the summer, SAGA had laid off many part-time workers, and some low-wage workers across the campus were still waiting for the University to fulfill promises that it had made that spring, including increasing pay. “Soon after SAGA food company came in, I almost knew there would be another strike,” Brooks remembered. “Just didn't know it was going to be as early as it was.” On November 7, 1969, almost 250 foodworkers began a second strike, demanding “recognition of a union, a job classification program, and the rehiring of 10 employees fired or laid off within the last week allegedly for pro-union activities.” SAGA refused to recognize the UNC Non-Academic Employees Union, which had previously been recognized by the state as the representative of the foodworkers, and

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179 Interview with John Sellars by Alex Ford, 8 November 2015, N-0042.

180 Wayne Hurder, “Scott Orders Employee Pay Hike As Fuller Urges Class Boycott,” The Daily Tar Heel, 22 March 1969, 1.

181 Interview with Elizabeth Brooks by Beverly Washington Jones, 2 October 1974, E-0058.
movement towards a quick resolution stalled as SAGA threatened to fire even more workers over the strike.\textsuperscript{182}

Students, including members of the BSM, once again held protests in support of the workers, standing on the picket lines and organizing boycotts of all dining facilities, including dormitory kitchens. By November 9th, over three hundred foodworkers were on strike and only two of six dining facilities around the campus were open, though understaffed.\textsuperscript{183} As with the first strike, the BSM, along with sympathetic white students, arranged for a boycott of the dining halls, encouraging students to donate to the Food Workers’ Assistance Fund, organized by the Campus Y. Boycotting students were encouraged to eat at the Baptist Student Union, which operated as a temporary dining facility for boycotters; but unlike Manning Hall during the first strike, it did not serve as a community space for the foodworkers and their supporters.\textsuperscript{184}

As picketing around the dining halls continued through mid-November, Chapel Hill and campus police occupied the entrances to both Lenoir and Chase Dining Halls in order to keep the buildings open. Six days into the strike, on November 13th, Chapel Hill police charged two foodworkers with assault and resisting arrest after they stood in front of a back door to Chase Hall and two police officers “suffered scalp lacerations” after being hit with milk crates.\textsuperscript{185} Police violence and the arrests of foodworkers and their student supporters continued through the second strike, with several incidents of struggles, usually begun as a result of police-induced

\textsuperscript{182} Al Thomas, “Food Service Workers Strike: 4 Dining Halls Closed, The Daily Tar Heel, 8 November 1969, 1.

\textsuperscript{183} Al Thomas, “Food Service Workers Strike: 4 Dining Halls Closed, The Daily Tar Heel, 8 November 1969, 1.

\textsuperscript{184} Strike Newsletter #1, November 1969 in the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{185} Al Thomas, “Chase Scuffle Ends In Arreasts, Injuries,” The Daily Tar Heel, 13 November 1969, 1.
standoffs between picketers and police. Jack McLean, the chairperson of the BSM, writing in *Black Ink*, explained that “the violence created by the Chapel Hill Gestapo force on peaceful demonstrators is a clear example that the Southern part of heaven has been captured by the roaring waves of fascism in this country. The irony is not that violence exists in the country but that it exists in the peace loving community of Chapel Hill.” The violence McLean described reached its peak on December 4th in front of Lenoir Hall when, “wielding nightsticks and brandishing shotguns,” approximately twenty-five police “charged a group of demonstrators when the group refused to heed police orders to disperse.” Nine demonstrators, the majority of them members of the BSM, were arrested and four were injured by the police.

Negotiations between the foodworkers and SAGA to settle the strike failed throughout November as SAGA refused to work with union representatives or agree to the rehiring of laid-off workers. On November 21st, a majority of full-time workers in the UNC Non-Academic Employees Union voted to affiliate with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union (itself affiliated with the national AFL-CIO), bringing national attention and resources to the strike. Even after the vote to affiliate with a national labor union, the University’s administration maintained that any settlement of the strike did not involve them, only SAGA. But beginning in December, Black students from across North Carolina began organizing to convene at the University for a massive demonstration of support for the foodworkers. James Westerbrook, a representative from SAGA leading potential

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188 Strike Newsletter #1, November 1969 in the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
negotiation, explained that he now regarded the strike as a “demonstration of Black [P]ower instead of a labor dispute,” and viewed the plans for “[B]lack Monday a threat.”\textsuperscript{189}

As the prospect of a “Black Monday” rally loomed, which the BSM said could bring over three thousand Black high school and college students to Chapel Hill, the University, fearful of a mass display of Black student and worker power, worked with SAGA to settle the strike as quickly as possible. The University also faced national pressure to help move negotiations forward after Ralph Abernathy, the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, arrived in Chapel Hill on Saturday, December 6th. Abernathy met separately with the striking foodworkers and with Chancellor Sitterson, telling \textit{The Daily Tar Heel} that he “considered the University responsible for settling the strike.”\textsuperscript{190} After the University’s administration joined the negotiations, the second strike ended on December 8th, with workers winning several key concessions, including a non-discriminatory clause for employment and promotion, ten days of sick leave per year, the ending of split shifts, and the re-hiring of several dozen laid-off employees.

Despite these victories, the contract signed between SAGA and the workers also included a “no strike, no walkout clause,” significantly limiting foodworkers’ ability to continue to leverage their power through future work stoppages.\textsuperscript{191} In the afternoon of December 8th, approximately one thousand Black students from across North Carolina met on campus for a “Black Monday” victory rally.\textsuperscript{192} “The ‘Message From A Black Man,’ comes through clear to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{189} Al Thomas, “SAGA Seeks Governor’s Help, \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 6 December 1969, 1.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{190} Al Thomas, “Abernathy Meets Sitterson, Lee On Strike,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 7 December 1969, 1.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{191} Al Thomas, “Strike Ends; Workers Return to Jobs,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 9 December 1969, 1.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{192} Interview with Ashley Davis by Russ Rymer, 12 April 1974, E-0062.
white society today,” *Black Ink* reported. “YOU CAN’T STOP US NOW.”\(^{193}\) The powerful showing of support by North Carolina’s Black students for the foodworkers’ demonstrated the importance of Chapel Hill in state-wide movements for racial justice. But when workers returned to campus in January 1970, SAGA refused to follow through on the promises of the settlement, firing forty-nine more employees in the wake of the second strike, including Elizabeth Brooks.\(^{194}\) Although the University did not renew their contract with SAGA the following school year, the foodworkers had legally lost their right to strike against SAGA, and the movement for better working conditions for low-wage workers on campus waned through the next decade.

**Legacy of Lenoir Hall and Manning Hall**

The Foodworkers’ Strikes were characterized by significant student involvement, on the picket lines and, crucially for the documentation of this movement, in the newspapers. Because the Foodworkers’ Strikes occurred contemporaneously with other student movements at the University and elsewhere, including anti-war and Black Power demonstrations, the newspapers at that time focused almost singularly on the involvement of Black students in the strike, characterizing the movement as another form of student unrest during the era of Black Power.\(^{195}\) But the Foodworkers' Strikes were above all a movement for Black workers which demonstrated how Black students and, to a lesser extent, white students could support a movement for workers rights at the University, building a Black women-led, multiracial coalition which both contested

\(^{193}\) “Brothers Give ‘Message From Black People,’” *Black Ink*, 1.

\(^{194}\) Brooks was subsequently re-hired, but only after SAGA fired another foodworker, a method they utilized to create dissension between the foodworkers.

\(^{195}\) Newspaper Clippings in the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
the institutional landscape of white supremacy, represented within the space of Lenoir Hall, and created a counter-space in Manning Hall for Black Chapel Hill citizens.

In this way, Black workers challenged the dominant cultural landscape of white supremacy within the institution by refusing to accept the anti-Black policies and processes which sought to extract their labor without regard for their humanity. At few other points in the history of racial justice movements at the University have multiracial coalitions formed between students and workers to support workers rights through racial justice organizing. The housekeepers movement of the 1990s (detailed in the section on the Cheek-Clark Building) utilized this working legacy of the Foodworkers’ Strikes to create their own movement for racial justice and workers rights. Engaging in counter-storytelling by sharing the history of the Foodworkers’ Strikes, the housekeepers movement sought not just to oppose a majoritarian view of the history of the University but also to activate potential student supporters with the powerful story of the successes of the Foodworkers’ Strikes.196

A subsequent shorter-lived workers’ movement in 2005 to oppose the outsourcing of the University’s dining services to the Aramark corporation also applied the story of the Foodworkers’ Strikes to its campaigns. Aramark, which pays its cashiers a wage far below the poverty line for Orange County, continues to oversee the University’s dining services.197 But perhaps most significantly for the national labor movement, during the Foodworkers’ Strikes, the state engaged in collective bargaining with the UNC Non-Academic Employees Union and in effect recognized the right of public employees to strike, though North Carolina had been (and


remains) a “right to work” state since 1949, which guarantees that employees can not be compelled to join a union in their workplace.

Despite the Foodworkers’ Strikes’ relevancy for racial justice and workers rights, the movement has never been commemorated by the University. In 2005, the Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth organized not just to place a plaque on Lenoir Hall in memory of the strikes but also to honor the leadership of Mary Smith and Elizabeth Brooks. CHAT presented the eponymous Mary Smith-Elizabeth Brooks’ Human Rights Award to Ms. Brooks and Ms. Smith for their “courageous leadership of the 1969 strikes...a victory for racial justice and a much needed reminder to the university that its employees’ dignity and work should not be taken for granted.” Their petition drive requesting that the University honor the strike with “an appropriate public commemorative marker,” which would honor the tremendous legacy of the leaders of that movement, was not recognized by the University’s administrators. Although the Foodworkers’ Strikes were one of the most significant racial and economic justice movements in the institution’s collective memory, the University, by choosing not to recognize the foodworkers’ legacy, sought to silence a crucial chapter in the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, displaying the institution’s commitment to repressing histories of resistance to anti-Blackness.

Although CHAT was focused singularly on Lenoir Hall as the main site of the Foodworkers’ Strikes, Lenoir Hall and Manning Hall together provide the strongest legacy for the movement as two spaces which illustrate how Black workers, supported by Black students, successfully challenged the anti-Black institutional processes that sought to exclude them from

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the campus and reject Black workers’ claims to self-possession. The dual approach of the
Foodworkers’ Strikes in contesting *and* creating spaces on the campus explains why the
movement remains a major touchstone in the crafting of a narrative of Black freedom striving at
the University, and points in the direction of the third approach in organizing towards a broader
reclamation of the University by Black students and workers. As racial justice campus
movements continued to expand, using the dual approach of contestation and creation, the
Foodworkers’ Strikes endure as an exemplar of how to challenge the cultural hegemony of racial
injustice and white supremacy in Chapel Hill.
CHAPTER THREE: UPENDO LOUNGE

“So you go to Upendo on Saturday night to party and you come back on Sunday morning to go to church. It was the same space, the very same space. Just cleaned it out, put the chairs up differently and you had a party on Saturday, church on Sunday,” Henry Foust remembered. By the time Foust arrived as a freshman in 1974, Upendo Lounge was already “the spot” for Black students.199 Officially opened on February 16, 1973 and located on the first floor of Chase Hall, the dining hall for South Campus, Upendo (Swahili for “love”) was envisioned by Black students as a space in which they could “gather to study, read, relax, and socialize in a predominantly Black atmosphere.”200 Upendo Lounge was the first formal Black counter-space on the campus which operated to provide for the social needs of Black students within and against the whiteness of the University’s culture. This chapter argues that because Upendo was the first formal Black student space on the campus, it was deemed by the University’s white administrators and students as a hazard to the maintenance of white supremacy, and thus, it faced tremendous scrutiny and retaliation through established institutional practices of discrimination and neglect.

Prior to the opening of Upendo, the Black Student Movement (BSM) procured a small office space on the second floor of the Frank Porter Graham Student Union. John Sellars, a member of the class of 1971, noted that, for the BSM, “having a place that we could sit and talk

199 Interview with Henry Foust by Monique LaBorde, 24 November 2015, N-0036.
200 “’Upendo’ to open,” The Daily Tar Heel, 16 February 1973, 2.
and meet, that gave us some authority. I mean, we were not student government, the student council, but we were another recognized group, and we knew that we had a purpose."\(^\text{201}\) The office did not, however, serve as a space for Black students to socialize or to build a sense of community outside of the organization of the BSM, which, by the early 1970s was growing larger in size. Although the University had been formally desegregated at both the undergraduate and graduate levels beginning in 1955, it was not until 1971 that the total number of Black students on campus reached five hundred.\(^\text{202}\) The protracted pace of desegregation can be attributed to the institution’s “hostility to genuine racial justice,” a judgment shared by dozens of white institutions across the South.\(^\text{203}\) In the 1969-1970 school year, the percentage of Black undergraduates reached just over one percent, with sixty Black freshman in an entering class of 2,394.\(^\text{204}\) As the Black student body continued to grow, albeit slowly, so did the BSM, which organized into subgroups, including the Opeyo dance group, BSM Gospel Choir, and Black Ink magazine.\(^\text{205}\) In 1972, Richard Epps was elected as the University’s first Black student body president, and his election signaled to the University’s administrators that Black student power was strengthening on the campus.

\(^\text{201}\) Interview with John Sellars by Alex Ford, 8 November 2015, N-0042.

\(^\text{202}\) Enrollment Data in the Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40130, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


\(^\text{204}\) Enrollment Data in the Office of the Registrar and Director of Institutional Research of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40130, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\(^\text{205}\) Black Notes from Carolina, Fall 1971 in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40124, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
The BSM worked to acquire a larger space for their organization from the University, lobbying administrators in the Division of Student Affairs for a physical space on the campus that could meet the operational needs of the growing organization. With the opening of Upendo Lounge in 1973 after several years of the BSM advocating for a meeting space, Black students had their first official space on the campus dedicated solely to the community of Black students at the University. It was the first formally recognized counter-space for Black students, a space in which they could “specifically affirm the racial and/or ethnic aspects of their identity.”

Like South Campus and Manning Hall, two contemporary counter-spaces, Upendo Lounge, as a space of Black autonomy, would face censure and attack from white students and administrators through certain anti-Black processes which operated on behalf of institutional control of all Black people on the campus.

**A Perceived Threat to White Supremacy**

The placement of Upendo in Chase Hall, on South Campus, was essential for developing a sense of shared experience among Black students. Finding themselves unwelcome in other spaces in which white students socialized (primarily white fraternities, and the Frank Porter Graham Student Union on North Campus), Black students gathered in dorm rooms and floor lounges in the South Campus dorms to socialize. White students and housing administrators perceived these gatherings of Black students as threatening, and in Hinton James, the Housing Department enacted a new lounge policy in 1972 to curtail socializing among Black students.

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Charles Duncan, a writer for Black Ink, described the effect of the policy: “there will be no Black floor parties in the respective floor lounges because, under this new policy, only residents of a particular floor can have a party. There are no all Black floors, so any floor party will be mixed.”  

The year before, white students in Hinton James asked for weekend ID checks for all persons entering the dormitory, presumably to prevent Black non-students from entering the building, the result of what the Yackety Yack, the University’s yearbook, called, “the south campus situation, fraught with community-campus and black-white tensions.” The creation of Upendo Lounge on South Campus as a space for solely Black student life was essential for the sustaining of the BSM, then still a fledgling organization. Henry Foust, a member of the BSM Gospel Choir through the mid-1970s, highlighted the significance of Upendo’s location, saying that “it was very much a hub and everything happened there. Dances, parties, meetings, concerts sometimes, practices. Anything that went on in the Black community, pretty much the first place you tried to get was Upendo.”

The physical location of Upendo on the first floor of Chase Hall had formerly been a space referred to in The Daily Tar Heel as a “mini-union,” much smaller than the main North Campus student union. Because the space of Upendo had formerly been dedicated for use by any student in the University’s predominantly white student body, the permanence of Upendo as an entirely Black social space was always in question. Many white students viewed Upendo

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211 Interview with Henry Foust by Monique LaBorde, 24 November 2015, N-0036.

212 “‘Upendo’ to Open,” The Daily Tar Heel, 16 February 1972, 2.
Lounge, the first space for Black students recognized by the institution, as a threat to their claims on the cultural and campus landscape. Two white men articulated the fears of many white students in a letter to the editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*, writing that “after reading and hearing about all the uproar concerning the Upendo Lounge, it occurs to us that whites have been discriminated against ever since the concept for the Upendo Lounge was conceived…whites do not have an area set aside for their activities…after all, equality is what we are all fighting for, isn’t it?”

Because Upendo Lounge highlighted racial difference instead of concealing it, the space threatened white privilege, the foundation of white supremacy, and endangered the social and cultural dominance established on campus by white students. Upendo Lounge was therefore vulnerable to attacks from white students, as well as white administrators, as soon as it opened.

Black students understood the possible consequences of white suspicion and potential attacks. *Black Ink* reported that some Black students had “concocted various reasons why the University administration saw fit to allow us to set the place up. Some believe that they did it to allow for an embarrassment to the Black student populace. They believe the center is sure to flop and that the failure will be credited directly to the BSM and Black students in general. The University would then return to its do-nothing program for Blacks on the basis that their problems are incurred by themselves and not by the University.” Other students thought that the University had given the BSM the space in order to confine the activities of Black students, “thus sparing the administration the unpleasant task of coping with the continuing nuisance of Black

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masses in the dorms on weekends, participating in ‘wild jungle rituals,’ or with the discordant and disdainful music of a so called ‘choir’ practicing in a dorm lounge.”215 These explanations, though perhaps true, do not give full agency to the Black students who organized to create Upendo Lounge. The creation of the space was, BSM chairman Warren Carson Jr. explained, “due to the innovative ideas offered by BSM concerning a Black student lounge, and the persistent pursuit in making the idea a reality.”216 However, if the intent on the part of University administrators was to segregate Black student activities into a single space, they were somewhat successful in that containment, though the subsequent attacks against the space make this rationalization less credible.

Only three years after the establishment of Upendo Lounge, white administrators challenged the space for the first time. In the summer of 1976, the University’s Space Committee approved the relocation of the cafeteria in Chase Hall from the second floor to the first, displacing Upendo Lounge, without informing the leadership of the BSM. Dean of Student Affairs Donald Boulton promised a space would be set aside for the BSM on the second floor, following renovations, but the lack of communication between the Space Committee and the BSM's leadership enlarged a rift between Black students and white administrators.217 Henry Foust explained what was at stake in the potential threat to Upendo, stating his feeling at the time that “You can talk about money all you want to but you’re talking about closing Upendo, you’ve got a fight on your hands. It’s like, ‘You are not closing that because that’s our spot.’”218


217 Laura Scism and David Stacks, “BSM not consulted on moving Upendo,” The Daily Tar Heel, 5 October 1976, 1.

218 Interview with Henry Foust by Monique LaBorde, 24 November 2015, N-0036.
On the celebration of the University’s founding, University Day, October 12, 1976, two hundred Black students marched into Memorial Hall, the main auditorium on campus. Chanting “Power to the people, Black Power to the African people, we shall survive in America,” the students protested the planned relocation of Upendo Lounge and demanded an apology from the Space Committee. Foust, describing the frustrations of Black students about the way they had been treated during the process of relocating Upendo, said he and others felt that “we just want to be here. Just treat us like you treat the rest of the organizations on campus and just let us do what we’re going to do. Why is this becoming an issue every time?” The BSM acquiesced to the relocation of Upendo Lounge to the second floor of Chase Hall, but seven years later, in 1983, the building once again underwent renovations, with the second floor rededicated as the Chase Union, now under administrative control of the Carolina Student Union.

Although the physical space of Upendo Lounge had been retained, the Union shifted their reservation policy so that any student group could use the space, though they promised the BSM would have “priority” in reserving Upendo. Soon after, white students, unconcerned with the significance of Upendo for Black students, began to reserve and use the space, previously dedicated to the affirmation of Blackness and resistance to the institution’s persistent whiteness. In this way, Upendo Lounge was effectively colonized by the University, a result of what geographer Katherine McKittrick describes as the institution “repetitively constitute[ing] blackness as a discreet (and hostile) racial category that routinely ‘troubles’ an already settled

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220 Interview with Henry Foust by Monique LaBorde, 24 November 2015, N-0036.
Because the existence of Upendo Lounge undermined the normalized white supremacy of the campus landscape, the University’s administration forwarded a policy that would dilute the Blackness of the space and create the conditions for white student-led colonization. Explaining this policy decision, Director of the Carolina Union, Howard Henry, stated, “the Union should not have to ask the BSM how that space is used.” In response, BSM president from 1983 to 1984, Sherrod Banks, told The Daily Tar Heel, “we will have an ambiguous term such as ‘priority’ to rely on for the existence of the BSM. It’s ridiculous.” The changed reservation policy dramatically shifted the attitudes of Black students, administrators, and faculty towards a new idea taking shape at predominantly white universities across the country: a Black Cultural Center. “We want a new facility,” said Banks. “It doesn’t matter a whole lot where it is.”

Even before Upendo’s opening in 1973, administrators referred to the space as the University’s “Black Cultural Center,” a concept for the space which included room for exhibits and an auditorium, which it did not have. The continued precarity of Upendo’s existence and accessibility resulted in the search for a permanent location for a Black Cultural Center, an effort that eventually separated from conversations about the future of Upendo Lounge. The movement for a permanent and free-standing Black Cultural Center began in 1984 and continued for the next thirty years when the free-standing Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History opened in 2004. Throughout, Upendo Lounge continued to serve as a gathering space for

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222 C.F. Wallington, “BSM was guaranteed space, UNC official says,” The Daily Tar Heel, 27 October 1983, 1.


the BSM, operating under the same “priority” reservation policy enacted in 1983, which limited Upendo’s potential for community building and support.

Michelle Thomas, president of the BSM from 1992 to 1993, described in an interview the three spaces on campus that were important to her as a student: “The Sonja Haynes Stone Center, eventually—the Black Cultural Center at the time—Great Hall for parties on Friday nights, and the Upendo Lounge, which were the three places where Black folks congregated on campus.” Before the interview was over, she asked about Upendo: “Is it still Black?” Her question suggests that Black students in the late 1980s and 1990s did not believe in the permanency of Upendo as an essential social space for Black students. That even formally created Black counter-spaces lacked immutability in the way that social spaces for white students did in part explains how indelible anti-Blackness is across the cultural landscape; every Black-created space is deemed by the dominant culture to be a hazard to the maintenance of white supremacy.

**Legacy of Upendo Lounge**

In 2003, Chase Hall was torn down and Upendo Lounge temporarily moved to the Frank Porter Graham Student Union. After this move, the BSM was no longer given “priority” in reserving Upendo Lounge, and the space was open for reservations by any student organization. By 2007, Upendo Lounge had moved to its current home in the Student and Academic Services Building North (located, despite its name, on South Campus). At the fortieth anniversary celebration of the BSM later that year, leaders unveiled the “Upendo history wall,” an exhibit of old newspaper articles and correspondence with the University’s administration that traced the

225 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

history of Upendo Lounge. In 2016, Upendo was renovated and rededicated as a space that the BSM had the “first right” in reserving, which gave the BSM “a permanent place to meet.” Although Upendo Lounge still has not regained its original status as a space solely for the Black student community to gather in, contemporary leadership of the BSM have stated their contentment with the BSM having “priority” in reserving the space. Kendall Luton, a graduate of 2018, described the current importance of Upendo to The Daily Tar Heel, stating, “Most of the spaces are filled up with only white people — and that is good and all — but it is nice to have a space of our own where we can have our thoughts and things like that, where we can just come together as a community.”

The attacks leveraged against Upendo Lounge exposed the fears of the University that Black students, having created a formal space in which to meet and socialize, threatened white claims on the cultural landscape and would build up significant power in Black social counter-spaces. And as Black students did continue to build up and exercise such power through public protest, the University acted to minimize the potential of Upendo Lounge to serve as a space for Black students to gather, socialize, and organize. By moving Upendo around the campus and changing policies for the process of reserving the space, the University weakened Upendo’s role as a space for the Black student community, a method of reproducing anti-Blackness—using institutional mechanisms to control Black bodies within the whiteness of the campus landscapes—that demonstrates how embedded white supremacy is within the University.

Although now Upendo Lounge does serve as a space in which the BSM and its subgroups can


228 Jamie Gwaltney, “Upendo Lounge—a place to support and uplift each other,” The Daily Tar Heel, 2 September 2016.
meet and hold events, the current iteration of the space bears little resemblance to the dynamic Upendo Lounge of the 1970s, a shift in power that is a direct result of University-enacted policies that control Black students and the power they can exercise on the campus.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE FISHBOWL

“That Fishbowl—as frustrating as it was, as small as it was, you were always feeling a sense of surveillance—it was a magical space,” Renee Alexander Craft, a graduate of 1994, remembered, describing the University’s first Black Cultural Center (BCC).229 The Fishbowl or the BCC (students used the terms interchangeably) was located on the first floor of the Frank Porter Graham Student Union and enclosed in glass, giving the space its nickname. The space itself was small, roughly eight hundred square feet, and located in a renovated snack bar and vending machine area, a supposedly “temporary” location the Fishbowl occupied for almost two decades.230 Despite the many limitations of the physical space of the Fishbowl, it operated as one of the only campus spaces—along with Upendo Lounge and the South Campus dorms—in which Black students could find respite from the University’s whiteness and create a sense of community through the 1990s and early 2000s.

This chapter argues that after the colonization of Upendo Lounge and its elimination as the main counter-space for Black students in the 1980s, the Black Cultural Center served as the foremost counter-space for Black students, combining for the first time the social and academic needs of Black students within the space and drawing condemnation from white administrators. The Fishbowl also served as the nexus of a movement that sought to create a free-standing

229 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.
230 Interview with Christopher Faison by Charlotte Fryar, 9 December 2016, L-0458.
version of the BCC in honor of one of the faculty members who had fought the hardest for its creation. The history of the campus movements that operated for and within the space of the Fishbowl illustrates the ways in which the institution sought to control, contain, and exclude Black life from the dominant cultural landscape of the University.

The idea for a BCC began to take form in 1983, after administrators changed the reservation policy for Upendo Lounge. Black students, along with Black faculty and staff, petitioned the administration for a space separate from Upendo Lounge in which to hold Black cultural performances and academic programs. By the time this conversation had begun at the University, most of its peer institutions of public predominantly white universities across the United States had already built Black culture (or cultural) centers. Most centers had been built in the early 1970s, the result of Black student-led demonstrations in the wake of the assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., protests which also brought Black studies programs and increased numbers of Black faculty to the white campuses.

Through the remainder of the decade, dozens of white universities built BCCs, centers which included not only social spaces for Black students (like Upendo Lounge), but dedicated space in which to hold Black academic and cultural programs. During this period in Chapel Hill, a small number of Black faculty members presented a concept paper to Chancellor Nelson Ferebee Taylor outlining the creation of an “Institute for Minority Studies,” which they explained, could “serve as a unique or special resource center for minority students and faculty,” and “assist the university in its efforts to be more responsive to the needs of minority

communities.” Taylor did not pursue their proposed institute, but among Black faculty in particular, there was a growing recognition that the University needed a Black Cultural Center to serve all Black people within the institution and Chapel Hill.

One of the most active participants in the national Black culture center movement was Dr. Sonja Haynes Stone, a professor in the Department of Afro-American Studies. Partially at Stone’s insistence, in 1984, Dean of Student Affairs Donald Boulton convened a committee to develop a proposal for a Black Cultural Center which would “promote learning, self awareness, self determination and broadened world perspectives.” The BCC planning committee (a group comprised largely of Black faculty and administrators) issued their final report in February 1986. They determined that a new Black Cultural Center would need a space of at least 8,548 square feet, an estimate which included space for a library, a large meeting room, an art gallery, a music room rehearsal hall, offices for staff members, and a lounge for socializing.

In their report, the committee included a minimum of 2,500 square feet that could be used as a temporary space, a concession given with the understanding that it would take both time and financial resources to fully develop the larger proposed 8,548 square foot facility. But before

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233 Proposal for a Black Cultural Center, February 1986 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

234 Proposal for a Black Cultural Center, February 1986 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

235 Proposal for a Black Cultural Center, February 1986 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
the BCC planning committee submitted their final report, Boulton set aside a temporary eight hundred square foot space in the front of the Frank Porter Graham Student Union, and funds were raised to hire a director for the University’s new Black Cultural Center. Black students were dissatisfied with the space that had been set aside for the BCC. “No, we’re not happy with the vending machine area,” Black Student Movement (BSM) President from 1986 to 1987, Camille Roddy, said to Campus Profile. “This is due to the fact that the proposal that we have in mind encompasses much more spacing than what the vending machine area would allow. And by stifling us with that area, you’re stifling the ideas and the plans for the cultural center.”

The Black Cultural Center Opens

Despite objections from students, on July 1, 1988, the University’s Black Cultural Center officially opened in the temporary space in the Frank Porter Graham Student Union with Margo Crawford, a university professor and administrator from Chicago, as its first director. Donyell Roseboro, in her dissertation on the movement for a free-standing Black Cultural Center, points to the decision to create even the temporary BCC as monumental. “By officially assigning the Black cultural center temporary space in 1988,” she explained, “university administrators publicly announced their belief in the importance of such a facility; it represented a social and academic coalescence of learning, a safe space for Black students, and a tribute to the struggles of Black people on the University campus and beyond.” Although the BCC’s opening was

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237 “Black Cultural Center,” Campus Profile, Episode 20, UNC Student Television, 6 November 1985.

238 The same day, Paul Hardin became chancellor of the University.

indeed significant, the precarity of its status within the Division of Student Affairs and the inadequate resources it received always kept open the possibility that the BCC would be forced into a similar dismantling of power that Upendo Lounge had undergone over the last decade.

The Black Cultural Center, although small and exposed, immediately became a space for congregation and conversation for all members of the University’s Black community. In describing the Fishbowl, Renee Alexander Craft referred to the structural, social, and emotional resonances of the space:

“In the middle of the space there were the same kind of chairs, but they formed a circle so that the seat part was facing out so it was like a flower in the middle, and then seats lining the side. So you’d have plenty of places to sit and plenty of floor space if you just wanted to plop down. So even if you didn’t come in for a meeting, you just came in to get something, there’s someone’s TA over there having a conversation with their students, there’s students talking about politics on campus and what needs to be done, there’s students talking about the environment and what needs to be done about that. So there’s all that energy and movement and you can fall in and fall out of those conversations as you’re going about your mundane life.”

Although the BCC held programs and lectures, organized by its director Margo Crawford and its staff of students, the center also functioned for Black students as a space for debate, mentoring, organizing, and relaxation. “I would literally walk in sometimes – I didn’t go all the time – to sit down, not say anything to anyone, and just exhale, and then ten minutes later I would get up,” remembered former BSM President from 1999 to 2000, Chris Faison. “We didn’t even have to say anything. It was just the acknowledgement of the fact that you just needed a break from being the only one in your class, right? And then you would get up and you would walk out.”

240 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.

241 Interview with Christopher Faison by Charlotte Fryar, 9 December 2016, L-0459.
The BCC operated not just as a social space for Black students, but also as a space of incubation for student created programs and initiatives. In 1991, Renee Alexander Craft established *Sauti M’pya*, the literary journal for the BCC and the first Black literary publication created by Black students in Chapel Hill, which gave many Black student writers and artists their first opportunity to publish their work.\(^{242}\) In 1992, Michelle Thomas and Denise Matthewson founded the Communiversity Program, which continues to serves Black students in local elementary and middle schools through a variety of cultural and educational activities in Chapel Hill.\(^{243}\) Many Black students in the 1990s participated in a program called Around the Circle, weekly graduate student-led discussions of political and social issues happening across the University which “sharpened [their] teeth” for public discourse.\(^{244}\) Each of these initiatives was created by and for Black students, faculty, and staff within the eight hundred square feet of the Fishbowl.

Despite its limitations, the Fishbowl engendered a remarkable social dynamism infused with a progressive political orientation that marked it as distinct from Upendo Lounge as a social and academic counter-space. It was crucial for Black students’ identity development that the BCC served as an academic counter-space as well as a social space, because, as critical race theorists Daniel Solórzano and Octavio Villalpando have determined, academic counter-spaces allow Black students to stimulate their own learning in a nurturing environment where their

\(^{242}\) Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.


\(^{244}\) Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.
experiences are considered important in teaching and learning.245 As the University struggled to recruit Black faculty (in 1988, there were only fifty Black faculty members out of a total of more than two thousand), the Fishbowl served as a critical space for Black students to access Black academic programs through peer mentorship.246

White students viewed the Fishbowl, as they had Upendo Lounge, as a threat on their claims to the campus landscape. Unlike Upendo, which had been located on South Campus, the accepted space for Black students on campus, the Fishbowl was located on North Campus, in the main student union, a critical social space for white students. Speaking to Campus Profile in front of the Fishbowl in the fall of 1988, only months after its opening, a white student explained that “in some cases I think the Black students take it too far in that they have so many organizations for minority rights and minority counsels…I feel that Black students are pampered.”247 In 1992, the Carolina Alumni Review explained that many white students and faculty believed that “black students seem to be claiming that their race entitles them to be treated differently…well-meaning programs have often encouraged minorities to be dependent on special help and to think of themselves as victims with special rights.”248

Black students and faculty rejected the idea that the Fishbowl's eight hundred square feet somehow afforded them special status on campus. “Everybody asks about a white cultural


center, but the whole University is a white cultural center,” Lee Greene, a professor of English, argued.\(^{249}\) Because the Fishbowl was enclosed in glass and faced the Pit—a sunken plaza in front of Lenoir Hall and the Frank Porter Graham Student Union through which hundreds of people passed daily—the space could be surveilled at all times. “You did have a feeling of surveillance, and that’s both good and bad,” explained Craft. “You felt surveilled at times by people you didn’t feel like looking in on you, but you also could always find the people you were looking for, because all you had to do was peek in.”\(^{250}\) Simone Browne, a scholar of Blackness and surveillance studies, explains that “blackness [is] a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and enacted.”\(^{251}\) Even if the Fishbowl site was not chosen specifically for its increased capacities for surveillance, within the cultural landscape of white supremacy, this was an added benefit for administrators.

Even before the opening of the BCC in the summer of 1988, the center’s students and staff sought a commitment from administrators for a permanent location for the center. “If we accept the space that the University has given us then it will become permanent,” Lee Greene explained.\(^{252}\) In the spring of 1990, \textit{Campus Profile} reported that the planning committee for the BCC was eyeing the soon to be emptied Howell Hall, then the location for the School of Journalism, which was moving to Carroll Hall. Chancellor Paul Hardin met with the BCC planning committee in early February, but made no promises about the future of Howell Hall. For the students and administrators who had been working for seven years on the creation of a


\(^{250}\) Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.


permanent BCC, the timeline was stagnant. “From their perspective,” Margo Crawford explained, “this is very slow and they’ve seen other programs blossom to life or be prioritized over the BCC facility.” Speaking rather presciently about the lack of movement on Howell Hall, the BSM president from 1990 to 1991, Tonya Perry, told Campus Profile: “It’s a student building. If students want it, they’re going to have to push for it.”

Legacy of the Fishbowl

On August 10, 1991, Dr. Sonja Haynes Stone, the much-admired faculty member in the Department of Afro-American Studies and mentor to many students, passed away suddenly. Students immediately began to gather in the Fishbowl to comfort and support one another, reeling in their collective loss. From meetings in August 1991 held in the Fishbowl, students began to build a movement to create a permanent and free-standing Black Cultural Center, an ambition that had been deeply held by the late Dr. Stone (detailed in the chapter on The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History). As the movement to construct a free-standing building for the BCC continued to grow, the Fishbowl remained a site of incubation, energy, and renewal for Black students engaged in the struggle. The Fishbowl, which was designed to be a temporary space to be occupied for no longer than two years, was not closed until 2004, when the Stone Center building officially opened.

Many alumni who remember the communal nature of the Fishbowl have been surprised and even dismayed to learn that its free-standing successor, the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, does not always play the same role as a community gathering space.


254 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.
for Black students, faculty, and staff. “I am so proud to have the free-standing Sonja Haynes Stone Center…But there’s something we took for granted that we had in the Fishbowl that does not currently exist, which is again, a space for multiple generations and multiple ranks to come together just to be,” Renee Alexander Craft, now a faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies, explained.255 This belief that the contemporary Stone Center suffers from the absence of social spaces is repeated throughout other interviews with Black alumni who remember the collective energy of the Fishbowl.256 The loss of a social space within the Stone Center confirms that part of the dynamism that marked the Fishbowl as a counter-space separate in significance from either the Stone Center or Upendo Lounge was the remarkable way in which it melded the academic and social needs of Black students.

The Fishbowl, though no longer in existence, operated for close to two decades in a temporary space defined in part by its physical shortcomings and uncertainty regarding its future. Despite this precarity, the history of the Fishbowl stands as a testament to the students, faculty, and staff who created a counter-space that supported Black students’ experiences and identity development, despite the University’s consistent undervaluing of the importance of the BCC. By blending the social and academic interests of Black students, the BCC became a vigorous force within the institution for progressive energies, intellectual activities, and passionate discourse. And in creating a space in which to both challenge the prevailing cultural practices of the University and support one another, Black students also developed the BCC into a powerful space from which to build and sustain a major movement for racial justice. But the physical

255 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.

256 Interview with Christopher Faison by Charlotte Fryar, 9 December 2016, L-0459; Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.
space of the Fishbowl exposed the University’s anti-Black institutional policies, which sought to contain Black life within a space which could be surveilled at all times. Thus, the Fishbowl, like Upendo Lounge, carries a dual legacy of both the insurgent power of Black counter-space creation and the institutional policies utilized to suppress the capacity for Black students to exercise their power.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE SONJA HAYNES STONE CENTER FOR BLACK CULTURE AND HISTORY

A progressive student-led movement in the early 1990s to build a free-standing building for the Black Cultural Center (BCC) created the current Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, today one of the preeminent centers in the nation for the critical examination of African-American and African diaspora cultures. The BCC movement brought together a diverse coalition of student organizations on behalf of what appeared to be a straightforward idea—a free-standing building for a center that already had a detailed plan developed by the BCC’s planning committee. But the movement ended up asking something far more profound: could Black culture ever exist within the cultural landscape of the University?

Although the existence of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History would suggest that the answer might be yes, the history of the University’s resistance to the power of the BCC movement supplies a different answer and confirms the institution’s deep anti-Blackness. The Stone Center, as the final institutionally-recognized counter-space created by Black students, faced discrimination through anti-Black policies as had prior Black counter-spaces, including Upendo Lounge and the Fishbowl. This chapter argues that as a result of institutional actions taken to diminish the potential for the Stone Center to serve as a space which supported Black culture against the University’s white supremacy, the Stone Center was never able to be included within the mainstream of the University’s dominant culture. But the BCC

movement, led by Black students and supported by non-Black students and an array of staff and faculty, forced the University’s leadership to determine whether a distinct building and center devoted to the study of Black culture could be incorporated into the white hegemony of the institutional and campus landscapes, ultimately exposing the institution’s anti-Black policies and laying the foundation for future acts of space contestation.

Laying the Foundation for the BCC Movement

When students returned to campus for the start of the school year in late August 1991, they learned that Dr. Stone had died of a stroke on August 10th. Stone arrived on the Chapel Hill campus in 1974 from Chicago to lead the curriculum in Afro-American Studies, and she had spent her last seventeen years making an impressive impact not just at the University, but in the Chapel Hill community, the growing field of Black studies, and the nationwide movement for Black culture centers. The year before Stone arrived in Chapel Hill, the University had fourteen Black professors (less than two percent of the total faculty), only two of them women—Hortense McClinton and Roberta Jackson.258 Stone’s addition to the faculty was crucial for the development of several generations of Black students, particularly women, to whom she provided informal mentoring, counseling them on how to handle the regular discrimination they faced from white students and faculty.259

Stone personally experienced the institution’s anti-Black and misogynist policies, having been denied tenure in 1979 despite her strong academic record. Although the University System’s Board of Governors eventually granted her tenure and promotion the next year, the

258 Sam Fulwood, “Recruiting Continues as Black Join Faculty,” The Daily Tar Heel, 1 March 1977, 1.

259 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.
initial rejection of Stone by the institution was deeply felt by Black students who believed that Stone embodied the ideal professor, who served as a gifted educator, dauntless researcher, and dedicated community leader.²⁶⁰ “She was a race woman,” Michelle Thomas, Stone’s student in the fall of 1990 described. “And she was not ashamed about it. And there was nothing about being a race woman that made her racist. There was nothing about it that diminished anyone else’s humanity. She was so in love with our community.”²⁶¹

As a mentor and friend to Black and white students alike, Stone’s death resulted in an outpouring of emotion from across the student body, which fixated in the space of the Fishbowl. By the beginning of September, students turned their grief into action, creating the multiracial Sonja Haynes Stone Task Force, which began organizing towards three goals: the renaming of the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone; an endowed chair named for Dr. Stone; and departmental status for the curriculum in Afro-American Studies. In November, the University’s Board of Trustees voted to rename the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone, but made it clear to students that an endowed chair would require raising $500,000.²⁶² Having now found some success in working with the University’s administration, students in the Task Force next turned to the new goal which they thought would truly honor Dr. Stone’s legacy: a free-standing BCC.²⁶³

Through the fall of 1991 and into the next spring, Black student leaders began to lay down the groundwork for the movement, building a wide and diverse foundation on which to lead their campaign. Michelle Thomas described the early months of the movement, stating,


²⁶¹ Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.


²⁶³ Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
“That year we were really organizing. We were developing our list of demands. We were meeting with different groups and people, developing our strategy around raising awareness. We began doing some protests, but we also spent some time trying to talk with members of the Board of Trustees, individually, particularly Angela Bryant, to try to help us to do it—we didn’t want to have to raise hell. We wanted to see if we could figure it out.”

By the late spring of 1992 it became clear that the University would not easily submit to the request from the students to build a free-standing building, though administrators had promised one as early as 1986.

Communication between students and administrators was almost non-existent on the issue of the BCC. Chancellor Paul Hardin repeatedly refused to acknowledge the possibility of a free-standing BCC, apparently unconcerned that the center had now spent four years in a “temporary” space. “Honestly, a lot of the activism,” Carol McDonald, a member of the class of 1997, explained, “was, ‘We want to sit down and have a meeting,’ and the chancellor saying, ‘I’m not meeting with you.’ It was really just that simple. There was such a level of disrespect with which the students felt they were treated.” Administrators had previously employed the strategy of ignoring Black student dissent during the struggle for the Black Student Movement’s (BSM) autonomy over Upendo Lounge and during the conversations surrounding housing segregation policies. By 1992, simply ignoring student attempts at dialogue with administrators had become an established method of controlling Black students, exercised with the goal of excluding Black students from the dominant cultural dialogue through “benign neglect.”

264 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

265 Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

Paul Hardin, the University chancellor from 1988 to 1995, who became a “nemesis” for many BCC supporters, eventually advocated building a multicultural center rather than a Black Cultural Center. On March 17, 1992, standing in front of a banner held by BCC supporters which read “Hardin’s Plantation”—a reference to his paternalistic attitude towards Black workers in particular—the chancellor stated his belief that a multicultural center could serve the campus as a “forum, rather than a fortress.” His phrasing infuriated BCC supporters, who had, since 1986, explained that the BCC, when given adequate space, would serve the academic interests of the entire campus population, not just the social needs of Black students. Hardin, in turn, resented BCC supporters’ characterization of him as a stalwart racist for throwing his support behind a multicultural center. Hardin explained that his perception at the time was that “we had an activist group under the leadership of Margo Crawford really making a whipping boy out of the chancellor and seizing on a reservation I’d expressed about a free-standing center in terms of the fortress mentality.”

Hardin’s support for a multicultural center was shaped in part by his tenuous connection to the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Hardin’s father, a bishop in the Methodist Church, was one of the white clergymen to whom King directed his Letter from Birmingham Jail, in which King wrote of his disappointment in the “white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice…who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom.”


269 Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.

Hardin often spoke publicly about the relationship between his father and King’s famous *Letter*, apparently unaware of King’s indictment of both his father and Hardin’s own position in the BCC debate as a white moderate. Hardin was hardly the only white moderate guilty of adulterating King’s words, which historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explains have been “endlessly reproduced and selectively quoted,…los[ing] their political bite.”[^271] By continuing to invoke his dubious relationship to King, Hardin appears to have interpreted King’s rebuke of white moderates as a sign of King’s support for a multicultural center. At his March 17th speech, Hardin explained that his support for a multicultural center was grounded in his belief in “the inclusion of all people into the full opportunities of American society,” this belief the result of “the unique impact Martin Luther King Jr. had on [him] and [his] father.”[^272]

In truth, by refusing to provide institutional support for a Black Cultural Center, Hardin was “constantly say[ing] ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can’t agree with your methods of direct action.’”[^273]

Acting on his own view of himself as a progressive leader of a liberal institution, Hardin called for the formation of a BCC Working Group headed by Provost Richard McCormick, to investigate finding a space for an “adequate BCC,” repeating the task that the initial BCC planning committee completed six years earlier.[^274] The University community’s allegiances divided as the case for a multicultural center, which would presumably celebrate the diversity of


the student body, grew among white students and administrators. Myron Pitts, the editor of *Black Ink* from 1991 to 1992, described white student opinions on the BCC as dividing into four camps: “the uninformed set,” “the pseudo-multiculturalist faction,” “the apathetic majority,” and “the racists.”275 *The Daily Tar Heel* frequently published opinions about the BCC movement from members of each of these four camps, focusing particularly on the multicultural center argument forwarded by seemingly progressive white students (rarely were there other non-Black students of color who argued for a multicultural center). Student Elliott Zenick, who would have belonged to Pitts’ “pseudo-multiculturalist faction,” wrote in a March 23rd guest column that “the idea of a Black cultural center is a good one, but it fails to celebrate the diversity on this campus...A multicultural center would better serve the needs of all campus minorities.”276

It was during this quasi-campaign for a multicultural center that the public language promoting the University’s current cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice” began to ascend to prominence.277 At least in part to oppose increasing displays of Black student and worker power, during the early 1990s, the University began to tout the racial diversity of the institution’s student body, though administrators made little effort to dismantle the power structures that kept student of color in separate cultural domains within the institution.278 Although the numbers of non-Black students of color were slowly increasing, Native, Latinx,


and Asian-heritage students together comprised less than four percent of the total student body in 1991. Administrative efforts to increase the diversity of the student body were often presented with reminders to maintain the civility that had come to define the Chapel Hill community. In 1990, while creating the Chancellor’s Committee on Community and Diversity, Hardin explained that “no more urgent issue confronts the University than to make certain that this is truly a diverse campus while, at the same time, encouraging honest appreciation of the differences among us and thus preserving the unity and civility of the University community.”

Although the Committee reported that “the campus climate is a ‘chilly’ one for minority students” and provided dozens of quotes from Black students and faculty regarding the social and academic isolation they experienced on the campus, the proposals suggested by the members of committee were not, for the most part, implemented. Instead, the University utilized the specific rhetorical technique of highlighting institutional diversity in order to reify the white supremacy of the institution without having to draw attention to the ubiquity of its own whiteness. Sara Ahmed, in her groundbreaking text on racism and diversity in institutions, explains this technique, writing that “diversity pride becomes a technology for reproducing whiteness: adding color to the white face of the organization confirms the whiteness of that face.” Thus, by increasing its display of pride in the institution’s racial diversity through

279 “Focus: Institutional Racism,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 3 April 1991, 5; However, in the 1990 North Carolina census, citizens who identified as neither white or Black made up 2.47 percent of the total population.


expanding administrative support for a multicultural center, the University did so not to celebrate racial diversity, but to protect its own white supremacy.

The BCC movement occurred as part of a national increase in Black student activism and a growing national interest in what it meant to be Black in the United States in the decades post-desegregation. “The ever-changing black experience in America is being assessed with a new intensity,” The New York Times reported in 1991. “Not since the tumultuous 1960s has there been such an intense focus on blackness.”283 The popularization of Blackness in mainstream popular culture contributed to a growing sense among members of the BCC coalition that they were part of a new movement to define Blackness in Chapel Hill. Tim Minor, who arrived in Chapel Hill in 1990, explained the ways in which Black students manifested pride in their Blackness, remembering that “my friends were coming on campus with African medallions. You had it in your music, your hip-hop, Afrika Bambaataa, and you had just different types of expressionism of Blackness. You had it in your fashion—there was Cross Colours and FUBU…There was a lot of ethnic pride.”284 As Black students continued to assert their identity, seeming to many white members of the campus community as flaunting their refusal to assimilate into the dominant culture, the University continued to use the argument for a multicultural center to suppress students’ expressions of Blackness.

Despite growing popularity among white students for a multicultural center, student supporters for a free-standing BCC continued to make their case to their peers, attending meetings with receptive student organizations and holding speak-outs to share their message.


284 Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.
Student supporters also met with students at other colleges across the state, including North Carolina Central University. “We very much talked about that a building that is dedicated to Black culture and Black studies is very much just a lens to telling the story of our state and of America,” Carol McDonald explained, “and it wasn’t intended to be some isolated thing, that this is another academic building... and that recognition of one group, particularly the group that was brought here and was enslaved, really then opens up the conversation about all.”²⁸⁵ By positioning themselves against the institution’s liberalism, BCC supporters used counter-storytelling as an effective method to advocate for their cause and build a foundation for their coalition.²⁸⁶ After meeting with Black student leaders, particularly BSM president-elect Michelle Thomas, the Asian Students Association, the Carolina Indian Circle, and the Carolina Hispanic Association, each issued private statements of support for a free-standing Black Cultural Center and joined the growing multiracial BCC coalition.²⁸⁷

Negating the argument forwarded by white students and administrators that a multicultural center would better benefit all students of color, Michelle Thomas and Scott Wilkens, the white Campus Y co-president, wrote in *The Daily Tar Heel*, describing a campus landscape that operated to exclude Black students: “Each day on this campus, African-American students must go into buildings built by their forefathers, but named for plantation owners and Klansmen. We are not suggesting that buildings be renamed, we merely wish to describe the

²⁸⁵ Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.


atmosphere in which Black students find themselves. Thus it is true that a free-standing BCC would give African-American students a place to celebrate their culture in an atmosphere free of intimidation found elsewhere on campus.”

These comments by Thomas and Wilkins demonstrate clearly the dual purpose of the BCC movement to transform both the institutional landscape and the built landscape.

The Black Awareness Council Changes the Narrative

By the end of the spring semester of 1992, the Sonja Haynes Stone Task Force had achieved only one of its stated goals: the renaming of the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone. The BCC coalition—which included members from all major Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native student organizations as well as more liberal majority-white organizations—needed a new strategy. Over the summer of 1992, a new student group formed that would dramatically change the political rhetoric and direction of the BCC movement. John Bradley, Tim Smith, Jimmy Hitchcock, and Malcolm Marshall, four members of the University’s football team, founded the Black Awareness Council (BAC) in July 1992.

“So that was really our mode of trying to operate to figure out how to change the narrative and change the movement,” John Bradley explained of BAC’s origins. “The movement had always been there. We didn’t start the movement by any stretch of the imagination, but we wanted to take it to the next level so that there would be some change that occurred.” Renee Alexander Craft, who covered the BCC movement for Black Ink, recalled that BAC “served the important role of amplification. There’s one thing to think,

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289 Initially the group was called the Black Athletic Council, but changed their name to include other members not affiliated with University athletics.

290 Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.
oh, the BCC is over there for the cultural folks and the activists. Well, these aren’t folks who are identifying solely as cultural folks and solely as activists. These are people who have come to get to make their legacy in football at UNC who are also daring to move forward in other kinds of ways.”

BAC’s campus celebrity status as members of the football team attracted national media attention to Chapel Hill as demonstrations in support of a free-standing BCC grew in size. On September 3, 1992, an estimated four hundred supporters marched to Chancellor Hardin’s home at eleven o’clock at night, chanting “No Justice, No Peace,” hoping to deliver a message of strength. Hardin was out of town and missed the students’ protest. A week later, on Thursday, September 10th, three hundred supporters marched from the Pit to South Building to present Hardin with a letter demanding his support for a free-standing Stone Center and the development of a BCC proposal to be given to the University’s Board of Trustees for a vote by November 13th. “Failure to respond to this deadline,” the letter said, “will leave the people no choice but to organize towards direct action.”

BAC’s members brought with them to the movement their experiences as Black male student athletes for the University, a role which both gave and denied them power on the campus. Following the heightened student-led action at the beginning of the semester, The New York Times reporter, Bill Rhoden, approached members of BAC for a story, eventually writing on the influence Black student athletes could exert on predominantly white campuses. Tim Smith, speaking on behalf of BAC in the Times, explained the unique role that Black student athletes could play in justice movements: “It’s not common for athletes, Black athletes, to be in

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291 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.

this type of leadership role. Athletes feel they have a chance to make it, as the white man defines making it, in this society. You have a chance to go and make millions of dollars, and you don’t want to jeopardize that by speaking out about injustice. We feel it’s our responsibility to speak out and lead. That’s what’s surprising a lot of people. As athletes here, we have a lot of untapped power because we bring so much money into this university.”

Smith’s comments in the *Times* demonstrate the acute recognition of members of BAC both of the power that they could exert by the nature of their distinction as athletes and of the devastating personal losses they might suffer for choosing to engage in actions deemed insubordinate by the University’s administration. They also address the first of the two main institutional processes through which anti-Blackness is reproduced: “the extraction of labor from the Black body without engaging the body as a laborer, but as property.” Smith, as an athlete for the University, was not financially compensated for his labor as a football player, situating his and his teammates’ labor “outside the constraints of wage labor” and inside the realm of institutional property. Smith also went on in the *Times* article to address the inadequacy of the Fishbowl and Hardin’s refusal to endorse a free-standing center: “To me, when he says we want a forum, not a fortress, he’s saying he doesn’t want us to have any power. Having our own building would give us a unique sense of power. As long as you can have us in a glass-enclosed


room where you can watch everything we do, every move we make—you can control us.”  
His statement directly addresses the second process through which anti-Blackness is reproduced—
“the mechanisms that institutions use to police, control, imprison, and kill”—by condemning the
space in which the institution sought to contain and surveil Black students.

The national coverage of BAC drew the attention of Spike Lee, then still an emerging
filmmaker and a cousin by marriage to the late Dr. Stone. Lee, along with Black nationalist
leader Khalid Abdul Muhammad, spoke to over five thousand people in the Dean Dome on
September 18th. After meeting with Black student leaders including Bradley, Smith, and
Thomas, Lee spoke to the crowd, urging more Black athletes to sit out games to advocate for a
free-standing BCC. Muhammad spoke last, urging Black students to give up on gaining the
support of white students, whom he described as “blue-eyed devils” and “crackers.”

Hundreds of white students left the rally early, upset at Muhammad’s comments, and momentarily, there
was concern that the BCC coalition, which included many white members of SEAC (Student
Environmental Action Coalition), the Campus Y, and B-GLAD (Bisexuals, Gay Men, Lesbians
and Allies for Diversity), would fall apart. But Black student leaders did not waste time
attempting to mend the white fragility of students distressed by Muhammad’s incendiary

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“I think most of the students understood that the things that he said weren’t really reflective of what we believed,” Bradley explained. There was no doubt following the Spike Lee rally that the introduction of BAC had dramatically changed the momentum, strategies, and rhetoric of the BCC movement. Speaking on behalf of “the majority of students,” Student Body President John Moody explained his concern that after the rally, “the label racist seems to have come an easy line of argument against the opponents of a free-standing BCC.” Because BAC’s platform was proudly pro-Black, their involvement in the movement threatened white privilege, risking a loss of the social and cultural dominance established in Chapel Hill by white students. Even for white members of the BCC coalition, the new outspoken pro-Black rhetoric coming from the members of BAC was suspect. “There was a little bit of curiosity as to what their agenda was,” Ruby Sinreich, an organizer with SEAC and white supporter of the BCC movement explained. “I may have had biases because they were athletes, but it was more, in my mind at least, that they weren’t activists before that.” A white writer for the Carolina Alumni Review explained that BAC’s refusal to use conciliatory rhetoric with white students “took center stage with the kind of aggressive bluntness encouraged on the football field…as in sports, there was no middle ground, only for or against.”

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300 Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.


Even beyond the unfounded fears of white students, there was another division in the coalition along gender lines that BAC’s entry into the movement amplified. Carol McDonald explained that members of BAC “brought a lot of visibility and used their sort of star power as athletes, which, again, also helped elevate the issue beyond campus and beyond sort of the Triangle area…I don’t know how much people talk about the tension that that created, three men with some very stereotypical, traditional notions about their role versus women’s roles in the movement and organizing.”

For other women students who had been organizing for over a year, BAC’s introduction into the coalition was a welcome one. “I was happy that they were there. It was revolutionary for student athletes on scholarship to stand up and to be such strong beautiful Black men, and to have them stand up for us. It was a relief,” remembered Michelle Thomas.

John Bradley explained that BAC understood they needed Black women’s leadership: “we never pushed away the ideas or the involvement of other women, because they were the majority of the leadership…we needed them, and I think that we understood that obviously this can’t become a male-driven leadership or movement, because there’s not enough of us to make an impact.”

BCC supporters followed up on the momentum they gained from the national coverage of BAC and the Spike Lee rally by interrupting the proceedings of University Day, October 12, 1992, by then an established tactic of direct action for student organizers. They entered Memorial Hall after the start of the morning program, standing along the rows of the auditorium, holding

304 Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

305 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

306 Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.
signs that read “BCC Now,” “No More Waiting,” and “Time Is Running Out Hardin.” That afternoon, the BCC Working Group, which had begun meeting that September, presented to Chancellor Hardin their recommendation to support a free-standing BCC and offered three possible locations for the building: “the area between Kenan Labs and Wilson Library, the area between Coker and the Bell Tower, and the area just south of the Student Union and across from Fetzer Gymnasium.” Three days later, Hardin finally publicly voiced his endorsement for a free-standing BCC named for Dr. Stone, but did not state a preference for the building’s location.

**The Question of Location**

Hardin’s statement of endorsement did not indicate that he would provide the support needed to plan and sustain the center, and indeed, following his statement he largely disengaged from the issue until students forced him to once again enter the conflict. Hardin explained that he felt that his endorsement of a free-standing BCC would be enough to appease student protestors, though privately he still “had some intuitive concerns about this being misperceived as resegregation and as an exclusive kind of Black Student Union.” Hardin’s passive endorsement of a free-standing BCC without institutional support was a function of the institution’s “diversity without justice” paradigm, in which the University escaped further media portrayals as a racist institution without having to provide the administrative support structures

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310 Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.
necessary to insure the construction of a center that honored the legacy of Dr. Sonja Haynes Stone.³¹

Despite Hardin’s private reservations, with his statement of support for a free-standing BCC, planning for the creation of the building began. The BCC Advisory Board—which had advised the BCC since its creation in 1988 with a membership of students, faculty, and a handful of administrators—had previously refused to acknowledge the BCC Working Group, headed by Provost McCormick. Now that the construction of a free-standing building had been agreed to, the two groups combined efforts to begin planning for the center. The co-joined groups employed Yongue Architects of Durham to make recommendations for each of the three proposed sites. In the early weeks of 1993, the Advisory Board and Working Group solidified programming decisions, but clashed over the potential building site. Working Group members preferred the site near Coker Hall and the Bell Tower, in the Coker Woods, across South Road, away from the main quad of campus. The BCC Advisory Board favored the site between Wilson Library and Dey Hall, a space on Polk Place which would physically include Black culture at the University within the main part of the campus landscape. Yongue’s report, delivered in late January 1993, also favored the Advisory Board’s preferred Wilson-Dey Site, stating that “putting a building here would reflect a serious commitment from the University to its students and their awareness of Black culture.”³¹²


Despite the architect’s overwhelming recommendation for the Wilson-Dey site, the two groups could not agree on a final decision. Margo Crawford, the director of the BCC, walked out of a February 15th meeting, stating that the process for choosing a building site lacked “integrity.”\(^{313}\) BCC student supporters shared Crawford’s determination that the BCC be included into the physical and symbolic center of the campus, arguing that the only way to carry Stone’s legacy into the building would be to locate it on the main quad of the campus.\(^{314}\) The BCC Working Group’s resistance to the Wilson-Dey site highlighted the University’s fear over the potential loss or dilution of whiteness at stake in building a free-standing BCC on the main quad of the campus, which would display a shift in the institution’s culture.

As geographers Aubrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake explain, “Whiteness is…a standpoint: a place from which to look at ourselves and the surrounding society, a position of normalcy, and perhaps moral superiority, from which to construct a landscape of what is same and what is different.”\(^{315}\) By placing the BCC within the main academic quad of the campus landscape, the institution would have been forced to draw attention to the ubiquity of its own whiteness and the way in which its hegemonic cultural landscape had proscribed Black culture and delineated Black bodies to labor. Not only would it have reflected the University’s commitment to Black culture, but placing the BCC on Polk Place would have been a decisive step towards the integration of the University, in its shared culture as well as on its campus.

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demand for a free-standing BCC, Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs Harold Wallace explained, “is a cry for inclusion.”316

The two groups split after the BCC Advisory Board rejected a proposal from the Working Group which suggested a 48,000 square foot center with no clear preference for a site. In response, the Advisory Board drew up their own proposal, which stated clearly their preference for the Wilson-Dey site and a 53,000 square foot center. Through February and March of 1993, students called on Chancellor Hardin to adjudicate the process for site selection.317 When the Board of Trustees met on March 26th, omitting any discussion of the BCC from its agenda, BCC supporters were furious. Although there were still other details related to the planning of the BCC that had not yet been decided, the battle over the site became the crucial hinge on which the rest of the movement depended.318

Donyell Roseboro, in her dissertation on the BCC movement, explained that the Wilson-Dey site “symbolized for some the essence of the struggle, the significance of the center, and the spirit of Dr. Stone. For that reason, some considered the issue of location absolutely non-negotiable—the center’s location on the main academic quad would mark the ultimate renegotiation of space, the final traversing of boundaries previously believed impenetrable.”319 Thus, for some BCC supporters, the campus landscape became the moral ground of the


movement, and the invisible boundaries surrounding the main quad of the campus became the paramount border to cross. Geographer Daniel Trudeau writes that “landscapes represent socio-spatial practices aimed at fixing boundaries, imposing cultural coherence and stabilizing meaning.”\(^{320}\) In placing the BCC on the Wilson-Dey site, BCC supporters believed they could finally destabilize the dominant cultural landscape that had for centuries fixed them outside the boundaries of the institution.

**South Building Sit-In and After-Effects**

Working from the Fishbowl in the last week of March 1993, BCC student supporters drew up plans to sit-in in South Building until Hardin called for an emergency meeting of the Board of Trustees and endorsed the Advisory Board’s proposal for the Wilson-Dey site.\(^{321}\) On April 1st, students began their sit-in. After delivering a letter to Chancellor Hardin, signed by “The Occupants,” a core group of Black and white students including members of BAC, SEAC, and the Campus Y, moved into the rotunda of the building.\(^{322}\) Chancellor Hardin refused to acknowledge their presence, and traveled to New Orleans to watch the men’s basketball team vie for the NCAA national championship title. During the two weeks they occupied the administration building, students made themselves at home, moving in a fax machine and television, rushing to Franklin Street to celebrate the men’s basketball team winning the NCAA championship, and hosting several guests, including labor and civil rights activist Dolores

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\(^{322}\) Letter from the Occupants of South Building to Chancellor Hardin in the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History Records #40341, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Huerta. On April 15th, the students still sitting in were expecting a visit from former presidential candidate Jesse Jackson. Upon arrival in Chapel Hill, Jackson met first with Chancellor Hardin, which confused and upset BCC student supporters, who understood Hardin to be their adversary in the struggle. Those students who were still occupying South Building moved directly from the rotunda into Hardin’s office.

Hardin, perhaps as a result of his conversation with Jackson and certainly having wearied of his limited access to the administration building, called for the intervention of the campus police, a step last taken against protesting Black students and workers during the Foodworkers' Strikes. Although the students sitting in repeated their sincere request to simply have a conversation with the chancellor about the future of the BCC, Hardin used police intervention as way to both end the sit-in and punish students for their insubordination. Roseboro explained that “in authorizing the removal of students from his office space, the chancellor enacted his ultimate role as a ‘master’ of the plantation” of the University. The escalation of the situation by calling for the campus police to remove students practicing civil disobedience demonstrated Hardin’s disregard for the lives of Black students, a public display of the institution’s deepest anti-Black processes. As scholars Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton explain in their work on white supremacy, “police impunity serves to distinguish between the racial itself and the elsewhere that mandates it…the distinction between those whose human being is put permanently in question

323 Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461; Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

and those for whom it goes without saying.”

By ordering the policing of Black and allied white students sitting-in in South Building, Hardin exemplified one of the crucial ways in which the institution denies the humanity of those who stand against its white supremacy.

Within an hour, over three hundred students had gathered in the building’s rotunda and the campus police began to threaten students with arrest. Carol McDonald remembered that “the way that the arrest then unfolded was interesting. It was like, ‘People have to leave, or you’re going to get arrested.’ That went on for almost forty-five minutes to an hour, and that’s how the giant group of three hundred got whittled down to, ‘OK, so these seventeen really are not going anywhere, so these are the ones that we have to do something with.’” One-by-one, sixteen students (and one local teacher), including Carol McDonald, Chris Baumann, Jimmy Hitchcock, and Tim Smith, were arrested and carried down to a van waiting for them on Cameron Avenue, which took them to the county jail in nearby Hillsborough. Chris Baumann remembered feeling both pride and fear while in police custody: “So I was scared, because I didn’t know what the consequence was going to be in my record. It’s something today I’m proud of, but at that moment, I was scared.” The remaining students, who had gathered outside South Building, marched down Franklin Street towards the Chapel Hill jail, where they believed police had taken the arrested students, chanting “No Justice, No Peace.”

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326 Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

327 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

328 Thanassis Cambanis, “16 students arrested in Hardin’s office,” The Daily Tar Heel, 16 April 1993, 1.
Chancellor Hardin eventually dropped the charges against the seventeen arrested, but the issue of site selection for the free-standing building had still not been taken up by the Board of Trustees by May, after spring commencement. The Board of Trustees deferred to the University Building and Grounds Committee, which reported in June that they recommended the Wilson-Dey site, calling it “acceptable” and the Coker Woods site “less acceptable.” At its next meeting, on July 23, 1993, the Board of Trustees approved a free-standing BCC at the Coker Woods site, citing the Wilson-Dey site’s square footage capacity as a deciding factor, though the architect’s plan stated clearly that the Wilson-Dey site could contain a building larger than the planned 50,000 square foot building.

Supporters were disappointed, and at the request of the BCC Advisory Board, trustees agreed to hear arguments for re-evaluating the Wilson-Dey site at its September 24th meeting, though afterwards, they agreed not to re-vote on the issue. Trustee Angela Bryant—one of two Black trustees, and an alumna of the University who had witnessed the violence against Black students during the second Foodworkers’ Strike—voiced her frustrations about the Board’s decision, telling The Daily Tar Heel that the issue wasn’t just over the building or the site, but rather was a “symbolic acknowledgement of the importance of Black culture… I’m not sure that there’s a way that the [Board of Trustees] can understand that or wants to understand that.” By placing the BCC on the Coker Woods site outside of the physical and symbolic center of the

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campus landscape, the trustees fortified the boundaries protecting the white hegemony of the campus.

On October 12, 1993, the University celebrated its bicentennial, but many Black students, faculty, and workers felt uncomfortable joining the celebration, frustrated that the seeming conclusion of the two-year long struggle for a BCC had resulted in a pyrrhic victory. Harry Amana, BCC Advisory Board chairman and a journalism professor (and later, a Stone Center director) expressed that frustration to The Daily Tar Heel, stating, “The University is throwing its 200th-year birthday party, and we haven’t been invited. African Americans were never included in the University in its beginning. Here we are—celebrating 200 years of what? We’re still on the outside looking in.”

In January 1994, Margo Crawford, the BCC director who had served as a mentor for the students within the movement, resigned to join a diversity consulting group in her hometown of Chicago. “She challenged us to push the envelope when we were fighting for the Stone Center, but she had so much to lose,” Michelle Thomas explained. White administrators, particularly Paul Hardin, viewed Crawford as an instigator among the students supporters for the BCC movement, and many students believed that her departure was at least in part a result of the “personal enmity between her and some of the administrators at Carolina.”

As the movement began to cool, conversations about the BCC turned to fundraising. Tim Minor, who managed donations for the Stone Center as part of his position in University Development, recalled the end of a slow process of fundraising in 1999: “We had a big twenty-


333 Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

six million dollar bequest that came to the university by an alum who passed, and [Chancellor] Michael Hooker made the decision—before he died, made the decision—that monies were going to be used to help complete the fundraising for the Stone Center. Without that type of support the Stone Center wouldn’t happen.”

By the building’s groundbreaking in 2001, the $9 million price tag of the Stone Center had been funded with private gifts, contributed by more than 1,500 donors. Those contributions covered one hundred percent of the total construction cost.

Minor, who had been a member of the BSM and a witness to the movement as a student, played a crucial role in raising funds, reaching out to alumni and listening to their ideas for the future of the center. “You had to listen first before you could act and so they felt listened to,” he explained about talking to Black alumni from the 1960s and 1970s. “So being the bridge between the students who are alumni now and also with other folks who were looking to fund it and sort of being able to express or talk about it at that time made it a little easier for me than it might have for anybody else.” Through Minor’s leadership and that of his colleagues in University Development, including Margie Crowell and Matt Kupec, the Stone Center became the first building on the campus funded entirely through private donations, with many of the largest donations from national corporations headquartered in the state. “A lot of the funding ironically came from people who weren’t Black,” explained Minor. “The biggest gifts came from white people or from corporations run by alumni.”

Jimmy Hitchcock, who had co-founded BAC and

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335 Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.


337 Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.
enjoyed a successful career in the National Football League after graduating, also donated substantially to the center, as did his old football coach from the University, Mack Brown.\textsuperscript{338}

**Legacy of the BCC Movement in the Stone Center**

The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History opened in 2004 in a tri-level, 44,500 square foot building nestled in Coker Woods, adjacent to the Bell Tower. The center's opening, Roseboro argued, “epitomized a final shift in discourse” for the BCC from that of a social hub to an academic center. This shift also happened within institutional structures, with the movement of the Black Cultural Center from the Division of Student Affairs into Academic Affairs.\textsuperscript{339} Hardin explained this move, stating that,

> “When we shifted the line of reporting from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs [we did so] to underline that this is not a student union but an educational activity, when we planned a building that doesn't even have a lounge in it but has ten classrooms and all, I think we've underscored the fact that given the ambiguities that inhere in this kind of situation we have been extremely attentive to the dangers and have tried to avoid the dangers but still affirm some glimmer of understanding on the part of the majority culture ourselves that there is a need for some turf, a need for some respect, a need for a sense of ownership in the minorities but then to keep helping the minorities understand that that's just the first step and a second step is to share that rich culture with others and to be open to others and not to resegregate.”\textsuperscript{340}

Hardin’s disparaging comments explain that the lack of social spaces in the Stone Center was intended as a way to create a space that would “keep helping minorities understand” that the center would not be a space of Black self-segregation. The purposeful lack of social spaces in the


\textsuperscript{340} Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.
Stone Center and its movement to Academic Affairs, therefore, can be understood as an institutional method of containing Black-created counter-spaces on the campus. Although the University would continue its ostensible support for Black academic achievement within the Stone Center, it did so through the logic of interest convergence, through which celebrations of Black academic accomplishments could be touted by the institution to rebuke critiques of racism.\textsuperscript{341} Hardin’s comments also demonstrate an institutional disregard for the argument BCC supporters had made for the center as early as 1986: it would serve not just Black students but operate to “educat[e] and sensitiz[e] non-Blacks to the history, concerns, and aspirations of Blacks in America.”\textsuperscript{342}

BCC supporters, for the most part, did not understand the degree to which the new academic focus of the Stone Center had been forwarded by white administrators as a way to undermine the potentials for the center to serve the social needs of Black students. Most believed that the new focus of the center as solely academic was crucial for securing funding and ensuring the BCC served the University’s mission statement. Still, it seemed to many alumni of the BCC movement that the academic focus of the Stone Center disregarded the ways in which the social and academic aspects of Black student life had been integrated within the operations of its organizational predecessor, the Fishbowl.\textsuperscript{343} For contemporary students who never knew the

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\textsuperscript{342} Proposal for a Black Cultural Center, February 1986 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{343} Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466; Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456; Interview with Ruby Sinreich by Jonathan Tarleton, 24 March 2011, L-0334; Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.
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space of the Fishbowl, there is a palpable dissociation between the concept of a center for Black culture and the current role the Stone Center occupies on the campus and within the institution as a whole. “It feels like an academic building because I think it definitely is,” Mars Earle, a graduate of 2015 said. “You had weird classroom set ups and the security guard out front and the weirdness at the Women's Center that people didn't really know was in there. And it’s kind of hard to find.”344

The “weirdness” Earle describes is echoed in the feelings of alumni, who remember the vibrancy and dynamism of the BCC when visiting the Stone Center. “In the planning, we imagined what we didn’t have,” Renee Alexander Craft explained. “We didn’t have a freestanding building. We didn’t have a library. We didn’t have a suite of offices that some of this necessary work could happen in. We didn’t have a space for some of the student organizations who would need to be in close proximity. We didn’t have a theater. We didn’t have an auditorium. So we thought about what we needed, and the building was going to be that. And I think as we dreamed forward, one, it was such a struggle to even get that far. We just never thought about the space we had.”345 The space that the BCC Planning Committee imagined and built is indeed impressive. Designed by the award-winning architectural firm, the Freelon Group (headed by the nationally distinguished Black architect and North Carolinian, Phillip Freelon), the building houses the staff of the Stone Center, seminar rooms, classrooms, a 10,000-volume lending library, a computer classroom, an art gallery and museum, a 360-seat auditorium, a

344 Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

345 Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.
multipurpose room, a dance studio, several office suites, and space for visiting scholars and artists.  

But many alumni, even with a deep appreciation of the remarkable nature of the center, register shock that the building does not contain a social space in which students can gather. “When we were students we though the academic and the social just went hand in hand and they were integrated so seamlessly, and we didn’t understand why they had to privilege the academic when they built the free-standing center. Now, of course I get it,” Roseboro described. “But when I went to see the center...I was floored that there weren’t real social spaces.” Unlike Manning Hall, Upendo Lounge, South Campus, and the Fishbowl, all primarily social counter-spaces created by Black students in which to support and nurture one another, the Stone Center, without a social space, cannot necessarily occupy the same role, a result of its status as an institutionally recognized academic counter-space. In this way, the Stone Center operates as a different kind of counter-space from its predecessors. Sanitized of its social capacities and disregarded by the institution despite the prodigious academic achievements of its staff and associated faculty and students, the Stone Center operates beyond the boundaries of the University’s cultural landscape.

The question of whether and how the Stone Center can become a social space for students is complicated by the lack of funding the center receives from the University. “It tries to serve a lot of purposes...But I think the question now becomes—the Stone Center’s basement is not even complete. The Stone Center doesn’t have a fundraiser,” Chris Faison, now a current


University staff member, explained. “So, I think it would be nice to see...a real focus on the Stone Center to get past just saying, ‘Oh, we have a building.’”348 In 2015, the University System’s Board of Governors targeted the Stone Center along with eight of the System’s other centers and institutes (many of which support minority communities in North Carolina) for potential defunding, signaling that the status of the Stone Center within the institution is not secure.349 Whether the Stone Center can serve as both a social and academic space for Black students remains a possibility. Roseboro, in her analysis of the current space of the Stone Center, argues for the potential for the growth of its social capacities, believing that “students will invariably mold it into what they need it to be.”350

While the potential for the creation of a social space within the Stone Center might still exist, the University’s leadership confirmed their approach toward Black-created spaces in deciding to place the Stone Center in a location removed from the social and academic center of campus: while the creation of Black spaces would be tolerated for the positive impression of racial diversity at the institution, support for those spaces and their inclusion within the mainstream of the University’s dominant culture would not be permitted. The question initially posed by the BCC movement—whether Black culture could ever been included into the cultural landscape of the University—has an answer in the position that the Stone Center occupies within the institution, which illustrates how the “conditional hospitality” of the white institution accepts

348 Interview with Christopher Faison by Charlotte Fryar, 9 December 2016, L-0459.


spaces (or people) of color on the condition that “they return that hospitality by integrating into the common organizational culture, or by ‘being’ diverse, and allowing institutions to celebrate their diversity.”351

The Stone Center is, therefore, included within the campus and institutional landscapes only through this coded logic of diversity which upholds white supremacy. The geography of exclusion that had been established for Black students at the desegregation of the institution in 1951 remains in place, and the socio-cultural boundaries that Black students sought to finally cross with the placement of the BCC in the center of campus remain fixed. The University’s opposition to the inclusion of Black culture within the landscape of the campus and the institution all but insured that the Stone Center, like Upendo Lounge and the Fishbowl before it, would be prevented from reaching its potential as a Black student-created space which sustained and affirmed Black culture against the University’s continued anti-Blackness. The mitigated success of the BCC movement signaled to students and workers that a different approach to spatially-based organizing would be necessary, as future movements turned away from creating Black spaces and toward contesting campus spaces that represented and enacted white supremacy.

CHAPTER SIX: CHEEK-CLARK BUILDING

On September 17, 1998, dozens of housekeepers, administrators, professors, and trustees, gathered to rededicate and rename the building that had for seventy-five years been known as the University Laundry. Representatives from the University’s administration and the UNC Housekeepers Association (HKA) spoke at the event, each in turn remarking on the historical significance of the building’s renaming as the Kennon Cheek/Rebecca Clark Building—now the central office for the University’s Housekeeping Division, named in honor of two Black labor organizers and University employees from the early twentieth century. Barbara Prear, the president of HKA, spoke to the assembled group, marking the event as an opportunity “to recognize the contributions of African-American housekeepers to the University community.”

In the seven years before the Cheek-Clark Building rededication, the HKA, a group comprised of the low-wage housekeepers and groundskeepers of the University, most of whom were members of Orange County’s Black communities, organized one of the most successful labor movements of the late twentieth century in the South. At the legal conclusion of their movement, a settlement with the University in November 1996, the housekeepers, led by petitioners Barbara Prear and Marsha Tinnen, earned over one million dollars in pay raises and back pay. They also earned “recognition of the HKA as the representative of the housekeepers,

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…substantial backing for career training, child and elder care, a public health study, and the establishment of a historical commission.”

After decades of filing complaints and grievances which cited horrific working conditions, abysmal pay, and a lack of opportunity for advancement, the housekeepers took up a bold weapon in their struggle: the University’s history.

The legal argument they filed with the state was supported by the historical legacy of Black freedom striving and the history of the University’s treatment of Black workers, extending into enslavement. “We knew the 1960s struggle [Foodworkers’ Strikes] and talked a lot about that,” Chris Baumann, a white student organizer with the HKA from 1991 to 1997 explained. “Then we found out there had been another in the thirties very similar to what we had done...And then we kept going back further, understanding that the university owned slaves, that Old East and Old West were built by slaves, and so that’s why we started arguing for reparations. People always say, ‘Oh, you can’t prove reparations.’ Well, we felt that we could prove—we did prove reparations.”

The housekeepers movement, directed by the legacies of Black freedom striving, shaped the 1996 settlement by using the University’s history as a tool with which to pursue justice for Black low-wage workers at the University, creating a model for how histories of injustice could be used to rectify present conditions. Although the potency of the memory of the movement behind it has been diluted, the Cheek-Clark Building exists as a physical representation of the ways in which Black housekeepers and their student supporters used the legacies of previous movements to reclaim the University as a place that they too could assert their ownership of, as

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353 "Housekeepers Win Settlement," Chapel Hill NAACP newsletter, Spring 1997 in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

354 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
white Chapel Hill citizens had done for centuries. The housekeepers’ reclamation of the University as a dynamic place of resistance is best understood as the confluence of the two prior organizing approaches—a way to claim spaces of resistance by contesting the ways in which those spaces have been inscribed as anti-Black, using the history of Black freedom striving to do so. In asserting their claims to the history and place of the University, the housekeepers movement established a new approach for spatially-based racial justice movements to challenge the white supremacy of the cultural landscape using the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.

**Forming the Housekeepers Association**

For decades before the formation of the HKA, Black workers at the University campaigned for racial and economic justice from the institution. Although there are numerous individuals who organized on behalf of Black workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the HKA followed most directly in the steps of the Janitors’ Association of the 1930s and 1940s. As the effects of the Great Depression came to Chapel Hill following the 1929 stock market crash, the University threatened a ten percent pay cut to the wages of the janitorial staff. In response, four Black janitors—Frank Hairston, Elliot Washington, Melvin Rich, and Kennon Cheek—began meeting regularly to discuss issues arising from their jobs, and eventually, their options for organizing against the potential pay cuts. The Janitors’ Association formed on April 14, 1930, with Kennon Cheek as its president, a position he held for three years. Early victories for the organization included “a week’s paid vacation, showers in the janitors’ bathrooms, and increased communication between the janitors and upper level administrators.”

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355 *The Voice of the Janitor’s Association*, Newsletter 1940 in the Office of the Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Michael Hooker Records #40026, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
In 1942, the Janitors’ Association reorganized to become the Local 403-P of the State, County, and Municipal Workers of America, an organization affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). With Rebecca Clark serving as its shop steward, the organization (now representing all low-wage University workers) in 1947 won wage increases for laundry workers, safer work spaces, and more reasonable work schedules. As McCarthyism swept through Chapel Hill in the 1950s, the national CIO merged with the more conservative American Federation of Labor, significantly diminishing the capacity for the University’s workers to continue to organize for significant change.356 The next major wave of labor activism at the University was the Foodworkers’ Strikes of 1969, recounted in Lenoir Hall and Manning Hall. Both the Janitors’ Association and the Foodworkers’ Strikes provided the UNC Housekeepers Association with two strong models of how the University’s Black low-wage workers organized for dignity and equity in pay, treatment, and working conditions, historical precedents that the HKA utilized in the reclamation of a radical history of Black freedom striving at the University, which they used to build their own movement.

In the spring semester of 1980, housekeeping supervisors threatened to fire dozens of housekeepers who had not been able to get to the campus during a blizzard. Following this threat, Gene Alston, a housekeeper widely known to have organized with the Communist Workers Party, was fired. The politically motivated firing of Alston and the routine harassment of Black women workers by white supervisors galvanized the housekeepers to protest. On March 27, a group of housekeepers presented the Physical Plant Director, Claude Swecker, with a list of demands that included the removal of two supervisors widely known to sexually harass female employees, the ability to use vacation time at any time during the year, the elimination of

“warning letters” for employees who were late to work because of inclement weather, the rehiring of Gene Alston, and the establishment of regular meetings for all housekeepers.357

Swecker and others in the Housekeeping Department did not meet their demands, and the movement could not be sustained. But out of this action, in 1983, an early version of the Housekeepers Association (HKA) formed. In 1987, another staff member, Keith Edwards, the first Black woman hired to the University’s police force, filed a grievance against the University, charging her supervisors with gender and racial discrimination. Edwards was represented in her suit by Al McSurely, a local civil rights lawyer. Although Edwards did not settle her case until 1995 (the lengthened timeline was a consequence of a series of unsuccessful appeals from the University), the continued success of Edwards’s case encouraged other workers to question their own treatment by the University and take important steps towards collectively organizing.358

In February 1991, a group of twenty housekeepers with the legal counsel of McSurely, (later adding Mark Dorisin and Ashley Osment) filed a Step One Grievance against the Housekeeping Department’s administrators, citing racial discrimination in the form of poverty wages, unfair treatment, and the lack of opportunities for career advancement. Black housekeepers were largely hired at the lowest pay grade (Level 50, 51, 52), with the lowest salary of any employee of the University, while their few white colleagues were hired a higher pay grades. McSurely, speaking to The Daily Tar Heel, explained that “these Black jobs had about 10 to 20 percent lower starting pay than white jobs, and that was a very key part of our

357 History of Black Workers and UNC Timeline in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

358 Jennifer Talhelm, “Edwards Confident after appeal hearing,” The Daily Tar Heel, 27 August 1992, 1; For more on both McSurely and Edwards, see interviews with McSurely, Al (C-0347, C-0348, C-0349, C-0350, C-0351, and R-0840) and Keith Edwards (K-0230, K-0541, K-0543, K-0543, R-0373, and R-0860) in the Southern Oral History Program Interview Database.
lawsuit — that the University had basically developed a whole analysis that Black people didn’t need as much money to live on as white people and certainly didn’t need any promotions or training or any way to move up.”359 These strategies employed by the University to keep Black workers in subordinate positions by ignoring their human needs are part of the way in which anti-Blackness is reproduced in that “Black people remain property whether or not an individual [or institution] owns them.”360

At this level in the grievance process, the Superintendent of Housekeeping responded to the group, stating that there was no racial discrimination. The grievance next moved to Step Two, which involved the University’s upper-level administration in South Building, who also refused to address the grievance claim and allow legal representation for the housekeepers in meetings. At this point, it became clear to the housekeepers that if they wanted change, they would have to organize into a formal group and bring in partners to support their efforts. Over the summer of 1991, the group of twenty, led by Marsha Tinnen, Barbara Prear, Annie Pettiford, and Larry Farrar, reformed the UNC Housekeepers Association, which would serve as the movement’s recognized organization for the filing of a class-action lawsuit. HKA set three goals for the movement: “higher wages, fairer treatment, and beneficial training programs,” which would together serve as the guiding goals of their campaign.361

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359 Harris Wheeless, “UNC Housekeepers’ Settlement was made 20 years ago,” The Daily Tar Heel, 27 November 2016.


361 Justice for Housekeepers Pamphlet, We Are All Housekeepers, Fall 1993, in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Student Support and Institutional Retaliation

Starting in the fall semester of 1991, HKA sought out students to support them in their organizing work, holding meetings in student social spaces to educate them about the challenges housekeepers faced in organizing their lawsuit. “At one of the meetings,” Chris Baumann, a junior in the fall of 1991, remembered, “Al and Marsha Tinnen and Annie Pettiford came, and they showed the video of the 1969 cafeteria workers’ strike...and then Marsha and Annie talked about what they were up against.”362 HKA leadership used the legacy of the multiracial campaign of the Foodworkers' Strikes to activate contemporary students for their cause, grounding their practice of counter-storytelling in their own experiences. By engaging in this form of counter-storytelling, the housekeepers were able to “teach others that by combining elements from both the story [Foodworkers’ Strikes] and the current reality [the lived experiences of the housekeepers], one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone.”363

The first logistic hurdle to overcome was getting housekeepers across the campus to sign on to the class-action. Housekeepers were assigned to certain buildings and had little contact with their colleagues who worked in other campus buildings. Because there was no convenient central housekeeping office to gather in without being harassed or watched by their supervisors, it was difficult for HKA leaders to meet with their colleagues to explain why they should join the class-action lawsuit. To help cover the extent of the campus, HKA asked student supporters to help. Baumann, galvanized by the documentary video of the Foodworkers’ Strikes and the

362 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

stories of the housekeepers’ struggles for dignity and better treatment, began waking up early to meet with housekeepers across the campus. “They were trying to build this class-action grievance, and so they were having a hard time getting around to get everybody to sign it, so I said, ‘Well, is there anything hard you have to do?’ And they said, ‘Well, you just take this sheet around and explain what’s going on and sign it.’ So I said, ‘Why don’t I just get up early before class and go around and see if I can find some folks.’ So I went around, and my first day, I came back with over thirty forms.”

Baumann soon became a key student supporter of the housekeepers movement, along with former students and graduate students Matthew Stewart, Fred Wray, Jeff Jones, Mathieu Despard, and George Loveland. Many student supporters for the housekeepers movement were white, motivated to support the housekeepers’ cause because the movement was not centered only on racial justice, a cause often difficult to get white investment in, but workers rights. Although many active students supporters of HKA were white, the vast majority of white students, faculty, and staff were disengaged from the issue entirely. For his part, Baumann explained that he saw his role as a white male student in the movement as one of support: “my work was kind of behind the scenes and helping and trying to make sure that they [the housekeepers] had the space to lead.”

Students organized cookouts in the Pit to fundraise for

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364 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

365 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450; Justice for Housekeepers Pamphlet, We Are All Housekeepers, Fall 1993 in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


367 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
HKA, but soon were challenged by the administrators, who claimed it was illegal for students to give money directly to employees of the University.  

The reactionary strategies employed by administrators to punish student supporters of Black workers indicated that the University recognized and feared the power that white students and Black workers could wield when united by a common cause. After Baumann was brought up on false charges to the Student Honor Court and administrators called in the Health Department to stop a cookout in the Pit, students and housekeepers moved their fundraisers off campus. “There was a club out in Hillsborough, and we’d sell tickets, and it was fun. Students would be there, housekeepers, and we’d just have a nice fun party to raise money for the movement,” Baumann described. These events provided a rare opportunity for housekeepers and students to come together in a social space, building relationships between mostly white students and Black workers which would strengthen the foundation for the movement.

Happening simultaneously in the early years of the housekeepers movement was the student-led movement for a free-standing Black Cultural Center (BCC). Although they were distinct organizing efforts, student participants organized for both, sometimes holding simultaneous rallies and speak-outs on behalf of both Black housekeepers and students. “Both the housekeepers movement and the Black Cultural Center movement was about....acknowledging the dignity and contributions of people who had been marginalized at UNC for two hundred years. That really was the root of it. And so because it was that common purpose, the Black Cultural Center could not ignore the housekeepers movement because it


369 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
signified what it was we were trying to accomplish,” explained Michelle Thomas, the Black Student Movement (BSM) president from 1992 to 1993.\(^{370}\)

The campus conversation about the housekeepers movement propelled some students into the BCC movement. John Bradley, a co-founder of the Black Awareness Council and BSM president from 1993 to 1994, was introduced to the issues surrounding the BCC movement through conversations about the housekeepers movement: “So I’d heard about the Black Cultural Center, and more on the side of the housekeepers movement just with wages and some things that they were trying to get done.” Although the two movements ran parallel and on occasion shared the same platform, most student energy devoted to racial justice organizing was given to the BCC movement. “I think part of the problem was that it was a valiant and understandable struggle, but the students didn’t really—it didn’t really resonate with them as much, and the housekeepers movement almost seemed like an ancillary movement that they couldn’t identify with,” Bradley explained.\(^{371}\)

**The Legal Case Against the University**

Despite the tempered support they received from the larger student body, the HKA continued to organize, building the case for their class-action and holding marches and rallies to advocate for their lawsuit. In January 1992, members of the HKA delivered ninety-one signatures of housekeepers who wanted to move their grievance up to a Step Three Level Grievance. The University denied their request to hear the grievance and denied their right to have an attorney represent them. Although several meetings were held between the Steering Committee of the HKA and Chancellor Paul Hardin, there had been no movement made towards

\(^{370}\) Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

\(^{371}\) Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.
the HKA’s three goals—higher wages, better treatment, and job training programs. In January 1993, the housekeepers moved their grievance up to a Step Four Level Grievance, having now gone through the entirety of the University’s internal dispute resolution and grievance process.\footnote{372 \textit{Justice for Housekeepers Pamphlet, We Are All Housekeepers, Fall 1993} in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.}

The Steering Committee of the HKA next filed a Contested Case Petition with the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings on behalf of over four hundred housekeepers and groundskeepers, charging racial discrimination. It was the first class action case for state employees in the history of North Carolina.\footnote{373 “Historic Victory By UNC Housekeepers Approved By Judge” Press Release from UNC Housekeepers, % McSurely, Dorosin, and Osment, 3 December 1996 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.} Through the fall semester of 1993, the University’s legal team made several motions to dismiss the case, which were denied by Administrative Law Judge Brenda Becton. In October, David Parker, representing the University as the state’s Assistant Attorney General, made an extraordinary move, filing a writ of certiorari with Judge Henry Hight in the Superior Court in Wake County and requesting a review of Becton’s order to rule on the case by December. Judge Hight granted the writ, accepted the case, and promptly dismissed it. After an unusual bout with North Carolina’s Court of Appeals, with the University represented by then Attorney General and future North Carolina Governor Mike Easley, the case was sent back to Judge Becton in April 1995. Later that month, the University’s legal team led by State Deputy Attorney General Thomas Ziko, appealed again, petitioning the North Carolina Supreme Court to overturn the decision to give the case back to Judge Becton. This last appeal was denied, and the case was finally sent to Judge Becton to review in July

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372 Justice for Housekeepers Pamphlet, We Are All Housekeepers, Fall 1993 in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

373 “Historic Victory By UNC Housekeepers Approved By Judge” Press Release from UNC Housekeepers, % McSurely, Dorosin, and Osment, 3 December 1996 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
1995, over four years since the first grievance had been filed by the initial group of twenty housekeepers.374

During this tenuous period of legal back and forth, the housekeepers attempted to keep the momentum of the movement going, continuing fundraising and holding marches and rallies in Chapel Hill and Raleigh in support of their cause. Within state government, these demonstrations were not well received. Don Follmer, the press secretary of the State Speaker of the House of Representatives, referred to housekeepers and their students supporters as “niggers and wormy kids” to the Associated Press during a rally led by housekeepers in Raleigh.375 But in Chapel Hill, the housekeepers increasingly had the support of many liberal white students. Baumann, who had graduated in 1993 but earned an organizing fellowship to stay on with the HKA, worked with current students to form two student organizations that would support coalition-building and fundraising efforts for the housekeepers. Students, housekeepers, and community members first organized “the We Are All Housekeepers, and then later it was a group of kind of the next generation of students that we did the Coalition for Economic Justice, and I think that probably came out of the students kind of forming their own name, and so it was building ally groups.”376

Both We Are All Housekeepers, which was active from 1993 to 1995, and the Coalition for Economic Justice, in operation from 1995 to 2000, were groups that melded students, faculty,

374 Justice for Housekeepers Pamphlet, We Are All Housekeepers, Fall 1993 in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Tinnen et al. v. University of North Carolin at Chapel Hill, Wake County No. 93 CVS 09678, North Carolina Court of Appeals, 4 April 1995 in the Alan McSurely Papers, #4928, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

375 Letter from the UNC Housekeepers Association to Harold Brubaker, 24 April 1996 in the Alan McSurely Papers, #4928, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

376 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.
and staff. Both served as support organizations, developing newsletters, organizing protests, and holding rallies to support the housekeepers movement. The Coalition for Economic Justice (later, it became Students for Economic Justice) focused largely on efforts to organize against potential privatization of the Housekeeping Department by the University, a strategy which mirrored the outsourcing of dining operations to SAGA Food Services after the first Foodworkers’ Strike in the spring of 1969. These two student-led organizations and their support work were part of the overall strategy of the HKA. “We were always talking about kind of the one-two punch, so we had the organizing strategy and the legal strategy, and I always felt that without either one of those, we probably wouldn’t have been as successful,” Baumann said.

“A Modest Proposal” and the Final Settlement

Judge Becton asked the HKA to prepare the settlement proposal with the University in the fall of 1995. In meetings with lawyers and advisors, the HKA developed by January 1996 what they named “a modest proposal” for potential settlement with the University. In the proposal, the petitioners described the University’s relationship to Black workers—citing scholarly research on the institution’s history through each historical era, most from a graduate student, local historian, and social justice advocate Yonni Chapman—to show that the plantation system enslaved people had labored under during the first century of the University had been reprised for the modern era in the supervisory system of the Housekeeping Department.

“UNC-CH has always placed African American employees in its most menial and physically

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377 “Chancellor Hooker: It’s Time To Talk,” Press Release from the Housekeepers Association and the Coalition for Economic Justice, 4 September 1996 in the Campus Y Papers of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

378 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

379 Jeff Jones, a doctoral student in the Department of History also contributed to this research.
demanding jobs and paid them substantially less than white employees who did comparable work,” the proposed settlement stated.\(^\text{380}\) By citing previous workers struggles, the petitioners of HKA revealed a history of neglect and abuse on the part of the University, publicly attacking the institution’s anti-Blackness, which regarded Black workers as fungible bodies for labor.\(^\text{381}\)

Their lawsuit was grounded in the phrase within the thirteenth amendment which abolished the “badges and indices of slavery,” which HKA argued were still in effect at the University, evidenced by housekeepers’ low pay, plantation-like supervisory systems, and the inaccessibility of career advancement. HKA utilized county data on Black land ownership across Orange County to explain how the University had kept wages for Black workers low in order to keep land in the control of white citizens and the University. They provided data to show how Black workers and students had “provided a disproportionate amount of financing to build and endow UNC-CH” and explained the ways in which the University had made “little or no effort to create new career training programs for housekeepers.”\(^\text{382}\) The construction of the “modest proposal” is one of the most striking acts of the reclamation of the University through counter-storytelling, in which Black workers presented a counter-history of the University and its relationship to Black people.\(^\text{383}\) In every section of the “modest proposal,” the petitioners used the history of the University to demonstrate that the anti-Blackness of the institution was not just


a facet of its past but instead was at the center of its contemporary approach to labor and racial
difference.

HKA’s proposal for remediation included back pay for every housekeeper, the creation of
a housekeeper endowment fund, career development programs, and free health and dental care
for housekeepers and their families. The housekeeper endowment fund they proposed would be
funded in part from “the money with interest accumulated by the University from the escheats
which it realized from 1795-1971,” money which came during the pre-Emancipation era in part
from the selling of enslaved persons. The HKA called on the University to establish a career
training program for one hundred housekeepers a year, which would allow them to advance to
more highly paid work and guaranteed them jobs after they advanced through their training.384

The housekeepers also called directly for financial and educational reparations,
requesting a small $1000 “one-time payment to the designated heir of all Black employees at
UNC between 1793 and 1960,” as well as free tuition for children and grandchildren from ages 2
to 21.385 This version of the proposed settlement with the University was a visionary call for
symbolic and material reparations from the University for former and current Black workers and
forwarded what might have been the first significant movement towards a dramatic cultural
paradigm shift for the institution towards reparative justice. Chancellor Michael Hooker,
unwilling to recognize the justness of the housekeepers’ proposal, called their policy suggestions
“excessive in the extreme,” and the HKA began to prepare for a hearing trial, rather than a

384 Tinnen v. UNC Proposed Settlement Draft, January 1996 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern
Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

385 Tinnen v. UNC Proposed Settlement Draft, January 1996 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern
Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
closed-door settlement. By rejecting the housekeepers’ initial proposal, the University once again refused to use its power to move the institution towards racial justice.

However, on November 26, 1996, the University finally settled with the HKA, who achieved all three of their stated goals from 1991. Every housekeeper and groundskeeper at the University received a pay raise of up to $1700 and a one-time, $600 Christmas bonus. The HKA was given a monthly meeting with the Chancellor to “meet, confer, and consider” any changes suggested by the HKA. Career training programs were to be initiated for housekeepers, and a commission was to be developed to analyze the effect of the work conditions of housekeepers. Significantly for the historical legal case the housekeepers mounted, a commission was to be developed to honor Black workers at the University, with attention given to the institution’s history with enslavement. Gathered in Hill Hall, three hundred housekeepers across the University voted to accept the settlement, but many of them already knew that it would be another struggle to get the University to meet the conditions of the settlement. “We are catching our breath, and getting ready for the next stage—a permanent workers’ organization and center which fights for the rights of all African Americans and other working people against the arrogance of the University,” Barbara Prear, president of the HKA, told the Chapel Hill NAACP early the next spring.

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386 “Historic Victory By UNC Housekeepers Approved By Judge” Press Release from UNC Housekeepers, % McSurely, Dorosin, and Osment, 3 December 1996 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


388 “Housekeepers Win Settlement,” Chapel Hill NAACP newsletter, Spring 1997 in the Campus Y of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40126, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
The Fight Continues

As predicted, the HKA returned to protest within half a year, presenting Chancellor Michael Hooker on University Day, October 12, 1997 with a “failing report card,” a grade calculated by how well the University had kept the promises of the settlement. Almost a full year after the settlement had been reached, the University had failed to hold satisfactory monthly meetings and no movement had been made either for the commissions to honor the contributions of Black workers or to analyze the effects of working conditions for the health of housekeepers. The University’s refusal to follow through with actions promised in the settlement agreement mirrored the treatment of foodworkers by the University and SAGA almost thirty years before.

Following another series of protests from the HKA and the student-led Coalition for Economic Justice, the University began working to meet the stipulations that they had agreed to a year ago, including raising pay.389

To meet the condition requiring recognition of Black workers, the University created a Commemorative Commission, headed by Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs Harold Wallace. On January 28, 1998, the Board of Trustees accepted the Commission’s recommendation to rename the University Laundry to the Kennon Cheek/Rebecca Clark Building “in honor of two persons who provided effective leadership for University Housekeepers during the 1930s and 1940s.”390 Although the commission developed an outline for a more thorough examination of the history of Black workers’ achievements on the campus, they were not given adequate resources to write a full report or to enact their plans. If the Commemorative Commission,


390 Harold Wallace to Elson Floyd, 12 November 1997 in the Office of the Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Michael Hooker Records #40026, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
established in 1997, had been given the adequate resources necessary to “establish a Commission to come up with the best way to honor the contributions the University’s African American employees,” it might have become the first historical commission established by any university in the country to explore “the University’s history during its slave and segregated periods.” As such, Brown University, with the establishment of the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice in 2003, became the first American university to study its relationship to slavery and has been heralded as the first institution in the United States to examine the difficulties of that historical relationship. The potential of the historical commission to honor Black workers was mitigated by the focus on renaming just the Cheek-Clark Building, rather than using the commission as an opportunity to fully explore and examine the University’s “painful current and historic facts,” as outlined in the “modest proposal” for settlement.

Following the struggle to get the University to meet the conditions of the settlement, the HKA joined the Local UE-150, a chapter of the North Carolina Public Service Workers' Union. UE-150 expanded to include workers in several public institutions across the state, and made their central goal an end to North Carolina’s “right to work” laws, legislation that made collective bargaining by public workers illegal. Without the right to bargain collectively and

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organize as a workers’ union, it was difficult to sustain pressure on the University to enact change. In placing the significance of the settlement within the longer history of labor activism in North Carolina, Baumann described the limitations of the “right to work” laws: “Even though it was a significant victory at the time, that the University sat down and had to negotiate in a state that it’s illegal to collectively bargain—it’s anti-union—the fact that we were able to get them to sign an agreement was significant, and there were victories there, but I would consider it more winning the battle rather than the war.”

With North Carolina’s “right to work” laws still in effect, the University can still ignore without consequence efforts from workers to collectively bargain. Even after the 1996 settlement, there were no policies in place to ensure that the University would fulfill the agreed upon conditions of the settlement, and as a result, the settlement was a short-term victory for low-wage workers, rather than one that brought enduring change to the institution. In 2017, graduate student employees of the University resurrected UE-150, and at the time of this writing, are actively organizing for all workers to earn a living wage and create a formal grievance policy for both campus workers and graduate workers. Today, many current housekeepers at the University are women of Southeast Asian descent, refugees from Myanmar and nearby regions who primarily speak Karen languages or Burmese. Although the difficulties of language difference for Burmese-descent housekeepers are a critical barrier for continued labor organizing on the campus which might draw on the broken promises of the 1996 settlement, there has been

395 Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.


at least one recent victory for the University’s low-wage workers. In August 2018, the North Carolina State Employees Association’s won a minimum salary for UNC workers of $31,200, marking a twenty-eight percent increase for some workers. However, even this salary increase is still far below a living wage of $49,504 needed by a single parent to support just one child in North Carolina.

Though the victories of the housekeepers movement were largely short-term, there was at least one lasting change brought to the campus landscape as a result of their campaign. At the rededication of the University Laundry (the former name of the building inscribed in stone remains a prominent feature of the space) as the Cheek-Clark Building in September 1998, Barbara Prear highlighted the potentials for the future of the movement and the historic nature of the building’s renaming, stating clearly, “we have high hopes for this building.” The renaming of the Cheek-Clark Building was a crucial act of the reclamation of the University, a striking assertion of possession of the University as a place and all relational and historical notions the sense of that place holds for Black Chapel Hill citizens. But twenty years later, few Chapel Hill citizens recognize that the space, named to recognize the achievements of Black workers at the University stretching from enslavement to the present day, exists as a symbol of the long legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill. The lack of public commemoration of the housekeepers movement and the distant location of the Cheek-Clark Building on West Cameron


Avenue, almost a mile from the main campus, continue to exacerbate the symbolic nature of the housekeepers’ victory.

This lack of institutional commemoration of the housekeepers movement reveals the success of the institution in containing the dissemination of histories of resistance and repressing attempts to build on the progress of social movements. When the movement has been mentioned by later generations of campus organizers (Student Action With Workers in the early 2010s discussed the 1990s HKA campaign), it has been remembered as a movement for workers rights, though the housekeepers’ contributions to exposing the anti-Blackness of the institution and demanding symbolic and material reparations merit an important place in the history of racial justice movements in Chapel Hill.401 This loss of the collective memory of the movement and the lack of comprehensive memorialization of the housekeepers’ campaigns for racial and economic justice is a product of the University’s cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice,” which allowed the institution to diminish the potential for future workers to collectively organize, retreat from the promises made by University leadership in the 1996 settlement, and authorize the erasure of any social movement that dares to demand justice from the University.402 Although the Cheek-Clark Building may exist as a representation of the mitigated successes of the HKA, the history of the housekeepers’ movement can demonstrate for future organizers the power of using the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill as a tool with which to pursue racial justice.


CHAPTER SEVEN: SAUNDERS HALL

In May 2015, the University’s Board of Trustees voted to rename Saunders Hall, marking the first time a building on the campus had been renamed for reasons relating to the legacy of the building’s namesake.\footnote{“Trustees Rename Saunders Hall, Freeze Renamings for 16 Years,” Carolina Alumni Review, 28 May 2015, <https://alumni.unc.edu/news/trustees-vote-to-rename-saunders-hall-put-16-year-freeze-on-renamings/>; The second space on campus “renamed” for reasons related to the namesake was Kenan Memorial Stadium. Until October 2018, it was named in honor of William Rand Kenan Sr., but after historians brought to light his role in the Wilmington Massacre of 1898, the University moved forward with a plan to rededicate the building after his son, William Rand Kenan Jr., who donated the funds that created the stadium.} Saunders Hall, home since 1922 to the History Department, and later the Religious Studies and Geography Departments, was named to honor William L. Saunders, a member of the class of 1854 and head of North Carolina’s Ku Klux Klan. Now, the Board of Trustees declared, the building would be known as Carolina Hall, a name which “would highlight the building’s dedication to all the people of the State, including those who have been oppressed.”\footnote{Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, April 2015, <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2015/04/UNC-BOT-Saunders-Hall-Transcription-edit_RH.pdf>.

The renaming of this building was a direct result of almost two decades of student organizing, which had focused primarily on Saunders Hall among many spaces within the campus landscape that honored leaders of white supremacist movements. This chapter argues that the movement to contest Saunders Hall, which began in the 1990s, marked a significant shift in racial justice movements from the creation of Black spaces to the direct contestation of spaces which represented and enacted the University’s white supremacy. And as the movement against Saunders Hall continued, the organizing framework shifted again towards reclamation, as Black
students began to develop a new sense of place for Chapel Hill and re-conceptualize what it meant to use the institution’s own history as a tool to challenge white supremacy.

**Students Seeking Historical Truth**

The first mention of Saunders’s leadership of the Ku Klux Klan in a student publication was in March 1975, when *The Daily Tar Heel* published a piece comparing Saunders to the publicity director of the KKK, David Duke, who had recently visited the campus to deliver a lecture which had been protested by members of the Black Student Movement (BSM). Reporting on the connections between Saunders and Duke, Elizabeth Leland wrote: “Saunders, a patriot, a devoted North Carolinian. Or Saunders, the emperor of a racist organization. As you walk through the 62-room building named for this man, the choice is yours. The university made its opinion known upon dedication of the building 53 years ago.”

Over the next twenty years, the fact of Saunders’s involvement in the Ku Klux Klan was periodically mentioned in *The Daily Tar Heel* and *Black Ink*, but other campaigns for the creation of Black counter-spaces took prominence in movements for racial justice.

Students Seeking Historical Truth (SSHT) became the first student organization that formed to contest the University’s history of anti-Black violence. Founded in the fall semester of 1999, SSHT had two main goals: “First, to obtain official acknowledgement from the University of its history and that the University takes steps to teach and enlighten the campus community about its history. The second goal is to erect a public monument to the contributions that Blacks have made to this university.”

Kristi Booker, a Black student and graduate of 2002, had been

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406 Saunders Hall Anti-Klan decoration, presentation, and speak-out, October 1999, Videotape VT-5441/31, 8mm Hi8 cassette in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
inspired to create SSHT after a conversation she had with Yonni Chapman, then a masters
graduate of the History Department and a local social justice organizer, from whom she had
learned of Saunders’s leadership of the Ku Klux Klan. “The problem is that the University
continues to honor and condone Saunders,” she told The Daily Tar Heel. “By doing that they
condone the immoral practices of the Ku Klux Klan.”

Booker arrived in Chapel Hill in the fall of 1998 from Charlotte, North Carolina, where
she had been one of only six Black students at her high school. Her experiences with Black
student solidarity groups at her high school and within the BSM encouraged her to form SSHT as
a way to interrogate the progressive and predominantly white portrayal of the University’s
history. Booker explained in an October 1999 panel discussion that SSHT’s goal at its
founding was not to advocate for changing the name of Saunders Hall, but to commemorate “the
victims of Saunders’s violence.” Nor was their issue just relegated to the campus landscape.
As Booker’s comments to The Daily Tar Heel demonstrate, SSHT focused on the campus
landscape only as a way to bring awareness to the University’s anti-Black institutional landscape,
with a history that “reflects a deep commitment to Black degradation.” From their origins,
SSHT, with a membership of both Black and white students, was clear that their goal was not to


409 University Buildings: Racist Pasts and Current Meanings, Saunders Hall Anti-Klan panel, October 1999, 8mm
Hi8 cassette in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

410 T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, “Historically White Universities and Plantation
177.
simply to draw attention to the namesake of one building but to contest the University’s long history of racial violence and injustice.

SSHT identified a number of buildings on the campus named in honor of enslavers, Jim Crow-era white supremacists, and mid-twentieth century segregationists. In close proximity on the campus to Saunders Hall, the organization singled out Steele Building, named to honor Walter Leak Steele, “a vocal opponent of the Reconstruction Acts,” and Murphey Hall, named to honor Archibald DeBow Murphey, an early graduate of the University “who owned several slaves.” At a presentation to a meeting of the BSM, SSHT identified still other buildings named in honor of white supremacists, including Ruffin Residence Hall, Davie Hall, Swain Hall, Mitchell Hall, Aycock Residence Hall, and finally, Memorial Hall, which they argued “pulls it all together,” by honoring dozens of the state’s antebellum white elite and Confederate officers. Booker, who had “researched on her own about the history of UNC buildings,” compiled their findings in Wilson Library’s University Archives. Chapman, who had, by 1999, written a lengthy masters thesis on the history of activism in the Black community of Chapel Hill and provided historical research for the Housekeepers Association only a few years prior, supported Booker’s research.

Chapman, with his interest in combining history with activism in pursuit of social justice at the University and within the Town of Chapel Hill, continued to play a crucial role in supporting several campus organizations, beginning with the Housekeepers Association. As


412 Saunders Hall Anti-Klan decoration, presentation, and speak-out, October 1999, Videotape VT-5441/31, 8mm Hi8 cassette in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Chapman explained in the introduction to his dissertation, he “became interested in the names of university buildings during the 1990s when I was helping the UNC Housekeepers Association research the history of black workers at the university.”

Chapman understood profoundly the problem of sustaining a social movement through the four year cycles of student life, and he worked to bridge those gaps in time by continuing to educate incoming students about the University’s history and the legacy of its past.

Chapman’s contributions to campus movements for racial justice as a scholar and activist were considerable, and his legacy as an organizer in North Carolina continues to surface in more contemporary movements for Black voting rights and criminal justice reform.

Chapman’s masters thesis, dissertation, and other writings influenced two decades of students interested in the Black history of the institution, and he was one of the first scholars to explore the connections between institutions of higher education and the legacy of enslavement, asking questions about the history of predominantly white institutions that other scholars would not begin to explore until a decade later.

Although Chapman, as an older white heterosexual man from Ohio, was significantly different in many ways from the young Black largely female leadership of the movements he supported, Chapman’s dedication to racial justice propelled him into almost every social justice campaign in Chapel Hill through the 1990s and 2000s. Cognizant of the supporting role he could play as a white man in racial justice movements, Chapman continued to use his privileges to


415 For Students Seeking Historical Truth in particular, Chapman also played the crucial role of documenting the organization. Because their movement was short-lived, there are only a handful of articles on their organizing in the Daily Tar Heel and Black Ink. Chapman filmed their lectures, speak-outs, and crucially, their decoration of Saunders Hall, videos which may all be accessed in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

416 Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.
assist justice movements on the campus that were led by Black students and workers. His involvement in activism surrounding public acknowledgement of the University’s history led many white students and faculty into conversations about racial justice on the campus for the first time. Deeply committed to teaching white people about anti-racism, Chapman dedicated much of his organizing energies at the University to addressing white students and faculty, teaching them how to disinvest from white supremacy.417

Although Chapman continued to support Black-led campus organizations, he also sought to shift the organizing framework of racial justice movements from Black space creation towards the contestation of white supremacy as a way to involve white citizens, including himself, in racial justice movements. In this shift from a focus on creating Black spaces to contesting spaces that enacted and represented white supremacy, Chapman sought the active participation of white students, faculty, and workers, who had rarely been involved in prior racial justice movements in Chapel Hill. For SSHT in particular, Chapman played the crucial role of activation by introducing Booker to another side of the history of the University, and also that of white ally in support of an organization built by a young Black woman. By supporting SSHT but not leading it, Chapman helped to bring white students into the membership of SSHT, a multiracial student organization that took a direct stand against white supremacy.418

Through the early weeks of the fall semester of 1999, SSHT held a handful of meetings to discuss their plans for taking their issue to a wider audience. “They had these small vigils, and


418 Autobiography 1-5, April 2009 WMA Files in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
it would be them, and they would be standing around a statue,” Erica Smiley, a Black student organizer and 2001 graduate, remembered. “At some point they really wanted to do something big and said they wanted to start focusing on the religious [studies] building, which was named after Saunders.”

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, October 6th, members of the organization decorated Saunders Hall, Murphey Hall, and Steele Building. They hung a red sheet over the engraved Saunders Hall sign, which read “KKK,” a white sheet over Murphey Hall, which read “Hitler Hall,” and another sheet over Steele Building, which read “David Duke KKK.”

Seventy-seven posters were taped around and on Saunders Hall, a number which signified the seventy-seven years since the building’s dedication. On the posters, after listing the offenses perpetrated by members of the Ku Klux Klan including “intimidation, mutilation, lynching, rape,” the posters read in large font: “WHITE SUPREMACIST. Are You Proud to Be a Tar Heel?” Papers were taped to the brick pathways between the three buildings, reading “The Great Cover-Up,” “Fess Up Silent Sam,” and naming other white supremacists whose names were on University buildings, including “Elisha P. Mitchell,” “Charles B. Aycock,” and “David L. Swain.” They also hung nooses in the trees and bushes around the building to symbolize the legacy of the Ku Klux Klan.

By the time eight o’clock classes began the next day, the posters, sheets, papers, and rope had all been removed and confiscated by the University’s Department of Public Safety. “This

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419 Interview with Erica Smiley by Charlotte Fryar, 8 December 2017, L-0465.

420 Saunders Hall Anti-Klan decoration, presentation, and speak-out, October 1999, Videotape VT-5441/31, 8mm Hi8 cassette in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
was vandalism—it doesn’t belong stuck on a building.” Jeff McCracken, then the University Police Major, told The Daily Tar Heel.421 University Police, reacting to the nooses hung in the trees around the building, began to treat the decoration as a hate crime. Erica Smiley, unaffiliated with SSHT but eager to support the group, woke up early to see the decoration, and remembered that “they had put all this stuff up to demonstrate this racist history of this building, but what was hard about it...is that it wasn’t obvious what they were doing. There was not a sign saying “The legacy of this building is—.”422 SSHT’s decoration was intended to be a form of performance art, demonstrating that buildings named to honor perpetrators of state-sanctioned anti-Black violence and terrorism ought to be visible to everyone as a crime scene. “We created our own memorial to show what Saunders was: a murderer, a slave owner and the emperor of the KKK,” SSHT member Eboni Staton explained.423 The reaction of University Police to SSHT’s decoration of Saunders Hall was a demonstration of the structural nature of “the relationship between police violence and the social institution of policing,” evidenced in the police’s treatment of performance art as a hate crime, for which SSHT students were later threatened with expulsion.424

The next day, SSHT held a speak-out in the Pit, where they invited students to reflect on the history of the University and the ways in which it was visible on the campus landscape. For


422 Interview with Erica Smiley by Charlotte Fryar, 8 December 2017, L-0465.


over two hours, students came forward to register their shock at the history that Booker had excavated and SSHT had made public. “This campus is for everybody,” a white student at the speak-out said the crowd, “and the fact that a large part of the campus has to look at a building named to honor people who did those kinds of things to them in the past is really a travesty. It makes no sense.” Although SSHT dissolved by the end of the semester (perhaps precipitated by the threats of expulsion leveraged against leaders of the organization for their “vandalism” of the campus’s buildings), comments from white and Black students at the October 7th speak-out thanking members of SSHT for their research, validated the organization’s stated purpose to educate the University community. Later that year, Erica Smiley launched a campaign for student body president, galvanizing a progressive multiracial coalition of students and drawing on discussions about racial inequity on campus that SSHT had also highlighted.

SSHT’s decoration of Saunders Hall set an important precedent in making that building the focus of future efforts from organizers to contest aspects of the University’s history visible within the racialized campus landscape. It also represented a shift in racial justice organizing, which up until the decoration of Saunders Hall had largely been focused on the creation of spaces for Black students and workers as a way to challenge the cultural landscape. By contesting a specific space which represented the white supremacy of the entire institution, members of SSHT adopted a different organizing approach to challenge the dominant institutional culture which relegated Blackness as outside the bounds of humanity.

425 Saunders Hall Anti-Klan decoration, presentation, and speak-out, October 1999, Videotape VT-5441/31, 8mm Hi8 cassette in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

426 Interview with Erica Smiley by Charlotte Fryar, 8 December 2017, L-0465.

On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign

In the spring of 2001, the movement that Kristi Booker had begun, picked up again under a different name. Booker, now the president-elect of the BSM, organized in April 2001 the On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign (OWEC), designed as “a way to bring attention to unfair and discriminatory acts on campus” against Black students.428 Booker created OWEC largely in response to the publication of a David Horowitz editorial which ran in The Daily Tar Heel (and dozens of other campus newspapers at universities across the country) as an advertisement, titled “Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery is a Bad Idea—And Racist Too.”429 Catalyzed by the University’s lack of response to the Horowitz editorial, OWEC developed a list of fourteen demands, and on April 2nd, they marched from Saunders Hall to South Building, delivering the list to Provost Robert Shelton. Among the demands, several related directly to the history of the institution that Booker had highlighted during her leadership of SSHT, including that “The University take a more active role in the accurate depiction of the history of underrepresented groups,” that there be “Public recognition of contributions of African-Americans to the University,” and to “Restore the headstones in the Slave Cemetery.”430 Booker explained the similarity between OWEC’s fourteen demands and the BSM’s original 1968 demands, telling The Daily Tar Heel that “these are basically the same things, and we need action to be taken on them.”431


431 Kim Minugh and Daniel Thigpen, “Students Meet With Campus Officials to Discuss Racism at UNC,” The Daily Tar Heel, 9 April 2001, 1; Between the 1968 BSM Demands and the 2001 OWEC demands, Black students
Another organization, the Freedom Legacy Project (FLP), first organized by Yonni Chapman in 1995, supported the On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign in their demands. Chapman had imagined FLP to be a central resource space for social justice movements in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. In early organizational documents, the stated purposes of FLP were to “1) strengthen individuals, organizations, and movements working for social justice, 2) retrieve, preserve, and popularize the history of those who have been forced to struggle for freedom, 3) preserve and popularize the history of current freedom struggles, 4) enliven and enlarge democracy in our communities and institutions.”

Although FLP never became the non-profit social justice hub that Chapman envisioned, the organization worked to support efforts of other student and community organizations, including OWEC. Through 2000 and 2001, FLP, primarily under Chapman’s leadership, sponsored several panel discussions on institutional racism at the University and the legacy of the University’s past in maintaining structural racism on the campus landscape.

In their support of OWEC’s fourteen demands of the University, FLP hoped “to bring attention to the lack of clear involvement of university administrators in fighting discrimination and institutional racism at UNC.” Although the fourteen demands were received by the University, they were not met, as students perhaps suspected would be the case. “Only time will tell whether or not anything will be done,” Fred Hashagen, a spokesman for

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OWEC, told *The Daily Tar Heel*. As students left campus for the summer, the movement subsided.

**Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth**

Yonni Chapman, who had inspired the creation of Students Seeking Historical Truth, was able to sustain the conversation about the University’s racialized campus landscape largely through his own interest in the University’s history. In 2005, after returning to the University to earn a Ph.D. in History, Chapman formed another organization, the Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth (CHAT). Donelle Boose, a Black student and member of the class of 2006 who joined CHAT, explained that Chapman was “the impetus, brainchild behind CHAT, because he had this firm belief that people’s misunderstanding about who they were was rooted in the stories they told themselves about their history.”

CHAT organized around similar goals of SSHT and OWEC, including “educating the Carolina community about our true history, insuring that the university tells its story without censoring either the injustices committed in its name or the contributions of historically disenfranchised groups, and using our understanding of history to strengthen movements for justice at UNC.”

The membership of CHAT was significantly different than its predecessors. Comprised largely of white graduate students and staff, many of them Chapman’s colleagues and friends (Boose was one of the only Black members and one of the only undergraduate members of the

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436 Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.

437 Campaign for Historical Truth and Accuracy application to the Carolina Student Union, 3 November 2005 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
organization), CHAT sought to use the privileges of the whiteness of their membership to bring awareness to the ways in which the institution’s normative white supremacy forced Black people beyond the institution’s intellectual, economic, and cultural boundaries.\(^{438}\) In this way, it was not just CHAT’s white membership that marked it as a different kind of organization. It was also one of the only predominantly white organizations (perhaps along with the Southern Student Organizing Committee of the 1960s) which sought to use its own white privilege specifically for the cause of racial justice at the University.

CHAT also expanded the movement for historical truth beyond building names to highlight the history of labor movements at the University, connecting that history to contemporary labor actions. “So we had this campaign for trying to bring awareness to—I think it was 1969, that was the year of the [Foodworkers’] strike—to the student population,” Boose explained. “The idea was to connect the two struggles and to celebrate people who are in the community, who are ignored, but who are with you in community every day.”\(^{439}\) In this focus on the history of labor movements, CHAT partnered with the University’s chapter of Student Action With Workers (SAW), which had spent much of 2005 working to support an organizing drive for Aramark employees in the University’s dining halls with the Service Employees International Union.

CHAT and SAW worked together on a number of actions relating to this organizing drive and the University’s backlash against Aramark employees who were active in building the union. CHAT, in its direct involvement with workers rights, differed somewhat in focus from its

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\(^{439}\) Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.
predecessors, SSHT and OWEC, highlighting not just the racist history of the University, visible in building names like Saunders Hall, but also focusing on the strong legacy of Black labor movements that served as their inspiration.\footnote{Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso, “Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research,” \textit{Qualitative Inquiry} 8, No. 1 (2002): 32; Lisa Ikemoto, “Furthering the inquiry: race, class, and culture in the forced medical treatment of pregnant women,” in \textit{Critical race feminism: a reader}, ed. Adrien Wing, 136-143, (New York: New York University Press, 1997).} In their focus on the history of Black worker-led movements, CHAT engaged in counter-storytelling as a way to “strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance.” The counter-storytelling that they engaged in set an important precedent for future student organizers in that the history they crafted was not just a response to the “majoritarian story” of the University’s liberalism, but instead was more so a “method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told.”\footnote{Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.}

While the issue of Saunders Hall itself was not an explicit focus of CHAT, the legacy of the University’s past and its operation in the collective memory of the institution certainly was. “What we wanted folks to understand with CHAT is that this is not just like, oh, we just want a plaque,” Boose said, “The plaque is irrelevant—not irrelevant but, not the point. The point is the remembering so that you can understand in this particular moment the power that you have.”\footnote{“UNC Labor History,” UNC-CH Student Action with Workers, 2005, <https://uncsaw.wordpress.com/unc-labor-history/>.}

CHAT spent the 2005 to 2006 school year organizing to honor the leaders of the 1969 Foodworkers’ Strikes, Elizabeth Brooks and Mary Smith, with their goal being an award for Brooks and Smith and plaque placed outside of Lenoir Hall commemorating the strikes.

The organization dissolved in the fall of 2006, after Chapman defended his dissertation on the history of Black freedom and the University through the mid-twentieth century. Chapman,
who had always been the driving force of CHAT, died three years later, in 2009, after twenty-nine years living with cancer.\textsuperscript{443} Chapman was posthumously honored with his own place in the commemorative landscape of Chapel Hill with his name added to a marker on the Peace and Justice Plaza, in front of the Chapel Hill Post Office and across the street from McCorkle Place.\textsuperscript{444} Because Chapman had served for over a decade as the bridge across the four-year cycles of student life and movement-making, after his death, the movement to contest spaces of racial injustice subsided for over five years. Although Chapman had been a catalyst, leader, and advocate for many racial justice movements in Chapel Hill and across the South, his legacy for contemporary students has largely been tied to his dissertation, which mapped the long history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill through the mid-twentieth century, meticulously drawing connections between previous justice movements and a future for Chapel Hill directed by social justice.

While Chapman’s legacy has continued through the usefulness of his dissertation, the legacy of CHAT as an organization which challenged narratives of liberalism in Chapel Hill has been mitigated by its brief tenure as a formal student organization. “I never thought about CHAT as an organization meant for permanence,” Boose said. “We thought about it as a means of bringing people together with similar questions and concerns to deal with things.”\textsuperscript{445} Despite being a short-lived organization, CHAT played a crucial role in expanding the dialogue surrounding the University’s history to include not just buildings named for white supremacists,  


\textsuperscript{445} Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.
but a broader understanding of how labor, race, and movement-making influenced the institution’s past and present. When CHAT dissolved in 2006, it was clear that campus movements concerned with historical truth and racial justice meant the issue to be one that stretched across the campus and into the present, rather than one focused solely on Saunders Hall with a legacy that remained fixed in the early twentieth century. It also had firmly established the new organizing framework for racial justice movements centered around the contestation of spaces which represented and enacted white supremacy, rather than focusing on the creation of Black counter-spaces.

**The Real Silent Sam Coalition Forms**

In August 2011, a new organization comprised of both students and Chapel Hill and Carrboro permanent residents formed, named in opposition to the most striking monument to white supremacy on the campus, the University’s Confederate Monument, known as “Silent Sam.” Invoking the language of “historical accuracy” from CHAT, the Real Silent Sam Coalition (RSSC) was comprised of white and Black individuals “who are devoted to bringing historical accuracy to all members of our campus and our greater surrounding community.” Through the 2011 to 2012 school year, RSSC held several demonstrations at the Confederate Monument, targeting that space in particular as one that needed historical and cultural contextualization. Although in this early iteration of RSSC, Saunders Hall was not specifically named as a space which needed contextualization or review, the group’s public writings display concern for the entire campus landscape: “One cannot feel welcome on a campus whose geography is adorned with quiet but unsubtle remembrances like the names of white supremacists engraved on our
buildings, and confederate soldiers on our front lawn, so long as they boldly go unexplained and unproblematised.”

RSSC adopted a broad spatial scope to their organizing, reasoning with evidence from the institution’s past that anti-Blackness was the University’s constitutive form of past and present place-making and that there was a demand to act on the legacies of past racial justice movements to develop an entirely new sense of place for Chapel Hill. In doing so, the 2011 to 2013 iteration of RSSC followed in the footsteps of the housekeepers movement, helping to set the foundation for future acts of reclamation—a method by which to assert ownership of the University using the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill to reclaim their right to self- and place-possession from the anti-Black institution.

Organizers in RSSC drew on this history through both Chapman’s dissertation and a tour of the Black history of the campus developed and led by Tim McMillan, a white professor of African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies. McMillan described the Black and Blue Tour as “a racialized history of the University” conducted as “a walk through time and space starting at the origin point of the campus, McCorkle Place, and ending in another origin part of the town of Chapel Hill, which is the old Chapel Hill Cemetery.” The popularity of the tour, led by McMillan over a dozen times a year from 2001 to 2014, exposed hundreds of people to a counter-history of the institution as a site of enslavement and continued racial discrimination, and helped to shape students’ and workers’ access to the Black history of Chapel Hill.


447 Interview with Tim McMillan by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0462.
On February 15, 2012, RSSC delivered to the seemingly progressive chancellor Holden Thorp and the Board of Trustees their first list of demands, which targeted the University’s Confederate Monument as one example of broadly experienced anti-Blackness on the campus landscape. RSSC called for “the establishment of a ‘memorial review’ process which...will serve as a model for evaluating other monuments and buildings on campus,” with the goal that continual review would “encourage constant dialogue and critical thought, in keeping with the mission of the university.” After initially signaling to RSSC that he would consider their demands, Thorp demurred, suggesting only one possibility: a plaque to be placed on the University’s Unsung Founders Memorial, which recognizes “the people of color bound and free, who helped build the Carolina that we cherish today.”

This proposed solution was not what the members of RSSC had in mind. Thorp’s suggestion, though likely intended as an enlightened solution to the issue, was actually an example of the institution’s practice of containing Black identities. By proposing that a commemorative plaque be placed on the Unsung Founders Memorial, Thorp signaled his support for constraints to be placed around any further potential recognition of the institution’s white supremacy, which Aubrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake explain “is indicated less by its explicit racism than by the fact that it ignores, or even denies, racist indications.” Thorp, in denying


RSSC’s claims that the whole campus landscape reflected the institution’s racist past and present, reified and protected the institution’s white supremacy.

Many of the early student organizers in RSSC—including three women of color who had led the organization, Zaina Alsous, Nicole Campbell, and Kristen Maye—graduated from the University in 2012 or 2013, leaving behind a movement unclear on where it should next try to target its goals for historical accuracy. “By my sophomore year, I was the only student in Real Silent Sam Coalition,” Blanche Brown, a white student remembered. Brown, who wanted to keep the movement going, knew that “the biggest thing that needed to happen was getting students mobilized and involved again.” She turned to friends and classmates, and “then it became Taylor Webber-Fields, Omololu Babatunde…and me.” Through the fall semester of 2013, the three friends began to build the coalition again, and “slowly,” Brown explained, “we just built up interest and just had actions and reached out.” As RSSC expanded its membership, it did so with a purposeful horizontal leadership model, so that students could come in and out of the organization as their movement continued.

In the spring of 2014, RSSC made the strategic choice to focus their efforts for the semester on Saunders Hall, instead of the Confederate Monument. “It’s less divisive than dealing with Silent Sam,” Brown explained to The Daily Tar Heel in April 2014. “We have the chance to win.” Mars Earle, who began attending RSSC meetings in the fall of 2013, remembered that “Saunders was a really strategic choice in that there is just so much easily found direct evidence of the racism that we’re accusing him of...It just really was something that felt like we can make

451 Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454.

this case, and really be able to articulate it so simply and so easily with evidence from their [the University’s] own records for every single point.”⁴⁵³ To make their case to the student body, RSSC employed a number of different direct action methods, including “banner drops...taking over the Pit and literally using our bodies as reminders and eulogies for folks. There were countless, countless, countless marches and press conferences, sit-ins. And it was never ending.”⁴⁵⁴ Like Students Seeking Historical Truth, RSSC employed performance art as a strategy of direct action, because as Brown explained, “that’s how we engage people who aren’t maybe aware of a lot of things and how we engage with students.”⁴⁵⁵

Although the movement continued to grow, some members of RSSC remained pessimistic that the Board of Trustees, the governing body who had the ability to change the names of buildings, would ever rename Saunders Hall, even after RSSC was asked to present to trustees at a May 2014 meeting. In response to RSSC’s presentation to the Board, trustees promised to consider the renaming of Saunders Hall, but did not take the issue up in committee meetings that summer. “That is the tactic,” Brown explained. “We presented to the Board of Trustees last May [in 2014], and they were like, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah. We’ll get back to you.’ Nothing for a year until we made a huge, giant, public stink about it.”⁴⁵⁶

When RSSC students returned to campus in the fall, their cause was bolstered by the emergence of the national Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of events in August 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, where a white police officer murdered Michael Brown, an unarmed Black

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⁴⁵³ Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

⁴⁵⁴ Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454.
teenager. With a focus still on renaming Saunders Hall, RSSC took on a new meaning for many Black students looking for a place to discuss anti-Black violence happening in the country and on their campus. “I just think that we were having an ongoing conversation that wasn’t happening in other spaces, so when people were feeling upset about police brutality, when people were feeling upset about all of these different things that were happening, it was almost like we were a go-to space,” Taylor Webber-Fields explained. “People knew that if you wanted to have a hard conversation, this was going to be a place that you could do it.”

RSSC drew directly on the legacy of prior racial justice movements while they built their campaign. “I think a lot of CHAT, and Students Seeking Historical Accuracy [sic]. I was thinking a lot about Yonni Chapman, whose work has been huge,…building the Stone Center, students organized around that and raised money themselves to have the Sonja Haynes Stone Center,” remembered Blanche Brown.

The 2013 to 2015 iteration of RSSC also became the first organization in the history of racial justice movements at the University to explicitly use Black feminist theory to support their movement, organizing against multiple connected forms of injustice. Practitioners of Black feminism, explained in the Combahee River Collective Statement in 1977, “are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as [their] particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking.”

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457 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.

458 Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454.

processes of enacting oppression as the target of their movement, championed a distinct kind of liberation politics at the University. In this way, RSSC shared their practice of liberation politics with that of the developing national Black Lives Matter movement, which “affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum.”

For some Black members of RSSC, practicing Black feminism meant supporting their peers and friends through intentional healing practices as they experienced discrimination on the campus. “Just individually the ways that we learned to organize as an united front and prioritize healing and prioritize the leadership of women and femmes, I think that really influenced and then directed the folks that were organizing together,” said Mars Earle. For other Black members, the liberation politics that emerged from the community of student organizers within RSSC shifted directly towards the understanding of how interlocking forms of oppression operated within the institution. Omololu Babatunde explained that members of the movement began to “think about what is inter-communalism and what does it mean that, yes, we’re organizing around our Blackness and the way that we’ve been dispossessed, particularly here in this location of our Blackness, but how that aligns with all the different ways that we are being dispossessed all the time, and we have to align with each other.”

For Shannon Brien, a white supporter of RSSC, understanding interlocking oppressions meant thinking about the movement as “intersectional in so much as that current campus

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461 Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

462 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.
organizing is anti-racist and anti-capitalist, and tries to center queer folks and trans folks. It’s focusing on all of these things at the same time.”

Regardless of the form that RSSC’s liberation politics took on for students individually, it is important to recognize the organization as the first to explicitly take a Black feminist approach to the “interlocking” forms of oppression within the institution, a framework that continues to direct racial justice movements in Chapel Hill.

That fall, as RSSC’s membership continued to grow, the University-appointed independent investigator Kenneth Wainstein issued what became known as the Wainstein Report. This document appeared to be the final report on the University’s academic-athletic scandal, a controversy of alleged fraud and academic dishonesty involving several of the University’s athletic programs and academic departments over two decades. The scandal had begun to unspool in 2010 with reports of academic fraud involving a tutor in the athletic department’s academic support program, but as institutional whistle-blowers came forward and the University sanctioned several independent investigations, it became clear that faculty and administrators across several academic and athletic programs had participated to varying degrees of culpability in helping student athletes maintain academic eligibility.

But the Wainstein Report named the African and African-American Studies (AFAM) Department as the sole location of academic impropriety across the campus, where two individuals, the report argued, executed a master scheme to defraud over three thousand students.

463 Interview with Shannon Brien by Charlotte Fryar, 5 May 2015, L-0453.


of their education by allowing them to take “nonexistent classes” for academic credit. The department underwent deep scrutiny and condemnation as an academic field of study, though the “paper classes” had been arranged by only two individuals in the department and supported by staff members and administrators across the campus.466 Reginald Hildebrand, who taught in the department for over two decades, explained how the institution’s inherent anti-Blackness allowed for AFAM to become an object of attack, stating that AFAM “would not have taken the bounce it did if, somehow, in the background, we weren’t talking about what people perceive to be a Black department, a Black subject, and Black athletes.”467 By prioritizing the reputation of the athletic department in their investigations, the University created the conditions for AFAM to be widely vilified across the institution and in national media coverage of the scandal.

Tim McMillan, who had developed the Black and Blue Tour with his students in the AFAM Department, resigned for his involvement in the scandal, but many students in AFAM suspected that McMillan had been scapegoated for his role in helping to make public the University’s historic involvement in the systemic subjugation of Black citizens in Chapel Hill through the tour.468 Soon after McMillan’s resignation, the UNC Visitor’s Center began offering a “Black and Blue Tour” through their Priceless Gem walking tour series, now led by another white lecturer, Robert Porter, in the former AFAM Department, renamed in 2015 as the African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies (AAAD) Department. While the institutional tour offered many of the highlights of McMillan’s tour, it appeared to some Black students to be a


467 Interview with Reginald Hildebrand by Charlotte Fryar, 27 March 2017, L-0460.

diluted and institutionally affirmative version of the original tour. As the institutional tour continued, members of RSSC began to offer their own tour of the campus landscape, modeled after McMillan’s original tour but incorporating new histories of institutional anti-Blackness, including the defamation of the AAAD Department. In doing so, Black students engaged in another form of counter-storytelling, making clear the connections between the anti-Blackness in the University’s past with that of its present.

In response to the accusations circling in national and local media publications which disparaged the AAAD Department, RSSC organized a “Speaking Back to The Wainstein Report” rally in support of AAAD and the mentoring that Black students received from the faculty in the department. The rally, as described by Webber-Fields, “was just such a critical moment because overall the whole moment was for restoring voice, changing the narrative, and laying claims to space.” For Mars Earle, the yet unarticulated but underlying purpose of RSSC became clear following the Wainstein rally, during which dozens of Black students described what it felt like to be a Black student on the campus within the dominant culture of white supremacy: “Real Silent Sam became a place of okay, all these things are really intersecting around this issue of taking back space.”

Webber-Fields’s and Earle’s use of the language of “taking back space” and “laying claims to space” both introduce the act of reclamation of campus spaces within the spatial logic of the University as a place directed not by the narrative of the University’s liberalism, but by the

469 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.


471 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.

472 Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.
history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill. Like the Housekeepers Association’s “Modest Proposal,” members of RSSC were beginning to articulate in their public discourse a new approach to organizing, distinct from previous efforts focused on either creation or contestation of space. The reclamation of space involves an assertion of ownership over the socio-spatial dimensions of the institution’s history and a conviction of self- and place-possession within and against the white supremacist institution. RSSC, in these beginning efforts at the reclamation of the University, was also beginning to shape a new campaign around the concept of the reclamation of the history of Black freedom striving at the University, which they identified as particularly resonant in one individual: the Black writer, folklorist, and activist, Zora Neale Hurston.

“UNC Calls for Hurston Hall”

At the beginning of the spring semester of 2015, the movement built by RSSC reached “a fever pitch,” as Webber-Fields described it. On January 30, 2015, over one hundred students marched from the Pit to the Confederate Monument, rallying not just to remove Saunders’s name from the building, but to rename the building Hurston Hall, in honor of Zora Neale Hurston. “At that time,” Babatunde explained, “Black students at UNC from all different populations—Black Greek life, all different Black students from BS[M], from different sects of Black UNC communities—were together organizing, and it was under umoja [Swahili for unity]…and everyone there had decided it was Hurston Hall.” In 1939, over a decade before the formal desegregation of the University, Hurston, while working as a professor in the Drama Department at the North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University), audited a

473 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.

474 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.
class at the University of North Carolina taught by Drama professor Paul Green. When a white undergraduate complained about her presence on the campus, Green moved the class to his home. By invoking Hurston’s name and sharing her story to oppose the public narrative of the University’s liberalism, Black students engaged in counter-storytelling, exposing and challenging the white supremacy enacted by white students and administrators.

Students identified Hurston as the first Black student at the University, though there was no formal archival proof in the University registrar or elsewhere that she had been enrolled. “Potentially we could have pulled a Pauli Murray Hall because there’s documentation,” Babatunde said. “We could have made a case for it. There’s no way the administration would ever put Hurston on that building, there’s absolutely no way, because it just wasn’t legible to them.” The concept of replacing the name of a leader of the Ku Klux Klan with that of one of the nation’s most famous Black writers and scholars was a powerful notion of reclamation, a strategy by which Black students could reclaim a space previously inscribed to the legacy of white supremacy as a space which would commemorate Hurston. By invoking the name “Hurston Hall” when identifying the building, the act became for RSSC members and supporters a way for themselves to reclaim, not just the space itself, but the history of the institution as directed by the powerful legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.

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478 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.
While no formal documentation existed to support the claim that Hurston had been the first Black student at the University, Blanche Brown found an historical document that she thought could transform the movement to remove Saunders’s name from the building. “In the University Archives, there is a specific section just for the Board of Trustees,” she explained. “I looked at the year that Saunders Hall was dedicated. And it sort of goes through the whole building process, and then it has the meeting where they decided that they would name it after Saunders, and they had this sort of resume of his that they used to justify the naming...The second thing listed was that he was head of the North Carolina Ku Klux Klan.” This was conclusive proof that the University's Board of Trustees had named the building in honor William Saunders, not in spite of his activities in the Ku Klux Klan, but because of them. “So that was a really big thing,” Brown remembered. “My heart just leapt with joy, because I was like, ‘When people see this document, there is no way that they will think that we can leave this building the way it is.’”

Brown’s discovery in Wilson Library’s University Archives followed the archival path advanced by Yonni Chapman and Kristi Booker, both of whom had used the institution’s own archive as a tool to transform the institution.

Through the rest of the spring semester of 2015, support for RSSC’s cause grew, as more predominantly white organizations, including the Campus Y and Student Government, stated their support for the removal of Saunders’s name from the building. In March 2015, the University’s Board of Trustees issued a call to the University’s students, faculty, and staff to submit opinions to the Board on the renaming of Saunders Hall. As the issue continued to grow,

479 Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454.

the crucial role that RSSC had played in making the issue known and providing historical documentation seemed to be forgotten in the weeks before the April 2015 Board of Trustees meeting, when there would be a discussion on the issue of renaming Saunders Hall. Three members of RSSC—Taylor Webber-Fields, Omololu Babatunde, and Dylan Su-Chan Mott—spoke to the trustees in addition to a representative from the UNC Young Republicans and faculty from the School of Law and the History Department. “We were the entertainment piece of that Board of Trustees meeting,” Webber-Fields remembered, “The whole thing was weird. It was almost like people were settling in with their popcorn, like ‘Oh, what are they going to do?’”

For the individual students that had spent over two years organizing direct actions of every kind, being invited to the Board of Trustees meeting, having already publicly argued for the importance of the issue, was demeaning. “Students did history, got documents, put an argument together, got it to you, and now you are constructing [the renaming of Saunders] for us,” Babatunde stated regarding the faculty member from History who presented before the trustees at the April meeting. The co-opting of Black student labor in the research and interpretation of the issue demonstrated that the institution regarded Black students as property, from which labor, even intellectual labor, could be withdrawn, without mention of the students’

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481 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.

482 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, April 2015, <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2015/04/UNC-BOT-Saunders-Hall-Transcription-edit_RH.pdf>.

483 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.

484 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.
research and reasoning.485 Citing the scholarly work of Yonni Chapman, RSSC students presenting to the trustees demonstrated the clear connections between the University’s relationship to anti-Black violence in its past and in its present. For almost two decades, they explained, students had revealed the ways in which the movement around Saunders Hall was about more “than just renaming a building. This movement is about the future of this university. It is about facing the violent, racial history of UNC Chapel Hill, of the State of North Carolina and of the United States.”486

**White-Washing History With Carolina Hall**

On May 28, 2015, the Board of Trustees voted to pass three resolutions. Led by Trustees Alston Gardner and Chuck Duckett, they explained the principles that had led their decision-making. All solutions to the issue of Saunders Hall had to:

- “Be grounded in evidence and research
- Be focused on teaching and learning
- Be careful not to impose today’s social norms on the past
- Not hide the unpleasant aspects of our history
- Be accurate, complete, and accessible
- Be practical and sustainable for future generations
- Lastly, must include clear responsibility for execution.”

These principles are key to understanding the outcome of the three resolutions, particularly that the solutions “be grounded in evidence and research” and that the trustees “be careful not to impose today’s social norms on the past.” In accordance with these principles, the trustees called for: the creation of a Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History (without mention of

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486 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, April 2015, <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2015/04/UNC-BOT-Saunders-Hall-Transcription-edit_RH.pdf>.
the 1998 Commemorative Commission, created as a result of the housekeepers’ settlement, and an obvious predecessor to the new Task Force); the renaming of Saunders Hall to Carolina Hall, while also “recogniz[ing] and appreciat[ing] Mr. Saunders [sic] many contributions to UNC and the State of North Carolina;” and a sixteen-year freeze on “renaming historical buildings, monuments, memorials, and landscapes.”

Several trustees cited the document found by Blanche Brown in University Archives—the 1920 meeting minutes of the University’s Board of Trustees that listed Saunders’s participation in the Ku Klux Klan—as the motivating factor in their vote to rename the building. “The deciding factor for Trustee Clay,” the 2015 meeting notes read, “hinged on the historical record of the 1920 Board [of Trustees] having cited Saunders’ leadership of the KKK as a qualifying factor.” Trustee Sallie Shuping-Russell stated that until finding these meeting minutes in the archives, “there was no record to be found, at least at the University, of his leadership in the organization [of the Ku Klux Klan].” The document found by Brown had forced trustees to confront the institution’s widespread investment in white supremacy as one of its foundational values. But in the trustees’ resolutions there was a singular focus on Saunders himself, which ignored the reality that there were other landmarks within the campus landscape that would show the “unpleasant aspects of our history,” signaling the trustees’ unwillingness to truly address the institution’s white supremacy.

By fixating on Saunders, trustees fortified the University’s racist history and current racialized processes, thereby reinforcing the racial binding of the campus landscape to exclude

487 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 28 May 2015, <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2013/07/May-Minutes-signed.pdf>.

488 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 28 May 2015, <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2013/07/May-Minutes-signed.pdf>.
and discriminate against Chapel Hill’s Black citizens. By creating a boundary around the issue, the trustees demonstrated the way in which the University maintains the cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice” by constricting any social movement which challenges the white supremacy of the institution and the campus.\(^{489}\) Although Trustee Cochrane (one of three trustees who voted against the renaming of the building) stated that “the issue here was about more than a name — that it is also about history, education, and explanation,” it was clear that the trustees’ focus on the tangible proof that Saunders had been the head of the state’s Ku Klux Klan missed the larger point that student organizers in RSSC had made since 2011: “We cannot pick and choose which histories we explore, the history of our campus is the history of students, it is the history of workers, it is the history of this town.”\(^{490}\)

Although RSSC organizers had wanted the removal of Saunders’s name from the building, “the moratorium [on renaming] was just an extra slap in the face,” Mars Earle explained. “And the really beige naming of Carolina Hall, particularly since their pushback on Hurston, as a name, was really dismissive of her as a person and why the coalition had chosen that name in the first place—an uplifting and visibility of particularly Black women on UNC’s campus.”\(^{491}\) Other students were just as furious as Earle at the trustees’ decision. “I was livid when I heard about that sixteen year freeze and even more so pissed when I heard that they changed it to Carolina Hall,” Michelle Brown, a graduate of 2018 said. “Every nook, cranny, and


\(^{491}\) Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.
brick on this campus is named for somebody. Y’all can’t think of one name to name that whole building after other than Carolina Hall?”

The refusal to acknowledge Zora Neale Hurston was explained by trustees by the fact that the students’ claim that she was the University’s first Black student was not “grounded in evidence and research.” The obsession with historical fact apparently only to be found through archival documents housed at the University belied an historical reality supported through secondary materials and widespread support from Black and white Chapel Hill citizens. All three of the trustees’ resolutions—the neutral naming of Carolina Hall, the creation of a Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History, and the sixteen-year freeze on renaming elements of the landscape—seemed designed to quell future movements that might contest the University’s anti-Blackness. “It just spoke volumes to what this University was willing to value and more than that, what people were willing to defend,” Michelle Brown said. “With William Saunders Hall, they were willing to change that one name and meet that demand, but immediately turned around and reminded us that we are minorities, we are without power, and that we need to be silenced by saying there is a sixteen year freeze…So give up now and stop asking too much.”

A subsequent exhibit placed in Carolina Hall in the fall of 2016, curated by members of the Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History aimed to provide “a frank examination of our past, including the long and bloody battle over race and democracy that occurred in North Carolina following the end of the Civil War,” and “to point to the value of historical study in

492 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0456.


494 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0456.
making a better university for today and tomorrow.” After a thorough examination of North Carolina’s white supremacist movements through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the exhibit ends with a short summary of the organizing that students had done around the issue of Saunders Hall, grouping together Students Seeking Historical Truth and the Real Silent Sam Coalition, and excluding mention of Yonni Chapman. This exclusion of Chapman was experienced deeply by contemporary students, even those who had never known him, but had learned from his scholarship. “It is the work that that exhibition should have been, because that’s the legacy,” Babatunde said. This section of the exhibit, the first attempt by scholars to provide context for the student organizing that had resulted in the removal of William Saunders’s name from the building, Babatunde explained, was just “about student activism…but we weren’t being student activists; we were deciding that we were not going to participate in the roles that we were given...so if you’re going to have an exhibition...why don’t you talk about how did people start to think that they could even instantiate a Hurston Hall?”

Babatunde’s explanation highlights an important way in which “student activism” can be appropriated by the University to support the superficial ideological and racial diversity of the institution, without making adjustments to the hegemonic culture which denies justice for Black Chapel Hill citizens. The University plagiarized students’ labor as organizers against the anti-Black institution in the institution’s retelling of the way in which it had “confronted” the history of Saunders Hall, in effect falsely performing its own anti-racism. As scholar Sara Ahmed


496 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 1 December 2017, L-0449.

explains, “when anti-racism provides a discourse of organizational pride, then racism is not recognized and is enacted in the mode of nonrecognition.” By using students’ labor to support the institution’s “organizational pride,” rendered through the celebration of its diversity and even ostensible anti-racism, the University ignored the students’ claims on their own history and labor.498 The University’s refusal to use the exhibition space in Saunders Hall to recognize the full legacy of student organizing that had led to the building’s renaming allowed the institution to render its racism as a facet of its past, instead of acknowledging anti-Blackness as a central value of its present.

**Legacy of Saunders Hall and Hurston Hall**

Although the stone tablet on the building’s facade that once read “Saunders Hall” was covered with another tablet reading “Carolina Hall,” the dual legacies of Saunders Hall and Hurston Hall remain within the institution. Neither name has faded from use as a name for the building, displaying a division in the collective memory of the University which mirrors the overall campus landscape—though there are some physical representations of the successes of racial justice campus movements, the campus and the institution remain dedicated to the support of white supremacy in order to maintain “cultural and moral legitimacy, and political and economic hegemony.”499 Even without its name etched in stone, Saunders Hall exists as a symbol of white supremacy, still visible across the campus landscape and experienced widely within the institution.


The University sought to contain within the name of Saunders Hall the entirety of the campus landscape, which broadly reflects and enacts racial inequities, but the Black student-led contestation of Saunders reflected instead a deep understanding of the history of the University as a site for state-sanctioned anti-Black violence. By 2014, when RSSC began organizing to rename Saunders Hall, they drew on the history of student-led organizing in SSHT, OWEC, and CHAT to engage in counter-storytelling, sharing the long history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill and the University’s repression of Black student and worker-led movements. The history crafted by the students who contested the space of Saunders Hall has become crucial to the continued reclamation of the University, particularly in the recent movement against what was formerly the most obvious monument to white supremacy on the campus, the Confederate Monument.

Although the name Hurston Hall most clearly reflects the memory of the powerful storyteller and scholar, Zora Neale Hurston, it perhaps most potently orients future organizers towards the potential offered by an approach to organizing based on the reclamation of the University. The legacy of Hurston Hall advances for future organizers the powerful act of Black self-possession against the University’s white supremacy and an assertion of ownership over the socio-spatial dimensions of Chapel Hill. The resilience of student organizers and their successes in crafting a counter-history of the space to challenge the boundaries placed by trustees around Saunders Hall displayed the fragility of the University’s racialized campus landscape and the potentials for the reclamation of the University as a place owned by all campus actors.\(^\text{500}\)

McCorkle Place is said to be the most densely memorialized piece of real estate in North Carolina. On the University’s symbolic front lawn, there are almost a dozen monuments and memorials fundamental to the University’s lore and traditions, but only two monuments within the space have determined the role of McCorkle Place as a space for racial justice movements.

The Unsung Founders Memorial and the University’s Confederate Monument were erected on the oldest quad of the campus almost a century apart for dramatically different memorial purposes. The former honors the enslaved and freed Black persons who “helped build” the University, while the latter commemorated, until its toppling in August 2018, “the sons of the University who entered the war of 1861-65.”

Separated by only a few dozen yards, the physical distinctions between the two monuments were, before the Confederate Monument was toppled, quite striking. The Unsung

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502 Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 139-142; Other memorials and sites of memory within McCorkle Place include the Old Well, the Davie Poplar, Old East, the Caldwell Monument, a Memorial to Founding Trustees, and the Speaker Ban Monument.

Founders Memorial, a Black granite table five feet in diameter, rises only two feet from the ground, its surface supported by miniature bronze figures representing the University’s “unsung founders.” The University’s Confederate Monument, which has been called “Silent Sam” by students since the 1950s, featured an eight foot tall bronze Confederate soldier, facing north and standing atop a nearly fifteen foot tall granite plinth, which included a bronze panel depicting a male student dropping books to answer “the call of their country.”504 The physical and memorial differences between the two monuments were stark, and yet both illustrate how the racialized campus landscape exposes the white supremacy of the institution’s culture. Both monuments have been sites of protest and resistance, and spaces from which organizers have demanded a widespread transformation of the campus and the institution.

Together, the two monuments and the history of racial justice movements around them provide a striking polarity from which to examine the varied ways in which campus organizers have used the University’s history as a tool of activation and demonstration towards the expulsion of white supremacy from the campus and institution. This chapter argues that, as with Saunders Hall, early movements against the Confederate Monument contested it as a symbol of institutional white supremacy, but following the installation of the Unsung Founders Memorial within McCorkle Place, organizers began to develop a broader understanding of the ways in which the history of the institution manifests across the campus landscape. With a deepened knowledge of histories of resistance to the University’s anti-Blackness, contemporary movements that have operated within McCorkle Place organized to challenge the University’s “diversity without justice” cultural paradigm, moving Black students and workers towards a

reclamation of the University as place directed by the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.505

“Soldiers’ Monument” or “Silent Sam”

On June 2, 1913, members of the University’s Alumni Association and North Carolina’s United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) unveiled a “Soldiers’ Monument” to the University’s Confederate veterans on McCorkle Place. The program for the dedication of the Confederate Monument included a number of prominent white citizens from across the state, including the University’s President, Francis P. Venable; a prominent state leader of the Democratic 1898 white supremacist campaigns, Governor Locke Craig; the president of the state’s UDC chapter, Mrs. Marshall Williams; and commander of the state’s Confederate Veterans, secretary of the Alumni Association, and University trustee, “General” Julian Carr.506

The erection of the Soldiers Monument was an opportunity for University and state leaders not just to commemorate the University’s Confederate veterans, but to affirm the institution’s shared culture with the values of North Carolina Jim Crow society.507

Following speeches from Venable, Craige, and Williams, Carr rose to give his “thanks of the student veterans.”508 The present generation, he complained, had no memory or appreciation of the dedication of student veterans to the Confederate cause, which had preserved “the purest

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506 Julian Shakespeare Carr did not serve as a general in the Confederate States Army, but rather was given the title, “General Carr,” from members of the state’s Confederate veterans’ association for his service in veterans affairs.


508 Program for the dedication of the Confederate Monument, 1913 in the University Ephemera Collection #40446, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
strain of the Anglo Saxon to be found in the 13 Southern States.” Digressing somewhat from giving thanks, Carr continued: “One hundred yards from where we stand, less than ninety days perhaps after my return from Appomattox, I horse-whipped a negro wench until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she had publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady, and then rushed for protection to these University buildings where was stationed a garrison of 100 Federal soldiers.”

Carr’s speech, along with those of the other members of the June 2nd program, provide clear documentation that there were multiple purposes behind the erection of a Confederate Monument on the University’s campus: to honor the lives of the University’s student Confederate veterans, to honor the Confederate cause of white supremacy that student veterans had fought for, and to dedicate the campus of North Carolina’s public university to the celebration of anti-Black violence.

Following the 1913 dedication of the Confederate Monument, there were numerous occasions in which white students used the monument as a space for gathering, decoration, and tagging (with paint, underwear, pumpkins, leis, among other materials). The earliest written record of protest against the monument was not until 1965, when student Al Ribak wrote a letter to The Daily Tar Heel in which he urged “the Carolina student body to take up the case of removing from the campus that shameful commemoration of a disgraceful episode.”

Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968, the Confederate Monument

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509 Unveiling of Confederate Monument at University Speech in the Julian Shakespeare Carr Paper, #141, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

510 Al Ribak, “‘Silent Sam’ Should Leave,” The Daily Tar Heel, 17 March 1965, 2.
was splashed with paint and tagged with graffiti.\footnote{White students later volunteered to clean the paint off the monument, and decorated the ground with small Confederate flags, which they were then asked to remove by administrators. See: Mike Jennings, “Dastardly Deed to Sam,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 10 April 1968, 2.} But the first documented student gathering at the monument for the purpose of protesting against white supremacy occurred on November 19, 1971.\footnote{James Moore, “I’m ashamed of my passivity,” \textit{Black Ink}, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, December 1, 1971.} Members of the Black Student Movement (BSM) and the Afro-American Society of Chapel Hill High School gathered at the monument to honor the one year anniversary of the murder of James Lewis Cates, a young Black Chapel Hill citizen who had been stabbed by members of a white motorcycle gang, the Storm Troopers, in the Pit after a party on the campus as the Chapel Hill police watched without intervening.\footnote{“Slaying Aroused Chapel Hill, NC,” \textit{The New York Times}, 31 January 1971, 34; The three men who were charged with first degree murder of Cates were not convicted of any crime.} Following the 1971 rally in memory of Cates, students began using the Confederate Monument as a gathering space of resistance.

Historian Brian Ladd explains that “monuments are nothing if not selective aids to memory: they encourage us to remember some things but to forget others.”\footnote{Brian Ladd, \textit{The Ghosts of Berlin}, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11.} By using the Confederate Monument for a purpose other than that which its creators intended, Black students engaged in another remembering process, transforming the monument into a space in which they could continue to remember and reject the legacy of anti-Black violence. In 1973, the BSM gathered again to commemorate three years since Cates’s murder.\footnote{“73 Yack Lacks Black Viewpoint,” Letter to the Editor, \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 24 September 1973, 6.} In May 1992, following the Rodney King verdict and the eruption of riots in Los Angeles against anti-Black violence and police impunity, students converged on the monument, led by BSM president Michelle Thomas,
voicing their anger over the King verdict. In 1995, members of the Housekeepers Association rallied at the monument, speaking out about the discrimination they experienced as low-wage Black workers at the University. In 1997, the Chapel Hill Martin Luther King Day march ended with a demonstration at the monument, with a focus again on the housekeepers movement. Although none of these demonstrations called directly for removal or historical contextualization of the monument, these early protests transformed the Confederate Monument into a space in which Black Chapel Hill citizens could rally against the racial injustice and inequity embedded in the University’s multiple landscapes of experience.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, some of the University’s students and faculty began discussing publicly the ways in which the Confederate Monument represented more than a memorial to the University’s student Confederate veterans. On February 2, 2000, Professor Gerald Horne, the director of the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center, contributed a “Villages Voices” column to the Chapel Hill News in which he argued that “though Chapel Hill allegedly prides itself on its opposition to the kind of retrograde conservatism that the Confederate flag represents, the fact remains that the most prominent statue on the university campus is a heroic rendition of a soldier from the Confederate military.” Condemning the University’s liberalism directly, Horne argued that the monument should be removed from the campus because it honored “racial separatism” and “slavery denial.” “The season has arrived to


consign statues honoring the Confederacy to the appropriate museum or historical society,” he wrote, “and plant in its place a tree symbolizing racial tolerance.”

Horne’s column inspired dozens of letters to the editor both rebuffing and supporting his statements. Yonni Chapman submitted his own statement to the Chapel Hill News, in which he echoed Horne’s visions for the future of the monument: “I agree, Silent Sam must be removed.” Chapman, who in 2000 was already organizing around issues of historical truth and racial justice at the University, turned the work of his Freedom Legacy Project (FLP) towards the Confederate Monument. In the following school year, FLP sponsored a handful of panels and lectures on institutional racism at the University, discussions which covered the symbolic nature of the Confederate Monument in contributing to institutional racism. Although the 2001 On the Wake of Emancipation Campaign (OWEC) targeted Saunders Hall more than the Confederate Monument as a space which demanded transformation, together the organizing work of OWEC and FLP, as well as the controversy surrounding Horne’s column, produced a conversation about how memorialization, enslavement, and the campus landscape operated to preserve white supremacy within the University’s culture.

The Unsung Founders Memorial and Public Reactions

The Unsung Founders Memorial, which was chosen as the Class of 2002’s senior class gift, entered onto the campus landscape within the context of this conversation about the future


of the Confederate Monument. The memorial, the senior class gift committee wrote in October 2001, would honor of the “men and women of color who helped raise the first buildings on campus.” The senior class president, Ben Singer, argued that the choice of the monument to the enslaved persons who built the University (rather than a monument to the September 11th World Trade Center attacks, another option considered by the senior gift committee) would not be “about improving the university aesthetically, but rather embracing our roots and telling a story.” The senior gift committee selected South Korean-born artist Do-Ho Suh to the create the memorial. Suh submitted a proposal for the memorial that would “incorporate his signature miniature figures,” which he had used previously to emphasize the creation of a collective in sustaining or challenging power.

For the Unsung Founders Memorial, which Renée Ater details in her article about the monument’s creation and reception, Suh built three hundred miniature bronze figures, which hold up a rounded Black granite table with their upraised arms. The figures, Ater described, have “distinctive Negroid features,” with the female figures wearing handkerchiefs and long skirts, and the male figures clothed in three different ways to designate between freeman, laborers, and the enslaved. Surrounding the table, which rises only two feet from the ground, Suh sculpted five seats, which resemble the “rough-hewn stone grave markers of slaves and free persons of color found in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery.” The memorial that Suh created for the Class of 2002 offers no atonement or honorific for the “the people of color, bound and free, who helped build

the Carolina that we treasure today.” Instead, the representational figures do the labor their real counterparts did in life. “If you look at the figures’ facial expressions they don’t look oppressed, so it has a kind of positive gesture, but what they are doing actually is just bearing weight,” Suh explained.

In attendance at the dedication of the memorial on November 5, 2005 were descendants of the University’s “unsung founders,” several local residents and leaders in Chapel Hill’s Black neighborhoods, including restaurateur Mildred Council, civil rights activist Fred Battle, and union leader Rebecca Clark (whose name is also on the Cheek-Clark Building). At the dedication, Chancellor James Moeser, who had developed a reputation as a liberal chancellor, notably used the phrase “servants and slaves” in his address which prominently praised the University’s changing approach towards the examination of its past, rather than focusing on the commemoration of the contributions of the Black persons who were crucial to its building and maintenance. “This memorial, I believe,” Moeser said, “attests to our commitment to shed light on the darker corners of our history.” The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Bernadette Gray-Little, a Black woman, offered personal remarks at the dedication. “One of the troublesome legacies of slavery is the pall that it casts over the family histories of those who were bought and sold,” Gray-Little said. “My obscured family history is a reflection of the


obscurity of enslaved persons... This monument finally recognizes the many unnamed whose toil and talent made the nation’s first public university possible.” Gray-Little reflected in a later interview that the descendants of “some of the very people we were talking about as unsung contributors” received her speech well.

Although the memorial received initial praise at its unveiling and dedication, it almost immediately drew criticism for its biased memorialization of the University’s use of the labor of the enslaved. Tim McMillan, the founder of the Black and Blue Tour, in his article on the memorial, divides the various critiques leveraged against the monument into four distinct issues: “1) its non-imposing nature while being surrounded by more ‘monumental’ monuments to the white founders of the campus, 2) its non-specificity, 3) its evasive and self-congratulatory rhetoric, and 4) its creator.” The first of these critiques highlights the evident dichotomy set up between the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial, which Suh purposefully established when choosing a space for his creation.

Reginald Hildebrand, an emeritus professor of the Department of African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies, explained the structural racism inherent in the memorial, stating “there are very few monuments that make you smaller as a monument than you were in

527 Speech from Bernadette Gray-Little at Unsung Founders Memorial Unveiling, 5 November 2005 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


life, and put you down on the ground. You literally have to look down on those people to know that they are there. Unfortunately, they are well-positioned to be footrests. When it rains, they get splattered with mud. How can that be honoring them?”

Although the Unsung Founders Memorial was not likely designed by Suh to be a public display of Black suffering for the consumption of a white audience, this was the result. As Dancy et al. explain, “Black suffering merely decorates the landscape of White humanity.” The figurines in the Unsung Founders Memorial became, on the white campus landscape, an artistic portrayal of Black pain, rendered as an aesthetic commodity.

Hildebrand, referencing the invitation of the “unsung founders” descendants to the 2005 memorial dedication explained their reticence to accept the “honor” bestowed on their ancestors: “There were some people who belonged to the church that I belong to, been here forever, and had had family members who worked on the campus, and the University made a gracious effort to have them present for the unveiling. They were aware of the difficulty. But they also were appreciative of being recognized. So you are in the position of, in order to accept this honor, you also have to accept being demeaned.”

The inscription on the face of the table, which reads

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531 Interview with Reginald Hildebrand by Charlotte Fryar, 27 March 2017, L-0460.


533 The selection committee’s choice of Do-Ho Suh, a South Korean-born artist living in the United States, as the artist for the memorial inspired its own conversation regarding race and racism. Many critics of the monument felt that a South Korean-born artist could not correctly render a memorial to the suffering of African-Americans in the United States, and some attributed the inadequacies and even pejorative nature of the memorial to Suh’s ethnicity and race, rather than his abilities as an artist. For more see: Timothy J. McMillan, “Remembering Forgetting: A Monument to Erasure at the University of North Carolina,” in Silence, Screen and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information, ed. Lindsay A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, 137-162, (Berghahn Book: New York, New York, 2004): 154-156.

534 Interview with Reginald Hildebrand by Charlotte Fryar, 27 March 2017, L-0460.
“The Class of 2002 honors the university’s unsung founders, the people of color, bound and free, who helped build the Carolina that we cherish today,” has also been disputed. The word “we” suggests to some that there is an us/them dichotomy between the University and its “unsung founders,” a divide exacerbated by the forced diminishment of the representations of the “bound and free.” The absence of the words “slave,” “slavery,” or “enslaved,” are also contentious, largely because the memorial was planned to be a form of honoring enslaved persons.535

For some students who entered the University after 2005, viewing the Unsung Founders Memorial for the first time was shocking. Taylor Webber-Fields, who organized with the Real Silent Sam Coalition through 2015, remembered experiencing the memorial on her first tour of the campus: “She [the tour guide] took us to Silent Sam and was telling us about the monument...And then she took us to Unsung Founders, which is two hundred feet from the monument. And I just remember imploding. I just remember feeling...almost like, cheated again, or lied to again...So to know that this place not only capitalized on this whole system [enslavement], but was perpetuating the whole system all over again, and then, seeing it in statue form was just maddening.”536 Donelle Boose, who was an undergraduate at the time of the memorial’s unveiling and dedication, described the offensive nature of the memorial in relationship to the Confederate Monument: “when you contrast those two things, this monument to Silent Sam and the Confederacy, to this monument to the unsung people who helped build the university...it’s like ‘how can we do something to shut these people up and not piss off other


536 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.
people? How can we just do this as low key as possible? How can we acknowledge our roots in the most subtle way possible, our slavery roots?”

Movements to Contextualize and Remove the Confederate Monument

The dedication of the Unsung Founders Memorial and subsequent critiques leveraged against it arrived among a spate of other events that were also attempts to address the University’s history as a site of enslavement. In April 2003, Gerald Horne published another opinion piece, this time in *The Daily Tar Heel*, comparing the Confederate Monument to statues of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Iraq. In 2002, Yonni Chapman began a campaign to rename the Cornelia Phillips Spencer Bell Award, which since 1993 annually honored a woman who had made significant contributions to the University. Citing Spencer’s role in the post-Emancipation movement against Black enfranchisement, Chapman argued that her name should be removed from such an award. The discussion around Spencer and her legacy eventually developed into a two-day long conference in October 2004, “Remembering Reconstruction,” which was a response to the conversations about white supremacy embedded in the campus and institutional landscapes of Chapel Hill, conversations that Chapman had supported beginning with Kristi Booker’s creation of Students Seeking Historical Truth in 1999. Following the conference, Chancellor Moeser “retired” the Spencer Bell Award.

In October 2005, University Archives unveiled an exhibit in Wilson Library entitled *Slavery and the Making of the University*, which coincided with the dedication of the Unsung

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537 Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.


Founders Memorial and highlighted archival materials that aimed to “recognize and document the contributions of slaves, college servants, and free persons of color, primarily during the university’s antebellum period.” In 2007, the University officially rededicated Hinton James North, one of the new South Campus dorms constructed in 2002, as George Moses Horton Hall, marking it as what Chancellor Moeser described as “the first university building in this country named for a slave,” and allowing the University to claim Horton, a formerly enslaved poet from Orange County, as part of its institutional history.

Although not all of these events directly corresponded to the space of McCorkle Place itself, they were all aimed at understanding the legacy of the University’s past within the eras of enslavement and Reconstruction. McCorkle Place, as the oldest space within the University’s built landscape, was an historic site of enslavement, and therefore, each of these events, campaigns, and conversations spoke to the history and legacy of the space as it existed in the first century of the University. However, few if any, of these initiatives directly involved the leadership or counsel of Black students or workers.

Present in the background of these conversations about how the University might rectify the legacy of its racist past within the historical eras of enslavement and Reconstruction was the Confederate Monument. Students picked back up the issue of the Confederate Monument in

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541 Dedication Speech at Georges Moses Horton Residence Hall, 12 February 2007 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: James Moeser Records #40228, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

September 2011, when the Real Silent Sam Coalition first formed. In their first list of demands to the University, delivered in February 2012, RSSC stated clearly that they had no wish to “remove the statue or revise history,” but rather that they sought “to challenge the university to provide a more complete historical narrative.” Only through historical accuracy, they wrote, can “we hope to invigorate a culture at the university that celebrates difference and cultivates a diverse, egalitarian, and truth-seeking student body.”543 At their first meeting, members of RSSC read aloud Julian Carr’s speech at the dedication of the Confederate Monument to demonstrate how the institution remained committed to anti-Black violence.544

The first of RSSC’s four demands called for the addition of a plaque on or near “Silent Sam,” which “thoroughly explains the context in which the monument was erected.” The remainder of their demands dealt with memorial review, educational efforts, and significantly, the creation of a new monument, “of equal size and prominence to the Confederate Monument, to demonstrate the commitment to inclusivity at the modern university.” Rather than honoring a “mass of unnamed persons” they wrote, “it is critical that this monument honor a specific individual...Abraham Galloway, Zora Neale Hurston, or the Rev. Dr. Anna Pauline (Pauli) Murray should be considered for this honor.” This identification of a key issue with the Unsung Founders Memorial, along with the demand for historical contextualization for the Confederate Monument, established a written dichotomy between the two monuments.545


544 Interview with Omololu Babatunde by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0449.

The 2012 demands from RSSC also addressed the need to not just remove or contextualize names or monuments within the campus landscape, but to add those monuments and names that reflect the values of individuals or movements deserving of commemoration.546 Although RSSC was still focused on McCorkle Place in particular, their rhetoric suggests that members were developing a new sense of place for Chapel Hill by understanding themselves as emplaced actors within the history of the institution and the campus. Describing how a focus on one space could augment conversation about the entire campus, Zaina Alsous, one of the founders of RSSC, explained in 2012 that the Confederate Monument was “just a metaphor, a symbol for something much deeper and more unsettling about this place than a static image….I want us to be able to talk about racism and all its manifestations right here at this University.”547 The new sense of place for Chapel Hill that RSSC had begun to articulate as a powerful place of Black resistance set the foundation for future acts of reclamation through which Black students could assert their ownership of the University. In 2014, RSSC redirected their efforts away from the Confederate Monument and towards the removal of William Saunders’s name from Saunders Hall and the addition of Zora Neale Hurston’s name to the building, once again expanding their framework towards the reclamation of the University.

In June 2015, the national conversation about the future of Confederate monument removal shifted in the wake of a massacre at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, South Carolina perpetrated by Dylann Roof, an avowed white nationalist. Before entering the historic


Black church to murder nine Black citizens, Roof had taken photographs with the Confederate flag and visited several historic sites in North and South Carolina related to the Confederacy.548 The media coverage of the anti-Black massacre soon transferred towards questions about the meaning of monuments, flags, and other symbols of the Confederacy. In early July, South Carolina’s legislature voted to remove the Confederate flag from its statehouse grounds, and other cities and towns began to move towards removal of Confederate monuments from civic spaces across the United States.549

In response to the numerous national campaigns to remove Confederate monuments, North Carolina’s Republican-majority General Assembly passed a law that prohibits towns, universities, and other public agencies from moving or removing any and all “objects of remembrance” without permission from the North Carolina Historical Commission, a board of historians and interested citizens appointed by the Governor.550 In the months following the Charleston massacre, the Confederate Monument was tagged several times with the phrases “Black Lives Matter,” “KKK,” “Murderer,” and “Who Is Sandra Bland?,” referencing the name of a Black woman who was found dead in a jail cell in Texas in July 2015 after being stopped for a traffic violation. The continued tagging of the Confederate Monument helped to sustain a

conversation on the campus about the persistence of anti-Black violence in Chapel Hill during the summer months.551

The University continued to clean the monument after each tagging and installed video cameras in McCorkle Place to surveil the monument and protestors who might enter the space.552 Scholar Simone Browne explains that in public spaces that are “shaped for and by whiteness, some acts in public are abnormalized by way of racializing surveillance and then coded for disciplinary measures that are punitive in their effects.”553 By installing cameras in McCorkle Place to watch over the Confederate Monument, the University’s administration could surveil organizers (the majority of whom were Black students) in the space around the monument and potentially punish them for any actions they might take as they engaged with either the Confederate Monument or the Unsung Founders Memorial.

In the fall, RSSC organized once more against the Confederate Monument, this time calling formally for its removal from the campus. On October 11th, members of RSSC, led largely by queer Black women, gathered in front of the Confederate Monument under a blue tailgate tent and microphone. For twenty-four hours, they held a continuous reading of narratives from enslaved people. “It’s done as a space of healing for those involved and not necessarily for those to observe or watch,” Kescia Hall, the organizer of the readings told The Daily Tar Heel. “It’s lifting up the voices of those that Silent Sam would have chose to kill.” Telling the stories of enslaved people who resisted white supremacy, members of RSSC reclaimed the space of the

Confederate Monument by contributing to the reshaping of the ways in which the monument inscribed anti-Black violence into the campus landscape.\textsuperscript{554}  

The following day, October 12, 2015, students held a “Silence Sam” rally at the monument, then marched to Memorial Hall where they interrupted the proceedings of University Day, chanting “Tear It Down or We Shut You Down.”\textsuperscript{555} Two weeks later, on October 25th, an organization called “Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County” held a rally on the campus in support of the Confederate Monument, arriving in a caravan of trucks down Franklin Street and waving dozens of Confederate flags.\textsuperscript{556} Citing the organization’s right to freedom of assembly, the University did not attempt to keep the pro-Confederate group off the campus and provided a police escort for the organization towards the monument, infuriating students who were threatened by the University’s apparent welcoming of a pro-Confederate group to the campus.  

Referencing an email Chancellor Carol Folt sent to the University community in the days before the rally, Michelle Brown explained that “she said everybody’s out here to express their opinion and we respect freedom of speech, which is only used in defense of white supremacy.”\textsuperscript{557} University administrators arranged for a police force to encircle the Confederate Monument and keep student counter-protestors on one side of a barricade, while the pro-Confederate group held Confederate battle flags in front of the monument. The conspicuous use of police force to protect the Confederate Monument and pro-Confederate supporters showed the


\textsuperscript{555} Mona Bazza and Cole del Charo, “Pomp and protests at University Day,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 13 October 2015.  


\textsuperscript{557} Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.
University’s indifference to the lives of its Black students and exhibited one of the crucial methods the institution uses to repudiate the humanity of Black people.558

Many students were enraged that a pro-Confederate group had been allowed to gather on the campus, carrying symbols of a cause that had consecrated the right to the enslavement of Black people.559 In November, a coalition of anti-racist student organizations, including members of RSSC, delivered “A Collective Response to Anti-Blackness” to the University’s administration, the UNC System, and the North Carolina General Assembly. Separating demands into eleven sections across fourteen pages, the students’ fifty demands included several relating to the “racialized geography of campus.” Citing the pro-Confederate rally of the previous month, the students wrote “We DEMAND public condemnation of the anti-Black Confederate rally that occurred on this campus and their terroristic intimidation of Black students at UNC. We DEMAND the removal of the racist Confederate monument Silent Sam and ALL confederate monuments on campuses in the UNC-system.”560

Other demands relating to the campus landscape included the renaming of Carolina Hall to honor Zora Neale Hurston, the creation of a space to honor the contributions by members of Black Greek organizations to the University, and reclamation of control of Upendo Lounge by the BSM. The creation of “A Collective Response,” had been in part a response to concurrent Black student-led protests at the University of Missouri and the University of Cape Town, both


559 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455; Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

of which targeted symbols of white supremacy on their campuses that enacted anti-Black violence. At a Town Hall, organized by administrators to discuss issues of “race and inclusion,” members of RSSC entered the building to read their demands.561 Zakyree Wallace, a member of RSSC, explained after the Town Hall that, “We really, ultimately, wanted th[ese] demand[s] to really illustrate the impact that this environment, currently in this community, that doesn’t acknowledge racism, that doesn’t acknowledge anti-blackness on campus and how it affects black students.” 562 The demand of removal of the Confederate Monument has remained a constant since the delivering of the document, and “A Collective Response to Anti-Blackness” remains the most comprehensive document of student demands to the University's administration towards social, economic, and racial justice in Chapel Hill. 563

During the 2015-2016 school year, RSSC, still led primarily by queer Black women, set a crucial precedent in their demand that the Confederate Monument be removed from the campus entirely. Through the next school year, as the national movement to remove Confederate monuments continued, RSSC disbanded, but the coalition of students organized against the monument grew, with a majority of supporters now white students, many awakened to the realities of white supremacy following the election of Donald Trump.564 In September 2016, the Town of Chapel Hill added a new monument onto the campus landscape with the dedication of a


562 Felicia Bailey, “Town hall protestors prioritize demands, will meet with Chancellor Carol Folt today,” The Daily Tar Heel, 1 December 2015.


564 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.
marker to the enslaved persons and freed people of color buried largely in unmarked graves in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery (which is Town-owned, but part of the campus).\footnote{565} The monument, though a tremendous addition to the commemorative landscape and legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, was received by the University community with little to no celebration. The fact of its existence on the campus refuses to allow for a social death—that is, the condition of people not accepted as fully human—for the enslaved, even in their actual death, a powerful act of resistance to anti-Blackness on the campus landscape.\footnote{566}

Although the conversation about contestations of white supremacy remained active through the 2016 to 2017 school year, the campaign to remove the Confederate Monument stalled as organizers rebuilt the movement last led by RSSC. After a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017, in which pro-Confederate protestors rallied around a monument of Robert E. Lee and a counter-protestor was murdered by a member of a white supremacist organization, the movement to finally remove the most conspicuous symbol to white supremacy on the campus was revived. In Chapel Hill, on the night of August 22nd, hundreds of students and Orange and Durham County residents converged on the Confederate Monument following the forced removal of Durham’s Confederate monument by a group of citizens of that city. “It was a reaction to Durham, realizing that we can take this into our own hands if our administration isn't ready to fight for us,” said Michelle Brown, a graduate of 2018. “But you get to campus on the first day and they have not one barricade up but two. And the staff, the cops are

\footnote{565} Tammy Grubb, “Chapel Hill cemetary marker ‘is making something right that has been wrong’,” \textit{Raleigh News & Observer}, 16 September 2016.

\footnote{566} Orlando Patterson, \textit{Social Death and Slavery: A Comparative Study}, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).
within those barricades, ready to protect the statue before their students.” Once again, the University utilized its police force to uphold the “maintenance of the labor contract, which requires differential sets of social and material realities between Blacks and Whites.” Under the logic of this contract, Black students provide diversity labor for the institution without question, and certainly without protest. When Black students and their allies do protest, they are met with police intervention and violence.

That fall, students placed flowers on top of the Unsung Founders Memorial, reasserting the established relationship between the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial and calling on community members “to Honor those whose lives were stolen to build this campus,” “to Remember their humanity,” and to “Celebrate the Brilliance and lives of those who bring excellence Even in the face of injustice.” Later that school year, organizers placed placards around the Confederate Monument which listed the names of leaders of past racial justice movements in Chapel Hill, including Mary Smith, Elizabeth Brooks, Gene Alston, and Preston Dobbins, and historical markers, which oriented viewers to sites of anti-Black violence and intimidation across the campus. These placards and markers were another powerful example of campus organizers engaging in counter-storytelling to challenge the public narrative of the institution as free from violence and discrimination.

567 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.


569 Placard placed on Unsung Founders Memorial, 25 August 2017.

570 Historical Markers Placed Around the Confederate Monument, 30 March 2018.

As the year continued, a multiracial coalition of students, faculty, and Orange County citizens continued to protest, sit-in, and speak out for removal of the Confederate Monument, while university administrators continued to argue that they were unable to remove the monument because of N.C. Gen. Stat. §100-2.1. Although its supporters maintained that the Confederate Monument was only a testament to the University’s Confederate veterans, in reality its continued existence on the campus allowed the University to continue to enact the processes which permits the institution to consider Black students and workers property to be policed and controlled.  

For some organizers, the Confederate Monument itself was not as hostile as administrators’ insistence that they could do nothing to remove the monument. Citing two decades of student organizing to remove or historically contextualize the monument, Brown stated that what really “offends me is how willing this university is to keep it, how far they’re willing to go to deny what it stands for.” As security for the monument increased through the 2017 to 2018 school year, University Police Chief Jeff McCracken estimated that the department spent roughly $1,700 a day to maintain a police presence in McCorkle Place, in addition to maintaining the video cameras watching over the Confederate Monument. In November, organizers discovered that a man attending their meetings, who had introduced himself as an auto mechanic in sympathy with their movement, was in fact a member of the campus police


573 Interview with Michelle Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0455.

force.575 This heightened level of surveillance through police infiltration is, as scholar Simone Browne explains, “the fact of anti-Blackness.”576 Throughout that school year, campus and town police continued to surveil and intimidate student protestors who gathered at the Confederate Monument.577

Continued Contextualization of McCorkle Place

On April 30, 2018, Maya Little, a graduate student in the History Department and organizer in the Silent Sam Sit-In since August 2017, escalated the activities of the movement, smearing a mixture of red ink and her own blood on the statue. Little explained that the University’s Confederate Monument, like all monuments to the Confederacy, “were built on Black blood…without that blood on the statue, it’s incomplete, in my opinion. It’s not properly contextualized.”578 In her act of “contextualization,” Little followed in the footsteps of both Students Seeking Historical Truth and their decoration of Saunders Hall as “their own memorial to show what Saunders was,” and the Real Silent Sam Coalition, which used performance art as an alternative form of commemoration to activate students to their cause.579 “People are going to keep contextualizing it,” Little explained of the future of the Confederate Monument. “We’re going to continue contextualizing and talking about the real history of Silent Sam, the real


577 Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” The Daily Tar Heel, 1 May 2018.

578 Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” The Daily Tar Heel, 1 May 2018.

history of white supremacy at UNC and in Chapel Hill.” Chapel Hill police arrested Little for her act of historical contextualization, and Little faced charges for vandalism from the state and the University’s Student Honor Court and possible expulsion from the University.\textsuperscript{580} In October, a district court judge issued Little a guilty verdict but did not leverage a sentence; the Student Honor Court sanctioned Little with eighteen hours of community service.\textsuperscript{581}

Around two hundred and fifty students and community members gathered on August 20, 2018 at the Peace and Justice Plaza on Franklin Street for a demonstration in support of Little and the charges she faced for her act of contextualization. Gathered in the Plaza (where both Yonni Chapman and Rebecca Clark are commemorated for their contributions to racial justice), across the street from McCorkle Place, Little stood in front of four gray banners, each approximately twenty feet tall, which she explained were “an alternative monument” to “a world without white supremacy.” The crowd moved across the street after a series of speeches, gathering around the Confederate Monument while several police officers watched. Students and community members held the banners around the four sides of the monument, obscuring the entire Confederate Monument behind their counter-monument, one side of which listed names of victims of anti-Black violence, beginning with “unnamed Black woman beaten by Julian Carr.”\textsuperscript{582}

\textsuperscript{580} Suzanne Blake, “We Talked to Maya Little About protesting Silent Sam and her arrest Monday,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 1 May 2018.

\textsuperscript{581} Preston Lennon, “Maya Little has headed the charge against Silent Sam, but not without consequences,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 4 December 2018.

\textsuperscript{582} Jane Stancill, “Protestors topple Silent Sam Confederate statue at UNC,” \textit{Raleigh News & Observer}, 20 August 2018.
After approximately an hour, protestors, working behind the screen of the banners, tied a rope around the Confederate Monument and others on the ground pulled the rope. The Confederate soldier atop the monument fell to the ground, “sending people screaming and jumping in disbelief.” Later that night as a storm rolled into Chapel Hill, the monument was lifted out of the mud and taken to a “safe and secure location,” until Chancellor Folt and the Board of Trustees could develop a plan for its future. The University’s leadership responded to the toppling of the Confederate Monument by promising to “use the full breadth of state and University processes to hold those responsible accountable for their actions,” and police charged at least twenty-five people in connection to the rallies and protests that followed over the next week. Police violence against protestors at rallies through August and September was intense, with dozens of videos emerging of police officers shown throwing protestors to the ground, using pepper-spray to keep student protestors away from pro-Confederate supporters, and deploying smoke bombs to disperse a small crowd of students in front of an academic building on McCorkle Place.

The toppling of the Confederate Monument confirms that campus organizers are actively reclaiming the University as a place “without white supremacy,” their actions directed by the

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584 Jane Stancill, “Silent Sam Statue at UNC, where it is being stored,” Raleigh News & Observer, 21 August 2018.

585 Carol Folt, Harry Smith, Margaret Spellings, Haywood Cochrane, “Update from Carolina and UNC System Leaders,” 21 August 2018, Email; Grubb, Tammy, “Former UNC chancellor’s granddaughter among 14 now charged in Silent Sam protests,” The Durham Herald Sun, 30 August 2018.

legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.\textsuperscript{587} Little, describing the removal of the Confederate Monument for \textit{CrimethInc.}, explained that the group of “students, workers, neighbors, and comrades reclaimed Chapel Hill” and “memorialized and reawakened histories of resistance against the white supremacist institution and its followers and honored the martyred Black and Brown people in our area.” Little continued, explaining that at every point in the movement to remove the Confederate Monument “the university opposed activists, confiscated materials, and used surveillance and harassment to stop the recovery and rejoicing in reclamation.”\textsuperscript{588}

Rallies following the removal of the Confederate Monument in August and October of 2018 have highlighted these “histories of resistance,” in particular the story of James Lewis Cates, the young Black man stabbed in the Pit in 1970 by members of a white supremacist gang as Chapel Hill police watched without intervening. “At UNC, you find no monuments to James Lewis Cates,” Little explained to \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}. “There are no monuments to the countless acts of resistance against UNC’s racism and against Silent Sam.”\textsuperscript{589} The recovery of Cates’s story is another act of reclamation, referencing not just the story of his murder at the hands of a white supremacist organization and police bystanders, but the first gatherings of Black students at the Confederate Monument to protest the institution’s indifference to his murder.


\textsuperscript{589} Charlie McGee, “Here’s the story of James Lewis Cates, a rallying point for today’s UNC demonstrators,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 21 August 2018; Ellie Heffernan and Elizabeth Moore, “Before Maya Little's Honor Court trial, activists gathered to support her,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, 25 October 2018.
In an effort to take an enlightened step forward for the University, which faced national condemnation for its refusal to take a decisive stand against the Confederate Monument, on University Day, October 12, 2018, Chancellor Folt belatedly offered “our university’s deepest apology for the profound injustices of slavery, our full acknowledgment of the strength of enslaved peoples in the face of their suffering, and our respect and indebtedness to them.” Folt explained that “our apology must lead to purposeful action,” and continued her address by celebrating the institution’s shared values, including “the diversity that is our national heritage.”

Following Folt’s remarks, Jim Leloudis, a member of the Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History announced the Task Force’s plans for “purposeful action.” Over the next year, workers will install “signs and thresholds [sic] markers” which acknowledge the indigenous people who “were the first stewards of the land, and whose descendants work, study, and teach here today,” and commemorate the University as “the birthplace of American public higher education.”

590 Workers will also refurbish the Unsung Founders Memorial, reinstalling the monument onto a hard surface “surrounded by circular walls and a walkway that connects to the sidewalk” and adding an “interpretative sign.”

591 Folt’s apology placed the “profound injustices of slavery” firmly within the University’s past, with no acknowledgement of how the history of enslavement on the campus had created the conditions for current anti-Black violence to be enacted by campus police against Black student organizers. The plans proposed by the Task Force include an important acknowledgement of the indigenous people who lived and live in what became the campus landscape, but their plans do


little to mitigate the critiques leveraged against the inadequacies of the Unsung Founders Memorial as commemorative art. Nor do their plans break through the ways in which the campus landscape is racially bounded in order to enforce the exclusion of Black people. Although Folt’s address and the plans announced by the Task Force were intended to assert the institution’s commitment to “working to right the wrongs of history so they are never again inflicted,” they instead affirmed the institution’s commitment to the “diversity without justice” cultural paradigm, which Yonni Chapman explains “ensures the power of the past to continue shaping the future.”

After four months of uncertainty about the future of the Confederate Monument, Chancellor Folt presented a “Recommendation for the Disposition and Preservation of the Confederate Monument” to the Board of Trustees on December 3rd. The proposal suggested the construction of a new free-standing “University History and Education Center” to house the Confederate Monument, constructed at an approximate cost of $5.3 million dollars. With the construction of this building, Folt and the trustees explained, the University would not face punitive action from the state legislature for violating N.C. Gen. Stat. §100-2.1, which required the return of the monument to “a site of similar prominence, honor, visibility, availability and access that are within the boundaries of the jurisdiction from which it was relocated.” In the new building, which they proposed should be located in Odum Village, part of the South Campus housing complex, there would also be “appropriate buffers and state-of-the-art security measures, as well as the development of excellent exhibits and teaching materials,” totaling

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approximately $800,000 a year in annual operating costs. In addition to the construction of a free-standing center, the proposal also suggested the creation of “a mobile force [to] be developed at the UNC System level…to provide enhanced capability to address issues that arise with large crowds and protests.” The Board of Trustees voted to approve and submit the proposal to the Board of Governors, who would decide whether the plan would move forward on December 14th.594

The proposal was immediately met with outrage by students, workers, and faculty for its plan to spend millions of dollars in state funds to re-erect and protect the Confederate Monument and spend millions more dollars annually to increase the policing and surveillance of student protesters. Of more obscure significance, but still crucial for understanding the proposal within the context of former racial justice movements, was the plan to construct the center on South Campus, which was and remains the site for the majority of Black student on-campus housing. The use of the word “free-standing” to describe the “University History and Education Center,” which would house the University’s most prominent monument to white supremacy, evoked the movement thirty years earlier to construct a free-standing Black Cultural Center, which operated in direct opposition to the anti-Blackness fundamental to the Confederate Monument. The Stone Center, unlike the proposed History Center, had been constructed using funds solely from private donations, rather than state funds. The plans to further militarize the campus police also recalled the police violence enacted against Black student protestors in 1969 during the Foodworkers’ Strikes.

594 “Recommendation for the Disposition and Preservation of the Confederate Monument: A Four-Part Plan presented by UNC-Chapel Hill to the UNC Board of Governors,” Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, Board of Trustees Archives, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 3 December 2018.
At a rally organized for the night of December 3rd, Maya Little called on graduate student teaching assistants to strike, withholding final grades until the University withdrew its proposal. Following Little’s call, dozens of teaching assistants pledged to withhold final grades during the exam period, and thousands of students, alumni, faculty, and staff signed onto petitions, letters, and statements that urged the Board of Governors to reject the proposal. In a widely publicized statement written by alumni-student athletes, many of them former members of the men’s basketball team, alumni wrote “Black students and faculty are often used by the university as ‘accessories.’ We were a part of that sacrifice and branding. We helped to tell the story that Carolina is the ‘University of the People.’ We love UNC but now also feel a disconnect from an institution that was unwilling to listen to students and faculty who asked for Silent Sam to be permanently removed from campus.” After just two weeks of organizing, the newly formed #StrikeDownSam Anti-Racist Coalition had galvanized the University community into action against the proposal, and at their meeting later that December, the Board of Governors rejected the proposal, though stated its prohibitive costs, rather than its anti-Black objectives, as the determining issue in their vote.

On January 14, 2019, Chancellor Carol Folt announced in a letter to the University community that she planned to resign effective in May 2019 and would remove the remaining portion of the Confederate Monument immediately, explaining that its continued presence on the campus posed a “continuing threat both to the personal safety and well-being of our


community.” That evening, workers dismantled the plinth and began removing the brick foundation that the monument had stood on for over a century. By the afternoon of January 17th, the ground where the Confederate Monument had once been located was covered with straw and grass seed. The Board of Governors rejected Folt’s timeline for resignation, forcing Folt to leave by January 31st, a punitive decision meant to penalize Folt for her “draconian action” regarding the removal of the monument. At the time of this writing, a new proposal for the future of the Confederate Monument is still due to the Board of Governors by May 20, 2019, created by the new interim chancellor, Kevin Guskiewicz.

**Legacy of the Unsung Founders Memorial and the Confederate Monument**

Although the uncertain future of the Confederate Monument continues to be the flashpoint for continued protests, it is important to recognize that the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial both provide physical texts for understanding the structural racism built into the campus landscape. Though distinct, together they are illustrations of the cultural denial of oppression at the University, which transcends the distant eras of enslavement, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow to reach forward into the present. By positioning the cultural contexts of these monuments in the present, organizers have confronted the University’s “diversity without justice” cultural paradigm, through which the white supremacy of the institution produces and is produced by the racial binding of space in ways that continue to

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subjugate Black people. By challenging both monuments as spaces which reflected and enacted racist processes, organizers demonstrated the power of constructing an counter-narrative of resistance within McCorkle Place to oppose a narrative which celebrates the University’s erroneous claims to social justice.

The memorial dichotomy between the former Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial expands to include the entire campus landscape as a place which represents the unbalanced legacies of Black student and worker power and white institutional power. The history of the campus movements that organized to transform McCorkle Place illustrates how Black students and workers both contested the University’s anti-Blackness within its institutional and campus landscapes and began to reclaim the University. The recent successes of the McCorkle Place movement demonstrate the need to conceptualize the University as a dynamic place of resistance to white supremacy, by utilizing the full counter-history of these movements that Black students and workers have produced. Reclamation as a spatially-based organizing approach orients campus actors to their potential identities as emplaced organizers who can use the legacy of the past to direct a future for Chapel Hill towards racial justice. The toppling and final removal of the Confederate Monument confirms the powerful potential of self-possession and place-possession against the dominant white supremacy of the cultural landscape.

When the University is understood as a place that is co-owned by all campus actors, the power of students and workers to take action against its dominant white supremacy becomes the central spatial context within which all campus actors experience Chapel Hill. This concept of

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the reclamation of the University, developed by contemporary students and workers, offers the most compelling framework for future organizers to utilize in their own construction of past counter-histories and their future movements’ places within those histories. Fusing together the histories of these spaces within the process of asserting ownership, the act of reclamation directs the institution towards a future led by a new cultural paradigm of reparative justice.
CONCLUSION: RECLAIMING THE UNIVERSITY WITH A REPARATIVE JUSTICE PARADIGM

“This beautiful place is built on some very ugly things. What do I do with that? It is what it is, but what do I do about that? How do I function? What do I do differently?”602 The answers to Donelle Boose’s initial questions for herself and other campus organizers offered in the histories of resistance presented in this dissertation chart a series of counter-narratives that Black students and workers have built into a working legacy of racial justice movements at the University. Although this legacy is potent, these histories map onto an unstable landscape of access to justice for Black Chapel Hill citizens. Despite some success in challenging the anti-Blackness of the University, the cultural, campus, and institutional landscapes of the University all remain dominated by white supremacy, each controlled and reproduced by the University’s racist history and its contemporary anti-Black practices. And though the history of how Black students and workers challenged specific spaces within the racialized campus landscape demonstrates the power of constructing an alternative interpretation of the University as an institution defined by its anti-Blackness, the University’s dominant cultural paradigm remains inviolable. As long as the “diversity without justice” paradigm prevails, the future of the University will be directed by the white supremacy foundational to its past and present.603

602 Interview with Donelle Boose by Charlotte Fryar, 17 November 2017, L-0451.

What do we do with that? How do we function? What do we do differently? In providing possible answers to these questions, this dissertation concludes by considering a potential future for the University under a new cultural paradigm directed by reparative justice, and outlines the policies and processes necessary to initiate such a paradigm shift. This reparative justice paradigm is supported by contemporary movements’ assertions of a future for the University that they envision as formed by a relational sense of place, in which the University and its multiple landscapes of experience coalesce into a full and dynamic place of resistance to institutional anti-Blackness. By following in the directions that these movements point, the conclusion of this dissertation seeks to provide a prospective template for a counter-mapping of the University’s landscapes. In describing a counter-mapping of the University’s cultural, campus, and institutional landscapes—still predominantly mapped by white supremacy despite some changes—I refer to the introduction of systems, policies, and cultural shifts that map landscapes “against dominant power structures.”

This template outlines a potential path for future racial justice movements which utilizes the full legacy of past movements to conceptualize the University as a place of humanity, dignity, and equity for all campus actors. A reparative justice framework directs this counter-mapping of the University’s multiple landscapes.

**Defining Reparative Justice**

Reparative justice, like the more well known theory of restorative justice, is focused on “restoration, making things right…on repair of social injury,” but unlike restorative justice, which is usually associated with individual criminal law or transitional justice efforts, reparative

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justice offers a useful term for the analysis of state and institutional wrong-doing. Political scientist Ernesto Verdeja’s definition of reparative justice provides a framework for understanding the potentials of counter-mapping the University’s landscapes: “The goal of a critical theory of reparative justice should be to secure victims’ sense of dignity and moral worth in ways that are compatible with social justice and equality.” Reparative justice, Verdeja explains, can involve two types of acknowledgement—symbolic (e.g., official apologies, public atonement, commemoration of victims) or material (e.g., financial restitution, educational compensation)—and two categories of recipient—collective or individual.

In the case of the University, it is the institution, as the offender, that must provide both types of acknowledgement for the collective group of Black Chapel Hill citizens, including descendants of permanent residents as well as Black students and alumni, who have been denied their humanity through a variety of state- and institution-sanctioned mechanisms of anti-Black violence and discrimination. Reparative justice is, as philosopher Janna Thompson explains, “not merely [a] restoration of rights and property or compensation for injury. It must be expanded to include acknowledgment of suffering caused by the injustice, apology from institutions or persons who did the wrong, and acts designed to restore relationships that were damaged by the injustice.” A deliberate reparative justice praxis as outlined by both Verdeja and Thompson can establish a reparative justice cultural paradigm.

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But what would reparative justice at the University look and sound like? What specific constructions, policies, and cultural processes would need to come from within the University to inaugurate a reparative justice paradigm within its multiple landscapes of experience? I argue for three major constructions and policies to be enacted as essential to a reparative justice praxis at the University. First, I outline the establishment of a truth commission to research and address the true relationship between the University and Black citizens of Chapel Hill, extending from the institution’s origins within the era of enslavement through to its protection of white supremacist gatherings in the twenty-first century. Drawing on legal studies of truth commissions and a ground-breaking historical commission that explores the connections between the University of Virginia and the legacy of enslavement, I explain how a truth commission at the University would be a decisive step forward in building a counter-institution through changed policies, and potentially initiating steps towards reconciliation between Black Chapel Hill citizens and the institution.

Second, relying on scholarship from critical university studies and memory studies, I describe the creation of a counter-campus as a site of future reconciliation, proposing a series of changes to the campus landscape in ways that seek to honor the histories of Black freedom striving at the University with attention towards the breaking of racialized boundaries of belonging and ownership. Third, I argue for the establishment of reparations for Black Chapel Hill citizens, engaging arguments first forwarded by the UNC Housekeepers Association to explain the specific assemblies necessary to provide restitution for the harms committed by the institution. Together, these three policies introduce a potential counter-mapping for the University’s landscapes within a reparative justice paradigm, beginning the difficult task of untying the direction of the University’s future from its past.
The Counter-Institution: A Truth Commission for the Institutional Landscape

When the Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth (CHAT) applied for recognition as a student organization in November 2005 they explained that their “objectives are to generate a more accurate and truthful understanding of the university’s history...A greater awareness of the university’s role in the perpetuation of slavery, Jim Crow, and other injustices should be the basis for corrective action, and we will work to see that the university community engages in a process of truth telling, restorative justice, and reconciliation.” In other words, CHAT proposed to serve as the University’s first truth commission, a body which would address the University’s history truthfully in order to repair the injustices still operating within the present institutional landscape. It was tall order for any organization, especially one comprised primarily of white graduate students and staff. But the goal of CHAT—to ensure that the University take corrective action for the abuses in its past through the creation of an informal truth commission—is crucial to recognize, because it orients the University towards a broad exploration of the facts of its past and advances the institution and Black Chapel Hill citizens towards potential reconciliation. Since 2005, the University’s reactions to the movements for Hurston Hall and the removal of the Confederate Monument have demonstrated that there is perhaps a greater need than ever before to establish a comprehensive truth commission for the University.

There is no single definition of what constitutes a truth commission, let alone what would constitute a truth commission for a body not recognized as a state or country. Nevertheless, Priscilla Hayner’s definition of the objective of a truth commission, offered in her capacity as co-

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608 Campaign for Historical Truth and Accuracy application to the Carolina Student Union, 3 November 2005 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
founder of the International Center for Transitional Justice, is practical for application for the University. According to Hayner, the broad mandate of a truth commission is “to address the past in order to change policies, practices, and even relationships in the future, and to do so in a manner that respects and honors those who were affected by the abuses.”\textsuperscript{609} Hayner’s definition is aligned with Verdeja and Thompson’s definitions of a critical theory of reparative justice, which outline the need for apology and acknowledgement from the offender in addition to changed policies for restitution.

Hayner outlines the features of what constitutes a truth commission as “(1) focused on the past, rather than ongoing, events; (2) investigates a pattern of events that took place over a period of time; (3) engages directly and broadly with the affected population, gathering information on their experiences; (4) is a temporary body, with the aim of concluding with a final report; and (5) is officially authorized or empowered by the state under review.” Their aims usually extend far beyond their titular goal to state the truth, and often are tasked “to address the needs of victims; to ‘counter impunity’ and advance individual accountability, to outline institutional responsibility and recommend reforms; to promote reconciliation and reduce conflict over the past.” Although truth commissions may differ in their specific investigatory mandates and capacities, they focus largely on narrative accounts given by the injured party, usually “collecting thousands of testimonies, and honoring these truths in a public and officially sanctioned report.”\textsuperscript{610}


The expanse of these features and aims of truth commissions indicates that there are many potential ways to structure a truth commission for the University. The configurations that I propose are directed by the need expressed by Black citizens to reclaim ownership of the University and its history as their own. This need is summarized in a statement given by the Real Silent Sam Coalition in April 2012 regarding the demand to historically contextualize McCorkle Place: “when we stepped on to this campus…we became a part of a history—a deep, rich history that is in the walls, and the graves, and the grounds of this campus.”611 Using Hayner’s five defining features of truth commissions, I outline what the purposes and goals of a potential truth commission for the University might entail, similar and separate from Hayner’s definition:

(1) focused on the past, rather than ongoing, events;

A truth commission for the University will focus on the relationship between Black Chapel Hill citizens—all Black persons who have worked for, attended, or taught at the University—and the institution—its “routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies”—from its founding in 1789 to the present.612 This attention to past and ongoing events therefore differs from Hayner’s definition. By refusing to deny the ways in which past events are still operating in the University’s present, the commission will explore the various mechanisms the University employed to secure the permanent status of Black people as non-human throughout the operation of the institution. Indeed, one of the most important features that would mark this new truth commission as distinct from previous institutional efforts at historical truth-telling (e.g., the Slavery and Making of the University exhibit in 2005 or the Remembering

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Reconstruction conference in 2004) would be its broad mandate to engage with all eras of the University’s history.

(2) investigates a pattern of events that took place over a period of time;
Events the commission could investigate include, but should not be limited to: the enslavement and sale of Black persons by the University, its leadership, students, and alumni; the benefits reaped by the institution from the free labor of Black persons pre- and post-Emancipation; the role of the institution in perpetuating white supremacy in North Carolina’s political and social spheres; the effect of racial discrimination on Black economic mobility, land and home ownership, and educational attainment in Chapel Hill and North Carolina; the impact of institutional anti-Black policies and practices on Black students; the operational systems which denied equal rights and privileges to Black students and workers, especially regarding the autonomy of Black-created spaces and Black exclusion from the University’s cultural practices; and the ways in which the University sought to contain the dissemination of the histories of Black freedom striving and subjugate Black student and worker movements for racial justice.

(3) engages directly and broadly with the affected population, gathering information on their experiences;
The membership of the truth commission should include Black workers, faculty, students, and alumni, representatives from Chapel Hill’s major Black organizations, residents of Chapel Hill’s Black neighborhoods, local and institutional historians, and institutional representatives. It should, as part of its exploration of the relationship between Black citizens and the University, engage a variety of sources to fully investigate the legacy of each event. It will be crucial for the commission to emphasize in the gathering of testimonies the multivalent nature of individuals’ relationships to the institution, while still considering how systems of racism and discrimination
resonate through a longer and collective experience with institutional anti-Blackness in Chapel Hill.613

(4) is a temporary body, with the aim of concluding with a final report;
The resulting product of the truth commission, which should last no more than ten years (depending on the events to be investigated and the resources allotted to the commission), should be a report on the University’s historical relationship to Black Chapel Hill citizens. The report should include, at the very least, a full accounting of the events the commission is tasked to investigate and acknowledgement of and apology for the University’s responsibilities in enacting anti-Black violence and discrimination. It should also include recommendations for institutional reforms to address the stated needs of the injured groups, atonements necessary to redress past institutional impunity, and potential programs or policies that promote reconciliation.

(5) is officially authorized or empowered by the state under review.
The truth commission should be authorized by the University and empowered to fully investigate all events it is charged to research. This is perhaps the most difficult feature of a truth commission to imagine aligning with the potential for a truth commission for the University, especially when provided with the history of the ways in which the institution has sought to conceal its racist history. While it might be possible to authorize a truth commission through a body not connected to the University’s administration, it is almost certain that the commission would be less successful in achieving its goals without institutional or state support.

613 The Marian Cheek Jackson Center Oral History Trust and the Southern Oral History Program have interviewed dozens of Black Chapel Hill citizens about their experiences with the University’s anti-Blackness over the last four decades. These interviews could serve as a first step in the gathering of testimonies from individuals injured by the institution. See in the Jackson Center Oral History Trust the Oral History Collection. In the Southern Oral History Program Interview Database see: Projects K.2.8. Listening for a Change: History 170, Oral History Course Project: Desegregation and the Inner Life of Chapel Hill Schools; K.2.20. Listening for a Change: Mighty Tigers--Oral Histories of Chapel Hill's Lincoln High School; R.26. Special Research Projects: Northside Community Association, Chapel Hill, N.C.
The outcome of the first truth and reconciliation process to operate in the United States, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC), demonstrates the necessity of authorization by the state or institution under review. The GTRC was developed in 2004 from the grassroots of the Greensboro, North Carolina community to address the killing and wounding of over a dozen members of the Communist Workers Party by members of the Ku Klux Klan at a protest in November 1979 and the subsequent state cover-up of the killings. Although the five hundred page report was rigorously researched, condemning the Ku Klux Klan, the Greensboro Police Department, and the City of Greensboro for the events and their concealment, the predominantly white City Council of Greensboro refused to implement the GTRC’s recommendations, providing a mere statement of regret over the November 1979 events.\(^{614}\) For a truth commission for the University to be able to fully implement the recommendations of its report, the University’s administration should authorize the commission to fulfill its mandates.\(^{615}\)

**Historical Commissions at American Colleges and Universities**

The potentials for the truth commission for the University outlined above are adaptable beyond even the features Hayner delineates, and should be thought of as flexible in construction and focus, but not in their objective to address the institution’s history in order to create policies and practices which acknowledge, honor, and provide restitution for Black citizens of Chapel Hill. There have been no truth commissions yet established at any institutions of higher education in the United States, but there have been dozens of historical commissions. The first of

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\(^{615}\) Yonni Chapman, who as the founder of CHAT, was instrumental in the organization’s call to serve as a truth commission, had been present at the 1979 protest in which five of his colleagues and friends from the Communist Workers Party were murdered. Chapman was also aware of the work of GTRC as it was ongoing, and remained friends and colleagues with many of the individuals on the commission, particularly Nelson Johnson.
these historical commissions, Brown University’s Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice, was launched in 2003 under the auspices of President Ruth Simmons to examine “the University’s historical entanglement with slavery and the slave trade and to report our findings openly and truthfully.” Since 2003, over forty historically and predominantly white colleges and universities across the United States (concentrated on the East Coast) have established commissions, committees, task forces, and councils to explore the relationship between their institution and enslavement.

The number of universities willing to investigate their histories with enslavement has increased dramatically, such that in 2015, the national consortium Universities Studying Slavery officially formed and is now open to “any school seeking to confront its own historical legacies.” Though these historical commissions differ greatly in purpose, purview, resources, and outcomes, they have all so far been primarily focused on researching the institutional connections to “slavery, the slave trade, or the racist legacies of slavery.” Some institutions have published scholarly texts or full historical reports on the findings of their research, but most historical commissions are generally tasked with reproducing their research findings into a single easily accessible format, such as a multi-day conference, a physical monument on the campus, or

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617 Historically Black colleges and universities are also involved in the national conversation regarding the relationship between institutions and enslavement. In October 2018, members of the national consortium Universities Studying Slavery met at Tougaloo College to discuss systemic repair options for HBCUs.

618 Report to President Teresa Sullivan, President’s Commission on Slavery and the University, July 2018, Accessed 31 July 2018, [http://vpdiversity.virginia.edu/sites/vpdiversity.virginia.edu/filesPCSU%20Report%20FINAL_July%202018.pdf](http://vpdiversity.virginia.edu/sites/vpdiversity.virginia.edu/filesPCSU%20Report%20FINAL_July%202018.pdf); The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a member of Universities Studying Slavery and is represented by members of the Chancellor’s Task Force on UNC-Chapel Hill History. The Task Force is “responsible for developing a comprehensive approach to curating and teaching the history of the University.” It is not limited by its mandate in its scope to the era of enslavement.
a website displaying archival documents that illustrate the institution’s ties to enslavement.\textsuperscript{619}

These historical commissions are principally concerned with conducting historical research and publicly interpreting their findings, a traditionally scholarly process boldly termed in many of their founding documents as an effort to confront or even atone for the past. Very few white institutions have sought to examine the history of anti-Black discrimination and violence on their campuses post-Emancipation or understand the experiences of Black students at their institutions during the era of desegregation. Even fewer have sought to use the legacy of their institution’s past as a way towards acknowledgement, apology, atonement, or reconciliation.

While institutional historical commissions should not be confused for truth commissions, they might be best understood as their embryonic forms. One of these historical commissions—the University of Virginia’s (UVA) President’s Commission on Slavery and the University (PCSU)—has moved the farthest in their practices towards Hayner’s definitional features of a truth commission. PCSU bears examination when considering the potential construction of a truth commission at the University of North Carolina in part because of the historical similarities between the two institutions as historically and predominantly white flagship public institutions in the South, but more so because PCSU offers specific policies that the University of North Carolina might consider for implementation in Chapel Hill.

\textit{The University of Virginia’s Presidential Commission on Slavery and the University}

The roots for PCSU’s creation were set in February 2007 when the Virginia General Assembly passed Virginia Joint Resolution 728, which expressed “profound regret” for the

state’s role in slavery.620 Two months later, UVA’s Board of Visitors issued its own statement of regret for the University’s involvement with slavery and approved the installation of a plaque to honor the “several hundred women and men, both free and enslaved, whose labor between 1817 and 1826 helped to realize Thomas Jefferson’s design for the University of Virginia.”621 The statements of regret and the plaque, like the University of North Carolina’s belated 2018 apology for enslavement and the Unsung Founders Memorial, were roundly criticized for their inadequacies. By 2013, there was enough pressure on President Teresa Sullivan to create PCSU, an official historical commission to “explore and report on UVA’s historical relationship with slavery, highlighting opportunities for recognition and commemoration.”622

Although the directive for PCSU said nothing of atonement or reconciliation, their work eventually evolved to be “deeply informed by a similar restorative justice model” to the South African truth and reconciliation commission and to make amends beyond hollow statements of regret. For PCSU, this meant first brokering fractured connections to the Black community of Charlottesville, which, like the Black community of Chapel Hill, had been systematically segregated from the intellectual and social life of the University and exploited for their labor. “We learned very quickly that it is a mistake to understand UVA (or any other university) as


walled off from the community in which it is embedded,” PCSU reflected in their final July 2018 report. Community engagement formed the foundation of PCSU’s early efforts to examine the legacy of slavery in Charlottesville and to “acknowledge past wrongs, repair relationships, and build trust.” 623

Their Community Relations Task Force, comprised of PCSU members, local advisory board members, alumni, and community members, sought to foster connections to Black civic and educational groups in Charlottesville to share institutionally-held and locally-held knowledge with each other, as well as to take beginning steps towards building trust. To ensure that historical knowledge became mutually held, PCSU members created several interdisciplinary courses, held both on and off the campus, for undergraduates and Charlottesville residents to examine the history of slavery and its legacy at UVA and participate in and contribute to ongoing research efforts. The focus of these courses, in addition to teaching and learning the history of slavery at UVA, also examined “twentieth and twenty-first century UVA and Charlottesville, and the issues of segregation and integration, reconciliation and repair,” highlighted in Charlottesville after the violent white supremacist rally and counter-rally in August 2017. 624

The research initiatives into the history of slavery at UVA and in Charlottesville have been conducted through a variety of historical sources, drawing not just on institutionally- and state-held archival documents, but on the stories of Black freedom striving passed down


generationally by Black citizens of Charlottesville. One of the major outcomes of utilizing local histories supplemented by archival documents is the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers, an addition to UVA’s commemorative landscape which will serve as a salient reminder that UVA’s historical legacy is tied to lives of Black people who built the campus. Although the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers will be the major visible achievement of PCSU, UVA will “continue to expand their current efforts and interpretations of early life at UVA.” Thus, PCSU is continuing to work with community members in Charlottesville on the demanding task of refiguring UVA’s campus landscape.625

The work of PCSU did not involve historical research of events post-Emancipation, which it recognized as a shortcoming of its mandate and its work. The Community Relations Task Force suggested to the leadership of PCSU that the work of the commission be continued past its five-year end-point in 2018 in the form of another commission—the President’s Commission on the University in the Age of Segregation (PCUAS)—in effect extending the work of PCSU past its falsely static 1865 deadline.626 A majority of PCSU’s recommendations for future efforts involved “further meaningful connections and dialogue between the University and its many stakeholders, especially those who have felt disenfranchised, distrustful, and invisible…the process that must begin is one that involves some sort of reconciliation or


PCUAS will continue to move UVA towards actions which might better constitute it primarily as a truth commission, rather than as an historical commission. The efforts that UVA has undertaken to move the institution towards reparative justice actions and outcomes confirm PCSU/PCUAS as the best existing model for a potential truth commission for the University of North Carolina. Although the PCSU initiatives explained above are not a holistic report on their programs or their successes and deficiencies, they do provide an index of practices for the University of North Carolina to consider.

The first of these practices involves learning from the failings of previous institutional efforts to acknowledge involvement with enslavement (e.g., Unsung Founders Memorial and Chancellor Folt’s apology for enslavement). Second, to foster connections with local Black communities and other historically injured groups to eventually build trust and share historical resources between the institution and the community or groups. Third, to incorporate teaching and learning as crucial aspects of research products and outcomes. Fourth, to rely on multiple kinds of historical knowledge to fully research and examine the events under investigation. And finally, to not permit the limits on the mandate or erroneously static time periods to curtail efforts towards reparative justice. With such practices in place, enacted in ways which accommodate the specific histories of injustice in Chapel Hill and operate in a body with the features of a truth commission, the University might finally ensure that it takes corrective action for the abuses in its past, potentially securing past and present Black Chapel Hill citizens with a sense of dignity.

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and humanity and engaging in the “process of truth telling, restorative justice, and reconciliation” imagined by CHAT.  

**The Counter-Campus: Refiguring the Campus Landscape**

At the Remembering Reconstruction conference in October 2004, Yonni Chapman delivered a lecture titled “Seeking Historical Truth at UNC,” drawing on the themes of historical accuracy and collective memory that he had shared with Kristi Booker five years earlier. After explaining how the historical legacy of the University’s Reconstruction era leadership remained active in the present life of the University, Chapman asked his audience to “imagine, if you will, a campus transformed by a sense of social justice.” Chapman then launched the audience on a tour of a transformed commemorative landscape, beginning with entry to the campus from Franklin Street:

“…past Silent Sam, we would come to the statue in front of the Alumni Building honoring UNC’s Unsung Founders, the black workers, slave and free, who built Old East and other university buildings. Approaching Saunders Hall we would note a plaque stating that Saunders led the KKK during Reconstruction and served on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees at the time of the reopening….Across the quad in Murphy [sic] we would visit a comparable display about the impact of the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Movement, and other democratic social movements at UNC. Upon entering Lenoir, we would see a plaque honoring the black workers and students who participated in the cafeteria workers strike of 1969… As we continued our walk around the campus, we would notice that the portraits and artwork on the walls honored the heritage and contributions of all those who were formerly limited and denied by the University of North Carolina.”

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628 Campaign for Historical Truth and Accuracy application to the Carolina Student Union, 3 November 2005 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

629 “Seeking Historical Truth at UNC: Taking the Next Step Toward Becoming the University of the People,” lecture prepared for the Remembering Reconstruction Symposium, October 2, 2004 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Chapman’s vision of a transformed campus, with monuments to the movements and individuals he believed required remembering is still unrealized, though since 2004, we have seen campus organizers engage in actions to challenge spaces within the commemorative landscape. These actions demonstrate the need to broadly refigure the campus landscape to reflect a changed institutional landscape if the University is to move into a reparative justice paradigm.

Although Chapman’s call for a “more democratic and more honest” commemorative landscape is a crucial step forward, there is a need for greater attentiveness to the movement to transform the entire campus landscape by constructing new physical monuments and memorials to the aspects of the institution’s history that we might want to remember and honor. Further consideration is needed because a transformed commemorative landscape will not be a sufficient alteration to construct a campus landscape which would create the conditions for a reclamation of the University as a place of humanity for Black Chapel Hill citizens. Geographers Derek H. Alderman and Owen J. Dwyer explain that “commemorative landscapes obviously represent narratives about history, but it is wrong to see them as completely couched in the past…Rather than having a fixed, static meaning, material sites of memory are in a constant process of being rewritten as present social needs and ideological interests—including the growing social importance placed on racial diversity and multiculturalism—change. Memorials and monuments fall in and out of favor as opinions about the past shift.”

We must understand that whatever alterations we might make to the campus landscape will be rewritten, and similarly, we must recognize that the current iteration of the campus landscape demands to be refigured to accord with a shift in institutional culture. While changes

to the commemorative landscape of the campus are inevitable (and indeed, in the case of the Confederate Monument, were necessary and vital), it is imperative to reflect on how the white supremacy of the University’s cultural landscape has racially bound the campus in ways the enforce the exclusion of Black people and how we might break those boundaries through transformations of the campus landscape, questions which do not directly engage with the issue of commemoration.

In this section, I consider two approaches to the creation of a counter-campus as a landscape for the commemoration of the legacy of Black freedom striving and the breaking of racialized boundaries in Chapel Hill. The goal that both approaches work towards is the transformation of the University’s campus landscape as a site of reparative justice and potentially as a site of reconciliation. First, I explore the possibilities of traditional approaches to commemoration “through the material sites of memory…e.g., street signs, historical markers and plaques, monuments, and statues,” citing plans offered by previous student movements, focusing largely on commemorative changes. Drawing from scholarship on public commemoration and the numerous example of student-made alternative monuments, I next investigate new directions in commemoration and consider the additions of ephemeral commemorative spaces and the installation of counter-monuments, which produce a more democratized collective memory and spatial belonging than traditional approaches to commemoration. Finally, I conclude by explaining how the creation of a counter-campus would shift the University’s built landscape towards a place which inscribes the humanity and dignity of Black people and open up

possibilities for the crafting of a new sense of place, providing part of the essential foundation for a reparative justice paradigm.

**The Commemorative Campus Landscape**

As this dissertation has shown, every racial justice movement at the University has engaged in a dual refiguring of both the campus and institutional landscapes of the University through their organizing. With the decoration of Saunders Hall by Students Seeking Historical Truth in 1999, organizers began to pursue a specific goal to contest the white supremacy of the University’s commemorative landscape, which can be understood as “the material sites of memory” on the campus, “composed of landmarks that provide spatial and temporal coordinates for remembering.” Saunders Hall, the Unsung Founders Memorial, and the Confederate Monument can be understood as only three of hundreds of landmarks within the built landscape, inscribed as sites of memory. In addition to contesting these aspects of the commemorative landscape, organizers have also mobilized towards reparative justice on the campus landscape, usually in the form of a monument to the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill.

The vision for these monuments has been different for each movement, beginning with the Black Student Movement, which in 1997, demanded that “the University officially recognize the slaves which built the University in the form of a statue or monument.” Students Seeking Historical Truth called for “a monument to the contributions that Blacks have made to this

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633 Black Student Movements Demands, 14 November 1997 in the Office of the Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Michael Hooker Records #40026, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
university,” located “somewhere very visible, like Polk Place or right in front of Saunders Hall.” The Campaign for Historical Accuracy and Truth petitioned for a process to “commemorate the historic 1969 Lenoir Cafeteria workers’ strike by, among other things, placing a plaque honoring the workers, their leaders, and their allies on the front entrance to Lenoir Hall.” Following the installment of the Unsung Founders Memorial and critiques that it homogenized the identities of the enslaved, the Real Silent Sam Coalition (RSSC) called in 2012 for an additive monument “of equal size and prominence to the Confederate Monument,” which would honor a specific Black individual, rather than “a mass of unnamed people.” RSSC suggested that the University consider “for this honor” either Abraham Galloway, a former enslaved man who became a Union spy, militant abolitionist, and North Carolina state Senator; Zora Neale Hurston, the folklorist and documentarian; or the civil rights activist, lawyer, and priest from Durham, North Carolina, Pauli Murray. For the later iteration of RSSC, Taylor Webber-Fields explained that in 2015, the organization “petitioned for there to be a plaque there [Saunders Hall] that would recognize the student activity that had had the hall renamed,” which, if created, would have been a powerful representation of the Black reclamation of the University’s history.

634 Students Seeking Historical Truth Meeting Minutes, October 10, 1999 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

635 Petition from CHAT to Chancellor James Moeser regarding Lenoir plaque in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


637 Interview with Taylor Webber-Fields by Charlotte Fryar, 29 November 2017, L-0468.
While any of these proposed monuments and plaques to the legacy of Black freedom striving at the University would contribute to the destabilizing of the “diversity without justice” paradigm, it is important to consider the purpose of these proposed monuments.\(^\text{638}\) Alderman and Dwyer explain that “commemorative landscapes influence how people remember and value the past, in part, because of their apparent permanence and the common impression that they are impartial recorders of history. In reality, these landscapes narrate history in selective and controlled ways—hiding as well as revealing.”\(^\text{639}\) In considering additions of physical monuments or plaques, we need to question how and in what ways a new addition to the commemorative landscape fulfills a dedication to engage in truth-telling about the past to address policies and practices in the present. Similarly, the same questions should be directed at current features of the University’s commemorative landscape which might necessitate removal, renaming, or contextualization in the form of a plaque or marker. We must consider how potential additive objects operate within the paradox of commemoration: though monuments are erected under the illusory promise of their permanence, the malleability of memory insures that the meaning of monuments (or any feature of a commemorative landscape) will shift and the monument itself will be ignored, moved, or otherwise altered.\(^\text{640}\)


**Ephemeral Monuments**

What physical additions to the commemorative landscape will help the University to truly reflect (rather than falsely project) its commitment to practice reparative justice? How can we transform the campus landscape from a place that broadly honors the legacy of white supremacy into a place that we can learn from and within? And how might we create additions to the built landscape which do not just “give the past a tangibility and familiarity” through a false sense of fixity, but fundamentally change our relationship to the site and situation of the addition, refiguring the racially bounded spaces of the campus landscape?\(^{641}\) To answer these questions, we might consider a departure from traditional approaches to commemoration through the permanent installation of physical objects of remembrance and move towards a more radical reflection on why we build monuments and how we experience them. A new approach to commemoration, which works against the established concept of monuments or other objects of commemoration as static and enduring is needed to situate monuments against the traditional and mythical timelessness and grandiosity of their subjects.

One new approach is the installation of ephemeral monuments, which “dispel the illusion of permanence,” and “embrace uncertainty” in their form, purpose, situationality, and site. Ephemeral monuments function through interaction with their audience and are designed to change and disperse over time. Most exist as temporary installations, created by artists who are free to create without the risk of their project being locked in place (and time) for a foreseeable future. Historian Kirk Savage explains that with the addition of ephemeral monuments to our national commemorative landscapes, “designers would be freer to embrace difference and pursue

new perspectives. More voices would find room for expression. Inspired by rotating content, visitors to these memorial spaces might start to ask themselves what they would like to see represented there.” Ephemeral monuments—as either temporary installations, performance art, or reinterpretations of current physical commemorative objects—operate to create “a more open, democratic sphere of public memory—an ongoing conversation rather than a quest for some kind of immutable ‘identity.’”

For the University, ephemeral monument-making would enable the individuals who have been excluded from the cultural landscape of the campus to inscribe their identities onto and into the built landscape, which for so long has overwhelmingly reflected the history of the institution that operated to prohibit their claims to self-possession. Black students and workers could individually or in groups plan, design, and create monuments which recognize the histories of social justice movements at the University, highlighting the individuals, events, and spaces which have or could move the University towards a new cultural landscape. In this way, ephemeral monuments offer a potential method by which we might break the racialized boundaries of space, creating installations in spaces previously dedicated to the preservation of white supremacy (e.g., South Building, Memorial Hall, among others), and allow Black students and workers to reclaim these spaces as sites dedicated to Black creation and movement-making. These ephemeral monuments acknowledge that the way we make meaning of the University’s history continually shifts, while also granting the built landscape the license and physical space to change as the ideologies of future generations of campus actors at the University also seek to refigure the campus. Indeed, one of the most constructive aspects of ephemeral monument-

making is their scalability to the space they occupy and their sustainability, inherent in their refusal to accept the myth of their own permanence.

Counter-Monuments

In addition to ephemeral monuments, we might also consider the addition of counter-monuments, physical objects of commemoration that insist the viewer reflect on their own memories, rather than seeking to force a codified version of history onto the viewer.\textsuperscript{643} Counter-monuments attempt to remember through viewers’ personal engagement with the past, usually for the purpose of reshaping the collective memory of a nation, or in the case of Chapel Hill, an institution. James E. Young, scholar of memory studies and the Holocaust, coined the term “counter-monument” to describe the “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being” which were erected in post-Holocaust Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. The primary function of the counter-monuments that Young describes are to “jar viewers from complacency and to challenge and denaturalize the viewers’ assumptions.”\textsuperscript{644}

Counter-monuments are, therefore, likely to be abstract depictions of their subjects, and do not usually represent an image, individual, or clear message. Some call for their audiences to directly engage with their materials, inviting viewers to write on or otherwise tangibly interact with or alter their physical components. All engage their viewers, often with intentionally created discomfort, in the emotional acts of personal memory and placement of the self within the legacy


of the past.645 The addition of counter-monuments on the campus landscape invites us to question what we know of the past of the University and how we receive the legacy of the past in our present. Like ephemeral monuments, counter-monuments invite creators with an alternative knowledge of the history of the University to create objects which unsettle what we know of the institution’s past and what we feel when we are within the campus landscape, offering possibilities for the breaking of the racial boundaries of space. And because counter-monuments do not seek to canonize or codify history, their eventual alteration or displacement is incorporated into the vision for their creation, which insures a kind of sustainability for their existence inconsistent with our traditional notions of commemoration, but practical for the future.

We might also examine past campus movements’ advocacy for and use of alternative forms of commemoration as we consider the addition of ephemeral and counter-monuments to the campus landscape. SSHT, in their 1999 decoration of Saunders Hall, created their “own memorial to show what Saunders was: a murderer, a slave owner and the emperor of the KKK.”646 Gerald Horne, the former director of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, argued in 2000 that following the removal of the Confederate Monument, we ought to “plant in its place a tree symbolizing racial tolerance.”647 RSSC effectively used performance in their “disruption of space,” “using [their] bodies as reminders and eulogies for folks,” as an

embodied form of counter-memorialization.\textsuperscript{648} And of course, the banners used to cover the Confederate Monument during its toppling in August 2018 provide a critical example of the use of an “alternative monument” to reclaim the University as place “without white supremacy.”\textsuperscript{649}

The addition of ephemeral monuments and counter-monuments both provide potential directions to consider for creating a counter-campus, and should be evaluated within the context of the University’s current commemorative landscape, aspects of which will require removal or alteration. The creation of a counter-campus, as a site within which the University can reflect its responsibility to practice reparative justice, could be designed in an infinite number of ways, utilizing a mix of both traditional approaches to commemoration in the form of additive commemorative objects and more radical approaches which disrupt our notions of personal memory and spatial fixedness. Regardless of how a counter-campus might be drafted and constructed, we must remember that the campus landscape can and will be remapped to accord with shifts in institutional culture. Whatever changes might be brought in service to a reparative justice cultural paradigm will eventually be amended and erased.

Despite this certainty, the demand to create a counter-campus which breaks the racialized boundaries of the University remains an imperative if we are to support the refiguring of a campus and institution which recognizes the humanity and dignity of Black Chapel Hill citizens and atones for the injustices in the University’s racist past and present. A counter-campus must be designed and created with the leadership of Black Chapel Hill citizens and other excluded groups in order to open the possibility of reclamation of the University as a place directed by the

\textsuperscript{648} Interview with Blanche Brown by Charlotte Fryar, 15 April 2015, L-0454; Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

legacy of Black freedom striving; it cannot be imagined or built within white institutional power structures. A counter-campus is a crucial element of enacting a reparative justice praxis and building trust between the institution and those it has injured.

**Reparations: The Last First Step Towards Reconciliation**

The UNC Housekeepers Association (HKA) explained in their “modest proposal” for settlement in 1996 that the University had never sought to “redress the great injustices and exploitations of the African American Community which built, cleaned, and maintained the University’s physical buildings, but were not permitted to benefit from the intellectual development going on within its walls.” In the two decades that have passed since Chancellor Hooker dismissed the housekeepers’ initial proposal for settlement, it remains true that the University has not fully sought to “acknowledge certain painful historical and current facts” nor has it made the “promises, agreements, and considerations to resolve the issues” of anti-Black discrimination and the ways in which the institution has regarded Black citizens as property.650

Although the notion of reparations offered by a major American institution to Black citizens is not illusory (and perhaps is more feasible than at any time this century since the publication of journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates’s acclaimed article for *The Atlantic*, “The Case for the Reparations”), the conversation begun by the HKA regarding the feasibility and legitimacy of material reparations for Chapel Hill’s Black citizens has not yet been initiated in the twenty-first century.651 The essential reparations policies forwarded by the HKA are crucial for us to examine, because they provide the specific strategies necessary for material restitution for the

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injustices the institution has committed against Black workers and students throughout its entire operation. Although conversation about the feasibility of the housekeepers’ reparative claims and the possibility of financial redress for Black Chapel Hill citizens may have receded, it is imperative to establish an extensive reparations program at the University in order to fully initiate a reparative justice paradigm.

Philosopher Margaret Urban Walker defines reparations as “intentionally reparative actions in which goods (material or interactive) are tendered to victims of wrong by parties that acknowledge responsibility for wrongs or for their repair and whose reparative actions are intended to redress those wrongs as a question of justice.”652 It is this definition of reparations that guides us towards the development of a modern reparations plan for the University, which focuses specifically on material goods (e.g., financial compensation) in addition to symbolic reparative acts which focus on acknowledgement of and atonement for past injustices (e.g., truth commissions). While material reparations can be construed as symbolic in that they convey the expressive dimension of tendering apology via goods, it is crucial in the case of the University that reparative actions which tender material goods to the injured parties be given in addition to the acts of acknowledgement, truth-telling, and landscape reclamation explained in previous sections.653 Material reparations are the last step in initiating an understandably lengthy process of building trust between the institution and Black Chapel Hill citizens towards a reparative justice paradigm shift and a process of reconciliation. Because material reparations programs must be designed following the receipt of symbolic reparations and, then, must be arranged only


between the injured group and the offender, it is impractical to offer here specific economic assemblies of what material reparations should look like. Instead, this section explores several critical features of a potential material reparations program between the University and Black Chapel Hill citizens.

To begin to build a plan for material reparations, we must look closely at HKA’s “modest proposal,” which is the first attempt by Black citizens to gain material reparations from the University. HKA’s proposal for reparations included, first, the establishment of a Housekeeper Endowment Fund (HEF), which would be funded by “money with interest accumulated by the University from the escheats it realized from 1795-1971,” which included the sale of Black persons. The HEF would also be funded by revenue from the basketball and football teams, which HKA argued were financed through Black student labor. The HEF would then allocate “a one-time cash payment of $1,000 to the designated heir of every African American who worked for UNC-CH from 1793-1960.” The University would be responsible for establishing a career training program for all housekeepers to advance in their careers to more highly paid work, guaranteeing them better paid jobs after a certain period of training. It would also provide “free education from the age of 2 through the age of 21” for the children and grandchildren of housekeepers at schools sponsored by the University and at the University itself, and free health care to housekeepers and their children for “the rest of their lives.”

The HKA’s reparations plan offers at least three critical aspects for our examination of a reparations program for the twenty-first century. First, the housekeepers’ call for reparations was not isolated to the harms enacted during the era of enslavement, and instead, incorporated into

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their proposal *the full century after Emancipation* in which white actors and institutions could kill, control, and seize Black people and Black-owned property with impunity. Second, the housekeepers pointed towards the ways in which both Black workers and Black students provide the labor and capital necessary to maintain the institution’s financial status. And third, they called for both educational and financial reparations from the institution. Each of these three aspects of HKA’s reparations plan offers important structures for the broadening of a reparations program for the University in the twenty-first century.

In the United States, reparations movements for Black Americans have largely focused on compensation for enslavement. Historian Ana Lucia Araujo explains that beginning in the 1890s, “thousands of former slaves petitioned the government of the United States to pass Bills providing them with pensions for the time they were enslaved.” Although no bill was ever passed and many of the individuals in the movement’s leadership were persecuted by the federal government, this movement began a national conversation regarding the possibilities of financial compensation for enslavement in particular. Even as groups like the Republic of New Afrika and the Reparations Committee for the Descendants of American Slaves began to articulate in the 1960s how the legacy of enslavement affected Black citizens without living memory of the pre-Emancipation period, the injustice of enslavement was still the focus of reparation efforts.655 But economists William A. Darity Jr. (a former professor at the University of North Carolina) and Dania Frank explain that in addition to enslavement, “another compelling pillar of the case for reparations for African Americans is the practice of nearly a century of state-sanctioned

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apartheid in the United States” and “unlike U.S. slaves, direct victims of Jim Crow practices are still living.”

The HKA also argued for reparations for injustices committed both pre- and post-Emancipation, stating the need to compensate the descendants of injured individuals as well as the injured individuals themselves. Darity and Frank agree, arguing for “the suitability of reparations to compensate blacks for having been subjected to slavery, Jim Crow practices, and ongoing discrimination.” Although enslavement was a unique system of dehumanization separate from legalized discrimination and segregation, it remains essential that as we design a reparations program, we take care not enforce static time boundaries on the institution’s role in anti-Black practices, and to insure that we understand and seek recompense for injustices committed during every era in which systemic racism flourished, regardless of the specificity of the laws that maintained and supported that racism.

With an expanded understanding of the systemic nature of racism as unbounded by historical era, the question of who might receive reparations from the University also broadens. Although HKA did not argue specifically for granting Black students the right to financial compensation, they did explain how the labor of Black student athletes in particular continued to finance the institution: “In fiscal year 1994, the unaudited report of Harper, Wiggins & Co. shows that the Athletic Department took in over $26 million…The Department’s revenues exceeded its budget by over $9 million in 1994…These astronomical profits have been the direct


result of a series of African American basketball and football stars.”658 Even beyond athletics, Black students provide much of the diversity work for the University—circulating the positive image of racial diversity for the institution by the very fact of their racial identities—for which the institution receives economic and cultural commendations.659 Black students, then, as well as Black workers have been discriminated against without atonement or compensation from the institution. Although the specific nature of material reparations to be tendered from the institution might differ between Black workers and Black students (one might imagine, as one possible example, a retroactive tuition remission for Black alumni and free tuition for Black workers and their descendants), it is critical that the overall reparations program take into account discrimination against Black students as well as Black workers.

Lastly, the question of how to structure and implement a reparations programs is critical, though there are dozens of possibilities for how to provide material compensation for past injustices. The HKA argued for a hybrid reparations program, mixing elements of educational, occupational, and financial reparations policies. Together, these different policies ensure the success of material reparations towards the eventual goal of closure, which Darity explains as “the acknowledgement on the part of the victimized community that they have received a satisfactory act of compensation from the victimizers, and that they have no reason to request anything that’s specifically for their group in the future.”660 Georgetown University, which,


along with the University of Virginia, has done the most of any American university towards restitution for descendants of formerly enslaved people, has initiated a new educational reparations program. Part of their program includes “preferential treatment” in admissions for descendants, though what constitutes this form of treatment is unclear.\footnote{Will Cassou, “Slave Descendants Demand More From Georgetown Restitution Efforts,” The Hoya, 24 January 2018, <http://www.thehoya.com/slave-descendants-demand-georgetown-restitution-efforts/>.}

The descendants of enslaved persons sold by Georgetown largely view this admissions policy as a “symbolic gesture,” not “commensurate with the epic atrocity committed and its subsequent impact on generations of descendants.”\footnote{Will Cassou, “Slave Descendants Demand More From Georgetown Restitution Efforts,” The Hoya, 24 January 2018, <http://www.thehoya.com/slave-descendants-demand-georgetown-restitution-efforts/>.} Although Georgetown has made significant strides towards reconciliation with the community of descendants, the institution has not given financial reparations to descendants of the enslaved persons sold by the university, though their endowment is, at the time of this writing, $1.6 billion dollars.\footnote{Endowments, Financial Affairs, Georgetown University, Accessed 25 October 2018, <https://financialaffairs.georgetown.edu/management/endowments>}. The descendant community has criticized Georgetown for the lack of financial reparations they have offered. The reparations case at Georgetown University, though by no means finalized, provides an example of the potential issues that might arise with providing only one kind of material reparations.

Similarly, Darity and Frank explain the economic implications of only providing financial compensation, arguing that “without significant productive capacity [occupational or educational reparative actions] in place before [financial] reparations, a lump-sum payment could actually result in an absolute decline in black income.”\footnote{William A. Darity Jr. and Dania Frank, “The Economics of Reparations,” The American Economic Review 93, No. 2 (May 2003): 326-329.} It is, therefore, crucial to consider


material reparations as a number of different possible tendered goods—cash payments, institution-operated career training programs, institution job guarantees, and free tuition for North Carolina’s Black citizens. Although the specific details of the material reparations program will need to be generated between the institution and the injured parties, it will be imperative that multiple kinds of material goods be provided by the institution to the Black citizens it has harmed.

A reparations program, which (1) seeks indemnity for injustices enacted by the University from its origin during enslavement to the present, (2) offers restitution for all former and current Black citizens of Chapel Hill, including Black students as well as Black workers, and (3) provides multiple forms of material reparations, is the last action necessary to initiate a cultural paradigm shift guided by reparative justice. It does not guarantee that reconciliation between the University and Black citizens of Chapel Hill can be reached, but it does move the institution forward towards their stated goal to be a public university representative of and in service to the state of North Carolina, and creates the conditions for Black citizens of Chapel Hill to secure a sense of dignity and have restored their rights to property-, place-, and self-possession.

Although there are numerous questions rightly applied to calls for reparations—how to establish criteria for eligibility, how to fund financial reparations, how to create the systems necessary for educational or occupational reparations—the University must take up its responsibility for atonement and restitution, working together with Black citizens to develop a suitably designed program.665 Together with the reclamation of a counter-institution through the establishment of a truth commission and a counter-campus through the refiguring of the campus

665 Darity and Frank answer some potential questions in the “The Economics of Reparations.”
landscape, reparations guide the University out of the “diversity without justice” paradigm and towards a cultural landscape oriented around reparative justice and furthering the goal of achieving reconciliation between the institution and the individuals and groups it has injured.666

**Conclusion**

The creation and implementation of a deliberate reparative justice praxis is the pivotal movement needed to build a University that Yonni Chapman imagined could “provide moral leadership to the state and nation,” and “teach by example the importance of confronting the past honestly to bring about a more just future.”667 I have argued for three major policies necessary to enact a beginning to a reparative justice paradigm towards the goal of a transformed University. First, we must establish a truth commission to explore the relationship between the University and anti-Black discrimination throughout its history towards the goal of repairing the racial injustices still operational in the present. Second, we need to broadly transform the campus landscape to reflect a changed institutional landscape, taking into consideration changes which produce a more democratized collective memory of Chapel Hill’s history and extend a sense of spatial belonging to the individuals and groups who have been excluded. Finally, the University must deliver material reparations to former and current Black citizens of Chapel Hill as a way to atone for past injustices, initiating a process of building trust and potentially reaching reconciliation. The establishment of a truth commission, the refiguring of the campus landscape, and the delivery of material reparations are each a massive undertaking for the institution, but all


667 “Seeking Historical Truth at UNC: Taking the Next Step Toward Becoming the University of the People,” lecture prepared for the Remembering Reconstruction Symposium, October 2, 2004 in the John Kenyon Chapman Papers #5441, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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are necessary if the University is ever to operate as an institution guided not by its racist past and present, but by a future of reparative justice.

This dissertation has been aimed at helping readers understand how past racial justice movements at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have challenged the University’s dominant cultural landscape of white supremacy by creating and contesting space and by reclaiming the place of the University through the legacy of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill. It has also aimed to provide possible answers to the question of how to transform the anti-Blackness of the institution’s past and present into a future determined by reparative justice. If this dissertation has succeeded, when we, as campus actors, ask ourselves “what binds us to this place as to no other?,” we can answer that we are united here by our responsibility to acknowledge and carry forward the history of Black freedom striving in Chapel Hill, and then to act, organizing collectively to demand a broad cultural shift to reclaim the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a place that can one day become “the University of the people.”

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