A Central Park of their Own: Public Parks and the New South Movement, 1865-1920

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To Michelle

Abstract

The end of the Civil War, the demise of the Confederacy, and the abolition of slavery brought economic, political, and social tumult to the South. Cities and railroads lay in ruins, millions of dollars of southern capital (much of it in the form of human chattel) was lost, conservative governments were replaced with Republican administrations, and black southerners overturned the antebellum racial hierarchy with their assertions of civil and political rights. In response, a group of white southerners called for the creation of a New South, one characterized by a return of stability and prosperity. The path toward this future lay, they insisted, in accepting the reality of abolition and emulating the industrial economies previously established in the North. Consequently, they sought to grow and modernize southern cities along the lines of their northern counterparts between 1865 and 1920. This process of urbanization would, New South boosters believed, allow the region to regain, and eventually surpass, its antebellum status while simultaneously reintegrating it into the nation. But a key question remained: how does one convince a (white) southern populace, still reeling from the shock of military defeat and highly skeptical of practices associated with the conquering North, that an embrace of a New South did not require forsaking all that they had known?

"A Central Park of their Own: Public Parks and the New South Movement, 1865-1920" presents one answer to the above question. As the first historical study dedicated to the convergence of the New South movement and the nineteenth-century urban parks movement, the thesis reveals that public space played a central role in both modernizing the built environments of southern cities and familiarizing southerners with, and conforming them to, the expectations of life in a modern, industrial society. Using new archival material from the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, the Atlanta History Center, the Filson Historical Society, and the Historic New Orleans Collection, in conjunction with contemporary published sources, we can see how public parks were used to both project the appearance of material progress to outsiders

and conform local populations to prescribed behavioral standards. This thesis blends administrative records, design plans, promotional material, newspaper accounts, and personal reminiscences to compare the intended social effects of southern parks with the realities of public usage. The result reveals public parks as a crucial means of easing southerners' transition into modernity.

Each chapter focuses on a different southern city that serves as a case study: Richmond, Virginia; Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Louisville, Kentucky. By examining park-building initiatives that took place in these varying contexts we can observe the common ambition shared by city leaders across the postbellum South as well as the unique challenges to modernization created by individual circumstances. What becomes clear is that there was not one New South but many, each shaped by its distinct economic, social, political, and geographical conditions. This thesis embraces this diversity in order to develop a nuanced interpretation of the New South movement. Using public parks as a critical lens, it examines the range of experiences possible across the post-war urban South and asks: how did New South leaders attempt to balance their desire for conformity with the social demands of their respective populations?

Acknowledgements

This project was only possible due to the support of many. While the nature of such an undertaking has, at times, led to feelings of profound isolation, I have, nonetheless, been accompanied by a broad network of support throughout my studies. For that I will always be grateful.

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my ideas. Whether in the Trent Building or over a pint at the Staff Club, our supervisions always served as a source of support and friendship. Cheers, gents. My undergraduate supervisor, Peter Kuryla, deserves a mention as well. His inspiring classes and subsequent mentorship are, in no small way, responsible for this project. I am honored to call him a friend.

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Introduction:
The Convergence of Two Movements

In March of 1894, Frederick Law Olmsted wrote to his son, John, from Louisville, Kentucky, where he was overseeing work on the city's new park system. The world-famous landscape architect was nearing the end of his storied career—frequent illness and creeping senility would force the seventy-two-year-old into retirement the following year—but he remained focused on the future of the profession that he helped establish. His work on New York City's Central Park nearly forty years prior redefined the built environment of America's cities and ushered in a wave of urban park building that swept across the nation for the remainder of the century. While this movement for public parks made Olmsted's name synonymous with the emergent field of landscape architecture, it also diminished the market for future business. "Very soon our northern cities will all have been provided with parks," he wrote to John, who would shortly succeed his father as head of the family firm. "Future business in park designing will be in the South," he explained. Despite their work in Louisville, however, Olmsted feared that he and his partners remained "very ignorant and unprepared" concerning a transition to the region. He stressed the need for their Massachusetts-based firm to establish "good will" in the South before his departure. According to the elder Olmsted, this was not only to demonstrate the firm's ability to design for southern environments, but to dispel any sectional animosity that might still be lingering from the Civil War. "As we would all be called Abolitionists at the South, I think a demonstration that the time has passed in which hatred of Abolitionists is an element of consequence in matter of professional business is of some value," he explained. Previous wartime sympathies, in short, should not hinder the transaction of business.[1]

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[1] Frederick Law Olmsted, "Letter to John Charles Olmsted, March 13, 1894," in *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume IX: The Last Great Projects, 1890-1895*, eds. David Schuyler and Gregory Kaliss (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 755. Olmsted's assumption that he and the members of his firm would be regarded by

The resistance that Olmsted assumed he and his business partners would face in the South was, perhaps, overstated. There were, to be certain, white southerners who remained embittered following the defeat of the Confederacy and equated northern businessmen with the "carpetbaggers" they believed enriched themselves off of the prostrate South during Reconstruction, but there were also those who were determined to see national reconciliation and a resumption of commerce between the sections. The most fervent of those who belonged to the latter category called for the creation of a "New South," distinguished from the Old by an embrace of industrial capitalism and rapid modernization. They believed that leveraging the region's abundant natural resources and cheap labor in this way provided the best means of overcoming the economic and physical devastation that followed in the wake of the war. By the 1890s they—with the help of charismatic newspaper editors such as Henry Grady of the Atlanta *Constitution* and Henry Watterson of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*—had turned their economic vision into a full-fledged movement and promoted the promise of southern modernization to a national audience. Far from viewing northern businessmen with contempt, these New South boosters considered their influence and, most crucially, their capital as essential to making their vision a reality.[2]

The New South movement's potential for park builders such as Olmsted went beyond the more favorable environment for northern investment that it created. While efforts to establish a New South took various forms, much of the movement's energy was focused on urbanization. As centers of production and trade, cities were of outsized importance when industrial capitalism was ascendant in the nineteenth-century United States. They were not only the engines that powered economic activity but the measure of a particular locality's capacity for

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southerners as abolitionists stemmed not only from their New England roots, but his work as a journalist prior to the Civil War. While not an abolitionist, Olmsted was an outspoken critic of slavery and published three volumes regarding his travels through the South in the 1850s (later compiled in *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States*). These writings were key texts in the arguments against the extension of slavery in the United States.

[2] James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62-86.

material success, as expanding boundaries and growing populations were considered the standard markers of progress. Accordingly, proponents of the New South sought to improve southern cities—or build new ones from scratch—according to previously established northern models in order to generate the economic shift they desired, and to conform to normative conceptions of development. The importance they placed on urbanization is evident in the sheer growth of southern cities in the post-war period. The number of settlements of 2,500 people or more grew from fifty-one to 103 between 1860 and 1880, after which point the trend spiked dramatically. By 1910 there were 396 urban places in the South that claimed nearly one-fifth of the region's population.[3] Large-scale public parks of the sort popularized by Olmsted were an important component of this city-building process. Greenspaces—like paved roads, sewer systems, and streetcar networks—were understood to be essential pieces of urban infrastructure for any would-be metropolis (see Figure 1). Far from simply ornamenting the urban landscape, they were intended to serve as much-needed correctives to the many issues that arose from the rapid—and often chaotic—growth of Gilded Age cities by alleviating residential congestion, encouraging healthful recreation (especially among members of the working class and urban poor), and providing a democratic space in which members of different social classes could mingle.[4] Accordingly, parks were built in cities across the South throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as New South boosters sought to will their respective locales to national prominence.

[3] Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 9-11 & 14-21.
[4] David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 101.

Figure 1 – Currier & Ives, *The Grand Drive, Central Park, N.Y.*, ca. 1869, lithograph, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001702101/.

This thesis is the first historical study dedicated to the convergence of the New South and urban parks movements. By examining the economic, political, and social considerations that surrounded southern park building between 1865 and 1920, this project sheds new light on the importance of public space to the formation of a New South, and vice versa.[5] As will be made clear in the chapters that follow, the social presumptions that underpinned the New South movement informed the reshaping of city space as much as the new urban realities of the postbellum era influenced New South ideology. Focusing specifically on the behaviors promoted and condemned within public parks, this project contends that such spaces played an essential role in not only transforming the physical environments of New South cities but molding their

[5] This timeframe is based on that used by Howard Rabinowitz to define what he calls the "First New South." The exact years encompassed by the term "New South" are disputed, but most historians consider it to cover the period between the overthrow of Reconstruction and the end of World War I (1877-1919). This study agrees with Rabinowitz's assertion that the start date should be extended to acknowledge the movement's roots in the immediate post-war period. Howard N. Rabinowitz, *The First New South, 1865-1920* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1992), 1-2.

residents into "New South subjects." By this I mean individuals who were governed by, and supportive of, a society premised upon industrial capitalism, yet remained wedded to the notions of race, gender, and class that were foundational to antebellum conceptions of southern identity.[6] They were southerners who, as Stephen Prince describes, embodied boosters' rhetoric through their dedication to money-making and free labor while retaining a distinct culture that white southerners longed for and northern tourists expected to find as they traveled below the Mason-Dixon line.[7] While leaders of the New South sought to emulate the built forms of older, more established cities in order to create urban environments that supported industrial capitalism, they likewise intended to forge a southern public that did the same. Various challenges, however, that ranged from white nostalgia for antebellum society, to the novel racial dynamics that followed emancipation, to the persistence of agrarian practices, made the latter pursuit particularly difficult. This created two sides to the movement. On the one hand, there was an outward-facing aspect, which sought to project a given city's conformity to modern urban standards. On the other hand, there was an inward-facing aspect, which attempted to foster support for the New South agenda amongst local populations. Boosters were confident that the capital attracted by their outward-facing efforts, combined with the faithful workers and consumers created by their inward-facing efforts, would result in a thriving industrial economy for the South.

Through an examination of a wide range of source material I show how parks were used to both modernize the physical environment of southern cities and convert members of the public into New South subjects. The contribution that parks made to the former objective is not difficult to determine. Southern park advocates made explicit their belief that such spaces were fundamental pieces of urban infrastructure and widely publicized the reasons why in an effort to

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[6] This concept is adapted from the "urban subjects" that Nate Gabriel describes as being formed, in part, by Philadelphia's Fairmount Park in the 1870s. Like the urban subjects of Philadelphia, New South subjects were governed by, and reproduced, a knowledge of the city based on capitalistic practices, but were made distinct from their northern counterparts by the unique social context of the post-war South. Nate Gabriel, "The Work that Parks Do: Toward an Urban Environmentality," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12 (2011): 123-141.

[7] Stephen K. Prince, *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 99-119.

sway public opinion. Accordingly, a rich archive of park promotion exists in newspaper articles and essays from the period. When combined with municipal records, design plans, real estate maps, and promotional material, a vivid picture emerges of the ways in which pubic figures and private citizens wielded park space as a tool of modernization. Understanding the process by which parks created New South subjects is more complex. Not only do the contours of these subjects differ depending on the unique context of a given city, but determining the public's acceptance of, or resistance to, this subjectivity is dependent upon sources that speak to personal experience. Uncovering the social designs that New South leaders built into these spaces is fairly straightforward. By analyzing official park regulations, police records related to their enforcement, park management documents, and advertisements or reports of activities held within the grounds a clear picture of what the South's ruling class believed to be the ideal New South subject emerges. Determining whether or not the public conformed to these expectations is more challenging. Sources such as journals, diaries, personal correspondence, and travel literature give insight into the conditions of every-day life in the postbellum urban South, but specific references to the parks in question are not easily come by. As a result, what follows is in many ways a top-down examination of the role that parks played in the formation of New South subjectivity. Despite my intention to highlight the individual experiences of those who interacted with these spaces, constraints on time and archival access, combined with the inherent difficulty of locating sources that speak directly to such experiences, limited my ability to do so. The material presented in the following pages nonetheless provides novel insight into both the inward- and outward-facing functions that public parks played within the context of the New South movement.

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My focus on the social functions of southern parks originates from a dichotomy understood to be inherent within the postbellum South ever since C. Vann Woodward described the region's "divided mind" in his seminal work, *Origins of the New South* (1951).[8] Woodward identified a tension that existed between the drive toward modernity and a widespread cultural attachment to antebellum society amongst white southerners that forced New South boosters to walk a tightrope. As James Cobb succinctly puts it, proponents of the New South "vowed to use industrial development to northernize their region's economy while doing their best to restore and then to uphold the most definitively 'southern' ideals of the Old South, especially its racial, political, and class hierarchies."[9] But how, exactly, did southern leaders attempt to balance their desire for a radically new economic future with their longing for the social structures of the past? There has been no shortage of scholarship that seeks to answer this question. Paul Gaston emphasized the importance of mythmaking in crafting a "New South Creed" that fused nostalgia for the past with hope for a redemptive future in order to inspire white southerners to action.[10] This interpretation has since been reaffirmed by historians such as David Goldfield and W. Fitzhugh Brundage.[11] Other historians have focused on the ways in which particular elements of antebellum society were preserved amidst the drive toward a New South. Marjorie Wheeler and Elizabeth Enstam, for example, show how political activism surrounding the women's suffrage movement reinforced notions of white supremacy in the South even as it actively challenged antebellum gender norms.[12] Stephen Prince reveals the role that literature played in presenting the post-war racial hierarchy as familiar to white readers in the South and acceptable to those

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[8] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 154-155.
[9] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 62.
[10] Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 7.
[11] David Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).
[12] Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Elizabeth York Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas, Texas, 1843-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

North.[13] Within the vast ground he covers in his sweeping history of the New South, Edward Ayers shows how entrenched political machinery was mobilized by southern elites to stave off serious challenges by cross-class alliances formed during the Populist movement, thus maintaining pre-existing socioeconomic structures.[14] Such scholarship provides invaluable insight into the ways in which southern modernizers attempted to straddle the divide between the Old South and the New.

Historians working in the field of Civil War memory have also contributed greatly to our understanding of how elements of the Old South were preserved within postbellum society. As Lost Cause ideology—the revisionist ethos that justified secession (and obscured the role of slavery in bringing it about), idealized antebellum society, and glorified those who went to war to see it preserved—developed in tandem with the New South movement, studies of both are deeply entwined. Scholars such as David Blight, Caroline Janney, Gaines Foster, and Karen Cox, among many others, have shown how this cultural memory of the war and antebellum society was crafted and popularized through literature, music, visual art, ritual commemoration, and political organization, creating a common identity for white southerners that not only soothed the sting of military defeat but promoted sectional reconciliation and eased them through the drastic changes called for by the New South movement.[15] Relatively little attention, however, has been given to the role of the built environment in either promoting this particular conception of southern identity or wedding it to the broader New South project. While scholars of Civil War memory highlight the importance of physical memorials in disseminating Lost Cause ideology, very few—Catherine Bishir being the most notable exception—extend their analysis beyond the

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[13] Prince, *Stories of the South.*
[14] Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
[15] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

cemetery or statehouse lawn.[16] New South historians, on the other hand, have traditionally limited their consideration of the built environment to its role in establishing residential segregation or promoting urbanization.[17] Recently, scholars such as Reiko Hillyer and Nathan Cardon have broadened the field by examining how the New South movement was aided by constructed spaces as varied as world's fairs and seaside resorts.[18] This project seeks to build upon such scholarship in order to reveal the importance of the built environment in creating southerners who both embraced modernity and remained faithful to the supposed virtues of antebellum society.

The study of public parks is uniquely suited to understanding this New South duality. On the one hand, parks contributed directly to the movement's urbanization efforts. Scholars such as David Schuyler and Galen Cranz have made clear that such spaces were fixtures of the nineteenth-century American city, understood to be necessary correctives to the crowded, chaotic, and rationally planned urban environment in which they were situated.[19] As such, they were a means for New South cities to project claims to modernity and progress. The building of a large-scale public park both conformed a given city's built environment to contemporary standards and implied a certain level of growth, as the need for parks was understood to be determined by a certain level of population density. They were also considered pieces of infrastructure that benefitted public health. Historians have long noted the health rationale that lay behind park building during the period, explaining that they were believed to benefit physical

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[16] Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885-1915," *Southern Cultures*, Inaugural Issue (1993): 5-45. In her article, Bishir notes the important role that architecture, in combination with public sculptures, played in shaping public memory and projecting a "legitimizing continuum from the Old South to the New."

[17] Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); LeeAnn Lands, *The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009); Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*.

[18] Nathan Cardon, *A Dream of the Future: Race, Empire, and Modernity at the Atlanta and Nashville World's Fairs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory, and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

[19] Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982); Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape*.

well-being not only by providing a space for outdoor activities but by acting as the "lungs of the city" to clear away diseases thought to be caused by miasma and other pollutants.[20] At the same time, they directly contributed to the New South's economic agenda. As Matthew Gandy has eloquently explained, the creation of Central Park drastically increased the value of adjacent property and forever "altered the relationship between municipal government and private capital under the guise of a newly defined 'public good' within which the prospects for real estate speculation were greatly enhanced."[21] This new relationship established a precedent for other municipalities to follow and provided a much-needed means for cash-strapped cities of the New South to attract private investment and increase tax revenue.

Scholars have also demonstrated the many ways in which nineteenth-century parks functioned as a means of social control, providing a framework through which to understand the role of such spaces in the formation of New South subjects. It has long been acknowledged that public parks were intended to conform working-class citizens to middle- and upper-class expectations of public behavior (see Figure 2). Roy Rosenzweig pioneered this interpretation, first in his essay on the competing uses of parks in Worcester, Massachusetts, and again in the exhaustive history of Central Park that he co-authored with Elizabeth Blackmar. It has since been reaffirmed by numerous historians.[22] Indeed, Olmsted himself explicitly designed his parks for "receptive" leisure, believing that quiet contemplation of a naturalistic setting would exert a "civilizing" influence over the public, especially the large working-class and immigrant populations that he believed were particularly susceptible to the forces of "degeneration and

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[20] John L. Crompton, "The Health Rationale for Urban Parks in the Nineteenth Century in the USA," *World Leisure Journal* 55 (2013): 333-346; John L. Crompton, "Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Advocacy in the USA for Urban Parks as Antidotes for Ill Health," *World Leisure Journal* 56 (2014): 267-280; Bonj Szczygiel and Robert Hewitt, "Nineteenth-Century Medical Landscapes: John H. Rauch, Frederick Law Olmsted, and the Search for Salubrity," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74 (2000): 708-734.

[21] Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 85.

[22] Roy Rosenzweig, "Middle-Class Parks and Working-Class Play: The Struggle over Recreational Space in Worcester, Massachusetts, 1870-1910," in *The New England Working Class and the New Labor History*, ed. Herbert Gutman and Donald H. Bell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987): 214-230; Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992); Dorceta E. Taylor, "Central Park as a Model of Social Control: Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Leisure Research* 31 (1999): 420-477.

demoralization" that proliferated in cities.[23] There is debate as to whether his intentions are best classified as social control or social reform, but Olmsted's desire to influence public behavior through park usage is undisputed.[24] More recently, scholars have greatly expanded on the work started by Rosenzweig by exploring the ways in which parks influenced, or were intended to influence, public behavior beyond the type of recreation that they promoted. Stephen Germic, for example, shows how the construction of Central Park mitigated class conflict by serving as a public works project during the Panic of 1857.[25] Catherine McNeur and Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago have each shown how the park eliminated working-class appropriations of urban space throughout Manhattan by providing a strictly regulated, didactic environment that taught them "proper" public behavior that could then be transferred throughout the city.[26] Nate Gabriel, in an interpretation of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park whose thesis is central to this project, asserts that parks generated a particular understanding of urban space that conditioned members of the public to be urban subjects governed by and supportive of industrial capitalism by associating the city with work and nature with leisure.[27] While all of these works have illuminated the various social functions of nineteenth-century parks, they have limited their focus to cities of the Northeast. This project seeks to provide further examples of regional variation to this field of study by applying its interpretive frameworks to the unique context of the postbellum South.

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[23] Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," in *Civilizing American Cities: A Selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's Writings on City Landscapes*, ed. S. B. Sutton (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), 76.
[24] Geoffrey Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted: Landscape Architecture as Conservative Reform," *The Journal of American History* 62 (1976): 869-889; Robert Lewis, "Frontier and Civilization in the Thought of Frederick Law Olmsted," *American Quarterly* 29 (1977): 385-403; George L. Scheper, "The Reformist Vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and the Poetics of Park Design," *The New England Quarterly* 62 (1989): 369-402.
[25] Stephen A. Germic, *American Green: Class, Crisis, and the Deployment of Nature in Central Park, Yosemite, and Yellowstone* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001), 11-40.
[26] Catherine McNeur, *Taming Manhattan: Environmental Battles in the Antebellum City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 175-223; Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, "Central Park against the streets: the enclosure of public space cultures in mid-nineteenth century New York," *Social & Cultural Geography* 15 (2014): 151-171.
[27] Gabriel, "The Work that Parks Do," 123-141.

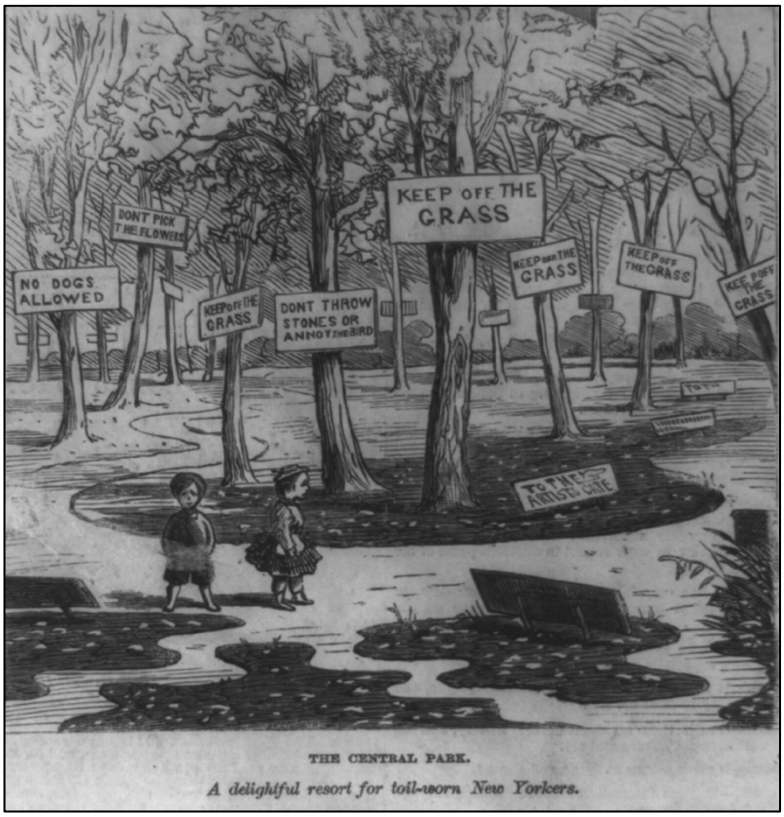

Figure 2 – *The Central Park. A delightful resort for toil-worn New Yorkers*, 1869, wood engraving, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/91790564/.

In marrying together these two fields of scholarship, this study not only reveals the centrality of public parks to actualizing the social vision shared by the leaders of all New South cities but nuances our understanding of the New South movement as a whole. It is essential to keep in mind that, as Charles Reagan Wilson puts it, "there are many Souths and many southerners."[28] Far from being monolithic, the post-war South contained a variety of political, social, economic, and geographical circumstances that could aid or thwart the creation of a New South. The obstacles to modernization faced by Atlanta in the final decades of the nineteenth century, for example, differed greatly from those that New Orleans sought to overcome. A critical examination of southern parks provides an effective means of accessing this local variety. The ability to adapt the design and regulation of these spaces allowed New South leaders to use them in service of addressing what they considered to be the most pressing obstacles to modernization in their respective cities while, at the same time, promoting the core pillars of the

[28] Charles Reagan Wilson, "Whose South?: Lessons Learned from Studying the South at the University of Mississippi," *Southern Cultures* 22 (2016): 104.

movement's social vision. When the following case studies are viewed side by side, it becomes clear that there was not a single New South movement but many, each developing in response to the unique circumstances of the cities in which they were founded. New South boosters throughout the region were united in their desire to maintain the central features of antebellum society in the face of modernization, but in studying their use of public parks to do so it becomes clear that there was not a singular approach that ensured success. As the following analysis will show, leaders in Richmond, Atlanta, New Orleans, and Louisville displayed varying degrees of willingness to deviate from the past in their efforts to balance the Old South and the New and employed a range of strategies in the process. This fact emphasizes the importance of considering the local when attempting to understand the formation of postbellum southern society.

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At the end of the Civil War the South faced economic devastation. Cities were reduced to heaps of smoldering rubble, critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and railways had been sabotaged by either invading forces or retreating defenders, and farmland was left desolate and unproductive by the scorch of battle.[29] What is more, personal fortunes, large and small, were wiped out. The collapse of the Confederate government rendered the region's currency worthless, contributing to a sixty-percent decline in southern wealth during the 1860s. Emancipation alone resulted in the loss of an estimated $3 to $4 billion in slave property.[30] It was this economic crisis to which New South advocates were responding. While they acknowledged that the economic collapse caused by military defeat brought widespread suffering to the South, they also believed it brought new opportunity. The slave-based agrarianism that characterized the

[29] Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the Civil War* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2012).
[30] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 62.

antebellum South may have led the region to war and, ultimately, defeat, but it also resulted in an abundance of largely unexploited raw materials and a now-idle labor supply. New South leaders viewed these features as the basis of a robust industrial economy in the making. By adopting the capitalistic models and practices previously established in the North, they insisted, the South would both regain and surpass the material prosperity it had lost and be catapulted to a position of national supremacy (see Figure 3).[31]

Figure 3 – Louis Dalrymple, *Giving the other fellow a chance*, 1895, chromolithograph, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012648612/.

But the collapse of the Confederacy also brought about a crisis of identity. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the subsequent military occupation of the South by northern

[31] Ibid.

forces, and federally imposed Reconstruction brought direct challenges to the ways in which white southerners understood themselves and they society in which they lived. Defeat on the battlefield was not only extremely demoralizing for those who had fought on behalf of an independent southern nation, but it naturally raised questions about the justness of their cause, the wisdom of secession, and the propriety of slavery. It also challenged notions of honor, gender, and white supremacy on which antebellum conceptions of southern identity were premised.[32] In response white southerners developed romanticized images of their pre-war society and embraced the ideology of the Lost Cause to develop, in the words of Paul Gaston, "an uncommonly pleasing conception of [their] region's past."[33] According to this revisionist interpretation, the antebellum South had been a region populated by chivalrous men, genteel women, and enslaved people content with their station and benefitted by their proximity to what was presumed to be the superior culture of Anglo-Americans. Secession had not only been justified, according to this telling, but in keeping with the individual and state rights guaranteed by the Constitution. And, crucially, military defeat did not reveal a fundamental weakness of southern values and mores but sanctified them with a baptism in blood and proved their strength by the willingness of southern men to defend them against a numerically and materially superior force. The proliferation of this historical memory not only provided an emotional balm for former Confederates with which to soothe the sting of defeat but served as the basis of a shared regional identity for all white southerners.[34]

New South boosters mobilized this constructed identity in order to rally white southerners around their calls for economic modernization. The construction of a New South, they insisted, would not only preserve a distinctive regional identity, but ultimately secure the

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[32] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 11-35; LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).
[33] Gaston, *The New South Creed*, 6.
[34] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 58-61; Gaston, *The New South Creed*; Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*; Blight, *Race and Reunion*; Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*.

prosperity and autonomy that the war had failed to deliver.[35] The path to redemption that they laid out was clear. The New South vision rested on a foundation of three core economic goals: industrialization, urbanization, and the diversification of agriculture.[36] An embrace of these processes would leverage the region's abundance of largely untapped raw materials while breaking its singular focus on cotton production, thus catapulting the region to a position of national economic supremacy.

But the movement's reliance on a white southern identity rooted in nostalgia to generate popular support resulted in a distinct social vision as well. New South society would be characterized by racial, gender, and class hierarchies that were adapted to postbellum realities but mirrored their antebellum forerunners as closely as possible. Boosters were eager to present the postbellum South as racially progressive and fully capable of solving the "Negro Question" on its own. While proponents of the New South believed peaceful race relations and black self-sufficiency to be prerequisites for the region's economic advancement, with some even going so far as to argue in favor of the direct uplift of African Americans, they were nonetheless committed to maintaining white supremacy.[37] What resulted was the emergence by the 1890s of what Nathan Cardon refers to as "Jim Crow modernity," a southern society characterized by an embrace of both industrial capitalism and racial segregation.[38] New South boosters similarly adapted their views on gender and class to the postbellum context while preserving their pre-war antecedents. It was hoped, for example, that the rural white poor would transition toward industrial labor while remaining responsive to the dictates of a relatively small elite.[39] It was also

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[35] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 62-63.
[36] Rabinowitz, *The First New South*, 2; Gaston, *The New South Creed*, 7.
[37] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 261.
[38] Cardon, *A Dream of the Future*, 3. There is debate as to whether or not the formal segregation that emerged in the 1890s should be considered a continuation of or departure from antebellum race relations. Early historians such as C. Vann Woodward claimed that segregation was merely the legal codification of the strict racial separation that characterized the pre-war South, yet Howard Rabinowitz insists that racial segregation replaced the outright exclusion of black southerners from white spaces, thus making the "separate but equal" principle a relative improvement in the day to day lives of African Americans. For more, see Rabinowitz, *The First New South*, 132-182; Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).
[39] The question of how 'new' the members of the postbellum elite really were remains central to New South scholarship. Some argue that political power and economic wealth remained concentrated in the families of the

acknowledged that both wartime experience and the demands of an industrial society required an increasingly public role for southern women. The New South vision accommodated such changes, particularly with regard to the wives of wealthy southerners, yet expected white women to maintain their primary roles as caretakers of the home and family.[40] Urban parks provided an extremely effective means of promoting public behavior according to this social vision while simultaneously contributing to the primary goal of modernization. As will be made clear in the pages that follow, southern parks played a fundamental role in maintaining white supremacy in the context of black freedom, acclimating the working class to the expectations of an industrial society, and accommodating increased female independence while preserving antebellum gender roles.

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I have structured this thesis around the examination of four cities that serve as case studies: Richmond, Virginia; Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Louisville, Kentucky. While these cities were linked by their leaders' common ambition to establish their hometowns as bastions of New South modernity, they were also distinguished from one another by a number of features. The most obvious were their respective geographical locations. Richmond sits in the upper portions of the southeast, linked to the Atlantic coast by the James River; Atlanta is an interior town, nestled in the southern reaches of the Piedmont; New Orleans' position near the mouth of the Mississippi River places it in the Deep South; and Louisville's

antebellum planter class, while others claim that this group was supplanted by an emergent class of industrialists, merchants, and financiers. For more, see Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South.*

[40] For more on the expansion of women's roles in the post-war South see Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life;* Judith N. McArthur, *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Wheeler, *New Women of the New South.* For more on antebellum notions of gender roles, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Catherine Clinton, "Women in the Land of Cotton," in *Myth and Southern History*, ed. Patrick Gerster and Nicholas Cords (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Nina Baym, "The Myth of the Myth of Southern Womanhood," in *Feminism and American Literary History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender.*

location within a border state where the South, Midwest, and Appalachia converge gives it a degree of regional ambiguity. These unique locations not only differentiated each city geographically, but had a profound impact on their wartime experiences, the local economies that emerged before and after the war, their development of urban infrastructure, the ways in which their residents related to the rest of the region and the nation, and their ultimate success as leaders of the New South. Richmond and Atlanta, for example, faced widespread destruction at the hands of both northern and southern troops during the war, while New Orleans and Louisville emerged from the conflict relatively unscathed. Atlanta was able to expand its boundaries rapidly in the decades after the war, while New Orleans remained physically confined to a small area of habitable land between the Mississippi River and surrounding swampland. Richmond, the former capitol of the Confederacy, had undeniable ties to the Lost Cause while Louisville, an antebellum slave state that remained in the Union, had more opaque claims to the southern identity that flourished there in the postbellum years. Louisville and Atlanta were able to convert the rise of southern rail into New South success, yet the economies of Richmond and New Orleans stagnated with the decline of river trade. These differences are but a few that contributed to a variety of New South experiences. By examining these particular cities side by side, this project seeks to capture the diversity of the region as well as the range of circumstances that determined the contours of local modernization efforts.

Before outlining each case study, I feel obliged to offer a brief note regarding the limitations of this thesis. First, this should not be considered an exhaustive study of the New South movement. I focus solely on southern cities, agreeing with Don Doyle that they stood as the "nerve centers of a changing economy and culture" in the region, but this is not to imply that the rural South is less worthy of consideration.[41] On the contrary, significant changes and events in the countryside during this period—most notably the Populist movement—influenced the

[41] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, xiii.

course and outcome of the New South movement as well.[42] Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that white southerners were not unanimous in their support of the New South agenda. Perhaps the central argument of this thesis makes this point self-evident, but it is worth noting that resistance to modernization at times went beyond abstract fears of cultural estrangement. There were early critics of the movement, for example, who charged that its leaders were motivated by the same crass "mammonism" that they believed was responsible for the worst aspects of northern society. Other ex-Confederates remained so wedded to the old order that they relocated to various Latin American countries with the intention of establishing slave-based colonies.[43] The New South considered here, in short, was but one conception of a southern future.

It is also worth noting that to study the New South social vision is to study a patriarchal, white-centric social vision. In doing so, I by no means suggest that this group had stronger claims to a southern identity than any other. I take seriously W. Fitzhugh Brundage's warning that when southern identity and white identity are assumed to be interchangeable, "white claims to power, status, and cultural identity are advanced at the same time that black claims are undercut."[44] This can be extended to include the claims of women, Latinos, Native Americans, and other minority groups residing in the South. Throughout this thesis I have sought to put diverse perspectives in conversation with the New South vision, but restrictions on time, scope, and source access have, at times, made this difficult. There is still much work to be done with regard to broadening our understanding of the many southern cultures that existed in the region after the Civil War, and it is hoped that the ideas presented in the pages that follow will aid scholars of the South in that pursuit.

Each of the following chapters is devoted to the deployment of parks in an individual city on behalf of post-war modernization. An examination of park building and management in

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[42] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 187-309.
[43] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 64; Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 16-17.
[44] Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 2.

each city reveals the unique social, political, and economic designs that local leaders believed would lead to the successful creation of a New South metropolis. The chapters are ordered chronologically based on the dates of each city's major park projects so as to not only shed light on the local circumstances that motivated individual park initiatives but provide a general sense of the breadth and duration of the larger New South movement. Chapter One, "Political Consolidation through Park Building," focuses on the construction of two parks in Richmond—Chimborazo Park and New Reservoir Park—during the years immediately following Reconstruction. Each park, I argue, was built to neutralize what the city's recently elected Redeemer government perceived to be the major challenges to their continued political hegemony. The creation of Chimborazo Park displaced an autonomous black community, simultaneously eliminating a Republican voting bloc and consolidating support amongst the neighborhood's white residents, while construction of New Reservoir Park was undertaken to provide work to the city's white working class whose livelihoods were threatened by the Panic of 1873. In detailing these processes this chapter reveals public parks as a crucial means of upholding white supremacy and stimulating economy activity based on real estate speculation, themes that will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two, "A Space of the Lost Cause in Service of the New South," examines the ways in which Atlanta's Grant Park provided a conceptual link between the idealized Old South and the modern New South in the 1880s. As Atlanta's leaders threw their city headlong into New South development, they sought a means of reassuring the white public that embracing modernity did not require them to abandon their cultural connection to the past. Accordingly, Grant Park—through design, regulation, and use—simulated the idealized Old South and framed the New South agenda as a means of preserving and validating white southern identity, rather than a force that threatened its existence. Chapter Three, "Parks over Pasture," takes us to New Orleans in the 1880s and 1890s, at which point city leaders attempted to improve and promote two public greenspaces: City Park and Audubon Park. Both parks, located on the

outskirts of New Orleans, were well-positioned to combat the agrarian commons used by the city's dairy farmers to graze their cattle. By physically enclosing the land and strictly regulating its use, these parks played a fundamental role in helping the city's modernizers to remove destructive free-roaming cows from residential areas and eliminate co-operative land use practices that ran counter to the principles of industrial capitalism. Lastly, Chapter Four, "Reform and Recreation in a Border State," examines the creation of Louisville's city-wide park system at the turn of the century. I argue that the three parks that constituted this system fostered a broad civic identity in order to generate support for reform initiatives amongst the city's heterogenous population. Through the conditional distribution of access to recreational space, city leaders used the parks to minimize the differences between Louisville's various constituent groups in order to form a cohesive public responsive to their cues.

The primary claim of this thesis, then, is that public parks were central to the New South modernization effort, simultaneously conforming the built environment of southern cities to standards previously established by their northern counterparts and aiding in social reform initiatives demanded by local circumstances. Taken together, these case studies reveal a diverse New South composed of cities ranging in age, size, wealth, and demographic makeup that each faced unique challenges in their quest for economic revitalization. They also clearly illustrate the convergence of an ascendant New South movement with an urban parks movement that had been initiated several decades prior, in which southern boosters found a means of balancing their outward- and inward-facing ambitions. As will be seen, public parks proved extremely versatile with regard to their ability to address the wide variety of challenges encountered during southern urbanization. As the leaders of New South cities encountered what they perceived to be obstacles to prosperity, they adapted a single form of public space to promote or condemn behavior according to their vision of an urban future. At times these efforts succeeded, at times they failed. Regardless of the outcome, however, the examples detailed in the chapters that follow make clear that control of public space was essential to making the New South a reality.

Chapter One

Richmond, Virginia:
Political Consolidation through Park Building

In his 1915 history of Richmond's transition out of Reconstruction, George L. Christian made plain what he and many of his fellow white Virginians thought about the five years of Federal occupation that the city experienced following the Civil War. "There could be no reasonable grounds for the enactment of those harsh, illegal, and unconstitutional measures," he stated, "unless…they were designed to further punish, and persecute our already prostrate and suffering people." He insisted that Reconstruction did more to exacerbate economic and political dysfunction than it did to rebuild the war-torn city. The "carpetbaggers" and "scallawags" that flocked to the former capitol of the Confederacy "like the miserable vultures they were" did nothing more than enrich themselves by plundering the wealth of Richmonders while attempting to put them "under the dominion of their former slaves." Recalling these trials weighed heavily upon Christian, but he believed it was essential to record them for future generations. His children and those of his fellow residents had a right to know "of the 'deep waters' through which we had to pass, and how their fathers and their mothers bore themselves 'in the midst of that flood.'" "The condition of Richmond to-day," he believed, "is the best proof we can offer to this last enquiry." According to Christian, the economic success of the city in the early twentieth century was not simply the result of wise commercial and industrial endeavors, but evidence of the ability of white Richmonders to persevere through the most trying of circumstances. Prosperity returned, he insisted, once Reconstruction was overthrown and white Richmonders regained control of their own affairs.[1]

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[1] George L. Christian, *The Capitol Disaster: A Chapter of Reconstruction in Virginia* (Richmond: Richmond Press, Inc., 1915), 2-3; 45.

This interpretation of Richmond's post-war experience was in keeping with that espoused by the city's Redeemer government after it came to power in 1870. The Conservative Party, an alliance of Virginia's antebellum Whigs and Democrats formed specifically to counter Republican influence in drafting the new state constitution in 1868, was built around the conviction that Reconstruction was depressing economic activity in the state. Gilbert C. Walker, the party's successful gubernatorial candidate in the 1869 election, promised that the ouster of Republicans would allow Virginia to reclaim its antebellum position as an economic leader among the other states of the Union.[2] Richmond's Conservative municipal government that rose to power following Walker's victory made similar claims, depicting Reconstruction as "five years of unbroken tyranny" that robbed the city of its pre-war industrial and commercial prestige.[3] The party's successful deployment of this argument gave rise to the powerful myth that Christian echoed over forty years later: that Richmond's postbellum economic growth was only made possible by the restoration of a conservative government.[4]

This chapter examines the efforts of Richmond's Conservatives to make this claim a reality through the strategic deployment of public parks. More specifically, it focuses on their use of greenspace to maintain political hegemony in the decades following the city's "redemption." Unlike the other case studies included in this thesis, this chapter is primarily concerned with the process of park building rather than park usage. I argue that the construction of two parks in particular—Chimborazo Park and New Reservoir Park (since renamed William Byrd Park)—helped Conservatives overcome two distinct challenges to their power by reinforcing antebellum social hierarchies. Chimborazo Park, located in the eastern suburbs of the city on a hill of the same name, was used by the Freedman's Bureau as the site of a refugee camp immediately after the war and evolved into an autonomous black community by the end of the decade. The

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[2] Jack P. Maddex, Jr., *The Virginia Conservatives, 1867-1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 51; 55-56; 82.
[3] Michael B. Chesson, *Richmond After the War, 1865-1890* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), 115.
[4] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 105.

concentration of independent black residents in what had been a predominantly white working-class suburb presented both an affront to the antebellum racial order and a potential foothold in the neighborhood for Republicans. The designation of the hill as a public park in 1876 diminished the ability of Republicans to seriously challenge Conservative control of Richmond by displacing the community at a time when black voters were being gerrymandered throughout the city. In this way, the clearance of Chimborazo was part of a broader effort to neutralize black political power. The creation of New Reservoir Park in the western section of the city, on the other hand, was a direct appeal to the white working class. After proposals to establish a large-scale public park languished in the City Council for years, they were given new urgency by the Panic of 1873. Construction of the park—and the new reservoir for which it was named—was undertaken as a massive public works project in order to stimulate the local economy and provide jobs to those left unemployed by the crisis. The benefits of this project, however, disproportionally accrued to white workers and businessmen. Such a display of direct relief helped Conservatives prove their support for local industry while averting a loss of support from key constituencies.

Conservatives were not mistaken in claiming that Richmond had fallen from its antebellum standing by the end of the war, but this had more to do with the city's central place within the failed Confederate project than the subsequent reign of Republicans. In the antebellum period, Richmond was the urban center of Virginia. As of 1860, it ranked twenty-fifth out of all cities in the Union according to population, and thirteenth (first in the South) in terms of the value of its manufactures. Its location on the James River allowed it to prosper as a regional entrepot, while the five railway lines that terminated in the city further boosted trade. Industrial production thrived in Richmond as well, revolving around the key exports of tobacco, grain, and iron. Massive foundries, such as Tredegar Iron Works, not only provided employment to a fifth of the city's labor force but promoted Richmond as a manufacturing center throughout the nation. When the Confederate capital was moved to Richmond in 1861 it increased the city's

political and cultural importance, but also brought new challenges. While industries such as Tredegar were boosted by the need to arm Confederate forces, a massive population increase and Union blockade strained the city's wartime economy. Then came its capture by Federal forces. As Confederate government officials and troops abandoned the city between April 2nd and 3rd, 1865, they set fire to warehouses and armories in hopes of depriving the Union army of supplies. The resulting blaze consumed more than twenty blocks, destroying between 800 and 1,200 buildings in what came to be known as the Burnt District—an area that included nine-tenths of the business district. Claims of lost property ranged as high as $30 million (see Figure 1).[5]

Figure 1 – *Richmond, Virginia. Panoramic view of burnt district*, 1865, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/resource/cwpb.03370/.

[5] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 4-10; 25-31; 45-46; 58.

The initial recovery, however, was swift and began nearly as soon as Union troops extinguished the flames. Thanks in part to a rapid arrival of northern transplants and capital, the city's infrastructure was quickly restored. By June 1865, three banks were opened with the help of northern financiers, bringing a much-needed injection of cash into Richmond's struggling economy. Rebuilding of the Burnt District—again, thanks in part to northern investment—began in the autumn. This time, the outdated wood-frame buildings that helped spread the flames of Confederate sabotage were replaced with modern, brick structures, often bolstered with iron facades in an urban architectural style well-established in the North, leaving a physical reminder of "Yankee" influence. Federal officials also aided the process of rebuilding the city. By the end of April, the army had four of Richmond's five rail lines operational. It also worked to clear the James River of obstructions left by Confederates to prevent an invasion by water and repair the bridges that connected Richmond with the nearby town of Manchester, essential steps needed to restart the flow of trade.[6] While these repairs by no means returned Richmond to its pre-war status, they nonetheless jumpstarted the city's economy and allowed it to regain much of its antebellum strength by 1870.

Downplaying the centrality of northern aid to Richmond's early recovery was essential to the restoration myth that propelled Conservatives to power, but it also bred complacency. At the state level the party's success signaled the ascendance of a new Virginia elite as industrialists replaced planters in the seats of power, but in Richmond, where the economy had embraced commerce and industry prior to the war, local leaders believed the city would naturally regain and surpass its former position.[7] Like their fellow party members across the state, Richmond's Conservatives were forerunners of the self-identified New South boosters that became prominent across the region by the 1880s—accepting the end of slavery and championing industrial capitalism—but the city's quick recovery fueled the assumption that no *new* strategy

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[6] Ibid, 61-65; 70.
[7] Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 171-172.

was needed. While they continued to form alliances with northern businessmen (at times to Richmond's detriment) and modernize the built environment of the city over the course of the 1870s, they focused much more time and energy on consolidating political power. This decision to prioritize politics and "model the future on the past" was responsible for Richmond's ultimate failure to maintain its standing as an important New South city later in the twentieth century.[8]

Their goal of maintaining political power demanded that Richmond's Conservatives overcome two major challenges in the early 1870s, one that they were fully aware of before they took control of the government and one that was completely unanticipated. The first was a direct result of the war's outcome. As an antebellum industrial city in which twenty percent of the black population was free, the drastic change of emancipation was not as jarring in Richmond as it was in the rural South.[9] But the massive influx of formerly enslaved refugees during the early days of Reconstruction nonetheless brought significant challenges to the city's antebellum social order. Conservatives accepted the end of slavery—it was even formally resolved at its founding convention that the state party regarded African Americans "favorably"—but local leaders were generally opposed to granting black Richmonders political or civil rights and made the maintenance of white supremacy central to their electoral strategy.[10] They did so out of a genuine belief in black inferiority as well as a desire to garner white support by exploiting racial anxieties, but black disenfranchisement was also a means diminishing political opposition. Black men in Virginia did not gain the franchise until the ratification of the new state constitution in 1869, but black Richmonders—both men and women—had been active in local Republican politics immediately after emancipation.[11] It was clear to Richmond's Conservatives that preventing a Republican resurgence after their 1870 takeover demanded diluting black voting power.

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[8] Ibid, 162; Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, xvi.
[9] Ibid, xv-xvi.
[10] Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls*, 172; Maddex, *The Virginia Conservatives*, 56.
[11] Lewis A. Randolph and Gayle T. Tate, *Rights for a Season: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in Richmond, Virginia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 83-88.

The other political challenge to Conservative hegemony was an unexpected (though predictable) byproduct of the industrial capitalism for which they advocated. The nation-wide financial panic that followed the sudden collapse of banking giant Jay Cooke and Company in September of 1873, and the five-year recession that followed in its wake, not only halted Richmond's economic resurgence but brought widespread financial pain to the city's working class.[12] The crisis shuttered banks and factories across Richmond, forcing thousands out of work and once again throwing the local economy into turmoil. Prolonged unemployment amongst white workers, in particular, risked defection of one of the key demographic groups in Conservatives' political coalition. Their reliance on the color line for electioneering purposes not only alienated the vast majority of black voters but meant that any loss of white support could be potentially devastating. Maintaining their hold on the city, then, required Conservatives to directly address the needs of the white working class.

Conservatives found opportunities to address both challenges within the broader effort to modernize Richmond's built environment that was spearheaded by Wilfred Emory Cutshaw, who served as the City Engineer from 1873 until his death in 1907 (see Figure 2). Cutshaw, who had been trained as an engineer at the Virginia Military Institute before serving as an artillery officer in the Confederate army, had his work cut out for him. Richmond's unpaved streets, which turned to muddy quagmires during the winter and were littered with deep holes, were a constant nuisance. Furthermore, the absence of adequate street lighting made them particularly treacherous as residents made their way home from work in the evening. Vacant lots and public squares had also been converted into unofficial city dumps, filling the city with the unbearable stench of rotting garbage in the summer months. Privies and flush toilets, which had yet to be connected to the sewer system, added to the olfactory assault. The city's reservoir, too, was in desperate need of improvement. It lacked the capacity and power to reach Richmond's elevated

[12] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 145.

suburbs and often dispensed an undrinkable brown liquid to those in center of the city.[13] The Conservative government intended to address these many issues but also saw paying off Richmond's wartime debt as a priority. This meant improvements occurred in a piecemeal fashion, carried out as funds were made available.

Figure 2 – Wilfred Emory Cutshaw, in Harry Kollatz, Jr., "A Meander Along the Boulevard," *Richmondmag*, April 29, 2014, https://richmondmagazine.com/news/richmond-history/history-of-boulevard/.

While Cutshaw worked to update all of Richmond's infrastructure over the course of his tenure, he was particularly devoted to bringing public greenspace to the city. His earliest projects involved improving the small public spaces that he inherited, such as Monroe Square. He did the same for Gamble's and Libby Hills, envisioning them as part of a system of small "promontory parks" that would service the suburban neighborhoods located throughout the many hills that surrounded Richmond. This system would grow to include Chimborazo Park as well as several

[13] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 80-81.

others. New Reservoir Park, however, was his ideal project. The entirely new greenspace presented Cutshaw with an opportunity to design and construct a large-scale park in the style popularized by urban landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted. Cutshaw was an avid student of park-builders such as Olmsted—even taking a leave of absence in 1879 for the sake of studying parks in cities throughout the North and Europe—and adhered to the urban design philosophy embodied in the City Beautiful movement. Inconsistent funding from the municipal government thwarted his ability to develop and implement the sort of master plan that such design philosophies demanded, but Cutshaw's efforts were nonetheless fundamental in shaping Richmond's landscape to modern urban standards.[14]

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first examines the story of Chimborazo Hill's conversion into a public park and the second details the process of establishing a public works project in the form of New Reservoir Park. While the efforts to create both parks began in the 1870s, the motivations for doing so were rooted in the Civil War and its immediate aftermath. Accordingly, much of the first section is devoted to discussing this crucial background. Emancipation, the city's capture by Union forces, and the determination of black residents to assert their recently gained freedoms resulted in completely new political and social dynamics for white Richmonders. The political ascendency of Richmond's Conservative Party was very much a response to these changes. Conservatives rose to power on the explicit promise of counteracting black autonomy and restoring the city to its antebellum glory. Understanding the circumstances to which they were responding, therefore, is essential to understanding their strategic deployment of public parks.

As the following analysis will show, the introduction of both Chimborazo Park and New Reservoir Park into Richmond's landscape aided the Conservative agenda on two fronts. While local officials often failed to adequately finance municipal improvements, they nonetheless

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[14] T. Tyler Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place: A History of the Richmond Landscape* (Charleston: The History Press, 2009), 64-70; 105-110.

desired the benefits that they generated. Chimborazo and New Reservoir Parks were not only important outward-facing features that proclaimed modern urbanity but a means of guiding Richmond's development. The greenspaces boosted the value of real estate in the immediate vicinity and encouraged residential development, stimulating the sort of physical growth and economic activity that Conservatives desired. They helped, in short, to put Richmond on the path to becoming a New South city despite the fact the Conservatives failed to plan for its long-term progression. At the same time, both parks provided those in power with a means of social control. The process of constructing the greenspaces allowed Conservatives to determine the residential composition of particular areas of the city while addressing the concerns of their political coalition, contributing greatly to their consolidation of power. Both the outward- and inward-facing effects of the parks bred confidence amongst Conservatives that they had secured Richmond's position as a metropolis of the postbellum South.

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When dawn broke on the morning of April 3rd, 1865, the hierarchies of race that structured Richmond's antebellum society lay in ruins alongside the city's homes and businesses. Frances Doswell had a sense that this was coming as she watched the city burn from her bedroom window the night before and saw scores of black Richmonders hurry by with "baskets filled with cloth, tobacco & other stolen articles." But she knew it for certain the next day when she was passed on the street by a black Union soldier on horseback leading a Confederate prisoner at his side.[15] The clear inversion of racial authority rendered the obliteration of the old order undeniable. This new reality was further reinforced by the thousands of formerly enslaved

[15] Diary of Frances Anne (Sutton) Doswell, 1865, 3-4, Mss1 D7424 b 82, Section 9, Doswell Family Papers, Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond, Virginia.

refugees that entered the city in the days that followed. As was the case in all southern cities after the war, many freedpeople migrated to Richmond from the surrounding countryside in search of displaced family members, economic opportunity, and Federal protection for their recently gained freedoms (see Figure 4).[16] As of April, the Union army estimated that there were 20,000 African Americans within the city in need of relief, over half of whom had come from the adjacent rural counties. By June that number had risen to somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000.[17] While Federal officials attempted to stem the tide by turning away black men, women, and children at the city limits and colluding with white employers to return black labor to plantations through a stringent pass system, many of these refugees settled in Richmond. Once there, they utilized the social institutions established by the city's antebellum free black population—and created entirely new ones—to exercise the self-determination that they had been denied while in bondage.[18]

The site that would become Chimborazo Park played a central role in black efforts to actualize their newfound freedoms in Richmond in the early days of Reconstruction, as well as white attempts to counter their gains. Perched atop a large hill overlooking the James River on the east side of the city, it was initially used by the Confederacy for what was considered at the time to be the largest military hospital in world (see Figure 3). The sprawling complex was truly impressive. It consisted of 150 separate wards and was almost entirely self-sufficient. In addition to its treatment facilities it contained carpenter's, blacksmith's, apothecary's, baker's, and shoemaker's shops to meet the various needs of its patients. According to Phoebe Yates Pember, who served as its matron from 1862 to 1865, Chimborazo Hospital, with its rows of barracks

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[16] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 81.
[17] Chesson, *Richmond After the War,* 72-73.
[18] The pass system established by the army in May of 1865 was a revived antebellum law intended to restrict the movement of black people in Richmond and enforce racial subordination. Citizens caught without a pass were arrested, imprisoned in a "negro bull pen," or hired out as laborers throughout the city. For more, see Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 81-83.

and bustling trades, "presented to the eye the appearance of a small village" more than a medical complex.[19]

Figure 3 – *Chimborazo Hospital, (Confederate) Richmond, Va., April, 1865*, 1865, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012650183/.

Pember's description could have been equally applied to Chimborazo after it was taken over by Union forces, but it is doubtful that she would have been willing to make such a concession. The army initially maintained the facility as a hospital, using it to treat both northern and southern casualties, but it was soon repurposed to house the growing population of refugees once the Freedmen's Bureau assumed control of relief efforts in June of 1865.[20] Lieutenant Halstead S. Merrill, the Freedmen's Bureau agent in charge of the district that encompassed Richmond, sought to apply order to the chaotic situation in the city by concentrating all displaced freedpeople in a single location. The army had been sheltering civilians in need, both black and white, in various locations throughout the city, but Merrill sought to organize them

[19] Phoebe Yates Pember, *A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond. Including Unpublished Letters Written from the Chimborazo Hospital*, ed. Bell Irvin Wiley (Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1959), 4-5 & 24.
[20] *The Whig* (Richmond, Virginia), Apr. 10, 1865; Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 74.

into two distinct camps according to race.[21] In a letter to his superiors dated June 24th, 1865, he explained that the two hundred white refugees currently at Chimborazo should be relocated to nearby Camp Winder in order to make space for more black residents. "It is desirable that they be removed as early as practicable," he explained, "so as to enable me to clear the Almshouse of the negroes & quarter them altogether at Camp Chimborazo."[22] And so he did. By July the Freedmen's Bureau reported that those at Chimborazo were the "only barracks occupied by negroes in the vicinity of Richmond," and while there had been 2,571 freedpeople received at the camp, all but 818 had found work and homes elsewhere.[23]

General Orlando Brown, the assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for Virginia and Merrill's superior, had no intention of making Chimborazo a permanent settlement. This was evident in the lack of improvements the Bureau made to the camp's facilities while under his command. Brown explained in a July news report that there had been "no 'fitting up' of [the buildings] since they were evacuated by the rebels." "They are simply coarse hospital barracks," he insisted, "nothing more."[24] The camp's eight hundred black residents, however, did not share his view. Despite Brown's insistence that their stay at Chimborazo would be temporary, the freedpeople laid the foundations of an independent community on the hill as soon as they arrived. Eager to, as W. E. B. Du Bois put it, "make freedom fact," those who lived on Chimborazo created the institutions needed to secure independence from white control.[25]

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[21] Merrill's motivations for segregating those in need according to race are unclear. It is possible that he wanted to ensure that freedpeople received the support they required by moving them out of the almshouse, which was overseen by the city government, and transferring them to accommodation directly controlled by the Freedmen's Bureau. There is also the possibility that he saw concentrating much of the displaced black population in a single location as a more effective, and necessary, means of controlling their movement and labor. As Michael Chesson points out, Merrill took advantage of the government's offer of free rations and transportation to freedpeople looking for jobs to ship black residents from Richmond to his father in New Jersey who was looking for cheap labor for his farm. Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 76 & 94.

[22] Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Office Records, 1865-1872, Richmond (subassistant commissioner), National Archives: M1913, Roll 162, "Press Copies of Letters sent, Vol. 1, Apr-Oct 1865. p. 309-310

[23] "The White and Black 'Trash' at Richmond – Comparison between the Two," *Washington Reporter* (Washington, Pennsylvania), Jul. 26, 1865.

[24] Ibid.

[25] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 155.

They built off of those that had been created by free blacks in the antebellum period, expanded the semiautonomous culture that had been fostered during slavery, and engaged in new organizations that could only be realized after emancipation. In short, they made Chimborazo their own.[26]

Figure 4 – Alexander Gardner, *Richmond, Virginia. Group of Negroes ("Freedmen") by canal*, 1865, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/cwp/item/2018671686/.

The cornerstone of their fledgling community was the Fourth Baptist Church. It was the outgrowth of a congregation originally established by a group of enslaved residents of Church Hill, the suburb that surrounded Chimborazo, in the basement of a nearby white church in 1859. While the white parishioners of Leigh Street Baptist Church had been willing to provide the neighborhood's black population with religious instruction before the war, they quickly voted to

[26] This is the same process of self-determination that Eric Foner explains was exercised by African Americans across the South in the early days of Reconstruction. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 78.

expel the group after Richmond fell to Union forces in the spring of 1865. Subsequently, Reverend Scott Gwathmey reorganized the congregation as the Fourth Baptist Church after receiving permission to occupy one of the barracks on Chimborazo Hill.[27] The church, like black churches throughout the South in post-war period, provided the residents of Chimborazo with a much-needed source of sanctuary and spiritual uplift following the traumas of slavery. Not only did worship offer clarity of purpose and communal celebration for black Richmonders amidst the chaos of a society in flux, but the establishment of an independent church "tangibly testified to their emancipation" by providing a physical space for activities that were forbidden under slavery.[28] Accordingly, services at Fourth Baptist drew throngs of worshippers. Hundreds gathered to watch Gwathmey baptize a group of converts in 1868, for example, and joined together in singing hymns that echoed off the hillsides and drew the attention of Church Hill's white residents. The crowd attending the service that followed filled the church and covered half an acre of ground outside.[29]

The church's importance to the Chimborazo community went far beyond its spiritual functions. As Lewis Randolph and Gayle Tate point out, Richmond's black churches created "secular program[s] that touched every aspect of the community's social, political, and economic life."[30] Fourth Baptist was no exception. The church facilitated social gatherings that strengthened collective identity and celebrated black independence throughout the period of Reconstruction. Gwathmey lent his voice to a city-wide celebration held in commemoration of the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's death in 1867, for example. Amidst the music and singing that drew thousands of Richmond's black residents to nearby Howard's Grove, Gwathmey

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[27] *Fourth Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1859-1986* (Richmond: Fourth Baptist Church, 1986), 4-9. The church remained on Chimborazo until the barracks were demolished. At that point, Gwathmey and his congregation salvaged the lumber, threw it down the side of Chimborazo Hill, pulled it up the opposite hill, and rebuilt the church on the west side of Bloody Run Gulley, in close proximity to its original location. Gwathmey eventually purchased land at the corner of 32nd and M Streets in 1874 and built a frame building on the site to serve as the church.

[28] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 76-78; Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 314.

[29] "Baptism of Negroes," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 23, 1868.

[30] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 77.

joined other speakers in celebrating Lincoln's virtues and urging their listeners to honor his memory by following his example. This, they insisted, would allow black Richmonders to "rise to the stature of greatness that God has given us."[31] The church also regularly opened its doors to Republican meetings in order to facilitate black political mobilization. Such events attracted black men and women by the hundreds and provided them with a means of asserting themselves within America's political tradition. While in attendance, they demanded the federal government take action on their behalf by ensuring equal protection of individual rights, abolishing the South's unjust Black Codes, providing access to education, and confiscating and redistributing the property of former Confederates.[32] Such meetings provided a forum through which black Richmonders could demand, as Eric Foner puts it, that the nation "live up to the full potential of its republican creed" by incorporating them into the political and civil order.[33]

Fourth Baptist also provided education for the residents of Chimborazo. Soon after Union forces took control of Richmond the New York National Freedmen's Relief Association, a civilian charity organization established in 1862 for the purpose of aiding recently freed African Americans in reaching "a position of self-support," arrived in Richmond to help with the refugee crisis.[34] A major focus of their efforts was the establishment of schools. As part of a broader initiative that Du Bois describes as "one of the most astonishing successes in new and sudden human contacts," six white women from New England joined with Scott Gwathmey and the residents of Chimborazo on terms of "essential social equality and mutual respect" in order to bring a source of formal education to the hill.[35] The residents, young and old, eagerly took advantage of the day and night classes hosted in the church. As of June 1865, the school had 180

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[31] "Celebrations of the Anniversary of Lincoln's Death," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 16, 1867.
[32] "Grand Mass Meeting at Chimborazo," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 10, 1867; "Rally! Rally!" *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 31, 1868; "Political Movements Amongst the Freedmen," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 3, 1868; "Meeting at Chimborazo," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 23, 1868.
[33] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 114.
[34] *Brief History of the New York National Freedmen's Relief Association* (New York: New York National Freedmen's Relief Association, 1866), 5-7.
[35] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 156.

registered students. That number increased to nearly 400 by December.[36] The teachers described their pupils as "conducting themselves in a manner marvelously well, and learning with an aptness that makes teaching among them a delight," while being taken aback by the extent to which many of them had been able to covertly educate themselves while enslaved.[37] Their enthusiasm for learning is indicative of a broader determination amongst freedpeople to cement their independent status and make the most of their recently-gained freedom. As Ronald Butchart notes, literacy was a crucial means through which the formerly enslaved could "extend their emancipation beyond the minimal legal termination of bondage" by exercising self-determination. The ability to interpret scripture provided religious independence, the means of becoming a better-informed voter strengthened claims to political equality, and the knowledge needed to evaluate and negotiate contracts increased economic opportunity. Access to a formal education was a crucial source of "self-respect and independence" that the black community utilized to establish itself after the war.[38]

The residents of Chimborazo asserted their independence through means outside of the church as well. As they constructed the social institutions that their community demanded they simultaneously exercised what were understood to be fundamental American rights. Residents made claims to private property on the hill, for example, despite its lack of formal recognition by government authorities. Land amidst the former hospital barracks was divided into plots for vegetable gardens that were considered by residents to be the domain of individual owners.[39] These plots not only served as a source of subsistence agriculture, allowing freedpeople to extricate their labor from white control, but provided those who tended them with access to a

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[36] "Richmond: Our Schools," *The National Freedman* 1, no. 5 (1865), 155; Records of the Superintendent of Education for the state of Virginia, Freedmen's Bureau, 1865-1870. Monthly statistical school reports of district superintendents July 1865-Apr. 1869; Jan. 1870 (NARA Series M1053, Roll 12) p. 108.
[37] "Richmond: Our Schools," *The National Freedman* 1, no. 5 (1865), 155.
[38] Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 13.
[39] "Crossin' De Line," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 17, 1869; "Over De Line Again," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 1, 1869.

semblance of the independent yeoman tradition that Thomas Jefferson had made central to American identity.[40] Men on Chimborazo also joined several other black communities throughout Richmond in organizing militia units. These groups, armed and acting under military discipline, first emerged in response to the very real need to protect black life and property from violence carried out by vengeful whites. Sentinels, for example, were posted to guard the Chimborazo settlement and frequently engaged white attackers. But taking part in martial self-defense also gave black Richmonders access to ceremonial traditions that were previously reserved for white Americans. By the mid-1870s, the city's black units took part in public parades and were organized into the First Colored Battalion of the Virginia State Militia, allowing them to lay claim to both civic space and a broader understanding of male political liberties.[41]

As the Chimborazo community was steadily established, however, it met with fierce resistance from the white residents of Church Hill. A concentrated settlement of independent African Americans itself was enough to draw the ire of white Richmonders, standing as both a constant reminder of the South's military defeat and a direct affront to the antebellum social order, but the desperate condition of many of Chimborazo's residents generated additional conflict. Despite the massive strides toward social and political independence taken by the community as a whole during the early years of Reconstruction, many of the freedpeople remained reliant on the Freedmen's Bureau for direct material assistance (see Figure 5). That limited social safety net, however, proved woefully insufficient. While the Bureau had taken steps to distribute aid to all Richmonders in need, it often lacked the resources to meet the demand. The results of the shortfall were dire. A reporter for *The National Freedman*, for example, described coming upon "an aged woman…in a dark cabin without a fire, literally clothed in rags" who had "eaten nothing but a few cabbage leaves for two days" when he surveyed the

[40] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 108-110.
[41] Brown, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," 305-308. These black militias lost government approval as segregation and disfranchisement proliferated at the end of the nineteenth century.

Chimborazo encampment in December of 1865.[42] As a result, freedpeople often pushed beyond the bounds of Chimborazo to acquire the resources they needed to survive. Residents of Church Hill reported chickens and pigs being stolen and slaughtered, while clothing set out to dry was taken straight from the lines. The train tracks of the nearby York River Railroad were even torn up by black residents desperate for fuel to heat their homes.[43]

While these acts were committed out of necessity, white Richmonders nonetheless understood them to be blatant violations of the old social order. This made Chimborazo an increasingly tempting target for animosity and physical violence. In March of 1866, the *Dispatch* accused "the negroes at Chimborazo" of having evinced "very hostile intentions toward the citizens in that neighborhood" before claiming that a group of young white men out celebrating a newly married couple several nights prior had been fired upon by the black residents without provocation. The article played heavily upon white fears of black retribution, reporting that the freedpeople had warned the men that "they intended to kill every rebel son of a b---h on the hill." It insisted that the camp's militia, which "held nightly meetings…[and] drills" and "posted sentinels on the street," was not for self-defense but to exact revenge on the city's white residents. Tensions reached boiling point when the sentinels ordered another white man to stop as he approached Chimborazo. When he refused, the guards fired and struck the man twice. Police quickly arrived at the scene and a running gunfight ensued, with the officers charging toward the camp and exchanging fire with the militia.[44] The battle continued until Federal soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Merrill, arrived and subdued the crowd. The police then raided Chimborazo, arresting eleven freedmen who they found sleeping in their beds. Papers like the *Whig* were quick to assume the guilt of the freedmen, explaining that those "now

[42] "Virginia: The Chimborazo School," *The National Freedman* 2, no. 1 (1866): 15.
[43] *Richmond Examiner* (Richmond, VA), Feb. 27, 1866; *Daily Eastern Argus* (Portland, ME), Oct. 20, 1865.
[44] "Rioting among the Negroes," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 5, 1866.

under arrest will be tried…before Judge McEntee, when they will, no doubt, meet the punishment they so richly deserve."[45]

It soon became apparent, however, that it was the white men who had initiated the violence. The day after its extensive and sensational account of events, in which it was alleged that the residents of Chimborazo were preparing to massacre Richmond's former Confederates, the *Dispatch* published a four-sentence correction:

> From our account of the fight at Chimborazo in yesterday's issue, it would naturally be inferred that there was an insurrectionary move on the part of negroes toward the citizens of the neighborhood. In fact, such was our impression from the accounts we gathered, and when we wrote of it. Since that time, however, facts have been developed which show that the demonstration was nothing more than the result of several fights and disturbances between young men and the negroes of the neighborhood and of Chimborazo. Everything has since been quiet.[46]

Despite the paper's previous insistence that black insurrection was afoot, it admitted that such was not the case. In reality, whites had harassed the residents of Chimborazo and instigated the violence. On March 7th, Lieutenant Merrill wrote to Colonel Brown, informing him that he had obtained the names of the white men responsible for the riot and asked for permission to arrest them. He did so the next day.[47] Merrill not only brought the rightful perpetrators to justice but stood as counsel for the freedmen during their trial. "At the conclusion of evidence…," the *Dispatch* reported, "the Court was satisfied that none of the [black] prisoners had been identified

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[45] "An Organized Body of Negroes Near Chimborazo Hospital," *The Whig* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 6, 1866.
[46] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 6, 1866.
[47] Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Office Records, 1865-1872, Richmond (subassistant commissioner), National Archives: M1913, Roll 163, "Press Copies of Letters sent, Vol. 2-3, October 1865 – September 1866. p. 421; Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Office Records, 1865-1872, Richmond (subassistant commissioner), National Archives: M1913, Roll 163, "Press Copies of Letters sent, Vol. 2-3, October 1865 – September 1866. p. 425.

as having been actually concerned in the affair, and they were accordingly all discharged."[48] This result did not resolve the situation, however. Violent clashes around Chimborazo were commonplace throughout the month of March, with the freedpeople consistently depicted as the instigators.[49]

Figure 5 – *Peep At The Freedmen's Bureau Office Of Lieut. S. Merrill, Superintendent Third District*, 1867, New York Public Library, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-3fdc-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

The continued civil unrest led the Freedmen's Bureau to disband the camp in the same month. On March 24th, 1866, the Bureau issued an order for all freedpeople able to support themselves to vacate Chimborazo Hill by April 1st. While the official reason given for the

[48] *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 9, 1866.
[49] For example, the *Dispatch* reported an instance of white children being assaulted by a gang of black children from Chimborazo. The paper blamed the distemper of all African Americans brought on by the Civil War for the attack: "These negroes are set down there chiefly through the wild mania that possessed the race when the Federal armies traversed the State…The scenes of those times, and bad teaching, have implanted ill-fated hostilities towards the people amongst whom they are obliged to live, and who are indeed their best friends." *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 17, 1866.

dissolution of the settlement was fear of a smallpox outbreak, it appears likely that it was motivated by a desire to put a stop to the violence, evident in the order's targeting of able-bodied men. As the *Dispatch* explained, "those who are old and infirm, or who have large and helpless families, will be permitted to stay, but all others will be unceremoniously ejected." At the time of the order's issuance, there were an estimated 1,000 African Americans living on the hill, and the paper hoped that the number would be reduced to 150 by the end of the month.[50] A number of waivers were granted, while those with the means to do so purchased their homes when they were sold at public auction. By May the Bureau reported that somewhere between two and three hundred residents remained.[51] Even this drastically reduced community, however, continued to draw the ire of its white neighbors. Violent confrontations on the hill persisted throughout the remainder of 1866, following the familiar pattern of white instigation and presumed black guilt. In July, another riot was reported in which "stones and firearms were freely used," resulting in the death of a white youth. The Richmond *Whig* was quick to label the event as "a cold-blooded murder…[of] an inoffensive young white man…at the hands of a negro."[52] Meanwhile, the residents of Church Hill continued to complain of the "dangerous nuisance" emanating from Chimborazo as musket fire and property damage became commonplace. One journalist, explicitly linking the disturbances to the racial makeup of the community, referred to the hill which had been "opened up to the outside barbarians" as "Chimpanzeetown."[53]

The persistence of the 'Chimborazo nuisance' contributed to the Reconstruction government's decision to expand the city limits in 1867. Much of the press coverage of the violence noted that the unrest was able to continue because the hill lay outside of Richmond's formal boundaries and was, therefore, beyond its police jurisdiction. This meant that

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[50] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 24, 1866.
[51] Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Office Records, 1865-1872, Richmond (Assistant Subassistant Commissioner), National Archives: M1913, Roll 170, "Press Copies of Letters Sent, December 1865-April 1867." p. 70-72
[52] *The Gazette* (Alexandria, VA), Jul. 6, 1866; *The Whig* (Richmond, VA) Jul. 6, 1866.
[53] "A Dangerous Nuisance," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 22, 1866; *The Whig* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 30, 1866.

Chimborazo's residents were not subject to the primary tool—policing—used to maintain white supremacy in the post-war urban South.[54] As a result, most news reports of disturbances in the area were followed by calls to bring the area under police control. As the *Dispatch* put it following a fight between white and black children in March of 1866, the "trouble may [continue to] come from this Chimborazo colony unless it be placed under police regulations."[55] The paper raised the point again in October after publishing complaints of musket fire coming from the hill. "Major Claiborne [Richmond's chief of police] has been complained to," the article explained, "but Chimborazo being beyond his limits, his hands are tied in the matter…we hope that in a reasonable course of time this nuisance, or rather outrage, fraught with so much danger to the lives of innocent and unoffending persons, will be not only abated but punished."[56]

There are several possible reasons why Richmond's government would have wanted to extend the city limits. Some historians have hypothesized that it was an attempt to generate more revenue from real estate and personal property taxes, while others have suggested that Republicans in power hoped to increase their voter base by annexing black settlements such as Chimborazo.[57] While these factors undoubtedly contributed to the decision, evidence suggests that demands made by white residents of Church Hill to bring Chimborazo under the city's authority also played a role. A news report from January of 1867, describing a string of robberies and vandalism, stressed the need for the city's enlargement:

> Scarcely a night passes by that some citizen is not robbed in some way; and nothing that can be made available is spared. Within the last few nights the gates of Messrs. Ferguson,

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[54] Howard N. Rabinowitz, "The Conflict between Blacks and the Police in the Urban South, 1865-1900," *The Historian* 38, no. 1 (1976): 63. Rabinowitz explains that "to whites in the postbellum South the policeman stood as the first line of defense" against black self-rule. By breaking up gambling dens and other illicit activities, clearing the streets of "vagrants," pursuing black lawbreakers and keeping black voters in check, police played a central role in maintaining the racial hierarchy of the Old South as the New South was being constructed.
[55] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 17, 1866.
[56] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 22, 1866.
[57] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 127; Steven J. Hoffman, *Race, Class and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870-1920* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004), 38; Tyler-McGraw, *At the* Falls, 173.

> Sands, and Love have been taken from their hinges and carried off. The iron works of the gate is sold to some junk dealer and the wood is used for fire wood. We know of no remedy unless the Legislature will extend the city limits, and bring a large number of persons within the protection of Major Claiborne and his efficient force.[58]

The State Legislature did just that only a month later, passing an Act to extend the city limits in February of 1867.[59] When it went into effect in July, the expansion doubled Richmond's size from 2.4 to 4.9 square miles, and brought both the neighborhood of Church Hill and the community on Chimborazo, encompassed by the newly-established Marshall Ward, within the boundaries of the city.[60]

Despite the insistence of the local press, the incorporation of Chimborazo did not neutralize the perceived threat that it posed to Richmond's social order. In April of 1868, the *Dispatch* again reported disturbances emanating from the settlement. This time, however, the paper not only reflected the frustration of Church Hill's residents, but framed the black community as a hindrance to Richmond's broader urbanization efforts:

> People residing in the eastern suburbs of the city complain very much of the depredations of the horde of negroes living at Chimborazo. Fences are torn down and carried off, trees mutilated, hen-houses and pig pens invaded and plundered; nothing portable is safe out of doors. *The country round about Chimborazo has been made a perfect waste.* Why can not this den of idlers and profligates be broken up? We cheerfully call the attention of the authorities to these facts. [Emphasis added][61]

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[58] "Annoying Depredations," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jan. 15, 1867.
[59] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Feb. 13, 1867.
[60] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 127.
[61] "A Nuisance," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 27, 1868.

This passage is indicative of a rhetorical strategy that would become common amongst New South advocates across the region in the decades to come as they sought to justify the displacement of people deemed undesirable in order to make way for the process of modernization. By describing the habits and practices of such groups as making a particular site a "waste," New South boosters promoted a particular perception of land use that valued residential and commercial development above all else while presenting those who did not conform to it as obstacles to be overcome. In this case, the strategy was explicitly racialized in order to channel white antipathy toward the black community on Chimborazo into a broader agenda of urbanization. No longer was the presence of the freedpeople simply an immediate danger to the residents of Church Hill; it was now also an impediment to the development of the city as a whole. The Chimborazo community's existence now meant precarious property rights, a marred urban aesthetic, and devalued real estate – all of which were antithetical to the New South ideal.

Public anger eventually grew to the point that it threatened the tax revenues that Chesson claims motivated the city's expansion in the first place. In January of 1869, the residents of Church Hill submitted a petition to the City Council for an exemption from the new tax that accompanied their annexation, listing the nuisance emanating from Chimborazo as justification:

> We have a negro camp in front of us…[we] can raise neither hogs, fowls, vegetables, nor fruit, owing to the thefts committed in our midst. Nor can we keep our gardens enclosed, as the fences are taken by the suffering negroes for fuel…we are liable to pistol & gun shots, fired from the camp to frighten thieves, as there is no protection for the honest white or black population. Consequently *our property is almost valueless.* [Emphasis added][62]

[62] Miscellaneous Richmond City Council Papers, 1865-1870, Box marked Council Papers 1869 – 1870, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Again, the conflict surrounding Chimborazo can be seen as a disruption to the urban system that was being established in Richmond during this period. The existence of the settlement, and the subversive behavior displayed by those therein, undermined white authority in the city. Thus, the issues understood to be generated by the independent black community evolved from the perceived immediate threat of black insurrection to the assumption of a broader incompatibility between the black and white populations in the emergent Richmond of the New South.

When the Conservatives successfully wrested control of the state and city governments from Republicans in the summer of 1869, they recognized the conflict surrounding Chimborazo as an opportunity to cement their political power. The party had, in fact, made race-baiting a central campaign tactic and played heavily upon the white public's fears of "Negro rule" to win the election.[63] Addressing the 'Chimborazo nuisance' was a chance to show their voters that their commitment to reestablishing white supremacy in the former capital of the Confederacy was not merely political rhetoric. At the same time, if the settlement was permanently removed from the Church Hill neighborhood, hundreds of potential Republican voters would be displaced from Marshall Ward. Combined, these results would strengthen the position of Conservatives and insulate them from any serious electoral challenge.

Conservatives had good reason to view the Chimborazo community as a political threat. Black residents on the hill had shown an eagerness to mobilize on behalf of "the party of Lincoln" soon after they moved into the settlement. Not only did they hold regular political meetings to educate one another with regard to civic engagement and organize on behalf of various Republican candidates, but they often advocated for radical positions such as the confiscation of Confederate property and the heavy taxation of former slaveholders. The meetings were regularly visited by white leaders of Richmond's Radical Republican faction such

[63] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 88-89.

as Reverend James W. Hunnicutt, a wartime Unionist, Primitive Baptist preacher, and founder of the *New Nation*. Hunnicutt, who advocated for a "revolutionized" Virginia characterized by public schools, expanded manufacturing, and land redistribution, was the overwhelming choice of the hill's residents for the Republican nomination for governor in the Spring of 1868.[64] As a hotbed of Radical Republican activity, the dissolution of the Chimborazo community became a priority for the Conservatives as they sought to ensure their control of Richmond was not seriously challenged in the years to come.

Conservatives made a city-wide push to diminish Republican strength soon after they took control of the government. There was a relatively even distribution of African Americans throughout Richmond's five wards as of 1870, giving Republicans the ability to reclaim power if that demographic could be sufficiently mobilized. Accordingly, Conservatives crafted a sixth ward out of territory gained from the 1867 annexation to contain black voting power (see Figure 6). The boundaries of Jackson Ward, or the "shoestring ward" as it came to be known, were skillfully drawn to encompass the majority of the city's black population. The area grew to become a center of black culture and community by the end of the century, as well as the home of Richmond's small but established black middle class, but it also limited black representation in the city government. Jackson Ward allowed black voters to consistently elect one or more black councilmen, but never enough to hold a majority on the city council. The successful gerrymander ensured that the city's other five wards remained firmly under white control.[65]

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[64] Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls*, 173; "Political Movements Among the Freedmen," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 3, 1868.
[65] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 127 & 157; Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls*, 173-174; Brown, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," 316-317.

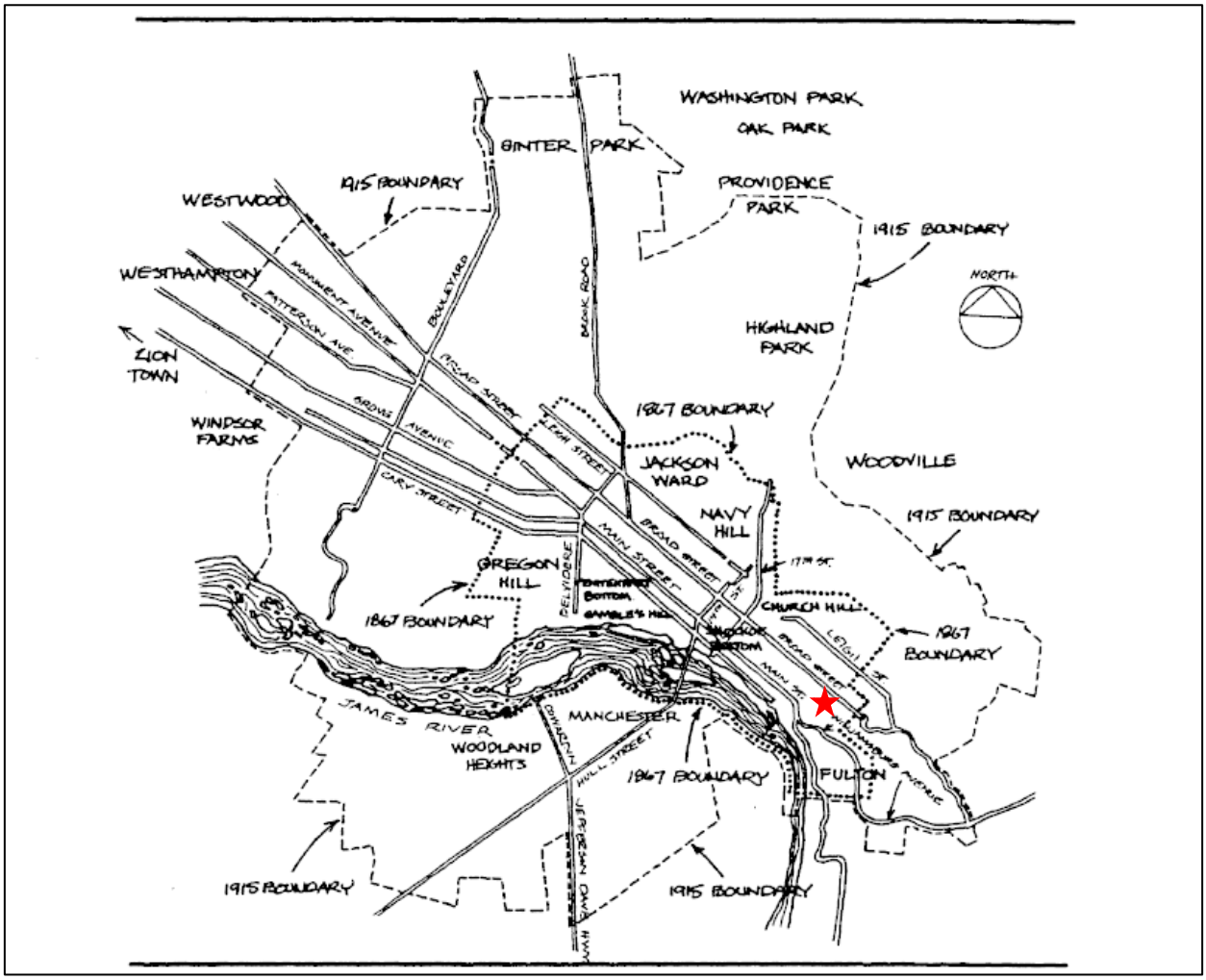

Figure 6 – Map showing boundaries of 1867 annexation (approximate location of Chimborazo marked by star), original map in Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995).

Chimborazo remained a problem for Conservatives even after the creation of Jackson Ward, however. Not only did it lie outside of the gerrymandered area, but Marshall Ward, in which it was located, held the second highest concentration of black Richmonders outside of the shoestring.[66] Furthermore, the hill continued to function as a hub of black political activity throughout the early 1870s. Even as moderate Republican leaders took over the local party and began distancing themselves from their black constituency following the Conservative victory of

[66] Joseph Gerteis, *Class and the Color Line: Interracial Class Coalition in the Knights of Labor and the Populist Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 83. Gerteis notes that the city directory indicates that Marshall Ward remained 40% black as of 1880.

1869, Chimborazo persisted as the site for Republican meetings in Marshall Ward.[67] If the Conservatives could eliminate this space of black civic engagement, they would both weaken Republicans' ability to organize and influence politics in the area and strengthen the position of white working-class voters who made up the majority of Marshall Ward's residents.

Chimborazo's conversion into a public park presented Conservatives with a uniquely effective solution to their problem. Not only would the site's designation as a park force out a concentration of black voters, further diluting Republican voting power by dispersing their constituency throughout the city, but it would help adhere Church Hill's white residents to the Conservative Party while encouraging the urban development and public behavior expected of a New South city. In April of 1871, the same month that the gerrymander of Jackson Ward went into effect, the *Dispatch* published an editorial that advocated for the establishment of a park on Chimborazo Hill. In doing so, the author framed the park as an essential piece of urban infrastructure to meet the needs of working-class Richmonders, in particular:

> Richmond needs parks. During the hot summer months for those possessed of little means, escape from the gloomy workshops, dull stores, and dusty streets is almost a matter of impossibility…We want a place where a man can spend the fragment of a summer evening—where the love-sick can do their billing and cooing unembarrassed by prying eyes; where the wives and children of hard-working mechanics can find relief from their monotonous life, and where the boys can loll away a half-holiday—and all in the pure atmosphere, and in the enjoyment of the beauties of nature, so lavishly strewn about our city.[68]

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[67] "Important Meeting," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 10, 1871; "Republican Ward Meetings," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 7, 1872; "Republican Ward Meeting Tonight for the Election of Delegates to the State Convention," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 25, 1873.

[68] "Chimborazo—What It Is and What It Might be Made," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 25, 1871.

By pitching the park as a necessary source of leisure for the working class, specifically, the article appealed directly to Church Hill's white residents. It would be a means for them to find respite from the manual labor that an industrial city of the New South demanded, while keeping within the limits on time and resources that a modern, industrial society imposed.

At the same time, the article promoted a particular conception of proper public behavior. The wholesome leisure and quiet contemplation described by the *Dispatch* stood at odds with the chaos that frequently surrounded the Chimborazo settlement and framed the activities of its residents as incompatible with urban living. Richmond's public spaces were for white recreation, the article implied, not black subsistence, community-building, or political organizing. In fact, the *Dispatch* insisted that that had always been the case. "Before the war [Chimborazo] was a common, chiefly occupied by grazing cows and ball-playing, kite-flying boys," the author explained. "When all things Confederate passed away, and the ignorant, starving wards of the nation began to swarm hither, the Federal Government assigned the deserted hospitals to them as habitation, and they have stuck there with a pertinacity most disagreeable to their neighbors ever since."[69] Richmond's park advocates leveraged the site's history as a commons to gain popular support. In painting an idealized picture of the hill's past and couching its demise in the rhetoric of the Lost Cause, the article framed the creation of a park as a form of redemption. By restoring Chimborazo to its idyllic state, white Richmonders would counter the effects of their military defeat and reclaim space that was rightfully theirs.

The white residents of Church Hill quickly rallied around the *Dispatch*'s proposal. Several petitions circulated through the neighborhood between September of 1871 and July 1874 in favor of the park. The first advocated for the selling of Libby Hill, a smaller city-owned plot nearby, in order to finance the purchase of Chimborazo. The park advocates, which included "many prominent property holders" of Church Hill, spoke of the "advantages which the

[69] "Chimborazo—What It Is and What It Might be Made," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 25, 1871.

proposed arrangement holds out to all interested," neglecting, unsurprisingly, the considerable number of black residents who would lose their homes as a result of such a move.[70] The document does not appear to have immediately prompted any action by city officials. A second petition, which proposed the same plan, was presented to the City Council in August of 1872.[71] This time a resolution to have the Committee on Public Grounds secure the property was raised, but the motion was tabled and efforts once again stalled.[72] Yet another petition was submitted in July of 1874, this one signed by a thousand of Richmond's "best citizens, tax-payers, and practical and useful men."[73] This time it was successful. On July 13th, 1874, the Board of Aldermen voted to refer the issue to the Committee on Public Grounds and the City Engineer, Colonel Cutshaw, setting in motion debates between the branches of government over how much land should be purchased and for what price that lasted more than two years. Finally, on September 26th, 1876, the Board of Alderman voted to direct the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings to purchase thirty acres of Chimborazo Hill for the purpose of creating a public park. The Common Council concurred on October 3rd.[74]

There is little detail available regarding the removal of the black residents of Chimborazo following the action of the City Council, but evidence suggests that they vacated in late 1877. An advertisement for residential plots adjacent to the new park from June of that year made sure to point out that all of the "old buildings [had] been removed," while the city directory published in 1878 was the last to list residences on the site.[75] Cutshaw began landscaping the grounds the following summer but, due to chronic lack of funding from the City Council, the last of the park

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[70] "Chimborazo Park," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Sep. 2, 1871; "A Park for Church and Union Hills," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Sep. 2, 1871.
[71] "Public Parks," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 30, 1872; "The City Council," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 12, 1872.
[72] "City Council," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 16, 1872.
[73] "Chimborazo Park, *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 16, 1874; "The Board of Aldermen," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 14, 1874.
[74] "The Board of Aldermen," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Sep. 26, 1876; "The Common Council," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 3, 1876.
[75] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 13th, 1877.

improvements were not completed until 1890.[76] The effects of the park on the city's development, however, were seen as soon as the last African American home was removed. The same 1877 real estate advertisement enticed potential buyers with the fact that the City Council "contemplate soon to improve and beautify [the] grounds, [which] will…add greatly to the value of [the] lots."[77] Moses Ezekiel, the world-famous sculptor and Richmond native, surveyed the land that spring and predicted more impressive and extensive outcomes. "It seems natural to suppose," he wrote, "in standing upon the newly-acquired grounds of Chimborazo, that this hill must eventually become a grand and natural entrance into the heart of [Richmond]…[which] will add immensely to the beauty and utility of the grounds and to the prosperity of the city."[78] By the summer of 1880, enough work had been done that the hill could, in earnest, be called a park. An article from that August championed the "improvements" as a certain means of attracting investment in the city and praised Colonel Cutshaw for having changed the hill "from an eyesore to a thing of beauty." It made no mention of the recently demolished community.[79]

Chimborazo's conversion into a public park aided in reestablishing white supremacy in Marshall Ward—and Richmond more broadly—in several ways. Apart from physically displacing an autonomous black community, the park offered a means for white authorities to reassert control over black labor. Cutshaw, for example, utilized convict labor as he commenced improving the grounds of the park in the early 1880s.[80] This was an explicitly racialized practice with roots in the antebellum era. The chain gang used to clean the grounds of Richmond's Capitol Square in the 1850s and 1860s, for example, was exclusively comprised of black inmates.[81] The city government continued to use convict labor to provide public services such as street-cleaning in the postwar period, while the system was adopted and expanded at the state

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[76] "The Board of Aldermen," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 16th, 1878; Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 67.
[77] *Daily Dispatch*, Jun. 13th, 1877.
[78] "Richmond and its Improvements," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 19, 1877.
[79] *Daily Dispatch*, Aug. 28th, 1880.
[80] "Personal—Brief Items," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Sep. 16, 1880; "Escape and Capture of a Convict," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Dec. 7, 1880; "The Convict-Killing Case," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Dec. 16, 1880.
[81] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 19; Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 71.

level in 1870 (see Figure 7). Under the new arrangement, prisoners (the vast majority of them black) could be leased to private businesses at extremely low prices with little accountability for their well-being.[82] Not only did such systems return many black Richmonders to a state of forced servitude, but the use of the chain gang on public projects provided a visual indication for the entire city that white supremacy would be maintained.

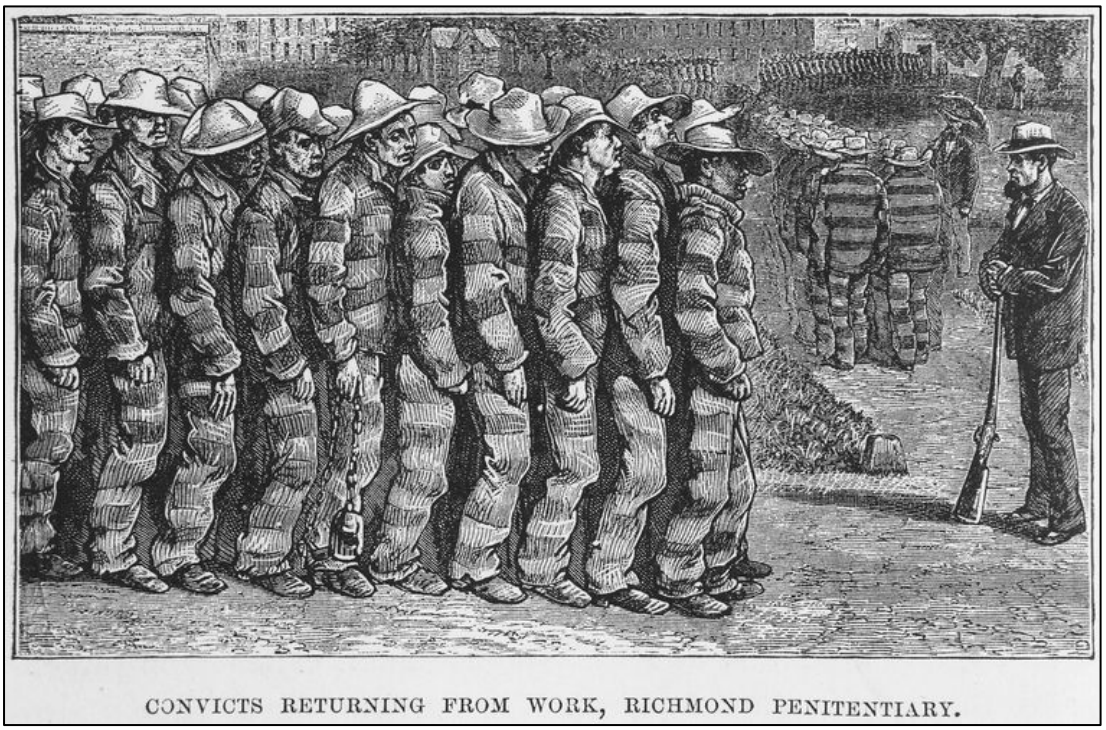

Figure 7 – *Convicts returning from work, Richmond penitentiary*, 1882, The New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47df-b7b1-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Cutshaw also pushed to associate the site with its Confederate past. While he did not attempt to memorialize Chimborazo Hospital within the grounds, he was determined to have a proposed monument to General Robert E. Lee placed in the adjacent Libby Hill Park. He insisted that the site's location atop the hill would allow the monument to be seen from "more points within the city itself than any other location yet indicated."[83] After initially agreeing with Cutshaw's proposal, proponents of the Lee monument ultimately decided to instead make the

[82] Maddex, *The Virginia Conservatives*, 225-229.
[83] Selden Richardson, "'Architect of the City,' Wilfred Emory Cutshaw (1838-1907) and Municipal Architecture in Richmond," (MA dissertation, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996), 14.

statue the centerpiece of a new urban plan design on the city's west side, what is now known as Monument Avenue. But Cutshaw succeeded in getting its counterpart placed on Libby Hill in 1895. The Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument, consisting of a massive granite column topped with a bronze statue of a Confederate private, towered over Libby Hill and was clearly visible from Chimborazo, just a short walk away (see Figure 8).[84] Any visitor standing on the heights of Chimborazo could not look west toward the city without viewing the monument that proclaimed "the bravery and self-sacrifice of the private soldier and sailor" who "faced danger and even death with a firm step."[85] In this way, Cutshaw and his fellow park advocates not only erased the local history of black independence on Chimborazo, but supplanted it with a glorified narrative of the white southerners' wartime struggle.

Figure 8 – *[Richmond, Virginia, Soldiers and Sailors Monument]*, ca. 1890, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016795439/.

[84] Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 68-69.
[85] "What the Leaders Say," *The Times* (Richmond, VA), May 30, 1894.

Quotidian activities within the park also served to reassert Richmond's antebellum racial hierarchy. While the segregation of public spaces was not yet codified into law, the emergent park system—like all of Richmond's public spaces—was governed by a custom of de facto segregation that spawned from the slave codes of the pre-war period.[86] The parks were, in short, spaces intended for the use of white residents first and foremost. As walking paths through the parks, especially those such as Chimborazo that were located in the suburbs, served as important pedestrian connections between the upper and lower portions of the city, it was not uncommon to see black Richmonders passing through the parks on their way to or from work. They were not, however, expected to freely use the spaces for leisure in the ways that their white counterparts were. It was much more likely that African American residents would enter in a work capacity, either laboring on the chain gang, as mentioned above, or as domestic workers employed by white families.[87] Their exclusion from public spaces was so evident to the city's African American population, that they often held their social gatherings elsewhere. By the end of the century, for example, black outings were frequently held in private resorts, such as Island Park and Bothwell Park, rather than the city's public parks.[88] This is not to say, however, that black Richmonders did not challenge white dominance of public space. The city's black community had a rich tradition of mobilizing against white oppression that stretched back to their successful integration of the streetcar system in 1867.[89] While efforts to integrate public parks did not reach the same level of organization or success, African Americans nonetheless laid claim to the spaces. An 1892 article in the *Dispatch*, for example, expressed outrage that black women dared to take up space on the city's park benches and "force their company upon the whites." "They ought to have sense enough to know that the whites pay for the parks," the

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[86] Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 71. Potterfield claims that the Richmond slave code of 1859, which banned African Americans from entering Capitol Square, became a touchstone for setting expectations of park-use in the post-war period.
[87] Ibid, 71-72.
[88] "The Sham Battle," *The Richmond Planet* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 8, 1891; "Picnic Grounds at Bothwell Park for Colored Excursions," *The Richmond Planet* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 20, 1898.
[89] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 28.

author wrote, "and that the patience of the whites cannot be expected to hold out much longer."[90] The paper proposed installing designated benches for white and black visitors—an idea supported by the City Attorney—advocating for a system of "separate but equal" accommodation nearly four years before the Supreme Court's ruling on *Plessy v. Ferguson*.[91]

While the creation of Chimborazo Park aided in the short-term goal of consolidating Conservative political power in the postbellum period, it also solidified a long-term pattern of black disenfranchisement and displacement in Richmond. By the turn of the century the city's African American population saw their voting power all but eliminated. A new state constitution drafted in 1901-1902, for example, drastically reduced eligible black voters with requirements such as property ownership, increased poll taxes, and literacy, while Jackson Ward was once again gerrymandered in 1904.[92] At the same time, black Richmonders continued to be forced into a pattern of residential development characterized by the concentration of African Americans of all classes into neighborhoods in the central city that were routinely deprived of basic public services. The decision to have Interstate 95 cut through Jackson Ward in the 1950s, which destroyed swathes of black homes and further isolated the neighborhood from the rest of the city, is a vivid example of this practice.[93] Cumulatively, these practices saddled black Richmonders with the "inherited ecological debt" that Kofi Boone explains characterized (and continues to characterize) life for African Americans in cities and towns throughout the South. By relegating black residents to marginal landscapes that suffered from low property values due to a lack of infrastructure and city services—while eliminating formal avenues of political redress—white Richmonders denied African Americans the opportunity to accumulate wealth

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[90] "A Warning to the Negroes," *The Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Sep. 1, 1892.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 105-106.
[93] Brown, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," 304; Michael Eric Taylor, "The African-American Community of Richmond, Virginia: 1950-1956," (MA dissertation, University of Richmond, 1994), 60.

and codified a "legacy of race in the landscape" that contributed to an "inequitable urbanism between African Americans and White Americans" that persists to this day.[94]

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The park movement in Richmond was not limited to Chimborazo. In addition to Cutshaw's efforts to convert the city's many hilltops into a series of small "promontory parks," Richmond's boosters hoped to establish a single large-scale greenspace in the style of New York City's Central Park. The idea was first floated by the *Daily State Journal* in August of 1872. The paper lobbied the city to purchase of a 525-acre plot of land across the James River, adjacent to the neighboring town of Manchester, and convert it into a public greenspace. According to the article, however, Richmond's acquisition of the land would do more than provide its citizens with space for recreation; it would constitute and investment in the city's growth and prosperity. Anticipating the New South rhetoric of urban boosterism, the author of the article insisted that Richmond "will soon rank in manufacturing and commercial importance with the first eight or ten cities of the Union, and her metropolitan character will demand such an improvement at her hands." The city's rise to national prominence was assumed to be a foregone conclusion, and it was up to its leaders ensure its physical environment matched its impending economic prowess. "Public parks have become part of our modern civilization," the article continued, and "they are necessary to great cities as the lungs to the human system…Richmond, when she reaches a population of two hundred thousand inhabitants as she most certainly will in the next twenty years, will stand as much in need of parks as Boston and Philadelphia do to-day."[95] If Richmond's leaders wished to emulate the economic success embodied in northern cities, they needed to emulate their built forms as well. Landscaped parks, as staple features of the modern

[94] Kofi Boone, "The Resilience of Ruinous Futures: Color, Urbanism, and Ecology in the Post-Jim Crow South," *InTensions* 2 (2009): 11 & 14.
[95] "The Manchester Side Park," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 26, 1872.

urban environment, were essential pieces of infrastructure for any American city hoping to attract residents and investment and distinguish itself from its regional competitors.

Whether or not the city government reacted directly to the article in the *Journal* is unclear, but it nevertheless began the process of establishing a large park in Richmond the following year. In June of 1873 the Common Council appointed a special committee under the resolution that it was their "duty to at once plan, lay out, and construct a first-class public park in the immediate vicinity of the city, of such magnitude as to afford a drive to and from and within its extent of several miles, and diversified with field, wood, and water scenery."[96] Such a park would not only conform to the naturalistic design popularized by Frederick Law Olmsted's work in northern and western cities, but would cater to the same class of users. Those able to take drives through the diversified scenery would necessarily be those with the means to own or hire a carriage and commit the time to an extended trip. The editors of the *Daily Dispatch* were quick to throw their support behind the project. "What will certainly result from the opening of a new park three or four miles from Richmond?" they asked in a June 11th editorial. Their predictions elaborated upon the urban development foreseen by the *Journal* a year prior. "First, every foot of land between Richmond and the new park will be doubled in value the very day after the Council makes the purchase," they explained. "Secondly, A line of railway will at once be laid down between Richmond and this new park…Thirdly, Houses will spring up all along the route of the street railway. Beautiful villas, vine-covered bowers, white fences, green fields, and whatever delights the eye will border the road."[97] This was a common understanding of a park's role in the New South. If located on outskirts of the urban core, the park would direct growth in its direction by encouraging residential development in its immediate vicinity. In turn, this would necessitate the extension of infrastructure to service new homes, which would then encourage further residential development between the park and the city. Again, the upper class was

[96] "The Park—The Committee," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 20, 1873.
[97] "The New Park," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 11, 1873.

understood to be at the center of this scheme, as they were the ones to build "beautiful villas" on land greatly enhanced in value by the proximity of the park.

The committee in charge of the initiative did not share the determination of the rest of the City Council or the optimism of the *Dispatch*. When it met later in June, it debated not how best to carry out the park project, as its mandate stated it must, but whether or not a park should be created at all.[98] When the committee presented its report to the rest of the Council in August, it declared that investing in a large park was "inexpedient at present." The city's budget was limited, the committee's members explained, and resources would be better used elsewhere. The streets and sidewalks in the business district were in need of paving and the James River needed to be deepened to provide access to the city's port for larger commercial vessels. Such efforts were crucial to stimulating economic activity in Richmond, the committee insisted, and would "present an attractive appearance to strangers who visit the city for business or to make investments" equal in value to a park.[99]

Although government officials initially balked at implementing the park plan, it was soon revived by forces outside of their control. On September 18th, 1873, the failure of Jay Cooke and Company, a major bank heavily invested in the railroad industry, sent the nation into the economic tailspin known as the Panic of 1873. Additional banks fell in the wake of Cooke's collapse, the stock market crashed, loans were recalled, and industries were shuttered. The United States then entered a Long Depression that lasted until the end of the decade.[100] Richmond suffered with the rest of the nation. By October mass layoffs and factory closures swept through the city before crossing the river into the neighboring town of Manchester. Local banks failed, including the Freedmen's Savings Bank, which wiped out the bulk of the black community's collective resources when it closed permanently in July of 1874. The livelihoods of

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98 "Public Park," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 19, 1873.
99 "Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Aug. 15, 1873.
100 Nicolas Barreyre, "The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 4 (2011): 407-408.

households throughout Richmond were threatened, as those who were able to keep their jobs faced short-term work and wage cuts.[101] One local mechanic, fortunate enough to retain work, wrote to the *Dispatch* in November describing the conditions of the city's working class: "There are numbers of very worthy men thrown out of employment recently, through the stagnation of trade, some of whose families are suffering the necessities of life."[102] Things worsened when Tredegar Iron Works, the famed foundry that played a central role in arming the Confederacy, went into receivership. Aside from tobacco, iron manufacturing was Richmond's largest industry, producing goods at a combined value of approximately $5,500,000 for the year 1872 alone. Tredegar was the largest company in the field and employed 1,500 workers, about half of the local iron industry's labor force.[103] Ninety percent of the company's workforce was subsequently laid off and "very few," the *Dispatch* believed, "[had] saved enough to support them through winter."[104]

In November, Mayor Keiley made an address to the Special Committee of the Council on the Relief of the Poor in which he discussed the extent of unemployment in Richmond as well as possible solutions. Keiley told the committee that he believed there to be about 4,500 persons who had been thrown out of their jobs in the last forty to fifty days, though he had seen a much higher estimate in a New York paper.[105] His solution was a large-scale public works project. The mayor believed that "as there were so many unskilled laborers unemployed it might be well to engage a number of this class and put them to work on the new reservoir."[106] Richmond's need for a new reservoir was known for some time. There had been two major water shortages in the summer of 1866 and spring of 1867, while water reserves were completely

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[101] Peter Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 71.
[102] "Suffering among Unemployed Mechanics and their Families—A Suggestion for Relief," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 10, 1873.
[103] "Effect of the Financial Pressure upon Business in Virginia," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 11, 1873; Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1976), 220.
[104] "Effect of the Financial Pressure upon Business in Virginia," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 11, 1873.
[105] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 21, 1873; to put Keiley's estimate in context, the total population of Richmond was approximately 52,000 in 1873, making the city's unemployment at least 8%. The population was recorded as 51,038 in 1870 and 63,600 in 1880 (Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 115).
[106] Ibid.

depleted after a flood had stopped the supply pumps in the spring of 1869.[107] The need to provide relief for the city's unemployed served as the impetus for the frugal City Council to finally get the project underway. In response to the mayor's address, the committee resolved that they considered "the construction of a reservoir an urgent necessity, and the present a favorable opportunity to begin its construction and at the same time furnish labor to its idle poor."[108] Following a report submitted by the City Engineer, the committee recommended that the Council appropriate $275,000 for the reservoir project. The Council adopted the committee's recommendation in December and work was commenced by mid-March, 1874.[109]

Those who had hoped to create a public park the previous year saw in the reservoir scheme a new opportunity to achieve their goal. On October 26, 1874, Mr. Tanner, of the City Council's Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings, addressed the Board of Aldermen. In his speech he advocated for the creation of park on the lands surrounding the new reservoir, and in doing so framed the concept as a utilitarian measure:

> The extension of our water-works are threatened to be hemmed in with factories and sewers if we do not secure the ground along our river-front with a reasonable distance of the works. The extension of these works must require additional ground, and in providing for a park we can accomplish two ideas together. This combination of water-works and park-grounds is the example of all large cities, and in carrying this out we shall be simply repeating what others have done, with the benefit of all their experiences.[110]

Tanner could have been referring to a number of northern locales when he mentioned the "example of all larger cities." Frederick Law Olmsted incorporated a new reservoir into his

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[107] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 76-77.
[108] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 21, 1873.
[109] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 27, 1875; "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Dec. 23, 1873.
[110] "Board of Aldermen," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 27, 1874.

design of New York City's Central Park in the 1850s, setting an example of how to successfully combine utilitarian and artistic concepts in urban design, while Philadelphia's Fairmount Park was promoted as a means of protecting the city's water supply from industrial pollution along the Schuylkill River.[111] Regardless of which particular example he had in mind, Tanner's proposition echoed trends in modern urban planning when he described the purchase of additional land around the waterworks as a necessity to protect the integrity of the city's water supply. He championed the park with the same utilitarian zeal, framing it as an essential tool for Richmond's economic progress. As the "cherished work of every city with any claim to progress and comfort," the park would "present the same attractions as elsewhere offered to both the business-man and the pleasure-seeker: for both look forward in visiting large cities…to their beautiful grounds, in which they can find recreation in their leisure hours." It was essential, Tanner argued, that in their "inducements to trade" the Council not only provide a thriving business district, but "aim to confer pleasure upon the businessman while we invite his active dealing amongst us." For the visiting investor or tourist, the park would be "as much the index of material prosperity as it is of the cultivated tastes and refinement of an enlightened people."[112] Noticeably, any mention of how Richmonders themselves might use the park was absent from Tanner's speech. In his pitch the park was framed as a means of conforming the city to a standard urban aesthetic that would encourage investment and growth. This time the plan made it off the ground. After being tabled initially, funds were finally appropriated and two hundred acres for New Reservoir Park were purchased in 1875.[113]

While the Conservative government's embrace of the New Reservoir Park project might appear on the surface as an altruistic effort to provide relief to those Richmonders hit hardest by the depression, it was also an exercise in political self-preservation. Periods of prolonged

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111 Rosenzweig, *The Park and the People*, 173; Gabriel, "The Works that Parks Do," 132.
112 "Board of Aldermen," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 27, 1874.
113 "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 10, 1874; Potterfield, *Nonesuch* Place, 110; Richardson, "'Architect of the City,'" 7-8.

unemployment such as the one that followed the Panic of 1873 always carried with them the risk of social unrest and political upheaval, threatening to take down those in power perceived as unresponsive to the needs of the working class. Such a possibility was clearly on Mayor Keiley's mind when he proposed the public works project. The local press routinely reported on the tense labor relations brought on by the Panic in cities throughout the United States, stoking fear that such upheaval might make its way to Richmond.[114] Such concern was not unreasonable. Richmond's large industrial working class had a history of mobilization against unfair employment practices, especially amongst its black members. On November 29th, 1873, for example, just days after Keiley made his address, 200 black laborers employed by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad to excavate a tunnel on the east side of the city walked off the job after going three months without pay.[115] The economic downturn bred class awareness amongst white workers as well. The same mechanic who had brought the plight of his fellow workers to the attention of the *Dispatch* also urged solidarity amongst the working class, insisting that "good can be accomplished by organized effort."[116]

Richmond's Conservative leaders and their allies feared such sentiments. A lack of action on their part risked alienating the white working-class voters on whom the party depended for electoral success, or, worse yet, forcing the same to resort to interracial coalition-building to advance their cause. The latter possibility was not out of the question, as the dire effects of depression on Richmond's African American community made black workers increasingly open to forming alliances with their white counterparts.[117] The *Dispatch* raised alarms regarding the potential for economic discontent to be mobilized politically, simultaneously alerting the city's elite to the seriousness of the situation and warning working-class Richmonders against taking

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[114] "The Labor Crisis," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 17, 1873; "Anticipating a Riot," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Dec. 5, 1873.
[115] Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond*, 73
[116] "Suffering among Unemployed Mechanics and their Families—A Suggestion for Relief," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 10, 1873.
[117] Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond*, 72.

action. "The late panic has taught us the lesson that when the rich suffer the poor suffer with them," the paper claimed, painting the holders of capital as victims of the depression rather than contributors to it. "Remember this fact when you read or hear demagogical appeals to the poor men and denunciations of the rich. If you vote for men who will damage the rich, you will vote for men who will ruin the poor."[118] At the same time, the paper deflected blame from the city's government, in particular. "Can there be any voter in Richmond who supposes that the recent troubles in the commercial world, and the consequent discharge of many mechanics from various workshops of this city, are due to the policy of the Conservative party?" its editors asked.[119]

It was in this context that work on New Reservoir Park was initiated. Fearful that an energized working class would threaten the position of power that they had only recently wrested from Republicans, Conservatives used the project as a means of maintaining the support of their key constituencies. In this way, New Reservoir Park resembled New York's Central Park in more than design (see Figure 9). As Stephen Germic convincingly demonstrates, the construction of Central Park was undertaken, in part, to mollify similar working-class antagonism that emerged from the Panic of 1857.[120] Whether or not Keiley was drawing on this example when he proposed his public works scheme is unclear, but the intention was the same. Framing the project as a source of work for the unemployed allowed the Conservative government to position itself as a champion of the white working class, thus preventing that group's defection from the party's electoral coalition. At the same time, it presented an opportunity for Conservatives to strengthen their ties with local business leaders through the distribution of contracts, improvement of infrastructure, and the encouragement of real estate development.

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[118] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 9, 1873.
[119] "Who are Responsible?" *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 17, 1873.
[120] Germic, *American Green*, 1 & 23.

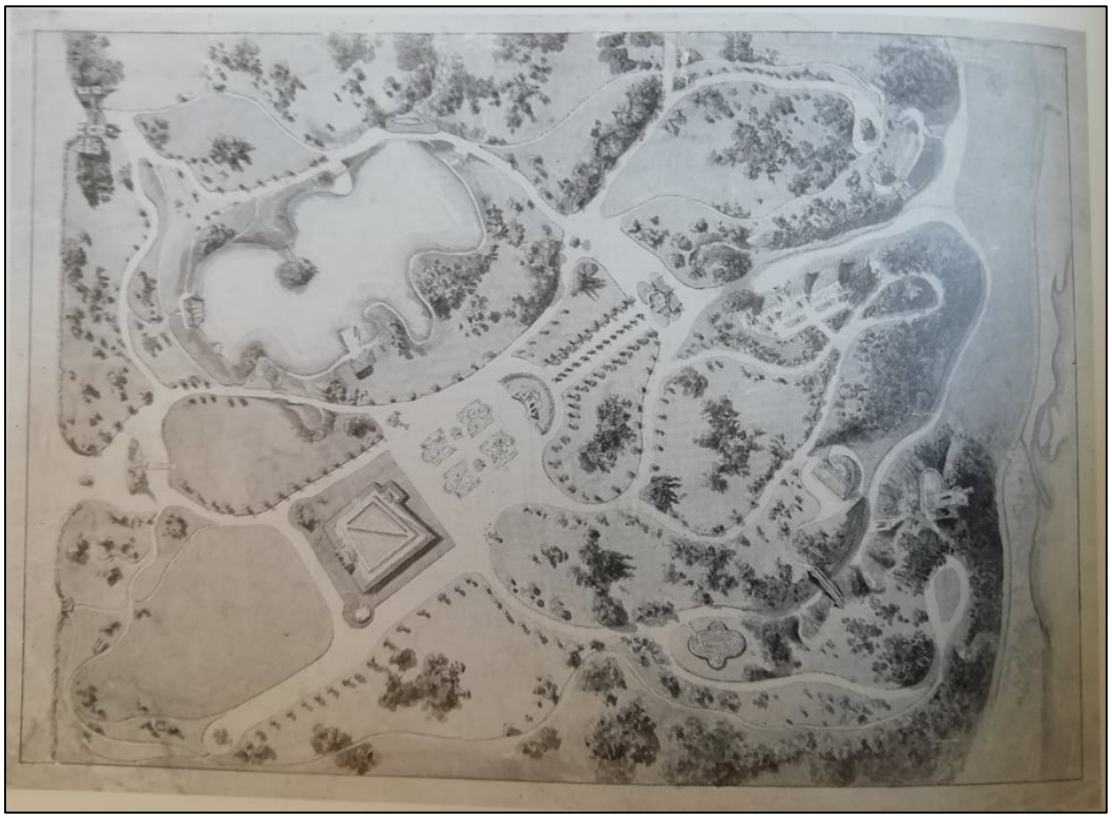

Figure 9 – Design plan for New Reservoir Park, ca. 1875, in T. Tyler Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place: A History of the Richmond Landscape* (Charleston: The History Press, 2009): 106.

The City Council moved quickly to start the project. By late February, 1874, the Committee on Water formally adopted Cutshaw's plan for the reservoir during a marathon session in which they also considered "a number of applications from parties who desire work."[121] Advertisements were published in the local papers just a few weeks later, stating that "able-bodied men can get work on the new reservoir," while the Committee on Water partnered with the Richmond Relief Committee—a civilian charity organization started in 1873 by local clergy upon Mayor Keiley's request—to identify heads of families in need of employment.[122] Work on excavating the reservoir began on March 18th. Three months later, the *Dispatch* reported that 150 laborers, white and black, were employed at the reservoir and the force was about to be

[121] "The New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Feb. 26, 1874.
[122] "Items," *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 19, 1874; "Substantial Help," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 11, 1874.

"considerably increased."[123] A year later the crew stood at 250, with all but fifty of its members black.[124]

The high proportion of black workers employed at the reservoir, at first glance, appears to be an acknowledgement of the fact that Richmond's African American community felt the brunt of the economic crisis, but a closer analysis of the evidence shows that the Council's relief efforts prioritized the city's white working class. As Peter Rachleff notes, between July and December of 1874 the government only dispensed $2,205 in direct "out-door relief" to black Richmonders, an average of less than fifty cents for each person out of work.[125] The Council provided the civilian Relief Committee with an additional $3,000 between the winter of 1873 and the spring of 1874, but distribution of those funds was left to the discretion of its white leaders. Those who applied for aid from the Relief Committee were subjected to a rigorous screening process "to distinguish between the regular street-beggar and the worthy," which resulted in large disparity between white and black recipients. As of January 1874, the Relief Committee had distributed assistance to 493 white families (a total of 1,218 individuals) and only 113 black families (376 individuals). The group disbanded in May of 1874, stating that "the most imminent need for them is past."[126]

The reservoir work itself reflects Conservatives' prioritization of white workers as well. Despite Mayor Keiley's stated intention of providing supplementary income to those out of work, black laborers employed on the project consistently struggled to receive adequate compensation to meet their needs. The Council halted all work on the reservoir for twelve days in April of 1875, "[subjecting] to hardship a considerable number of laborers," when it

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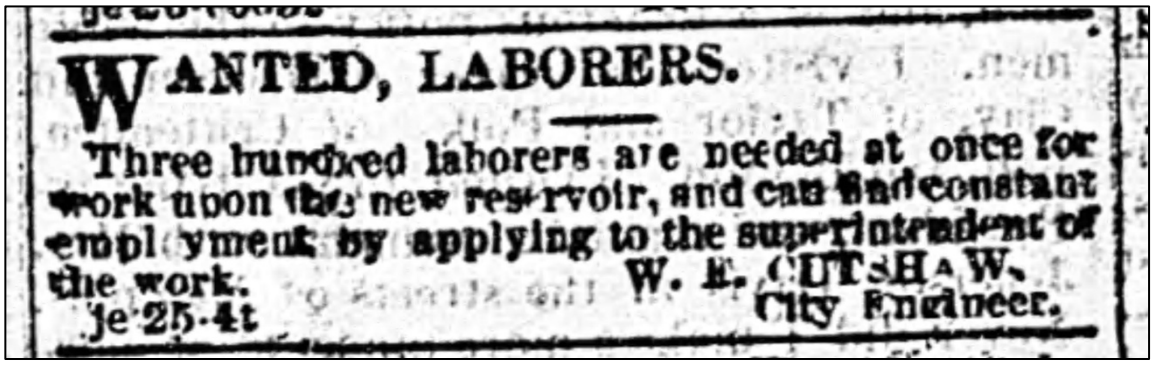
123 "The New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 18, 1874 & June 10, 1874.
124 "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 25, 1875.
125 Rachleff, *Black Labor in Richmond*, 72.
126 "Commissary Department of the Richmond Relief Committee," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jan. 9, 1874; "The Relief Committee," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jan. 12, 1874; "Richmond Relief Committee," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jan. 27, 1874; "Richmond Relief Committee," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 9, 1874.

discovered the project had gone over budget.[127] Work was again suspended two months later when the laborers went on strike over wages and working conditions. They explained that most members of the team had to walk three miles to reach the site, resulting in workdays that were thirteen hours long. Once there they engaged in punishing labor, with those working one the excavation "subjected to the intensest [sic] rays of the sun" without breeze. Rules imposed by the superintendent, they claimed, were overly strict and caused pay to be "docked for the most inconsiderable time lost." They demanded that their wages be increased from $1 to $1.25 per day, in line with those of city laborers employed on other projects.[128] In response, the Committee on Water authorized Cutshaw to hire 300 new workers to break the strike (see Figure 10). Why he was unable to do so is unclear but, in an uncommon acquiescence to the demands of black labor, the Committee directed to the superintendent to increase wages to $1.25 on July 2nd in order to have the work resumed.[129]


WANTED, LABORERS.

Three hundred laborers are needed at once for work upon the new reservoir, and can find constant employment by applying to the superintendent of the work.

W. F. CUTSHAW,
City Engineer.

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Figure 10 – Advertisement for laborers, in *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Nov. 26, 1875.

While the Committee resisted the calls of the "common laborers" employed at the reservoir, they were extremely willing to make concessions to the city's skilled labor. After receiving a petition from the local Iron-Moulders' Union in the spring of 1874, the Committee decided that ordering a portion of the reservoir's pipes immediately was "the best means of

[127] "The Water-Works," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 19, 1875.
[128] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 25, 1875.
[129] "Work on the New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 2, 1875.

alleviating the wants" of the union.[130] Within a year the Committee had spent $124,406 on pipes alone, much of it in the form of contracts awarded to Tredegar Iron Works. At nearly half of the Council's original allocation, this expenditure was a major contributing factor to the project going over budget.[131] The decision was a clear attempt to retain the political support of Richmond's white working class. One of the Committee's members, in fact, dissented from the decision to fast-track the pipe order, arguing that it was being done "for political purposes."[132] While there were African Americans employed throughout the city's many foundries, they were often kept out of skilled positions and excluded from the industry's formal labor organizations. As one member of the Iron-Moulders' Union put it, "there [are] no negro moulders [in Richmond], and [I] thank God for it."[133] In providing the bulk of the reservoir's funds to skilled laborers such as the iron workers, Conservatives both maintained the white supremacy that was central to their electoral strategy and appeased the members of the working class whose formal organization could easily be mobilized against them.

The reservoir project also allowed Conservatives to consolidate their political power beyond mitigating the immediate threat of working-class defection. The same work that provided jobs to Richmond's unemployed laborers also offered patronage opportunities that bolstered the local political machine. As Cutshaw explained in his report on the project's finances in 1875, the Committee of Water made an abrupt decision early in 1874 to transfer day-to-day management of labor away from one of his assistant engineers to a superintendent and a number of subordinates, "all of whom…were selected by the committee."[134] This gave the Committee eight salaried positions to distribute to individuals who had proven themselves loyal to the Conservative machine. Cutshaw, himself, regretted the glaring appearance of cronyism. He

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[130] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 12, 1874.
[131] "The New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 27, 1874; "The City Council," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 14, 1874; "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 27, 1875.
[132] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 12, 1874.
[133] "Workingmen in Council," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 11, 1875.
[134] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 27, 1875.

described the dispensation of the jobs, along with additional "minor differences between the Committee and myself," such as the discrepancy in laborers' pay, as "sources of anxiety on my part" that "place me in an awkward position before the public" due to the fact that they became "subjects of considerable comment outside."[135] The positions, nonetheless, remained in place, providing stable incomes for those selected to fill them. Such patronage appointments were an essential tool with which Conservatives maintained their power in post-war Richmond, allowing them to both reward loyal allies and neutralize potential threats.[136]

In a wider sense, New Reservoir supported Conservative power by providing evidence that they were making good on their promise to secure Richmond's position as a metropolis of the New South. Industrialists, another of the party's key constituencies and a primary component of the New South vision, were also threatened by the tumult brought on by the Panic of 1873. The massive public works project provided a source of financial relief for them as well. The same contracts that the Committee on Water used to appease the Iron-Moulders Union infused a key sector of the local economy with $20,000 (approximately $500,000 in today's currency) to spur production.[137] This was welcome news for foundries such as Tredegar Iron Works, which had been struggling to maintain production in the wake of the Panic. Thanks in part to the stimulus provided by the Committee, Tredegar's proprietor, Joseph R. Anderson, himself intimately involved in Conservative politics as head of the City Council, successfully paid off the debt that had sent the company into receivership by 1879.[138] Contracts for bricks and stonework were likewise channeled to local manufacturers rather than companies outside the state.[139] Such decisions demonstrated Conservatives' commitment to the city's industrial

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[135] Ibid; "The New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 10, 1874.
[136] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 96. As Randolph and Tate explain, Conservatives used patronage positions to siphon off potential political leaders from opposition groups, particularly amongst the black community.
[137] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 12, 1874.
[138] Dabney, *Richmond*, 220-221; Chesson, *Richmond after the War*, 149.
[139] "Local Matters," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Apr. 27, 1875.

interests, reaffirming the notion that municipal government and private capital would work together toward mutual benefit as long as they remained in power.

New Reservoir Park also gave Richmonders the impression that Conservative stewardship was placing their city on the path toward modernization, growth, and prosperity. As previously noted, the reservoir itself constituted a much-needed update of Richmond's urban infrastructure. Not only did the new water works provide the city's residents with clean drinking water, but it extended the resource to the entire city. Whereas the old reservoir lacked the capacity and power to reach Richmond's most elevated neighborhoods, Mayor Keiley celebrated the fact that the new reservoir's "ample supply was at once felt in every part of the city" when it was turned on in January of 1876.[140] This was especially significant in Church Hill, where residents were subjected to city taxes since the 1867 annexation but unable to access running water. The completion of the new reservoir guaranteed "their participation in the benefits of water [were] equal with that enjoyed by others" and, when combined with the improvement of Chimborazo Park, assured them that their inclusion in the city would redound to their benefit.[141]

The park that was built around the reservoir was viewed as a piece of modern infrastructure in its own right. Cutshaw had begun landscaping the grounds surrounding the reservoir even before the Council purchased the 200 acres for New Reservoir Park in 1875, planting trees and gravelling the ramparts for promenading. He also converted the excavation site next to the reservoir into an artificial lake, complete with a peninsula where boats could be rented, in 1876.[142] Improvements continued piecemeal throughout the remainder of the century—an additional 100 acres was added in 1888 while Cutshaw added more features to the grounds, such as a nursery to cultivate trees for transplanting throughout the city—but even in its semi-improved state it was described as "an ornament that will prove in every sense a blessing

[140] "Mayor Keiley's Annual Message," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Mar. 7, 1876.
[141] "Let us Dress Up the City," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Oct. 18, 1875.
[142] Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 110.

to its people."[143] These blessings extended beyond the grounds as well. As the *Daily Dispatch* predicted in 1873, the park spurred residential development and transportation extensions in its direction soon after its establishment. As early as 1874 real estate agents began advertising lots near the reservoir as desirable investments, and soon after they pointed to the park as a guarantee that land in its vicinity "must in the near future become very valuable."[144] Access to the area was increased, and real estate values further boosted, by a parkway, known as the Boulevard, which Cutshaw constructed between Broad Street and the park by 1883. Streetcar services were not far behind, with a steam railroad station erected in the park in 1887 and electric trolley services extended to the grounds in 1890 (see Figure 11).[145] Such rapid developments both assured Richmonders that Conservative guidance was improving the city's standing and generated opportunity for private interests to profit.

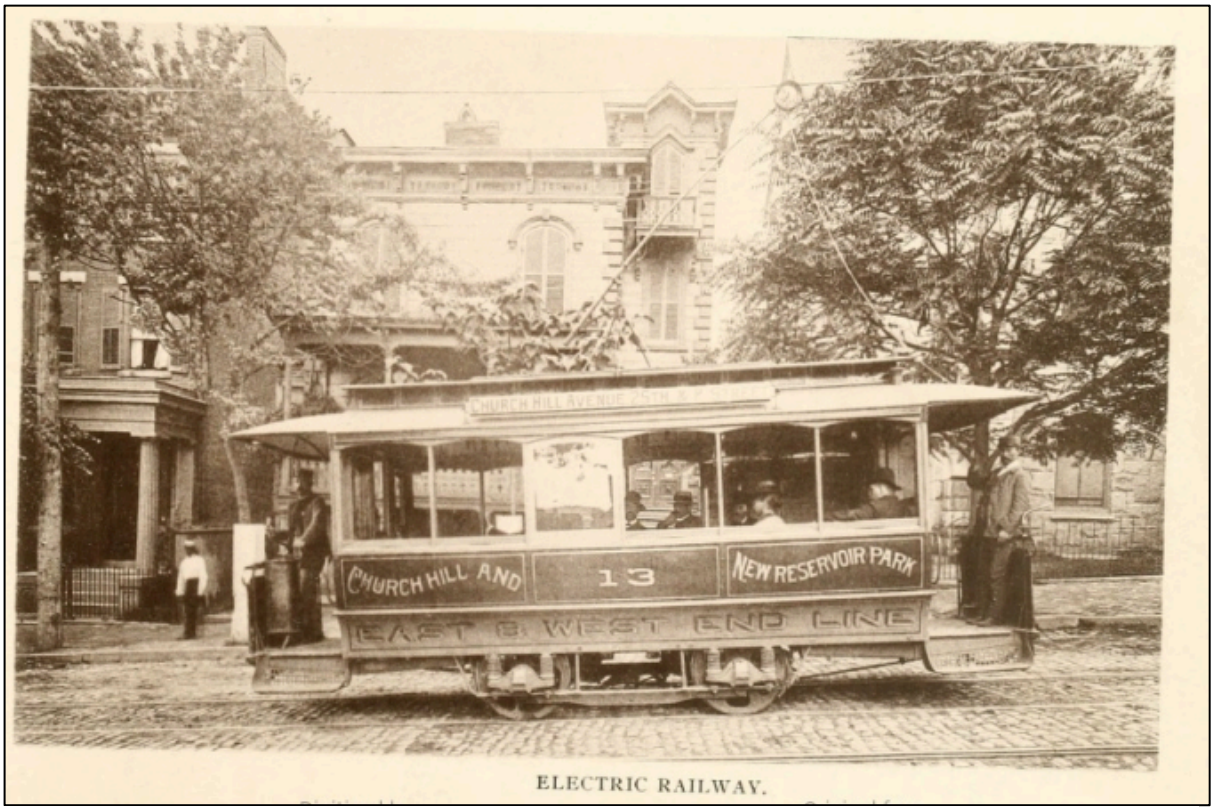

Figure 11 – *Electric Railway*, in A. Wittemann, *Richmond Illustrated in Albertype* (New York: The Albertype Co., 1888), 51.

[143] Richardson, "Architect of the City," 51-52; "The New Reservoir," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 21, 1876.
[144] *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), Jun. 2, 1874; *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 25, 1884.
[145] Potterfield, *Nonesuch Place*, 111-112.

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Despite their focus on retaining political power by neutralizing external threats following their successful "redemption" of Richmond's government in 1870, the Conservative Party was ultimately taken down from within by the end of the decade. Starting in 1871, an internal division began to emerge between those Conservatives who were determined to pay off Virginia's antebellum debt in full (Funders), largely planters and industrialists who had invested their money into internal improvements during the 1840s and 1850s, and those who favored lower taxes and a downward adjustment of the debt (Readjusters). The Readjusters formally split from the Funders in 1879 and made enormous electoral gains in that year's election. They captured 41 of the 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates and half of the seats in the Virginia Senate. They did so largely due to a successful alliance with black voters, many of whom cautiously supported the Readjusters due to their promise to fund public schools.[146]

While this spelled the end of the Conservative Party, Richmond's politics of white supremacy remained firmly in place. Despite their successful cross-racial alliance, the lack of a cohesive liberal agenda caused a slump in black support for the Readjusters. The Funders, who had retained control of the Conservative Party's political organization, transformed into the Democratic Party and revived the race-baiting tactics that had served them so well in the past. The Democrats won a resounding victory in the state election of 1883, signaling the dawn of nearly 100 years of one-party rule in Virginia. The same was the case in Richmond, specifically, where a Democrat served as mayor until 1988. With the Readjusters vanquished and Republicans rendered impotent, black voters had little hope of political success after the Democratic takeover. The new state constitution of 1902 saw to it that this was formalized by including franchise restrictions that made nearly all black Virginians ineligible to vote.[147]

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[146] Maddex, *The Virginia Conservatives*, 272-275; Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 93-96.
[147] Randolph, *Rights for a Season*, 93-96 & 105.

Richmond's economy continued to improve over the course of the period and into the early-twentieth century. Its industries diversified beyond the antebellum "big three"—tobacco, grain, and iron—which added depth to local manufacturing. At the same time, the continued expansion of rail connections bolstered wholesale distribution. Between 1870 and 1920 it consistently ranked first or second among cities of the South in terms of the value of its manufactures.[148] While this gave the impression of New South dominance, Richmond's progress nonetheless lagged behind other cities in the region. New, larger steamships that revolutionized international trade rendered the city's river port obsolete and allowed Virginia's coastal ports, such as Norfolk, Newport News, and West Point, to siphon off much of its trade. At the same time, the rise of a national railroad system controlled by northern interests diminished its importance as a rail terminus. The shift in trade routes meant that interior southern cities were better positioned than Richmond to reap the rewards. Atlanta, for example, rose to prominence during the 1880s due to its numerous rail lines while Birmingham, Alabama, surpassed Richmond in iron production by 1878, only seven years after its founding.[149] While Richmond's antebellum economy allowed for a natural transition to the New South, a lack of long-term planning on the part of city leaders prevented its ascendancy within the post-Civil War national economy.

The intended effects of Chimborazo and New Reservoir Parks were nonetheless successful. Not only were they pieces of modern infrastructure themselves, but they facilitated the residential development needed to promote the appearance of New South prosperity. Despite the eventual dissolution of the Conservative Party, the construction of New Reservoir Park helped its local organization prevent the defection of white working-class constituents. This strengthened an alliance that was maintained once Conservatives were reconstituted as Democrats in the 1880s. The effects of Chimborazo Park were also durable. It aided in the

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[148] Hoffman, *Race, Class and Power in the Building of Richmond*, 5-11.
[149] Chesson, *Richmond After the War*, 145 & 168; Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls*, 185.

creation of a political structure in Richmond that guaranteed white dominance and diminished black representation. While the short-lived Readjuster movement challenged this system, Democrats' successful counterattack attests to its resilience. The combined effect of both parks was to guarantee white supremacy in Richmond regardless of the city's success in the New South.

Chapter Two

Atlanta, Georgia:
An Old South Landscape for a New South City

On April 27th, 1890, Atlanta's Grant Park appeared more like a military camp than a place of recreation. Rows of white tents lined the greensward while hundreds of aged Confederates milled about them, or huddled over campfires, as they waited for the sermon that would bring their weekend-long reunion to a close. By the time that Clement A. Evans, the Confederate general turned Methodist minister, mounted his makeshift pulpit and surveyed the scene the crowd had swelled as civilians, carried to the park by a steady stream of streetcars, joined the ranks. He began his address with an appeal to the bond that the twinned hardships of the Civil War and Reconstruction had forged between him and his audience: "Comrades: We are fellow-soldiers still. We were comrades in camp, in march, in battle; comrades through all that we have suffered since; comrades today in our common faith, and I trust we shall be comrades forever." He then shifted his focus from the burdens of the past to the promise of the future. "We have a glorious land," he insisted. "By the blessing of God it is attracting the world's attention, and we shall yet live to witness its wonderful prosperity." Yet, as he enchanted his audience with promises of an impending windfall, Evans urged them to maintain their "old-time integrity, simplicity, chivalry and Faith." "The war did not end just as we expected," he explained, "but the God of battles has been with us and He is turning upon us a present wealth of blessing in peace that shall fulfil our most patriotic hope." It was through the combination of established southern identity and material progress that the South would achieve the victory that had eluded it twenty-five years prior.[1]

[1] "Veterans' Lovefeast," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 28, 1890.

In marrying a glorified past with an idealized future, Evans echoed a central theme of the New South movement. The drive to modernize the region's economy through industrialization and urbanization that emerged during the decades after the Civil War relied heavily upon nostalgia for a fictive Old South peopled by honorable whites and contented black slaves. New South boosters, to be certain, deployed such romanticized depictions of antebellum society in an effort to comfort white southerners still reeling from the shock of military defeat. But the Lost Cause narrative was also used to generate local support for the New South agenda. By reassuring white southerners of their honor and championing the values of antebellum society, the Lost Cause helped them adjust to a new social order rooted in deeper engagement in the national market economy while creating a mythic golden age that they could join together to recreate. Importantly, it also fostered the sectional reconciliation needed to restart economic exchange between North and South. The idealized image of a genteel, agrarian South appealed to northern capitalists wary of the economic tumult and labor unrest that characterized life in Gilded Age cities such as New York and Chicago, while the narrative of mutual heroism promoted by the Lost Cause helped ease lingering tensions between both regions. In doing so, the romanticized past helped clear the way for the investment on which the New South project relied.[2]

This chapter is concerned with the efforts of Atlanta's leaders to strike a balance between their desire for a modern future and popular nostalgia for the past between 1880 and 1900. More specifically, it focuses on the use of Grant Park—the city's first large-scale public park, established in 1883—to both modernize the city's built environment and keep a white-centric southern cultural memory alive. Located on the south-eastern boundary of the city, Grant Park stands as a clear example of Atlanta's leaders adopting the built forms of northern cities in service of making their city a New South metropolis. The 100-acre tract itself emulated the style of Olmstedian parks found in the North, containing curvilinear drives, water features, dense

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[2] For more on the use of the idealized past by New South boosters, see Woodward, *Origins of the New South*; Gaston, *New South Creed*; Blight, *Race and Reunion*; Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War*; Cobb, *Away Down South*; Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*.

woods, and verdant greensward. Furthermore, its creation spurred home-building and an extension of urban infrastructure, helping to transform the sparsely populated south-eastern suburbs into a middle-class residential development. In this way, Grant Park directly bolstered the progressive image that Atlanta's New South leaders tirelessly promoted. At the same time, the park stood as a preserve of the past. The naturalistic design that made the park a feature of modern urbanity also evoked an idealized vision of the Old South. It was an environment reminiscent of Atlanta's antebellum origins that, when combined with behavioral regulations reminiscent of pre-war society and overt references to Lost Cause mythology, allowed white Atlantans to fully immerse themselves in their nostalgia.

Such a balance was not easily achieved. Many of Atlanta's boosters chose to present their city as a forward-looking metropolis rather than a southern town wedded to the past. Indeed, scholars have detailed the efforts of local leaders to actively obscure Atlanta's connection to both the antebellum order and failed Confederate project in an effort to align it more closely with northern ideals and economic practices.[3] Rather than the aristocratic gentility widely associated with the antebellum South, the "Atlanta Spirit" promoted by local boosters was characterized by the sort of industriousness displayed by the inhabitants of northern cities. This image of Atlanta and its residents was rooted in its relatively short antebellum history and wartime experience. Founded in 1837 as the terminus of the new Western and Atlantic Railroad that ran from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Atlanta soon became a major rail junction that linked the South's coastal cities with midwestern and northern markets.[4] During the war, it rose to prominence not only as a crucial transportation hub for the Confederacy but as one of its main manufacturing centers, rivalled only by Richmond in terms of significance.[5] While this blessed the young city with investment and prestige, it also made it a high-value target for Union forces. During the

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[3] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 135-182.
[4] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 33; Georgina Hickey, *Hope and Danger in the New South City: Working-Class Women and Urban Development in Atlanta, 1890-1940* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2003), 9.
[5] William A. Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering in the Civil War's Aftermath* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 10.

summer of 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman engaged Confederate troops in three major battles on Atlanta's periphery in an effort to capture the city. As they would later do in Richmond, the Confederate defenders destroyed anything that might be of use to the advancing Federal troops before abandoning their posts in September of that year. Sherman's troops continued the process of strategic destruction by setting fire to the city before starting on their infamous march to the sea in November.[6] The work of both sides virtually levelled Atlanta, destroying four to five thousand buildings and sparing only four hundred (see Figure 1).[7]

Figure 1 – George N. Barnard, *[Atlanta, Ga. Ruins of depot, blown up on Sherman's departure]*, 1864, glass negative, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2018666986/.

While the war's toll was physically devastating, it was by no means permanent. As in Richmond, the process of rebuilding began almost immediately. During Reconstruction the city was made the headquarters of both the military government and the Freedmen's Bureau, while the state capital was relocated there in 1867. Atlanta's new-found administrative centrality

[6] Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams* (London: Verso, 1996), 19.
[7] Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South*, 11.

presented ample opportunity for a class of northerners that Charles Rutheiser refers to as "politician-entrepreneurs."[8] Whereas such "carpetbaggers" were viewed with suspicion and resentment elsewhere in the South, however, Atlantans generally welcomed the capital and business connections that they carried with them, understanding both to be essential to their city's revitalization. Atlanta's rail connections were reopened as early as 1867, allowing the city to resume its national role as a trade conduit between the North, deep South, and West. The flow of freight through these arteries led to booms in the wholesale grocery and cotton trades, which, in turn, led to a robust local banking industry.[9] By 1870, Atlanta regained and then quickly surpassed its pre-war population by reaching 22,000.[10]

Atlanta's rapid rebuilding during the immediate post-war years provided its promoters with a powerful narrative. Rather than a tragedy, Sherman's levelling of the city was framed as a form of creative destruction: a baptism by fire from which emerged a new Atlanta that stood as "proof of its destiny as a great city and of the resourcefulness and pluck of its people."[11] This tale of destruction and rebirth was repeated frequently in city guidebooks and local histories of the period. "There was never a grander triumph of manhood," I. W. Avery stated in his 1885 guide, referring to Atlantans' perseverance. "From the black baptism of ashes has arisen the present magnificent ideal of a city."[12] The narrative became so closely associated with Atlanta's civic identity that the image of a phoenix rising from flames and the Latin word "resurgens," or "rising again," was adopted as the city seal in 1887.[13] Atlanta's boosters coupled this story of regeneration with the city's relatively short antebellum history to present it as a forward-looking, economically-minded metropolis in the making. Whereas the leaders of other southern cities, such as Richmond, felt beholden to their pre-war heritage, Atlanta gladly advertised its lack of a

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[8] Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 20.
[9] Hickey, *Hope and Danger in the New South City*, 12; Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 40 & 44-46.
[10] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 49.
[11] Hillyer, *Designing* Dixie, 141.
[12] I. W. Avery, *Atlanta and Georgia Portrayed* (Atlanta: Constitution Publishing Company, 1885), 4.
[13] Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South*, 55.

decadent aristocracy "to create the impression of a city dominated by a work ethic of which northerners would approve."[14] It was this image of a city characterized by progressive zeal that Atlanta's boosters promoted to the rest of the nation. But, as Evans' sermon makes clear, New South boosters did not wholly abandon Atlanta's antebellum identity. Even as they advertised their city as the "Chicago of the South" to the rest of the nation, Atlanta's leaders felt compelled to sustain an idealized memory of the Old South amongst the local white population.

The following analysis will make clear that Grant Park contributed substantially to both pushing Atlanta into the future and preserving the cultural memory of its white residents. The first half of the chapter details the plan of Colonel Lemuel P. Grant, the park's benefactor and namesake, to use the greenspace as a means of generating personal profit. Like many of those who belonged to the emergent class of New South businessmen Grant intended to increase his wealth through real estate speculation. Despite being lauded as a selfless philanthropist for donating a large swath of land to the city, Grant hoped the park would boost the value of his remaining property in the area and attract potential buyers. He also envisioned it as an anchor destination for the new streetcar company that he helmed. With Atlanta's only public recreation ground several miles outside of the city center, Grant's company would have both the justification to establish a line and the demand to ensure its financial success.[15] While Grant's motivations for seeing this residential development succeed were selfish in nature, the process nonetheless benefitted the city's New South project generally. The park itself, as well as the expanded urban infrastructure that followed in its wake, stood as outward-facing examples of modernization by which northern capitalists could measure the city's progress and determine its suitability for investment. The construction of suburban housing in close proximity to public leisure space also had the potential to attract new middle-class residents who would both

[14] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 142.
[15] Gail Anne D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks, 1882-1917: Urban Boosterism, Urban Reform in a New South City" (PhD dissertation, Emory University, 1988), 39.

increase the city's population and power the urban economy. Grant Park, in short, provided fuel with which to drive Atlanta's New South agenda.

At the same time, the park satisfied the local white population's desire to maintain a southern identity premised upon the idealized Old South. The second half of this chapter discusses the ways in which Grant Park framed modernity as a means of maintaining antebellum culture rather than a divergence from tradition. Its naturalistic landscape stood in contrast to the ever-expanding built environment of the city and appeared to be a swathe of Atlanta's pre-war environment preserved from encroachment. This gave visitors the impression that they entered the past when they entered the park. This sense was heightened by physical reminders of the Civil War within the grounds. Rifle pits and breastworks—remnants of the city's wartime defenses—were still visible along the park's wooded hillsides. These features served as tangible representations of the Lost Cause that promoted, in conjunction with ritualistic commemorations periodically held within the grounds, the romanticized historical narrative upon which postbellum southern identity was premised. At the same time, behavioral regulations, both formal and informal, adhered visitors to antebellum social hierarchies according to race and gender. Together, these features of the park reaffirmed white Atlantans' sense of self by allowing them to fully immerse themselves in the Old South. Crucially, the park also instructed visitors on how to reconcile their nostalgic identities with the future-oriented society in which they lived. Through the unique visual perspective made possible by its geographical location and topographical features, Grant Park functioned as a didactic landscape that taught Atlanta's residents how to properly engage with the past as inhabitants of a New South. In essence, the park reinforced a white conception of southern identity and explicitly linked that identity to an agenda of modernization.

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Atlanta's New South ambitions cost the city its only public park in 1881. Oglethorpe Park, a forty-seven-acre tract designated a public park in 1869, was selected as the site for the Industrial Cotton Exposition, an industry-focused fair that C. Vann Woodward refers to as "the inaugural ceremony of the New South."[16] While the event blessed the city with prestige and investment, it also transferred control of the public grounds to private interests.[17] It did not take long, however, for local leaders to set out in search of a replacement. In February of 1882, the city council, concerned that the "vacant spaces suitable for parks [were] being rapidly taken up by other enterprises," appropriated $15,000 for the purpose of purchasing new greenspace. *The Constitution*, the paper that New South spokesman, Henry Grady, had made into a national mouthpiece of the movement, applauded the council's decision, stating emphatically that "as to the park there can be but one thought—we must have it." It stressed, however, that "local preferences or jealousies" should be set aside when considering the new park's location to ensure that it was placed "where it can best be used by the people."[18]

The council's appropriation set off a frenzy amongst Atlanta's wealthy landowners as they scrambled to assemble real estate packages. Several bids were made by various parties hoping to not only secure the funds set aside by the council, but to use the park to direct the city's growth toward their neighborhoods and increase the value of their adjacent landholdings. Among them was an offer from Colonel Lemuel P. Grant, a former Confederate officer and one of the Atlanta's wealthiest residents. In exchange for the $15,000, Grant would provide the city with two hundred acres in the undeveloped area southeast of the city's center.[19] He faced tough competition, however, as offers were received to have the park located near the popular private resort of Ponce de Leon Springs as well as the wealthy neighborhood of West End, both northeast of the city.[20] As the competing bids were considered by the council, *The Constitution*'s

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[16] C. Vann Woodward, "Bourbonism in Georgia," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (1939): 29.
[17] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 20 & 23.
[18] "A Busy Session of Council" & "A City Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Feb. 8, 1882.
[19] "Parks and Fire," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 24, 1882.
[20] "The City Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 22, 1882.

warning against personal bias went unheeded. Former mayor John James, involved in another south-side offer, warned the council that they would inherit land populated by "dead dogs and negroes" if they accepted Grant's unimproved tract. Similarly, a representative of the Ponce de Leon offer claimed that any park located to the south of the city would be contaminated by "all of the impure water drained from Atlanta" that flowed in that direction and would require an additional expenditure of $60,000 for drainage.[21] It appeared as if the council would choose the Ponce de Leon tract, due primarily to the fact that it benefitted from an established streetcar line to the location, but Grant successfully undercut his competition by offering one hundred acres of his original bid for free.[22] The council, unable to turn down such a deal, accepted and the land was formally deeded to the city in May of 1883 "in consideration of the public good, and benefits to accrue to [Grant's] contiguous property."[23]

The reason for Grant's donation stated in the deed reveals him to be an archetype of New South leadership. As Don Doyle explains, a new and powerful business class emerged throughout the South in the decades after the Civil War that successfully shaped the region's cities in their pursuit of profit.[24] Grant undoubtedly belonged to this class. Born in Maine, a career in the railway industry led him South before he settled in the fledgling city of Atlanta in 1840. Through his involvement with several different companies, Grant proved influential in expanding the city's rail networks and establishing Atlanta as major hub of trade. Despite his success, however, he did not limit his ambitions to the railroads. As Thomas H. Martin explained in his 1902 history of Atlanta's development, Grant quickly recognized that the city "was destined in the course of time to become an important centre of population" and subsequently invested his earnings in real estate.[25] Between 1844 and 1846 he purchased 600 acres of land

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[21] "Parks and Fire," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 24, 1882.
[22] "The Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 19, 1882.
[23] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 39.
[24] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, xii-xiv.
[25] Thomas H. Martin, *Atlanta and its Builders: A Comprehensive History of the Gate City of the South, Volume Two* (Atlanta: Century Memorial Publishing Company, 1902), 657.

southeast of the city, reportedly paying $1.50 an acre (see Figure 2).[26] These immense property holdings put him in an ideal position to profit off of Atlanta's expansion in the post-war years. Through a close working relationship between private interests and municipal government that was characteristic of local New South initiatives throughout the region, Grant intended his donation to benefit the public good as well his financial interests.

Grant hoped that by locating the park adjacent to his remaining property it would not only increase the value of the land, but direct Atlanta's rapidly expanding population to the area. The park, he believed, was key to converting the sparsely populated area southeast of the city into a lucrative suburban development.[27] This was by no means a novel concept. The establishment of New York City's Central Park in 1850 had made it clear to the rest of the nation that well-placed public greenspace was equally beneficial to private property values and municipal tax revenue.[28] This fact was certainly not lost on Grant. *The Constitution* noted the new park's impact on south-side real estate in the same month that the land was given to the city. "The fact that Atlanta has established a park and that the earnest work of shaping it and getting it ready for use has awakened a new interest in the southeastern part of the city," the paper explained. "We notice large sales of real estate are taking place in this section, which demonstrate the interest the public is manifesting in the present and future of the park and surrounding country."[29] Advertisements for lots in the area began circulating as well, highlighting the park as selling point. One noted that "the proximity of these lots to Grant Park, where property is rapidly enhancing in value…and the tide of improvement setting in in this direction make them particularly desirable for homes or for investment with good promise of speedy profits."[30]

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[26] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 45 & "Administrator's Sale," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Nov. 28, 1882. The red outline in Figure 2 illustrates the approximate area of Grant Park. While it is listed in the image as being owned by W. H. Dabney, Grant obtained ownership prior to the land's donation in 1882. As can be seen, the vast majority of the land north of the park was owned by Grant.
[27] Ibid, 39.
[28] Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 84-85.
[29] "Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 2, 1883.
[30] *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 28, 1883.

Figure 2 – Property map showing L. P. Grant's land holdings as well as the eventual location of Grant Park. Purple line indicates city boundary. Adapted from Griffith Morgan Hopkinson, *City Atlas of Atlanta, Georgia*, 1878, plates Q & R, Emory University, Rose Library: Historic Map Collection, http://www.digitalgallery.emory.edu/luna/servlet/view/all/when/1878?sort=title%2Cpage_no_%2Ccity%2Cdate.

The usefulness of the park for Grant was not limited to the value of his landholdings alone. At the same time that he was lobbying the city council to have the park located in the city's third ward, Grant was in the process of organizing the Metropolitan Street Railway Company with his partners Jacob Haas and Julius Brown. Established in 1882, the purpose of the company was to expand Atlanta's existing streetcar network in order to establish lines to the

southeastern section of the city.[31] Grant Park served as a catalyst for the company's development, providing it with a destination for its lines. In his application for a charter for the company, Brown noted their intention to build three lines to the south, the first of which would run "out Pryor to Hunter, Hunter to McDonough, McDonough to Fair and Fair to the city limits, Elias May & Co's. factory and the Grant park."[32] In this way, the park served as a justification for the company's existence – a public amenity to which easy access was a necessity (see Figure 3). The streetcar served Grant's interests in several ways. First, it further increased the value of his extensive landholdings along the entirety of the line, much like the park itself. Proximity to public transit was a guaranteed selling point for real estate. As Brown pointed out during his application for charter, "it has been established that the building of a street railroad doubles the value of property it passes."[33] Furthermore, Grant's investment in both the streetcar company and real estate had potential to generate reciprocal profit. The existence of a streetcar line encouraged the sale of Grant's property, while the subsequent improvements made to said property increased use of the streetcar.[34] The park itself factored into this equation as well. With a streetcar running to it, the park attracted more visitors; the increase in visitation created demands for park improvements; these improvements further increased the value of neighboring property, attracting more residents, while increasing park usage. In theory, the park would generate a self-sustaining profitability of Grant's two financial interests.

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[31] Wade Hampton Wright, "Georgia Power Company and its Predecessors as Factors in the Establishment, Growth and Development of the Electrical Industry in Georgia," *The Atlanta Historical Bulletin* 3, no. 14 (1938): 203-204.
[32] "Changes and New Lines," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 4, 1882.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Don L. Kilma, "Breaking Out: Streetcars and Suburban Development, 1872-1900," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26, no. 2-3 (1982): 72-74. Kilma makes a similar point in reference to one of Grant's contemporaries, George W. Adair. Adair, both a landowner and real estate agent, acquired the Atlanta Street Railroad Company in 1871 and subsequently used it to direct Atlantans to, and increase the value of, his various properties.

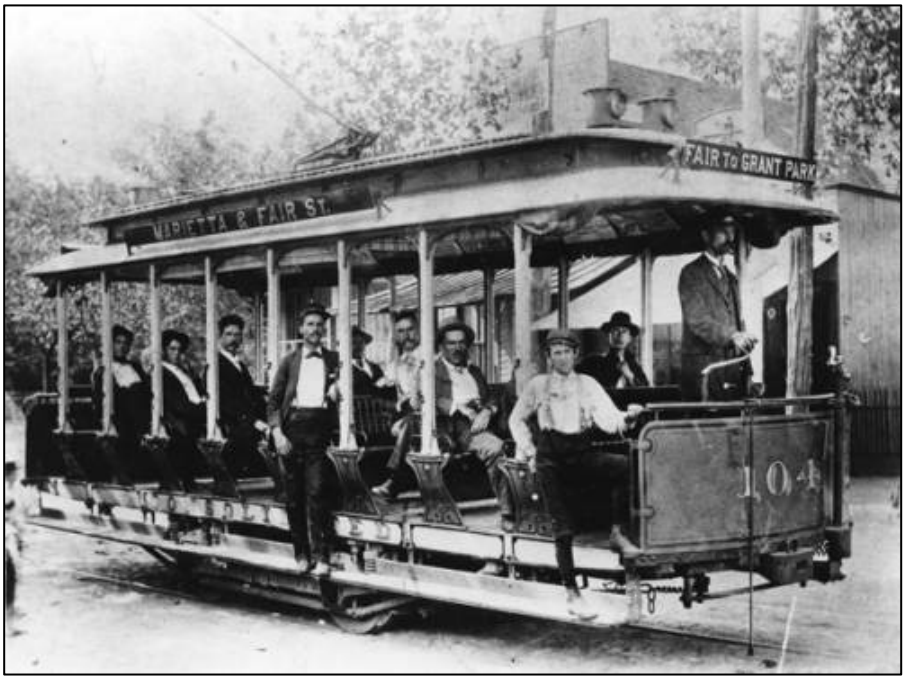

Figure 3 – Thurston Hatcher, *Fair to Grant Park Trolley*, ca. 1910, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center Repository, https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/athpc/id/1039/rec/62.

The suburban development of Atlanta's south-eastern periphery instigated by the combination of public park and streetcar service did not profit Colonel Grant alone. The city managers had reason to support the initiative, as the increase in real estate value meant an increase in tax revenue. Indeed, Mayor John B. Goodwin, initially skeptical of the cost of park development, eventually supported Grant's proposal over others because of the potential increase in property tax that would follow. "Besides adding greatly to the adornment of the city and health and comfort of the people," he explained, "the park grounds being partly within the corporate limits, will confer a return pecuniary benefit for the money expended on it in enhancing the value of real estate in the vicinity…thus adding to the taxes derived therefrom."[35] The addition of the streetcar lines simply enhanced this effect. R. H. Knapp, "one of the shrewdest and best posted real estate men in the city," summarized this relationship succinctly when he spoke in favor of the city council allocating $12,000 to enlarge the park in 1887:

[35] Quoted in D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 40.

> In the first place, the park has never cost the city a red cent. On the other hand it has so far been a source of revenue…The city has appropriated a few hundred dollars, and two street car lines have been built to the park. These car lines have considerably increased the value of taxable property along their routes, and this increase has more than covered the amount of money expended on the park by the city. The further increase of the park will increase the value of suburban property in its neighborhood.[36]

Again, Atlanta's leaders can be seen as acting upon the precedent set by New York City thirty years prior. By directly influencing the real estate market, through the designation of a large swath of land as public property, the municipal government sought to generate mutual profit for both private interests and the city coffers.

In addition to providing lucrative opportunities for the city's New South business class, Grant Park aided in conforming Atlanta to modern urban standards. As Reiko Hillyer points out, "Atlanta's business leaders knew that the physical appearance of the city would play a large part in convincing potential investors that their ventures would yield great profits, and that the city's built environment was crucial to advertising its material potential."[37] This meant a conscious shaping of Atlanta in the image of America's older, more established cities with which the holders of outside capital were familiar. The large-scale, naturalistic park was a major component of this effort.[38] Emblematic of a city's growth, prosperity, and taste, the park itself was a necessary feature of any aspiring metropolis of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the suburban development that followed the establishment of Grant Park encouraged the

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[36] "Everybody Favors It," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jan. 13, 1887.
[37] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 150.
[38] Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape*, 92 & 101. Adapting the philosophy of Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted created a theory of landscape design which established the public park as a pastoral space meant to counteract the rationally constructed urban environment. The popularity of New York City's Central Park, Olmsted's first park designed on these principles (established in 1857), generated a demand for such spaces in cities across the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century.

implementation of modern infrastructure and utilities, combatting the appearance of haphazard development that plagued young cities of the era. Finally, through the leisure activities that it facilitated, the park helped promote Atlanta as a desirable site of residence and tourism.

While the landscape of Grant Park was not physically altered to the extent of Central Park, it nonetheless conformed to the pastoral aesthetic popularized by Olmsted.[39] Shortly after Grant's land was deeded to the city Mayor Goodwin created a commission to oversee the planning and construction of the park, consisting of three members of the council and three private citizens. Grant and his close friend, Major Sidney Root, occupied two of the seats.[40] Root was elected president of the commission, a position which he held for seven years, but his duties extended beyond the administrative to include those of a landscape architect and superintendent of work.[41] While not an experienced park builder himself, Root was certainly attuned to the major trends in urban park design of the era. In an 1884 article for *The Southern World*, he lamented the "moderate results" the South had achieved with regard to park construction as he traced the evolution of American landscape design from the public squares of the early republic to Olmsted and Vaux's Central Park, which he described as an "exquisite work of art." He applauded the leaders of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago for simultaneously beautifying their cities while providing places of leisure for their overworked and overcrowded populations. One of his first acts as president was to distribute "copies of the rules governing and the annual reports of parks in Cincinnati, St. Louis, Baltimore and Philadelphia" to his fellow commissioners. [42] It was the style exhibited by the parks of these cities that Root strove to emulate with Grant Park.

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[39] Dana F. White, "Landscaped Atlanta: The Romantic Tradition in Cemetery, Park, and Suburban Development," *The Atlanta Historical Journal* 26, no. 2-3 (1982): 102.
[40] "The 'L. P. Grant' Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Nov. 18, 1883.
[41] Sidney Root, *Memorandum of My Life*, undated, 13, ahc.MSS908f, Folder 2, Sidney Root Papers (1863-1897), Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center Repository, Atlanta, Georgia.
[42] "About Parks," *The Southern World* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 15, 1884; "The Park Commission," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 1, 1883.

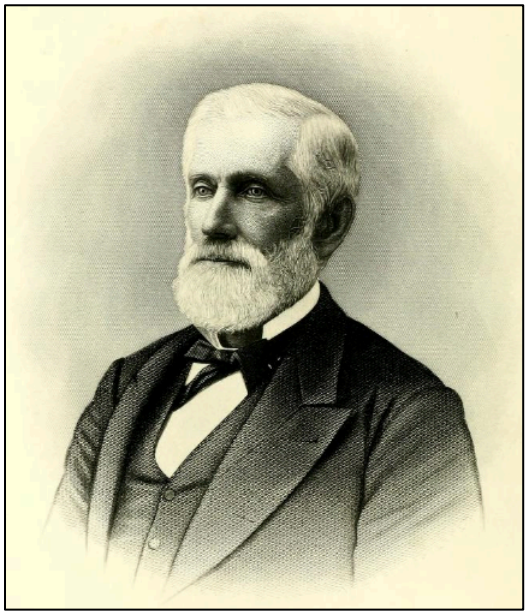

Figure 4 – Col. Lemuel P. Grant, in Thomas H. Martin, *Atlanta and Its Builders: A Comprehensive History of the Gate City of the South* (Atlanta: Century Memorial Publishing Company, 1902), 654.

Figure 5 – Maj. Sidney Root, in *City of Atlanta: A Descriptive, Historical and Industrial Review of the Gateway City of the South* (Louisville: Inter-State Publishing Company, 1892), n.p.

Root's work was aided by the fact that the land Grant had donated was already rural in appearance. As the *Constitution* explained, the area presented "fine natural advantages for park purposes," such as a variety of trees, natural springs, and undulating hills.[43] This, however, did not mean that the landscape remained unchanged. In the first months of his tenure as president of the park commission, Root hired Charles Boeckh, an engineer who had been involved in the construction of Cincinnati's Eden Park, to draft a topographical map of the land and help in laying out "some of the driveways as [Root] indicated."[44] Together they developed a plan which consisted of seven miles of curvilinear drives that snaked through the grounds at different elevations in order to hide each from view of the other and "increase the effect of space and distance" (see Figure 6).[45] Such drives had become staples of urban parks following the success of Olmsted and Vaux's Greensward plan for Central Park (see Figure 7). From there Root

[43] "At the Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 26, 1884.
[44] Ibid; D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 47.
[45] "The L. P. Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jan. 30, 1884; Thomas W. Hanchett, "Before Olmsted: The New South Career of Joseph Forsyth Johnson," *Atlanta History: A Journal of Georgia and the South* 39, no. 3-4 (1995): 16.

embarked on a process of piecemeal improvement. Lacking a comprehensive design plan and constrained by limited funding, various features of the grounds were added gradually over time. In 1884, between fifty and sixty young magnolia trees were planted and grass was seeded in what would become the Magnolia Lawn. This feature was not completed until 1888.[46] Between 1886 and 1887 an artificial water feature, Lake Abana, was created to provide a space for boating.[47] Such improvements continued after the city purchased an additional forty acres from Grant in 1888, with flowerbeds planted and lawns laid.[48] While these landscape alterations were gradual, they combined to mirror the natural aesthetic exemplified by urban parks across the country.

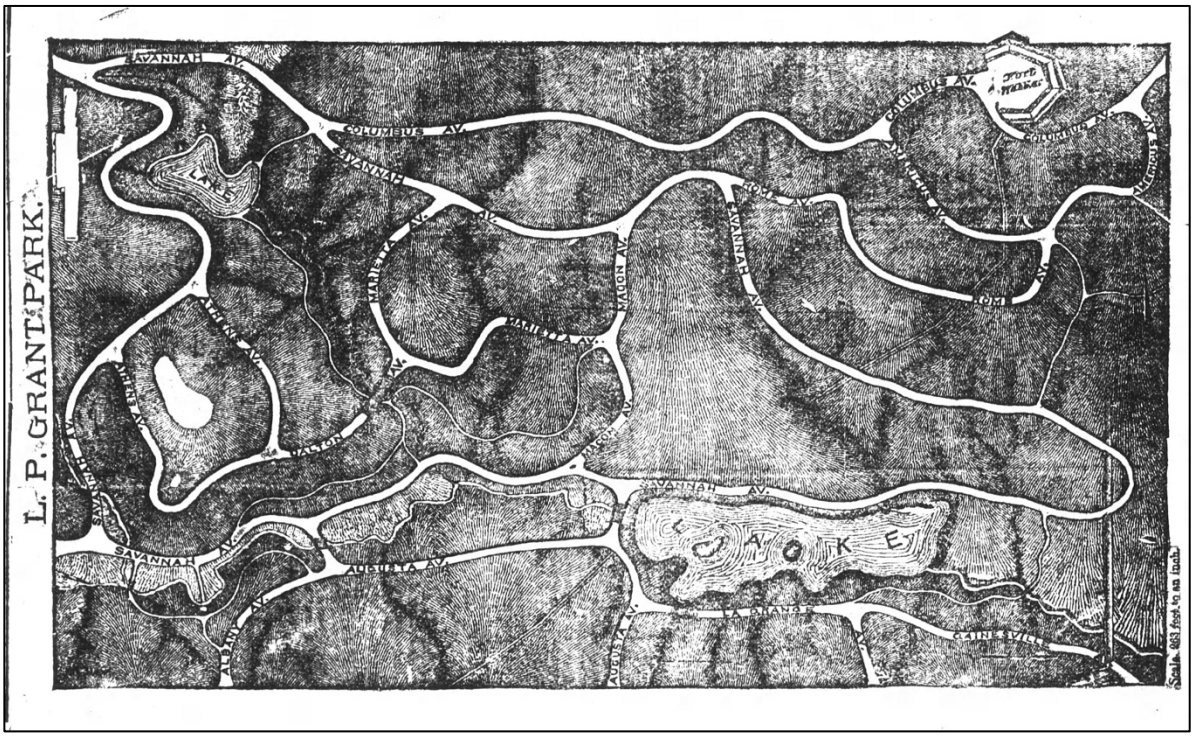

Figure 6 – *L. P. Grant Park*, 1886, in "The Beautiful Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 11, 1886.

[46] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 51.
[47] "The Beautiful Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 11, 1886; "At Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 17, 1887.
[48] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 62.

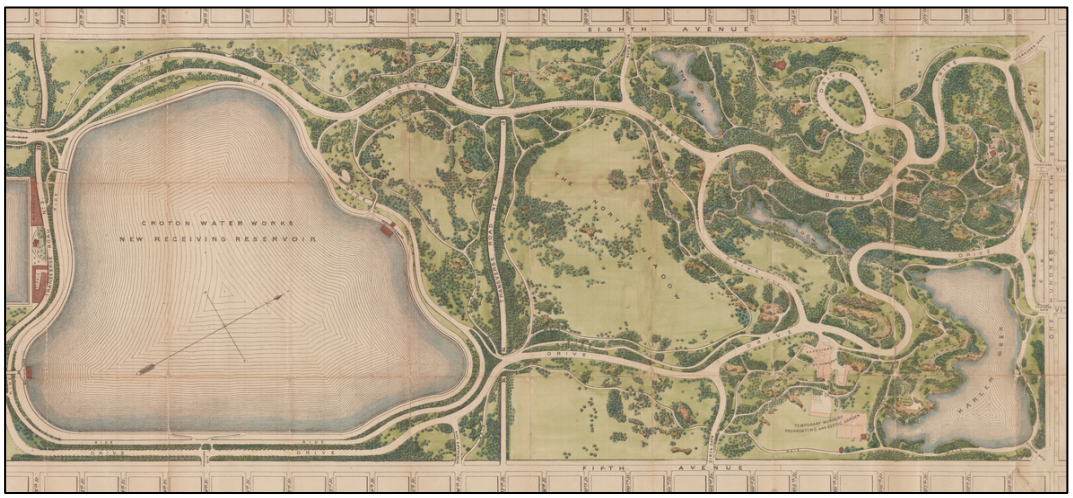

Figure 7 – The North Section of Central Park, from *Map of the Central Park*, 1873, Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/4ee14540-3569-0134-fa82-00505686a51c.

As a public space that conformed to standards set by those in more established cities, Grant Park was offered by local boosters as evidence of Atlanta's evolution into a modern metropolis. Promotional material and guidebooks highlighted the park's naturalistic features as evidence of the city's cultivated taste. In his 1907 guidebook, *Atlanta: The Metropolis of the South*, J. D. Cleaton devoted ample space to the "magnificent property of one hundred acres" known as Grant Park. "As if by nature designed," he explained, "the topography of Grant Park is such as to respond most readily to the landscape engineer's efforts, and year by year it has developed new beauties and grown more and more attractive."[49] Another guide, published for visitors to the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, detailed the park's "more than six miles of wide, graded driveways…five miles of delightfully shaded walks…great variety of beautiful and fragrant flowers…fine selection of native and exotic trees…[and] lovely lakes with boats."[50] By emphasizing these features, promoters fought the image of the "backward" South and demonstrated Atlanta's receptiveness to the cultural trends present in older cities. It was this desire to align Atlanta with mainstream metropolitan tastes that led the author of an 1890 pictorial guide to state that Grant Park's "natural beauty" was "equaled [sic] only by Druid Hill

[49] J. D. Cleaton, *Atlanta: The Metropolis of the South* (Atlanta: The Franklin-Turner Co. Publishers, 1907), 38.
[50] *A Few Points in 1895 about Atlanta* (Atlanta: Atlanta City Council, 1895), 15.

park in Baltimore," a park of over 500 acres established in 1860.[51] Additionally, the constant improvement of the grounds showed the city's commitment to providing for the public good. After explaining the origin of Grant's donation, the author of *Art Work of Atlanta, Georgia* assured readers that "the gift has been well cared for and no opportunity has been lost to enhance its beauty and add to its attractions." "It is controlled by a park commission under the direct control of the city council," the author continued, "and receives a generous appropriation each year."[52] In showing that city leaders were committed to sustaining and improving public amenities such as Grant Park, Atlanta's boosters signaled to outsiders that the municipal government was both conscious of public wellbeing and willing to fund projects that had the potential to benefit private capital.

The establishment of a large-scale naturalistic public park was also a means of distinguishing Atlanta from other cities in the region. Only two years after the land was donated to the city, I. W. Avery used the pages of his promotional guide to speculate that the park would be "made one of the most beautiful things of the kind in the South."[53] Similarly, an 1887 article described Grant Park as "a beautiful emerald set in the crown of Atlanta's glory," and claimed that "few cities can boast of a park superior to this…in a few years Atlanta will have a park second to none in all that pertains to a perfect metropolitan sylvan resort."[54] In this sense, the public park was a milestone of urban development. Boosters pointed to Grant Park as evidence that Atlanta had progressed beyond its regional competitors. As Wallace P. Reed explained in a full-page article written for *The Constitution* in 1899, Grant Park was "large enough for a city twice the size of Atlanta," and "as a place of recreation, instruction and amusement it is superior to

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[51] *"The Gate City." Atlanta, Georgia. Picturesque, Historical and Descriptive* (Neenah: Art Publishing Company, 1890), n.p.; "The Park," *The Daily Exchange* (Baltimore, MD), Jul. 25, 1860.
[52] *Art Work of Atlanta, Georgia* (Chicago: The Gravure Illustration Company, 1903), 96-98.
[53] I. W. Avery, *Atlanta: The Leader in Trade, Population, Wealth and Manufactures in Georgia—the Phoenix of the South—Georgia's State Capital and Cosmopolitan Metropolis—The "Gate City" between the West and South Atlantic Ocean—$97,000,000 of Business. The Advantages of Georgia, "The Empire State of the South"* (Atlanta: Constitution Publishing Company, 1885), 26.
[54] "Glorious Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 1, 1887.

anything else in sight."[55] Indeed, in a column describing his trip to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1889, Sidney Root made a measured assessment of that city's progress: "I do not say that Memphis is *the* coming city of the South," he explained, "but it is certainly *a* coming city and one of the most prominent among many rivals [emphasis added]." He pointed to the city's "lack of large public parks for the free use of the 80,000 inhabitants" as a reason for the qualification.[56] In this way, Grant Park became an effective promotional tool for Atlanta's New South boosters. It was both a means of illustrating the extent of the city's urbanization and a handy feature with which to draw comparisons with regional competitors.

In addition to standing as an example of modern urbanity itself, Grant Park aided in shaping the city to contemporary standards more broadly. Colonel Grant's efforts to use the park to guide residential settlement toward his landholdings was part of a broader trend in suburban development taking place at the time. As LeeAnn Lands explains, between 1877 and 1917, a conception of residential landscape that consisted of "single-family homes situated in spacious yards, amid homes and families of similar status and outlook" was articulated by developers and elite suburban enclaves across the United States.[57] Atlanta's developers and landowners, acutely aware of the urban trends throughout the country, sought to shape the unimproved areas surrounding the city in this image. Starting in the 1880s, various entrepreneurs developed residential plans in an attempt to realize what Don L. Kilma has referred to as "Atlanta's nineteenth-century suburban ideal" – exclusive park-neighborhoods based on Olmstedian landscape ideals for the city's white elite.[58] In 1884, prominent local businessmen George Adair, Hannibal Kimball, and Richard Peters partnered to establish Peters Park to the northwest of downtown. They were followed by Joel Hurt, who began construction on Inman

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[55] "Wallace P. Reed Writes of the Values and Picturesqueness of Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 16, 1899.
[56] "Memphis, Tenn.," *The Sunny South* (Atlanta, GA), Jun. 8, 1889.
[57] Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 42.
[58] Kilma, "Breaking Out," 67; Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 44.

Park to the east of the city just a few years later.[59] These developers were responding to a need that *The Constitution* drew attention to in 1884. "Atlanta has always been a busy town," the article explained:

> It has always offered special inducements for men who wanted to make money. The man of affairs who wanted employment or investment or business has always had room to come to Atlanta. It is doubtful if we have offered sufficient inducements to the man of leisure and capital who is looking for a pleasant home…we have lacked purely pleasure resorts, in good drives and fine suburban villas, farms and parks.[60]

The construction of suburban neighborhoods, in this sense, was part of Atlanta's larger New South agenda. By creating an environment that conformed to the tastes of America's business elite, the logic went, the more likely members of that class were to select Atlanta as a site of residence and investment, turning the city into the "Metropolis of the South" which it already claimed to be.

It was in this context that Grant offered the city the use of his land for park space, although his residential development differed from those of his competitors in several significant ways. While the increased value of contiguous property resulting from the establishment of Grant Park would naturally limit subsequent settlement to those who could afford the inflated real estate prices, the Peters and Inman Park projects were comprehensively planned communities specifically marketed exclusively to the city's most wealthy. The neighborhoods encompassed 180- and 189-acre tracts, respectively, and were based on northern suburbs which placed spacious lots within Olmstedian greenspace. Residential plots were integrated into the park plan rather than allowing residences to develop individually.[61] More significant, however,

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[59] Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 44-45.
[60] "Beautifying the Country Around," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 25, 1884.
[61] Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 45-46.

was the fact that Grant Park was a public space, while the parks located in the planned developments were private. This allowed developers to offer Atlanta's elites an environment of status and exclusivity, which simultaneously met a demand for, and reinforced, expectations of social divisions based on class and race.[62] Grant Park's status as a public space prevented such explicit exclusivity. The deed which Grant signed contained no clause restricting access, and local laws in the 1880s did not prevent black residents from using the park. Additionally, the park was often promoted as a space open to all Atlantans, particularly members of the working class who could not afford to travel outside of the city.[63] These two factors likely account for the fact that the neighborhood of Grant Park failed to become an elite enclave.

Despite the fact that Grant Park and Atlanta's other suburban developments differed in terms of success, they were all part of the same effort to modernize the built environment of the city. The construction of residential areas on the outskirts of the city helped to decentralize the population. As late as the 1880s, the absence of regulation and lack of city-wide planning caused the center of Atlanta to consist of a patchwork of uses, with the homes of "workers, [the] nascent middle class, and business elite…intermixed with one another and distributed among warehouses, fashionable hotels, factories, and smaller businesses."[64] The provision of suburbs, coupled with the expanding streetcar system, lessened congestion, remedied the chaotic appearance of the developing city, and devoted more of the downtown area to commercial interests. This allowed promoters such as T. H. Martin to advertise the city as orderly, convenient, and conducive to business. As he explained in his 1898 guidebook written on behalf of the city council and Atlanta chamber of commerce, the city was one of "magnificent distances…[while] the residence portions [were], as a rule, equidistant from the business center."

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[62] Ibid, 49 & 54-57. Lands explains that, while not explicitly restricted to whites, Inman Park was specifically advertised to Atlanta's wealthy and was financially out of reach for most of the city's nonwhite residents. This established a precedent of residential exclusivity that became more entrenched in the early twentieth century as legal segregation was established. The neighborhoods of Druid Hills and Ansley Park, established between 1900 and 1917, perpetuated this trend, with Ansley Park explicitly banning black residents.
[63] D'Avino, *Atlanta Municipal Parks*, 42 & 56.
[64] Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 13.

"The electric lines reach out for six or eight miles on all sides of the city," he continued, and, as a result, "there has been a remarkable expansion of the city…and the pressure on the center has been greatly relieved."[65] In this way, suburban development was a means of conforming Atlanta, spatially speaking, to the ideal which its promoters had imagined. Downtown was devoted to the carrying out of business, while the suburbs which surrounded it provided residential space according to popular taste for those who profited.

In addition to aiding in the expansion of Atlanta's residential areas, Grant Park encouraged the development of urban infrastructure. In order to effectively market the real estate of the burgeoning southeast suburbs, landowners and agents needed to assure potential buyers that they would not be isolated from city services. Proximity to a park would not offset the inconvenience and cost of a purchaser being responsible for installing their own utilities and arranging their own conveyance into town. Consequently, the establishment of Grant Park was accompanied by the incorporation of the Metropolitan Street Railway Company. The company's horse-drawn streetcars provided cheap and efficient transportation to the area. When steam-powered engines were introduced in 1888, the public could expect a car from the city to the park every ten minutes.[66] While it took until 1886 for the first lines to reach the park, they were quickly advertised as selling points for property in the neighborhood. One real estate advertisement for eighteen lots adjoining Grant Park from 1889 emphasized the fact that "the dummy line of street cars run in front of this elegant property," explaining that it offered "all the convenience of being right in the city, yet you live out of the dust and noise."[67] Furthermore, essential utilities expanded to service the neighborhood that developers hoped would take root. An advertisement from 1887 focused on the property's proximity to such infrastructure in an attempt to attract buyers:

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[65] T. H. Martin, *Handbook of the City of Atlanta: A Comprehensive Review of the City's Commercial, Industrial and Residential Conditions* (Atlanta: Southern Industrial Publishing Co., 1898), 14-15.
[66] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 55-56; "Glorious Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 1, 1887.
[67] "H. L. Wilson, Real Estate Auctioneer," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 19, 1889.

> This property faces the main driveways to and from the Park. It is well known that these avenues, beautiful, broad, well paved and graded, are the finest in the city. Here you have curbing and sidewalks equal to those in the heart of the city. GAS and WATER surrounds each block. No expense as is usual in buying vacant property. BEST SEWERAGE IN THE CITY, and all paid for.[68]

The expansion of such utilities not only attracted middle- and upper-class residents to the south-eastern suburbs but aided in the promotion of Atlanta as a city defined by material progress according to modern standards. The city's New South boosters, hoping to court investment from, and settlement by, wealthy northerners, were able to point to such development as evidence that Atlanta offered the standard of living that such individuals were used to.

In addition to conforming Atlanta to modern urban standards in terms of space and aesthetics, Grant Park also made the city a desirable site for new residents and tourists through the leisure activities that it facilitated. While the Olmstedian conception of park activities emphasized "receptive" uses—encouraging mental and moral stimulation through passive engagement with the natural environment—public parks nation-wide began to cater to middle- and working-class demands for more active recreation by the 1880s.[69] In light of this development, Grant Park provided space for more dynamic activities, though not so strenuous as to disrupt the genteel environment.[70] Picnics upon the lawns were permitted and, indeed, encouraged soon after the park was opened. When construction of Lake Abana finished in 1887,

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[68] *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 25, 1887.
[69] Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," 73-77; Rosenzweig, "Middle-Class Parks and Working-Class Play," 217-218. This transition from "receptive" to "active" leisure will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.
[70] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 43.

boats were made available to rent and proved popular with families and young couples.[71] Accommodations were made for lawn tennis and croquet within the additional forty acres that were acquired in 1888.[72] During the warm-weather months evening concerts were held in which visitors could hear classical music, marches, and patriotic songs. On such occasions, J. D. Cleaton explained, it was not uncommon to see "large crowds throng the Park."[73] In providing a space which catered to such activities, Root and the other members of the park commission shaped Grant Park around middle- and upper-class conceptions of leisure. This can be understood as a reflection of the type of resident Atlanta's promoters hoped to attract to not only the south-eastern suburb in particular, but the city in general.

The park further helped to attract new wealthy white residents by presenting an image of Atlanta society characterized by a docile workforce and harmonious race relations. As Hillyer points out, northern capitalists who eyed the city as a potential site of investment and settlement required assurances that their business would not be interfered with by labor unrest or racial conflicts.[74] In light of this fact, Atlanta's New South boosters used the park as a means of demonstrating the congenial relationship between members of all social strata. Like those of northern cities, park advocates in Atlanta framed Grant Park in democratic rhetoric. It was promoted as a place "where the tired and worn-out business man and workman may go and gather their weary brains together."[75] Despite such rhetoric, however, it remained difficult for working-class Atlantans to access the park. The Metropolitan Streetcar Company's line did not reach Grant Park until 1886, largely limiting park use to those who could afford a carriage ride from the city.[76] This fact was highlighted by a columnist for *The Constitution* who, covering a

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[71] "Through the City," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 27, 1885; "Picknickers," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 30, 1890; "At Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 17, 1887; "The Tales They Tell," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 1, 1889.
[72] "*The Gate City*," n.p.
[73] "Music at Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jun. 4, 1886 & Aug. 8, 1890; "Music at Grant Park Today," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Aug. 19, 1900; Cleaton, *Atlanta: Metropolis of the South*, 40.
[74] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 145.
[75] "Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Dec. 18, 1892.
[76] D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 55.

Labor Day picnic held at the park in 1899, noted that many of the attendees had never seen the park before. "To hundreds of those for whom this was the first visit," the reporter explained, "it was a revelation both as to the magnificence of the park itself and the opportunities which it afforded for the relief and enjoyment of the people."[77] When members of the working class did manage to reach the park, they were confronted with strict regulations that seemed to target them specifically. "All *respectable* people are cordially invited to visit the park [emphasis added]," one article noted before listing "rigid" rules set by the commission. These regulations prohibited the picking of wild flowers, "profane or impure language or conduct," and intemperance in order to ensure the park was a "safe, free and pleasant resort."[78] Such regulations ensured that working-class Atlantans who were able to access the park conformed to middle-class standards of behavior, giving outsiders the impression that they aspired to emulate the wealthy rather than organize against them (see Figure 8). Northern capitalists, with the labor unrest of the 1870s still fresh in their minds, were eager for such assurances.

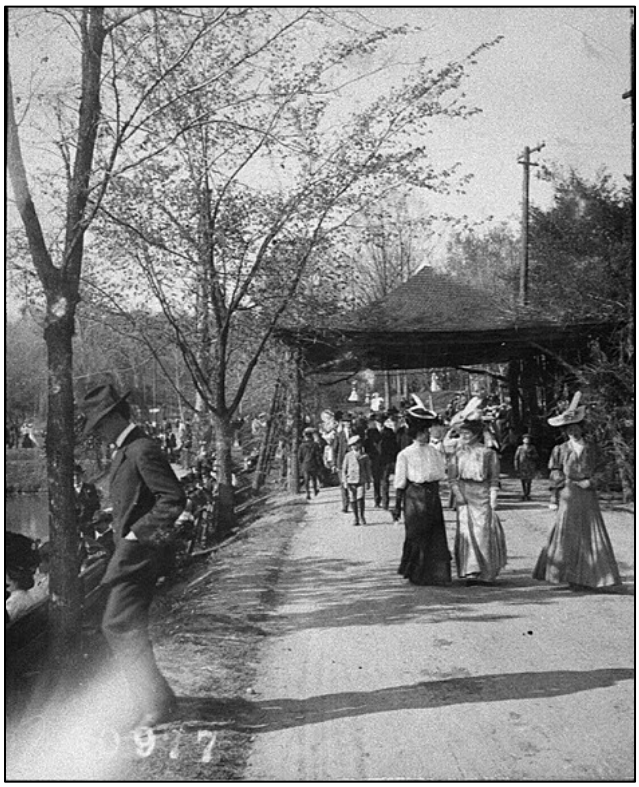

Figure 8 – *[Photograph of Grant Park, Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, 1907]*, 1907, Vanishing Georgia, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_vang_ful1055-91.

[77] "Build Up the Party," *The Constitution*, Sep. 6, 1899.
[78] "The Beautiful Park," *The Constitution*, Apr. 11, 1886.

This control over park access and conduct extended to Atlanta's African American population as well. As previously mentioned, black Atlantans were not officially prohibited from accessing the park, but there is evidence to suggest that the extent to which they could enjoy the space was limited. Large events, such as Fourth of July fireworks, often drew both black and white members of the public, but the park's comfort facilities were not segregated. The absence of washrooms and drinking fountains set aside for the use of African Americans suggests that black patronage was not expected on a large or sustained scale.[79] It is much more likely that black members of the public were discouraged from using the park by both the authorities and their white peers. In 1883, soon after the park was opened, *The Constitution* pointed out that the woods throughout the park were dense, and "the negroes frequently take advantage of this fact and there [indulge] in gaming." They assured their readers, however, that the police had been patrolling the area "with a view to breaking up the nefarious work."[80] By 1889, the paper noted that Atlanta's black population had resorted to using the woods around Clark University as a recreation area. "It has been suggested," the paper explained, "that they ought to have a place to themselves, where they could enjoy more exclusive privileges, and that they ought to have a park out there about the university."[81] In short, black Atlantans were largely absent from day-to-day scenes in Grant Park, suffering from the social exclusion which Howard Rabinowitz claims preceded formal segregation in the South.[82]

When black patrons were present at the park, they were expected to adhere to white conceptions of respectability. Wallace Reed, writing in 1899, noted that there were "a few colored people" among the pleasure seekers at Grant Park, but "not many…and they are all well dressed, decorous and polite and evidently on their best behavior."[83] This description speaks to

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[79] Ibid.
[80] "Through the Brain," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 2, 1883.
[81] "Parks and Fire," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 24, 1889.
[82] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South*, 127.
[83] "Wallace P. Reed Writes of the Value and Picturesqueness of Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 16, 1899.

the desire amongst New South boosters to assure northern investors that they had "solved" the race problem. In order to do so, they needed to provide "evidence" of either harmonious relations between the races or the uncontested subservience of African Americans.[84] Reed used Grant Park to illustrate the former. Suggesting that conflict between white and black Atlantans was a thing of the past, he explained that "the idea that they [African Americans] are obtrusive or disposed to interfere with the pleasure of others is an old notion which will be dispelled by a few visits." "Comparatively few negroes go to the park," he continued, "and as a rule they belong to the sober, well-conducted better class of their race. The roughs do not care to visit the place where they are certain to meet great numbers of our best people."[85] The restrictions and expectations placed upon black Atlantans in Grant Park served as an example of the race relations which New South boosters claimed were firmly in place throughout the city. This would reassure the holders of outside capital that their investments would not be threatened by social unrest should they decide to relocate to Atlanta's burgeoning suburbs.

It did not take much, however, to shatter this façade. For example, Bob Hunter, "a negro boy" (his age was not specified), discovered the repercussions of not adhering to expected decorum during a baseball game that he attended at Grant Park in 1890. According to a report in *The Constitution*, Hunter and his friends were "lounging about on the grass" after the game had ended. Nearby, a group of white boys were throwing dirt clods, one of which struck Hunter. He began cursing the boy who threw the clod and was, allegedly, "about to use his fists as well as his tongue" before some of the larger white boys "interfered." As a result, Hunter drew a pistol and fired two shots at the boys before fleeing to the nearby woods. The white boys gave chase, pelting him with rocks, before overtaking him. At some point "a group of outsiders" stopped the assault, but not before Hunter received "a bloody gash on the left forehead and a hole in the back of his head, with a light fracture of the outer table of the skull." The boys then marched

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[84] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 145.
[85] "Wallace P. Reed Writes of the Value and Picturesqueness of Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 16, 1899.

Hunter through town to the police station, where he was booked for discharging a firearm.[86] This incident reveals not only the fact that race relations in Atlanta were not as amicable as New South boosters alleged, but the extent to which the autonomous use of Grant Park by African Americans was restricted. Prior to the altercation, Hunter appeared to be using the park as any white patron would. It was the moment at which he stood up for himself, however, that the supposed racial hierarchy was violated, and violence resulted. Such were the stakes for black Atlantans who wished to access this "public" space.

In addition to encouraging new settlement, Grant Park was used to position Atlanta as a regional tourist destination. While Root clearly adhered to principles of park design established by Olmsted, he showed more of a willingness to accommodate what the creator of Central Park referred to as "vague and variable" uses.[87] Facilities that fostered popular trends in recreation were added to the grounds of Grant Park starting in the late 1880s. In 1887, in the midst of what David Lamoreaux has called the first golden age of American baseball, a field six hundred feet in length was dedicated to the sport. It experienced near constant use by amateur teams.[88] The same year a bicycle track, a quarter of a mile in length, was constructed after several petitions from Atlanta's wheelmen.[89] As we will see in Chapter Four, cycling enthusiasts had the power to influence the development, and popularize the use, of nineteenth-century urban parks. The track, immensely popular with the city's cyclists, was celebrated by promotional guides as "one of the finest in the South."[90] The most significant attraction added to the park, however, was what came to be named the Gress Zoo. In 1889, George V. Gress, local lumberman and sawmill owner, purchased a defunct circus at auction. He proceeded to donate the collection of animals to the park to serve as "the nucleus of a zoological garden." He was motivated, he claimed, by "a

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[86] "A Negro with a Pistol," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 24, 1890.
[87] Quoted in Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted," 878-879.
[88] David Lamoreaux, "Baseball In The Late Nineteenth Century: The Source Of Its Appeal," *Journal of Popular Culture* 11, no. 3 (1977): 597; D'Avino, "Atlanta Municipal Parks," 63.
[89] "The General Council," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 7, 1886; "Glorious Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), May 1, 1887.
[90] "*The Gate City*," n.p.

desire to make the Grant park the most attractive place in the south."[91] Buildings were soon erected to house the animals, and the resulting zoo became a wildly popular attraction. Guidebooks trumpeted the collection of animals, which by 1890 had grown to include an elephant acquired through a fundraiser spearheaded by local children, as "one of the best in America."[92] The addition of such popular attractions was part of a broader effort to market Atlanta as a destination for summer tourists. The provision of modern recreational facilities would help to attract those not only those outsiders hunting for business opportunities, but those in pursuit of leisure. As I. W. Avery predicted in 1885, "the rapid work on…Grant park…will make Atlanta one of the most interesting points in Georgia for the summer," helping to make the city "the center in which thousands of pleasure and health seeking people will make their headquarters."[93]

Grant Park played a crucial supporting role in the formation of Atlanta's New South image. Its establishment fueled the city's booming real estate market, aiding in the rise of a local business elite and signposting a rich field of investment for outsiders. The park's existence alone served as evidence that Atlanta was on a path of urban progress which mirrored that of older cities, while the suburban development and expansion of infrastructure that followed helped conform the city to the modern standards desired by middle- and upper-class Americans. Finally, the leisure activities facilitated by the park aided in marketing the city as a both a tourist destination and a desirable place of residence. All of these factors contributed to attracting the outside capital on which the New South movement relied. As such, Grant Park can be understood as one tool among many that Atlanta's boosters used to project an image of modernity to the rest of the nation.

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[91] "Will Have a Zoo," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 29, 1889; "The G. V. Gress 'Zoo,'" *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 31, 1889.
[92] Cleaton, *Atlanta: Metropolis of the South*, 38.
[93] Avery, *Atlanta and Georgia Portrayed*, 25-26.

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Grant Park's utility was not limited to the contributions it made to modernizing the built environment of Atlanta. It also played a crucial role in deploying the romanticized past in service of the New South movement. Not long after its opening in 1883, the park became what Kenneth Foote describes as a sanctified landscape – "a site set apart from its surroundings and dedicated to the memory of an event, person, or group."[94] In this case, the land was dedicated to the memory of the Lost Cause, providing a space for ritualistic celebrations of the Confederacy and the erection of monuments dedicated to the South's struggle to form an independent nation. This provided white members of the public with a venue in which to be familiarized with the historical narrative that formed the basis of their shared identity. The park's dual role as a place of recreation, however, allowed them to engage with a glorified memory of the past more intimately than they might with a traditional site of commemoration. From its naturalistic scenery that recalled the Old South to the history of the land which rooted it there, Grant Park functioned as an embodiment of the idealized conception of the past to which the Lost Cause spoke. By occupying the space of the park, white Atlantans developed a sense of regional identity by both learning the central tenets of the Lost Cause and physically inhabiting a nostalgic version of the antebellum South.

This engagement with historical memory not only sustained white Atlantans' cultural identity but helped to align them with the New South agenda. Through the visual perspective made possible by its geographical location and topographical features, the park allowed white members of the public to conceptualize a relationship between the Old South and the New that was otherwise confined to the rhetoric of boosters. In short, Grant Park was one force among many that helped to shape the public into New South subjects. It allowed white Atlantans to

[94] Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 8.

revisit an idealized past that was separate from the rapidly modernizing city while simultaneously aiding in the understanding of a bond of continuity between the two. The New South was framed as both an extension of the Old South and its ultimate vindication, positioning urbanization and industrialization as continuations of a white southern tradition rather than deviations from it. This provided a means by which Atlanta's modernizers could reassure white members of the public that the march into the future did not require forsaking their connection to the past.

Grant Park gained its sanctified status, in part, because of the ritualistic commemorations of the Confederacy which took place there throughout the 1880s and 1890s. These took the form of veterans' reunions and Memorial Day celebrations – events which engaged former soldiers and civilians alike (see Figure 9). For the veterans, these occasions called for a return to a martial setting. Reunions during this period varied in size and formality, but all had the veterans relive military discipline to some degree.[95] When the Fulton County Confederate Veterans' Association summoned veterans from across Georgia to Atlanta in 1890, for example, they had them "organized in companies, from each county in the state, with captains and lieutenants and sergeants, just as they used to have in the days of '62 and '63."[96] Upon arriving at Grant Park, the veterans found it transformed into a "camp…laid out in military style, with avenues, streets and alleys between the tents," in which "the crackle of the camp fire with the music of the fife and drum…[could] be heard as of old."[97] Once they had re-entered the martial context, the veterans engaged in celebrations of their service. At the 1897 reunion of Georgia's 7th Regiment, this was done through a public display of the unit's flag. The banner which the men had "followed and fought under through so many hot battles" was unfurled and passed down the line, causing them

[95] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 131. Foster has noted that Confederate reunions during the 1880s and 1890s ranged from small gatherings put on by local veterans' associations or the remaining members of individual companies, usually consisting of a relatively informal picnic, to highly-organized events that drew veterans from across the South and took over the entire city.
[96] "Veterans in Camp," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 18, 1890.
[97] "In Camp Once More," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 26, 1890; "Veterans in Camp," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 18, 1890.

to break out in cheers. One journalist reported that "the rebel yell never resounded with more vehemence" than it did as the old veterans saluted that "battle-scarred emblem of patriotism."[98] The events usually culminated with a communal meal served under the shade of the park's trees, during which the veterans would break bread and exchange memories of their war experiences.[99] These activities aided Confederate veterans in viewing their service through the lens of the Lost Cause. By once again entering a martial context, now devoid of conflict, the former soldiers engaged with a positive depiction of their war experience. Any shame of defeat or doubt regarding the righteousness of their motivations was replaced by strengthened bonds of comradery and exaltations of honorable service.

These rituals went beyond veterans to engage the broader public as well. In fact, public participation in such events was essential. One of the main functions of the Lost Cause was to provide "a deeper sense of social unity" for southerners – to supply them with a "separate cultural identity" once the dream of an autonomous government had been shattered.[100] To do this, rituals of commemoration needed to involve as much of the public as possible. Thus, all were invited to take part in the various reunions held at Grant Park.[101] Such events were rich opportunities to expose the public to the central ideas of the Lost Cause, as the Confederate veteran was to be "a living incarnation of an idea that Southerners tried to defend at a cultural level." Public celebration of such figures provided southerners with an opportunity to "symbolically…overcome history" as they "recreated the mythical time of their noble ancestors and paid tribute to them."[102] So, as "great throngs" of civilians gathered in Grant Park during the reunions, they did more than simply pay their respects to aging veterans; they reinforced the

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[98] "The Gallant 7th's Survivors," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1897.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 126; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause*, 1865-1920 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 1.
[101] "After Thirty Years," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1894.
[102] Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 36.

archetype of the noble southern soldier who had proved his masculinity in battle and defended his home with honor.[103]

One newspaper article detailing the program for a reunion in 1894 made a point of emphasizing that the celebration was not just for those citizens who had lived through the conflict. "It is hoped," the article stated, "that our citizens, *old and young*, will take a lively interest [emphasis added]" in the event.[104] The inclusion of younger members of the public sprang from the fear among Lost Cause promoters that, if left unchallenged, northern historians would craft a narrative which depicted southerners as villains of the national struggle.[105] Indeed, the resident historian of the 42nd Georgia Regiment made this point plainly when he spoke of the group's fallen comrades at their Grant Park reunion in 1887. "If we who bore an active part" do not record their history, he explained, it will "be written by those who were then our enemies…we should make a record of their deeds and preserve their memory that our sons…know that they are not the descendants of traitors and cowards, but of patriotic and chivalrous sires."[106] Reunions played an active role in cementing a narrative which championed the honor and bravery of Confederate soldiers in the consciousness of the region's youth. By attending these events in which the former soldier could be seen in the flesh as his heroism was actively praised, those with no memory of the war were taught Confederate history and southern loyalty.[107]

Female members of the public were a major target audience for these events as well. Indeed, women played a major role in crafting and promoting the idealized southern past, having "in many ways initiated the Lost Cause in 1865 and 1866" through their involvement in the Ladies' Monument Association and continued efforts to organize commemorative events.[108] But the reunions themselves often incorporated women in ways which reinforced the Old South

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[103] "In Camp Once More," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 26, 1890.
[104] "After Thirty Years," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1894.
[105] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 277-278.
[106] "A Grand Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1887.
[107] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 134.
[108] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 9-10 & 96.

archetype of the southern belle and, in turn, notions of southern masculinity. In describing the festivities surrounding an 1887 reunion in Grant Park, a reporter for *The Constitution* noted that "a large number of ladies were awaiting the arrival of the regiment" as the veterans disembarked from the street cars.[109] These were most likely 'sponsors'–young, unmarried women who usually had family ties to the Confederacy or came from socially prominent families–as they were regular fixtures of Memorial Day celebrations in Atlanta and throughout the South. Dressed in white to denote virginal purity, the sponsors would be presented to the veterans during the ceremonies.[110] Such rituals promoted the Lost Cause narrative in several ways. By presenting the sponsors in ceremonial fashion, "the veterans indirectly honored the women who had been faithful during the war" by maintaining the domestic sphere in their absence and persevering in the face of Federal occupation. Additionally, the sexual connotations inherent in their depiction as virgins reaffirmed the former soldiers' manhood by assuring them that southern women "loved them despite their defeat."[111] Furthermore, the celebration of southern womanhood helped distance the South's decision to go to war from a defense of slavery while providing it with moral justification. As Caroline Janney explains, "white southerners insisted that they had fought in defense of hearth and home rather than a war for some abstract principle like the Union. They had waged a defensive war against those who had invaded their land—threatened their homes, freed their slaves, and harassed their women and children." By associating the archetype of southern womanhood with the war, these memorial events insisted that "the southern cause was moral, righteous, and virtuous."[112]

The ceremonies held at Grant Park also promoted sectional reconciliation. This was a critical aspect of the Lost Cause rituals of the 1880s and 1890s, especially for those participants who also championed New South development. Both northerners and southerners supported a

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[109] "A Grand Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1887.
[110] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 134-135; "The Social Side of the Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 20, 1898.
[111] Ibid, 135.
[112] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 235.

return to national unity during the post-war years, but this did not mean that either side was willing to forget their reasons for going to war. Bridging the divide nevertheless presented benefits for both North and South. For former Confederates, the airing of reconciliationist sentiment "helped convince them that they were back on equal footing in the Union," overcoming the indignities of Reconstruction, while describing their former foes as a "worthy enemy only bolstered the courage of their soldiers."[113] Such a spirit of reconciliation was frequently on display at Grant Park. During the 1894 commemoration of the battle of Atlanta, for example, it was decided that all members of the Grand Army of the Republic, the national association for Union veterans, and officers currently stationed at the nearby Fort McPherson would be invited. *The Constitution* made a point to juxtapose the peaceful reunion with the violence of the war. "Thirty years ago the boom of the cannon and the rattle of the musketry were heard all around our beautiful city," one article explained, but "on this thirtieth anniversary of the battle of Atlanta all is peace, and the blue and gray meet on common ground and shake hands in common fellowship."[114] Likewise, at a reunion of the 35th Georgia regiment in 1886, veterans from Ohio and Massachusetts met their former enemies in the shade of Grant Park to "shake hands across the bloody chasm." One Union veteran, paying respect to the fierceness of his southern counterparts during the war, deemed this visit to Atlanta much more enjoyable than his last. "It is warm today," he said, "but, gentlemen, let me tell you when I met the Georgia and Mississippi boys in gray out here on Peachtree street it was uncomfortably warm."[115] Such expressions of reconciliation not only eased the tensions felt between two former adversaries now left to share a single nation, but assured a generation of defeated southerners that their sacrifice was not without honor and bravery.

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[113] Ibid, 162.
[114] "A Sunday Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 18, 1894; "The Blue and Gray," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1894.
[115] "A Happy Day," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 25, 1886.

In addition to providing a space in which Atlantans could participate in commemorations of the Civil War, the ceremonies at Grant Park allowed Lost Cause orators to hone and promulgate their central narrative. Speakers figured prominently in such events across the South. They were typically men of social distinction – prominent state politicians, leaders of veterans' associations, or, most preferred by audiences and event organizers alike, former Confederate generals. These figures were called upon to recite the myth of the Lost Cause: the narrative which depicted the antebellum South as "a glorious, organic civilization" which was "destroyed by an avaricious 'industrial society' determined to wipe out its cultural foes."[116] Lost Cause orators spoke to this myth through the evocation of recurring themes, such as secession having been a justifiable action, the honor of the Confederate soldier, an insistence on the 'Americanness' of the southern people, and the need to preserve southern history. By expounding these themes, Lost Cause orators exposed the public to a historical narrative which deflected much of the blame regarding the cause of the war, mythologized the region's antebellum citizens, and reaffirmed the southerner's place within United States society.

To many Lost Cause promoters, the urgency of creating a southern narrative stemmed from the fear that, if left to the northerners, American history would depict the South has having gone to war to "destroy the Constitution and extend slavery." It therefore became imperative to justify the choice to secede from the Union in order to "exonerate themselves from charges of treason and rebellion."[117] The speakers at Atlanta's reunions and Memorial Day events fully embraced this mission. Judge W. L. Calhoun, historian for the 42nd Georgia Regiment, quoted Jefferson Davis on the subject while addressing the veterans in Grant Park in 1887:

> The southern states had rightfully the power to withdraw from a union into which they had…voluntarily entered, that the denial of that right was a violation of the letter and

[116] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 257.
[117] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 143.

> spirit of that compact…and that the war waged by the federal government against the seceding states was in disregard of the limitation of the constitution and destructive to the principles of the Declaration of Independence.[118]

Calhoun's recitation of Davis' rationale for secession absolved southerners of any culpability in bringing about the war. According to this reasoning, the South had every right to leave the Union as autonomous states and it was the federal government which violated the nation's founding documents by waging war over the issue. In 1890, Major J. C. C. Black, addressing the veterans who had left their camp in Grant Park to hear him speak at the city's opera house, was less damning of the North as he explained the decision to secede. "The question is," he stated, "can we in the light of the truth as it then appeared to us, justify our effort to dissolve the union as it then existed and establish for ourselves a separate nationality?" He answered his question in the affirmative and explained that it was not only justifiable, but inevitable. The "seeds of dissolution had been sown…in the convention that framed the constitution" which caused "irreconcilable differences" to pervade "not only the politics of the country, but the schools, the press, the literature, the domestic, the social and religious life of the people" until "there was no resort but to the sword."[119] According to Black, neither side of the war generation was to blame; the conditions for conflict were inherent in the creation of the country and, when compromise proved ineffective, military action became inevitable.

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[118] "A Grand Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1887.
[119] "Honoring Our Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 27, 1890.

Figure 9 – *[Photograph of Confederate Veteran Reunion, Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, ca. 1887-1899?],* ca. 1887-1899, Vanishing Georgia, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_vang_ful0045.

As they resisted responsibility for causing the war, Lost Cause orators made sure to honor the soldiers who fought on behalf of the South. They were described exclusively in terms of their heroism, bravery, and loyalty. Judge Clay Jones, speaking to the veterans of the Georgia 7th Regiment gathered in Grant Park in 1897, impressed upon his listeners that those who fought on behalf of the Confederacy were far from traitors trying to destroy the government, but had gone to war "for what they thought was right, and for the cause that is still dear to every veteran." He then went on to praise the courage of all those former soldiers who had "faced the batteries a hundred times and ran but to avoid capture and surrender."[120] The soldiers in Jones' telling of the war entered the fray time and time again on the basis of their principles, namely what they saw as the "individual and state rights granted by the Constitution," and only turned from battle to ensure that they could fight another day.[121] Similarly, in the summer of 1887, Georgia Governor John Brown Gordon, the Confederate general turned politician, reassured the

[120] "The Gallant 7th's Survivors," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1897.
[121] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 58.

veterans of the 42nd Georgia Regiment that the collapse of the Confederacy did not imply that their cause was immoral. "Defeat does not make wrong," he insisted, and "right is not established by triumph." According to the Governor, no man who fought in support of the South should feel any guilt or shame because of their loss on the battlefield. "As far as I am concerned," he assured the veterans assembled in the park, "I shall face the great white throne at the last day with no cloud upon my conscience for my action in that struggle."[122] Such rhetoric, like the ceremonies that were carried out alongside it, reinforced the image of the noble southern soldier engaged in an honorable battle.

In addition to vindicating the South's decision to go to war and mythologizing the Confederate soldier, the orators who preached the Lost Cause narrative at Grant Park emphasized the region's loyalty to the Union. While this might seem contradictory to the celebration of the southern war effort, the assertion of fidelity to the United States was a common means used by Lost Cause promoters to deflect blame and foster sectional reconciliation.[123] In 1890, for example, Major Black overtly linked the Confederate cause to the American Revolution as he simultaneously distanced it from the institution of slavery. The South was not "inspired in that struggle by the love of slavery any more than our forefathers were inspired in the Revolutionary struggle by the love of tea." Their true motives, he argued, were "patriotism," a "love of liberty," and "loyalty to the constitution…whose supremacy over every state and section we had demanded."[124] Such rhetoric served to assuage any feelings of wrongdoing on the part of southerners by countering "Union claims of moral superiority regarding emancipation," but it also helped to mollify any concerns of the North regarding lingering hostility and reintegrate the South into the national narrative.[125] Indeed, Black unequivocally asserted southern loyalty to the federal government in the same speech. "Let no

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[122] "A Grand Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1887.
[123] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 147 & 170.
[124] "Honoring Our Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 27, 1890.
[125] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 146.

loyal soul be disturbed by the apprehension that we desire or contemplate now or in the future a dissolution of the union of these states," he proclaimed. "To that union now and forever, and all that constitutes its greatness and glory," he continued, "we plighted our honor when the sword of our peerless chieftan [sic]…was surrendered at Appomattox."[126]

While Grant Park provided a space for the public to learn the central tenets of the Lost Cause through ritual practice, it also contained monuments and relics of the Confederate past which bolstered those ideas. Between the late 1880s and World War I, monuments to Confederate leaders and fallen soldiers were erected in cities across the South. These monuments became a crucial component of the Confederate tradition. Like public rituals, monuments worked to promote the historical narrative of the Lost Cause, but they exerted a quotidian influence as opposed to irregular spectacle. Placed in conspicuous locations, such statues claimed and defined public spaces, placing the Lost Cause squarely "within the daily patterns of life of the citizens."[127] Atlanta, however, found itself outside of this trend as late as 1898.[128] Unlike Richmond or New Orleans, Atlanta erected no prominent statues commemorating the Civil War during the nineteenth century.[129] This absence did not go unnoticed by visitors to the post-war city. A group of northern tourists stopping through Atlanta in 1895 were confounded by the city's lack of attention paid to its important locations and events. "Why don't you mark those historic places?" they were reported to have asked. "You should have some war monuments—at least one splendid one to commemorate the siege [of Atlanta]," they explained.[130] The city's lack of traditional monuments did not mean, however, that it was without landmarks of the Lost

[126] "Honoring Our Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Apr. 27, 1890.
[127] Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," 128.
[128] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 272-273; Daniel Judt, "Cyclorama: An Atlanta Monument," *Southern Cultures* 23, no. 2 (2017), 32.
[129] The exception being the Lion of the Atlanta statue which was dedicated in 1894 to honor the unknown dead of the Confederacy. The fact that this is a monument of mourning located in Oakland Cemetery, differentiates it from statues placed in clear public view meant to glorify and celebrate the Confederate cause.
[130] "What Tourists Want To See," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 5, 1895.

Cause. Grant Park, through the history of its land and the objects held therein, functioned as a monument to the Confederate past.

Within the grounds of the park there were physical remnants of the Confederacy's struggle to maintain possession of the city during the war. Three major engagements took place around Atlanta during General Sherman's month-long effort to affect its capture. The second, known simply as the Battle of Atlanta, took place on July 22nd, 1864 in the immediate vicinity of the land that would become Grant Park. Fort Walker, one of the several defensive positions that Confederate troops occupied on that day, stood atop a hill in what eventually became the southeast corner of the park. The remains of its breastworks and rifle pits were still visible when Colonel Grant donated the land to the city in 1883. In fact, it was Grant himself who had been responsible for designing and overseeing construction of Atlanta's defenses twenty years earlier.[131] Sidney Root quickly recognized the fort as a valuable feature of the park as he took his seat as the first president of the park commission and began the process of improving the grounds. In 1885, Grant provided Root with the original plans for the fortifications and the two men surveyed the ruins with the intention of returning it to its wartime condition. By 1886 the *Constitution* reported that the fort had "been restored exactly upon its original plan and," in combination with the rifle pits which snaked through the park, showed "the formidable character of the defenses of Atlanta."[132]

Root's interest in Fort Walker did not diminish after he completed its restoration. Driven by a desire to "make the old fort look as near like it did during the war as possible," he wrote to Governor Gordon in 1887 requesting old cannons that he could mount on the former gun positions. The Governor obliged, giving the park commission four decommissioned brass cannons from the state arsenal. The guns were soon complimented by a collection of

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[131] *Atlanta: Points of Interest*, undated, 188, Grant Park Neighborhood Subject File, Folder 3, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center Repository.
[132] "Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 19, 1885; "The Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jan. 5, 1886.

cannonballs, donated by several members of the public, which Root had stacked in a pyramid within the fort.[133] This was the first of many public donations given to the park over the coming years. What was intended to be an example of historical accuracy soon became a menagerie of Civil War relics. In 1889 alone, the park commission received a sixteen-pound shell, several cannonballs, a variety of bullets, shrapnel, and even a human skull that had been unearthed on a nearby battlefield.[134] The park quickly gained a reputation for being a repository for any and all artefacts related to the war. The superintendent of the Street Department regularly delivered to the Park Commission objects that his team uncovered during their work improving the city's roads. Likewise, when a lamppost, revered for having had a shell pass through it and kill a Confederate soldier during the war, was knocked over by a runaway dray in 1893, the police officer on the scene immediately contacted Root to have it relocated to Grant Park for safekeeping.[135] Root became so inundated with objects that they filled his office; over fifty unexploded pieces of ordinance were stored in the room at one point.[136] He had hoped to construct a museum within the park to house all of the objects—a proposal that gained a great deal of public support—but it is unclear if enough funding was available to ever undertake such a project.[137]

Following its restoration, Fort Walker increasingly served the function of a Civil War monument for the people of Atlanta. In addition to the various war relics that had been collected within the fort, statues were added to the site. These included a marble column, "engraved as a memorial of peace," that Root had erected in the center of the fort as well as a replica of the famous Lion of Atlanta – a monument to the unknown dead of the Confederacy located in

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133 "Capitol Cullings," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Feb. 15, 1887; "Cannon Balls," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 12, 1887.
134 "Sixth Annual Report," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jan. 7, 1889.
135 "The Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Aug. 26, 1888; "A Relic Badly Injured," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Aug. 1, 1893.
136 "Sidney Root's Curiosities," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Aug. 24, 1888.
137 "City Hall Notes," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Aug. 25, 1888; "Letters From The People," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Jan. 10, 1889; "Letters From The People," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Jan. 13, 1889; "A Meeting Called," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Jan. 13, 1889.

nearby Oakland Cemetery (see Figure 10).[138] This collection of artefacts, statues, and military ruins acted as a physical palimpsest of Civil War memory – a multi-layered memorial, the various components of which imparted the Lost Cause narrative to different audiences. The same article which had relayed the disappointment of northern tourists over Atlanta's lack of monuments also noted that their ability to walk along the breastworks that had defended the city during the war satisfied their desire to a degree. "Fort Walker," the reporter stated, "seemed to please them better than anything else that they saw."[139] By the end of the century it had become a popular destination for tourists and locals alike, as few visiting the park neglected to see the fort.[140]

Figure 10 – *View at Fort Walker in Grant Park*, in *"The Gate City." Atlanta, Georgia. Picturesque, Historical and Descriptive* (Neenah: Art Publishing Company, 1890), n.p.

Fort Walker's status as a Civil War monument furthered the Lost Cause narrative in several ways. First of all, it paid homage to the South's sacrifice during the war. Root named the fort after General William H. T. Walker, the Confederate commander and "gallant son of

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138 "At the Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) Aug. 29, 1885; "Atlanta's Monuments to Confederate Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1898.
139 "What Tourists Want To See," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 5, 1895.
140 "Wallace P. Reed Writes of the Value and Picturesqueness of Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 16, 1899.

Georgia who crimsoned the soil with his life's blood" during the Battle of Atlanta. His death on the battlefield made him a martyr to the Lost Cause and representative of all those who fell in defense of the city, and the South more broadly. By standing on the site of the fort which bore his name, the public "commemorate[d] the valor" of a Confederate martyr as they looked out over the field on which he had fallen from the position which had served as the "last hope of safety" for Atlanta.[141] This allowed for an engagement with a romanticized version of the conflict that emphasized tragic loss and sacrifice on behalf of the South.

Additionally, the fort helped to both preserve the memory of the war for those who had experienced it while ensuring it was transferred to those who had not. Confederate veterans, during the many reunions which were held in Grant Park in the late-nineteenth century, visited Fort Walker, where they were able "to handle the same guns that they fought with during the war."[142] Such physical interaction with the space and relics of the war allowed veterans to relive their experiences of fighting for the Confederacy. Doing so in the context of commemoration, however, allowed the former soldiers to reimagine their experiences as part of the Lost Cause narrative. The fort also reinforced the southern interpretation of the conflict for the "younger generation who [knew] the war only through history and romance." By seeing and touching objects from the conflict, children would learn "lessons in patriotism" and "Atlanta's historic glory" more than they ever could from a simple history book.[143] Finally, the fort helped to assert the narrative of the Lost Cause in the face of encroaching Union memorialization. While the federal government had dedicated a monument to James McPherson, the Union general killed during the Battle of Atlanta, after the war, "the people of Atlanta [had] been too busy clearing away the wreck left by Sherman…to take care of their history."[144] The restoration of Fort Walker

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[141] Ibid; "Atlanta's Monuments to Confederate Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1898; "At the Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Aug. 29, 1885.
[142] "The Seventh's Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 10, 1897.
[143] "What Tourists Want To See," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 5, 1895.
[144] "Atlanta's Monuments to Confederate Dead," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1898.

in 1885, however, had shown "that the old confederates [had] not forgotten their heroes in the fight of the 22d."[145]

In addition to Fort Walker, Grant Park contained another de facto monument of the Lost Cause: the *Cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta*. The cyclorama is a massive panoramic painting, standing 49 feet high and 382 feet long, which depicts a single moment of the Battle of Atlanta (4:45 PM on July 22, 1864). The work was crafted by a team of thirteen German painters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1885. It was premiered in Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 29, 1886 and then embarked on an extensive tour that took it to Detroit, Indianapolis, Chattanooga, and Baltimore before arriving in Atlanta in 1892.[146] The painting was eventually purchased by prominent Atlantan George V. Gress, who arranged to have it permanently located in Grant Park, though he retained private ownership.[147]

The cyclorama was noted for its realism and attention to detail. In order to prepare for their task, the painters had travelled to Atlanta to survey the battlefield. They had a 40-foot observation tower constructed to obtain a full view of the scenery, while they consulted battle maps and official records and conducted interviews with veterans to piece together as comprehensive an image of the battle as possible.[148] The people of Atlanta felt that the artists were successful in their undertaking. *The Constitution* claimed it was "just as real" as the battlefield itself during the conflict:

> Every charge, every detail of that great struggle is brought out with surprising precision, and in gazing over that wonderful canvas which lacks only the booming of cannon and the crackling of muskets to make it real, one gains just about as good an idea of the battle of Atlanta as if he had been an eye witness on the memorable day of July 22, 1864.[149]

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[145] "After Thirty Years," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1894.
[146] Judt, "Cyclorama," 23 & 27.
[147] "Story of Cyclorama Now At Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 20, 1898.
[148] Judt, "Cyclorama," 30.
[149] "Story of Cyclorama Now At Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 20, 1898.

The veterans who visited the cyclorama during their reunions agreed. When an aging ex-Confederate who had been wounded in the battle was asked if the picture was true to life, he responded: "True to life?...it's too damn true!" There were "too many infernal bluecoats," he added as he looked over the Federal troops who swarmed the fields in miniature.[150]

The painting's ambiguity, however, lent itself to the perpetuation of the Lost Cause more than its realism. The specific time depicted in the cyclorama, 4:45 PM, was not a decisive moment in the battle. In the scene, Confederate soldiers have just broken through Union lines, a development which may have turned the battle if the federal troops had not pushed them back with a counterattack. As Daniel Judt notes, the decision to depict this scene was likely a commercial one, as the touring painting needed to draw crowds and national sentiment of the 1880s was largely guided by a desire for reconciliation. It was therefore important to depict a scene in which neither side appeared obviously dominant. But this intended ambiguity went beyond reconciliation and managed "to glorify a northern or southern victory at the same time, depending on the audience."[151] This left an opening for viewers in Atlanta to read the Lost Cause narrative onto the cyclorama. It was "the only cyclorama that does justice to the cause of the south," one article stated.[152] Another celebrated the realistic tribute to the "men who sacrificed everything for the defense of their homes and their people," claiming it was a fitting "monument to their bravery and their death for the enlightenment of future generations."[153]

Through the rituals practiced and monuments erected in Grant Park the public was exposed to the foundational concepts of the Lost Cause, but these ideas were further reinforced by the land itself. In visiting the park, Atlanta's citizens entered a space that not only contained manifestations of the Lost Cause but recreated the idealized past. This began with the park's

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150 "After Thirty Years," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 22, 1894.
151 Judt, "Cyclorama," 29-30.
152 "Battle of Atlanta," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Mar. 1, 1892.
153 "Story of Cyclorama Now At Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 20, 1898.

design. As previously discussed, Sidney Root adhered to the naturalistic design philosophy popularized by urban parks across the nation when he planned and constructed Grant Park. By incorporating the original features of the land into his design, Root created an idyllic landscape of grassy meadows, shaded woods, gently sloping hills, meandering brooks, and placid lakes.[154] These features gave the park a pastoral appearance, striking many visitors as if a small section of the countryside had been preserved on the outskirts of the city. "It is a relief to the visitors to discover that the park is no fancy, artificial...affair," a writer for *The Constitution* explained. "Even the most thoughtless had a hazy impression that 'man made the town and God made the country' when they saw the green hills and valley before them."[155] This naturalistic scenery was in keeping with national trends in park design, but it also evoked a sense of the South's agrarian past. By assuming the appearance of untouched countryside, the park allowed the public to enter a setting reminiscent of the antebellum golden age to which the Lost Cause narrative spoke. It was a space that simulated the basis of the region's collective identity.

The park was brought into closer association with the past by the history of the land on which it was constructed. As has been noted, the area that became Grant Park was in the immediate vicinity of the site of the Battle of Atlanta. This gave the land an especial significance with regard to the Lost Cause, as it had a direct connection with the very sacrifice that the mythology glorified. Veterans who visited the park were able to more fully relive their war experiences, as the scenery provoked "a retrospective mood" in which "many an incident long since forgotten was recalled." As they walked the hills veterans recounted how "a gallant comrade had fallen near this spot; how another had gallantly defended the colors of his company, or a third had been made captive."[156] The history of the land lent itself to recollections of the war based on Lost Cause romanticizations, in which the horror of battle was replaced with

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[154] "Atlanta's Parks in Fine Trim," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Feb. 9, 1896.
[155] "Wallace P. Reed Writes of the Value and Picturesqueness of Grant Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 16, 1899.
[156] "Some Flashlights on Veterans Caught in War and in Peace," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 21, 1898.

acts of heroism and bravery. Likewise, the public's understanding of the war was influenced by the land's history. In delivering his address at the reunion of the 42nd Georgia Regiment in 1887, Governor Gordon highlighted the park's connection to the Confederate sacrifice:

> I am especially glad to greet you on this historic day and upon this sacred ground…There is not a square yard…on these hills that is not rich in the blood of your comrades. There is not one of these trees…that surround us that is not watered by that richest current that ever wet a field of strife. Here was planted the artillery. There stood the infantry in solid lines. There charged the cavalry; and all around us the advancing and retreating federals and confederates left monuments in the bodies of their dead. There was not a green leaf of this forest which, on that fated 22d of July, was not blackened with the smoke of battle.[157]

The park gave those gathered to commemorate the war the ability to inhabit a *sacred* space – ground once occupied by those whom the Lost Cause venerated. When heard in the context of the park, the wartime events described by Gordon were no longer relegated to the past. Rather than remain abstractions, the sacrifices of the battle and the actions of the combatants were actualized in the minds of the public as they stood where Confederate soldiers once had, imagined their surroundings populated by fallen heroes, and walked beneath the same trees that were once "blackened with the smoke of battle."

The park's simulation of the Old South extended to Atlanta's black population as well. As previously discussed, black access to Grant Park was significantly restricted by both official regulation and social exclusion. When the city's black residents were present, it was under the expectation that they would show deference to whites. This expectation was further built into

[157] "A Grand Reunion," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jul. 23, 1887.

the structure of the park, as the majority of African Americans present were in official roles of service to white patrons. In 1890, black women made up ninety-two percent of females employed in domestic and personal services in Atlanta.[158] As such, much of their exposure to the park came through outings taken while caring for white children (see Figure 11). Similarly, black women appeared to be exclusively hired to staff the ladies' restroom in the park and wait on white patrons. Jacob Haas, the president of the park commission who succeeded Root after his retirement in 1895, stated unequivocally in 1899 that "no white woman has ever applied for the position as matron at the public comfort building in Grant Park…it is a servant's place."[159] These positions of subservience, in which the presence of black women in the park was largely restricted to providing services to white families, maintained a semblance of the racial hierarchy of the Old South which the Lost Cause narrative romanticized.

Figure 11 – *[Photograph of outing at Grant Park, Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, 1908]*, 1908, Vanishing Georgia, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_vang_ful0952-85.

[158] Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South*, 65.
[159] *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 5, 1899.

These associations with the past made Grant Park not only a container for the ideas of the Lost Cause, but an embodiment of the idealized Old South. Such a space aided the public's embrace of the Lost Cause narrative. As Edward M. Bruner has noted, historic sites have the ability to "enact an ideology, recreate an origin myth, keep history alive, [and] attach [visitors] to a mythical collective consciousness" by allowing them to interact, physically and socially, with a reconstructed past.[160] The same can be said of Grant Park in the late-nineteenth century. It was there that Atlantans could inhabit a space which was aesthetically reminiscent of the region's agrarian past, was imbued with the memories of the Civil War, and was governed in a way which reflected a stable antebellum social hierarchy. By experiencing a simulation of the mythical Old South first-hand, the public could engage with the romanticized past more deeply. The idea of the South as promoted by the Lost Cause narrative was no longer confined to rhetoric and monuments, but could be seen, felt, and lived by Atlanta's white citizens, no matter how briefly.

As an embodiment of the Old South, Grant Park acted as a foil for the rapidly modernizing city which it flanked. The old was placed beside the new. This juxtaposition aided the public's understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Souths as presented by those who wished to continue the region's march toward material progress. Within the park, visitors gained a perspective from which the Old South appeared as the foundation on which the New South was built. This started with the park's position relative to the center of the city. Located in the eastern suburbs of Atlanta, sparsely developed at the time of its opening, reaching the park required visitors to travel out of the city by streetcar. Riding from the crowded city into its more rural outskirts gave the impression that one was travelling back in time. Indeed, Maude

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[160] Edward M. Bruner, "Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism," *American Anthropologist* 96, no. 2 (1994): 411. Bruner discusses these effects in the context of modern historic sites, specifically the reconstructed frontier town of New Salem, Illinois. These are sites that are advertised as 'authentic reproductions' of historical locations in which curators strive to immerse tourists in an environment that resembles that past as closely as possible. Grant Park obviously differs from such sites in that it was never explicitly promoted as a reproduction of the Old South. It nevertheless functioned in the same way, I argue, by providing an environment in which Atlantans could learn about their past, consume nostalgia for a bygone era, and celebrate the values of the antebellum South.

Annulet Andrews picked up on this as she travelled to the park in 1888. The modern steam-powered streetcar on which she rode seemed "rather an unsuitable mode of transportation" in the midst of "God's great hills and valleys," she explained in her account of the journey published in *The Constitution*.[161] The obvious division between the park and the rest of the city—both physical and seemingly temporal—elucidated the distinction between the Old South and the New. It was also instructive with regard to the way in which one should engage with the past as a New South subject. Due to its distance from the city, visitors to the park were necessarily transient. The fact that they could occupy the park only temporarily reflected the New South's relationship with the past: the Old South was to be remembered, revered, and revisited, but not dwelt in permanently. Such a perspective allowed visitors to the park to conceptualize the Old South as relegated to the past, even as it persisted in memory.[162]

The park also provided the public with a means of visualizing the New South's relationship with the Old. When visitors ascended the slopes of Fort Walker, the highest point in Grant Park, they obtained a sweeping view of Atlanta's ever-growing skyline (see Figure 12). This allowed them to conceptualize the city—the clearest manifestation of New South progress—as an outgrowth of the Old South. Viewed from this perspective, Atlanta appeared as a "happy, prosperous city which has outlived the rude shock that threatened its final ruin."[163] The city was not a spontaneous creation, but a crowning achievement made despite military defeat – a vindication of the South's great sacrifice. Again, Maude Andrews offers rich observations on this subject derived from her visit. From the heights of Fort Walker she looked through the "valley of blood which hath ever been the path to great earthly things" toward the city that appeared as a "phoenix rising from the ashes." Viewed amidst reminders of the past,

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[161] "Pastoral Scenes," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Nov. 11, 1888.
[162] Gabriel, "The Work that Parks Do," 134. Nate Gabriel makes a similar point regarding transience and Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. He explains that the visitor's transience in a naturalistic setting helped to frame the park as a place of leisure while simultaneously reinforcing the understanding of the urban environment as a space of work.
[163] "At the Park," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Aug. 29, 1885.

Atlanta embodied the southern victory which the Confederacy had failed to deliver. It was a "world of prosperous peace…whose sons and daughters [had] thrown off the mantle of despairing idleness and turned their strong hands to the making of a diadem that will crown their mother the ruling queen of all America."[164] The view from the park promoted an understanding that material prosperity—the obtainment of "great earthly things"—was the region's path toward national prominence. While the attempt to establish an autonomous nation had failed, industrialization and urbanization provided a means of placing the South in an equal, if not superior, position relative to the North.

At the same time, however, the perspective provided by Grant Park depicted the New South as not only a means of achieving future glory, but as a force which sustained the memory of the Old South. It was necessary for New South boosters to appeal to a sense of social continuity as they ushered the public into a deeper engagement with the national market economy that seemed to bring disorder into their lives.[165] The familiarity of the past was needed to ease anxieties in the face of drastic change. So, as Maude Andrews found hope in the vision of modern Atlanta that she saw from Fort Walker, she also took comfort in the reminders of the past that surrounded it. "Still, there is yet…some reminder of the days that have been," she explained:

> In the valleys, sloping towards the east, wide cotton fields out-stretch their sheets of snow. The great overflowing bolls seem bowing their hoary heads in repentant sorrow over the past anguish and bloodshed caused by their wealth. Above them bends the negro, dropping the white fleece into his basket, as he sings his glad revival song. *The same negro he is now as thirty years ago* [emphasis added]—black, faithful, still a slave in his heart as he picks the white cotton for the white man.[166]

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[164] "Pastoral Scenes," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Nov. 11, 1888.
[165] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 81.
[166] "Pastoral Scenes," *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Nov. 11, 1888.

The perspective gained from the vantages of Fort Walker positioned the New South as a means of preserving the social structure of the Old South. While the Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Federal occupation and northern governance during Reconstruction, and ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments generated fears throughout the South of "negro rule," its proponents depicted the New South movement as a means of preserving the antebellum social hierarchy while reintegrating the region into the Union.[167] Grant Park allowed the public to conceptualize this continuity. In the shadow of the modernizing city, African Americans, though equal citizens according to the law, maintained a position subservient to white Atlantans. Such an image reassured Atlanta's white inhabitants that, despite the changes which were sure to follow, an embrace of the New South agenda would not mean a wholesale abandonment of antebellum life.

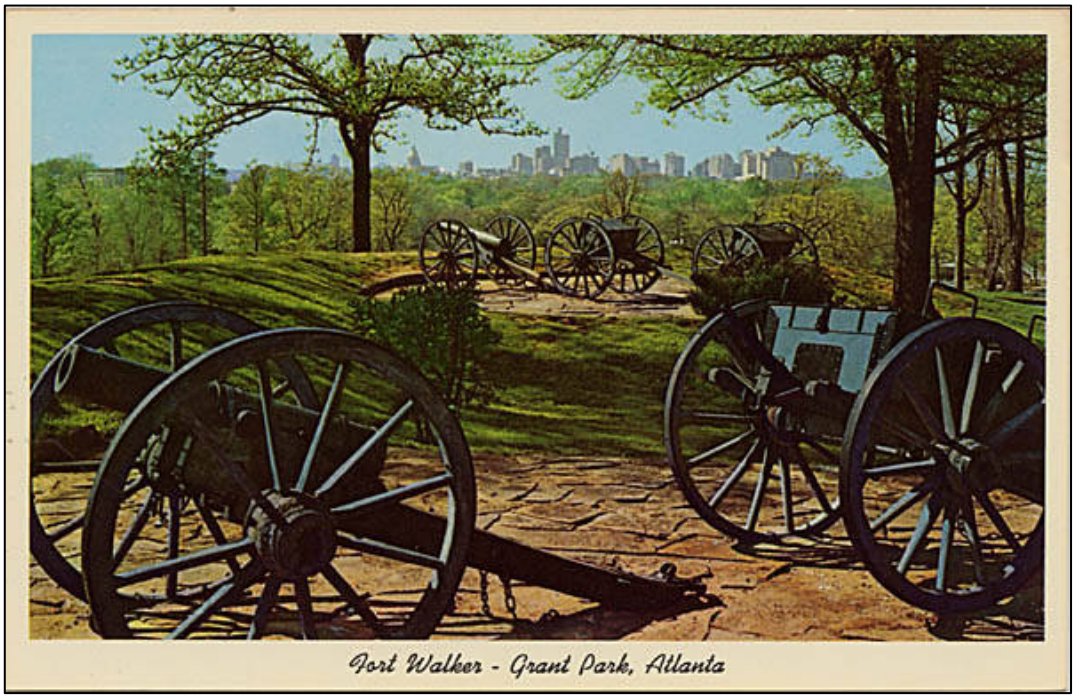

Figure 12 – Gaston Photo Service, *Fort Walker – Grant Park, Atlanta*, no date, Historic Postcard Collection, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia, https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/postcard/id/1327/rec/11.

[167] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 62.

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As this chapter makes clear, Grant Park played a major role in the formation of Atlanta's New South identity. Determined to prove to outside investors that their city was on the path to become a regional metropolis, Atlanta's developers and promoters were eager to adopt the built forms of northern cities. The creation of a naturalistic public park, firmly established as a staple feature of the nineteenth-century American city, contributed to that process itself. By establishing a large-scale public space which conformed to previously established designs, Atlanta's boosters signaled to the rest of the country that their city was developing according to a predictable process. Furthermore, it fueled the development of additional infrastructure and services typical of modern cities. Following in the wake of the park was a suburban neighborhood, multiple streetcar lines, gas, water, and sewage services, and recreational facilities. Such amenities combined to create an urban environment that catered to the lifestyles of northern middle- and upper-class whites, whose capital the New South movement required.

The park did more than simply project a metropolitan image to the rest of the nation, however. Through the regulations it imposed on its users, the park fostered behavior amongst the public that conformed to New South propaganda. Working-class park patrons were forced to adhere to middle-class standards of decorum, while African Americans' access was contingent upon their subservience to whites. This strictly regulated behavior provided Atlanta's promoters with evidence they needed to satisfy northern capitalists' demands for social stability. Finally, through its simulation of the Old South, the park served as a means of rallying white Atlantans in support of the New South movement more broadly. The park simulated the conditions of the idealized Old South, allowing white visitors to fully immerse themselves in the nostalgia upon which their cultural identity rested. Furthermore, the visual perspective gained from the park allowed such members of the public to conceptualize a link between the past for which they longed for and a potentially alienating future. This thread of cultural continuity helped forge an

allegiance among the white population to a project of development that would otherwise seem like an abandonment of their heritage. This is not to say that the initiative was entirely successful. The 1906 Atlanta "race riot," during which white residents rampaged through African American neighborhoods and murdered between twenty-five and one hundred black Atlantans following unsubstantiated claims that a white woman had been raped, stands as the clearest evidence that whites did not believe promises that the old social order would be maintained.[168] Grant Park is nonetheless illustrative of the desire common amongst New South leaders to balance popular attachment to the past with their drive toward the future. It also demonstrates the central role that public space played in their attempts to achieve this equilibrium.

[168] Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South*, 426.

Chapter Three

New Orleans, Louisiana: Urban Parks against the Commons

On a May evening in 1884 an engineer for the Spanish Fort Railroad guided his train from the private pleasure resort of the same name on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain toward downtown New Orleans. As he approached Hagan Avenue, roughly halfway to his destination, he noticed an obstruction on the tracks. Engaging the brake, he managed to bring the train to a halt before colliding with the object. As he exited the engine to clear the debris, he was confronted by fifteen dairy farmers, armed with shotguns and revolvers, who hurled "hot words" at him. He began clearing the track when one of the farmers, pistol raised, approached him. The two men grappled before the engineer managed to knock his assailant down and retreat back to the train, taking off toward the city at speed. The Chief of Police, having been informed of the situation, quickly dispatched eight officers to provide protection for the remaining trains until the last one reached the depot. No further altercations were reported.[1] The ambush was a response to an incident that had occurred earlier that evening in which a cow, being driven to pasture on the commons beyond Hagan Avenue, was struck and killed by one of the Spanish Fort trains. While it is unclear what, exactly, the dairymen hoped to achieve through the confrontation, it was not the first or last time that municipal leaders and private interests clashed with the unregulated agrarian practices that characterized life on the outskirts of the Crescent City.

This altercation is representative of a broader tension that existed between the modernizing New Orleans of the late-nineteenth century and its undeveloped suburbs. By the

[1] "Symptoms of a Riot," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 24, 1884.

1880s, the dairy farmers and their cattle were seen by the civic elite as obstacles in the way of the city's post-war revival. With a near-monopoly on the low-lying swampland between the developed city and Lake Pontchartrain known as the 'back of town,' they stood as a physical impediment to urban expansion. Yet, the root of the conflict went much deeper than the mere presence of these agrarian residents. The dairy farmers were engaged in an economy premised not only upon personal autonomy within the marketplace but control over resources and labor time made possible through co-operative production.[2] The civic elite, on the other hand, sought to clear the area for residential development in order to fuel a speculative economy based on real estate values. In their commitment to their co-operative economy, residents of New Orleans' outskirts developed a set of common-use agrarian practices that eschewed private property restrictions in favor of shared access to resources and, as a result, challenged the financial aspirations of the city's modernizers.[3]

This chapter is concerned with the efforts of New Orleans' leaders to rid the city of the de facto commons that existed on its outskirts. More specifically, it reveals the centrality of public greenspace to this effort. I argue that the city's modernizers used two large-scale parks—City Park and Audubon Park—to eliminate the commons and its associated behaviors and encourage the private residential development that they viewed as essential to New Orleans' post-war recovery.[4] The location of each park within the city's undeveloped suburbs—City Park north of the city on Metairie Ridge, approximately half-way between downtown and Lake Pontchartrain, and Audubon Park on the natural levee west of downtown—made them ideally

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[2] Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 253-254.

[3] For more on the role of the commons in the American South, see Shawn Everett Kantor, *Politics and Property Rights: The Closing of the Open Range in the Postbellum South* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Steven Hahn, "Hunting Fishing, and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South," *Radical History Review* 26 (1982): 37-64; & Scott E. Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

[4] These parks were initially referred to as 'Lower City Park' and 'Upper City Park' due to their respective locations below and above Canal Street, the major thoroughfare which divided 'Uptown' from 'Downtown.' In 1886, the name of Upper City Park was formally changed to Audubon Park. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to each by their post-1886 names throughout the chapter.

situated to counter unregulated land use (see Figure 1). Surrounded by pasturage, each park had the potential to eliminate the commons by both physically enclosing large portions of land and promoting suburbanization in their respective areas. They aided in pushing out the dairy farmers and their cows while incentivizing real estate speculation. While New Orleans' unique geography and cultural dynamics generated mixed results in this regard, public parks were nonetheless a crucial means by which modernizers attempted to energize the Crescent City's sluggish New South movement.

The common-use practices exhibited by the dairy farmers and their neighbors were by no means a novel concept. Their roots can be traced to seventeenth-century England, where the peasantry, typically within a particular bounded community, were given unrestricted access to certain resources located on a landlord's property. Such open lands were legally termed a 'commons,' a designation that Elizabeth Blackmar describes as affirming "an individual's right not to be excluded from the uses or benefits of resources" located thereon.[5] The concept was subsequently brought to North America during colonization, where it found particular purchase in the antebellum South. In this context it was less a legal designation than it was a custom. As Shawn Kantor explains, in the colonial and antebellum South, with its large swaths of unenclosed acreage, "property rights to unfenced land went unenforced, allowing people to graze their animals on what effectively became a 'commons.'"[6] While such lands were not explicitly labelled as commons, as they had been in England and continental Europe, the practice of using them as such was reinforced by various 'fence laws' which required farmers to enclose their crops if they hoped to seek damages due to wandering livestock. Such laws placed the bulk of responsibility for enforcing private property claims on the landowners themselves and permitted "livestock to roam freely upon uncultivated land." As Stephen Hahn points out, these common-use practices not only enabled small landowners and the landless to participate in the

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[5] Elizabeth Blackmar, "Appropriating 'the Commons': The Tragedy of Property Rights Discourse" in *The Politics of Public Space,* eds. Setha Low and Neil Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006), 51-52.
[6] Kantor, *Politics and Property Rights*, 2.

agrarian economy, but developed a setting in which "social relations were mediated largely by ties of kinship and reciprocity rather than the marketplace."[7] Such practices persisted after the Civil War, at which point they became particularly valuable for formerly-enslaved African Americans who sought personal and economic autonomy following emancipation. According to Scott Giltner, "many former salves chose to eke out a living on the South's seemingly limitless supply of abandoned or unoccupied land rather than work for their former masters."[8]

This tradition was certainly present in New Orleans, but was, perhaps, more deeply entrenched than in other southern locales due to the unique environment of the city and its surroundings. To fully grasp the relationship between the city and its rural outskirts, an understanding of the its geography is necessary. Situated on the banks of the Mississippi River, New Orleans' physical shape is defined by the contours of that waterway. From the time of its settlement in 1718 until the early 1900s, residential development was largely limited to the natural levee that ran adjacent to the river and stood fifteen feet above sea level. The river's regular flooding deposited huge amounts of sediment to form this levee, resulting in a band of higher, well-drained land that was safe from flood waters and, therefore, ideal for habitation.[9] This is where French (and later Spanish) colonists settled, laying the seeds of a rich Creole culture and constructing the section of the city referred to as the Vieux Carré, or, as it is now known, the French Quarter. Following the Louisiana Purchase, Anglo-American emigrants arrived in the city and continued settlement of the levee. They pushed upstream from the French Quarter, as the broad meander of the Mississippi created wider natural levees there than it did downstream, resulting in a greater amount of habitable land.[10] The result was a curving band of dense settlement along the river which branded New Orleans as the Crescent City.

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[7] Hahn, "Hunting Fishing, and Foraging," 39-42.
[8] Giltner, *Hunting and Fishing in the New South*, 15-16.
[9] Craig E. Colton, "Basin Street blues: drainage and environmental equity in New Orleans, 1890-1930," *Journal of Historical Geography* 28, no. 2 (2002): 241.
[10] Campanella, *Geographies of New Orleans*, 95.

Travelling away from the river toward Lake Pontchartrain, however, one entered the backswamp. In contrast to the natural levee, most of this perennially-flooded area sat one and a half feet below sea level—save for the naturally-formed Esplanade and Metairie Ridges that cut across the swamp about five feet above the lowest ground—and formed a "pestilential morass" known as the "back of town."[11] While what was considered the city proper ended where the backswamp began, the back of town was by no means unpopulated. Here "low-density village-like" developments populated by truck and dairy farmers as well as the "unestablished and poor" formed due to the abundance of available land.[12] This was an ethnically diverse population. From the 1820s to the 1850s, newly arrived German and Irish immigrants, attracted by cheap housing, settled throughout the city's semirural periphery. Following the Civil War, they were joined by the formerly enslaved, who had few options but to take up residence in the least desirable areas in the direction of the lake.[13]

It was this segment of the population that characterized the outskirts of New Orleans according to common-use agrarian practices. Unchecked by the pressures of an encroaching urban sprawl, these individuals were unchallenged in their use of the back of town as a de facto common. Cattle roamed at large and pastured freely on the swamp's vegetation; trees were felled for firewood and building material; Spanish moss was harvested and sold to upholsterers; deer and birds were hunted and crawfish were trapped; and various plants were foraged for subsistence by the poorest residents.[14] While such practices provided livelihoods for these members of the public, they presented tangible challenges to the New South movement in New Orleans. As the Spanish Fort incident shows, the free-roaming cattle were a persistent nuisance

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[11] Ibid & Pierce F. Lewis, *New Orleans – The Making of an Urban Landscape* (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976), 23.
[12] Richard Campanella, "An Ethnic Geography of New Orleans," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 3 (2007): 707 & Colton, "Basin Street blues," 242.
[13] Campanella, "An Ethnic Geography of New Orleans," 707-708; Lewis, *New Orleans*, 44-45.
[14] Joy J. Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress, 1880-1896* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press for the Louisiana Historical Association, 1969), 161; "Local Intelligence," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 15, 1864; "A Careless Hunter," *New Orleans Republican* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 18, 1871; "On Dit," *The New Orleans Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 21, 1875.

to the city's modernizers throughout the post-war period. They trampled sidewalks and gutters, ruined streets, and destroyed private property. But beyond the mere physical damage they did to the city's infrastructure, the cows were representative of a lifestyle that was antithetical to the New South project. Free access to the resources within the commons provided the city's poorest residents with a measure of self-sufficiency that allowed them to exist (albeit, to a limited extent) outside of the market economy. The personal autonomy made possible by subsistence farming and foraging allowed these individuals, especially African Americans, to remove themselves from the city's labor supply, thereby jeopardizing efforts to either industrialize or revitalize the cotton economy.[15] Furthermore, the disregard for private property exhibited by inhabitants of the back of town stood in opposition to suburban real estate development. As Lemuel Grant's efforts in Atlanta make clear, real estate speculation was fundamental to post-war economic rejuvenation in the New South. The disregard for private property boundaries shown by those who relied on the commons was antithetical to this process and increasingly drew the ire of New Orleans' commercial and political leadership as they attempted to shape the city according to the tenets of Gilded Age capitalism.

Efforts to mold New Orleans in this image, however, lagged behind other cities in the post-war South. Unlike Atlanta, New Orleans did not commit itself fully to a New South identity immediately after the conflict. Whereas the fledgling city in Georgia was able to leverage its short history and near-complete destruction to its rhetorical advantage as it emerged from Reconstruction, the Crescent City's early (and unspectacular) capture during the war coupled with postbellum trends in national trade meant it struggled to regain its antebellum prestige for much of the remaining century. As of 1860 it stood as the "economic locus of the vast Mississippi Valley" and the "financial capital of the entire South" due to its strategic position on the Mississippi River at a time when westward expansion and the advent of steam-powered

[15] Hahn, "Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging," 44.

water transportation placed a premium on river trade. In the 1850s alone it grew by 45 percent, outpacing both Boston and Cincinnati. By the start of the war it had a population of 170,000, making it four times larger than Charleston or Richmond, as well as the sixth largest city in the United States.[16] As such fortunes had been built upon the slave economy, the city's political allegiance clearly lay with the Democrats during the antebellum era, but it had, by no means, been a hotbed of secession prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The election of Lincoln in 1860 nonetheless pushed the political will of the state government in that direction. Though the city's ruling class feared the economic ramifications of cutting ties with the North, Unionist sympathies were rarely voiced after Louisiana joined the Confederacy in January of 1861.[17] Despite its economic and strategic importance, however, New Orleans' defenses were woefully unprepared and extremely flawed at the outbreak of the Civil War. This monumental oversight—which Justin Nystrom describes as "the single most underappreciated blunder of the entire war"—allowed the city to be captured by Federal troops in May of 1862, just over a year after it severed ties with the Union.[18]

By the war's end New Orleans faced economic crisis. As in cities throughout the South, banks which had prospered by lending money to plantation owners now held the worthless notes of planters without slave property. Likewise, local cotton factors who had acted as purchasing agents for planters now faced bankruptcy. The effects of such violent changes were exacerbated by the decline of the Mississippi steamboat trade and the expansion of northern railroads, which greatly diminished the city's geographical and economic importance. This trend had emerged in the late antebellum years, but it quickly accelerated after the war as northern rail lines extended into the South.[19] Furthermore, the city debt, which existed before the war,

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[16] Justin A. Nystrom, *New Orleans after the Civil War: Race, Politics, and a New Birth of Freedom* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 7.
[17] Thomas Ruys Smith, *Southern Queen: New Orleans in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 103.
[18] Ibid, 7 & 13-26.
[19] Michael Ross, "Resisting the New South: Commercial Crisis and Decline in New Orleans, 1865-85," *American Nineteenth Century History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 60-61.

ballooned under the Republicans' watch during Reconstruction. By 1880, it stood at a staggering $24,000,000.[20] Such impediments made the large-scale urban improvements which the New South movement demanded nearly impossible to implement. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, public sentiment severely dampened enthusiasm for industrialization and urbanization in New Orleans. As Michael Ross explains, the question of courting northern capital during this crucial period "became fatefully bound up with questions of race, Reconstruction politics, and lingering hatreds from the war."[21] Reconstruction figures such as General Benjamin 'Beast' Butler (military governor of New Orleans during Union occupation) and Governor Henry Clay Warmoth (northern-born Governor of Louisiana, 1868-1872) had pushed to modernize the city during their respective tenures, simultaneously adding to the debt and fostering resentment amongst the white population. As a result, subsequent efforts to urbanize "carried the taint of a Yankee-directed enterprise," while northern capitalists and businessmen faced enduring animosity.[22] These factors combined to hinder the emergence of a cohesive New South project in New Orleans. When modernization efforts eventually gained steam in the late 1880s, they were by no means comprehensive in fashion, nor were they readily accepted by the public.

The following analysis will show that both City Park and Audubon Park played a fundamental role in advancing New Orleans' flagging New South movement over the course of the 1890s despite these obstacles. Both parks aided in reorienting the city's undeveloped suburbs toward residential uses rather than common-use agrarian practices. When legislation alone proved insufficient to restrict the movement of wandering cattle, the parks were used to physically remove large portions of land from the commons. But they were also deployed in an effort to alter the public's perception of the back of town. As improvements according to middle-class tastes were implemented in the 1890s, the parks directed the attention of New

[20] Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded* Age, 60.
[21] Ross, "Resisting the New South," 63.
[22] Ibid.

Orleanians to the condition of the back of town while framing private residential development as its proper and inevitable purpose. Furthermore, they aided in shaping members of the public into New South subjects that were governed by and supportive of capitalistic exchange. The process of enclosure not only removed natural resources from the reach of the dairy farmers and urban poor who were dependent upon them but reinforced a conceptual binary in which 'nature' was associated exclusively with leisure and the city was designated a space of work. In this way, both Audubon Park and City Park aided in altering the public's use and understanding of New Orleans' rural hinterlands in support of the city's struggling New South movement.

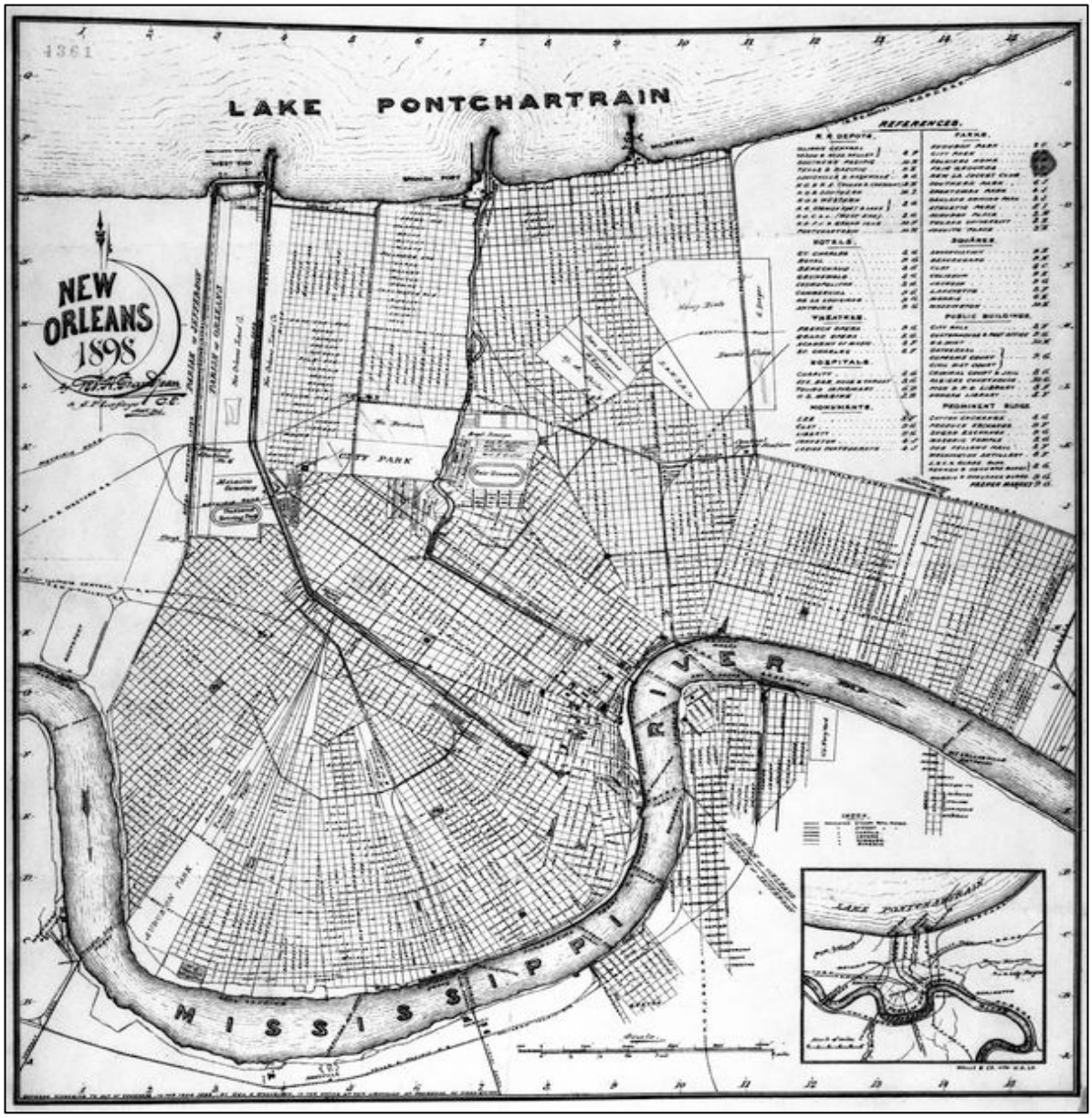

Figure 1 – George H. Grandjean, *New Orleans 1898*, ca. 1898, The Louisiana Digital Library, http://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/hnoc-p15140coll28%3A207.

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As of 1880, Audubon Park and City Park existed in name only. The latter, formed from a portion of a defunct plantation estate that was bequeathed to the city by John McDonogh upon his death in 1850, had been declared a public park by the City Council in 1859.[23] Its formal designation as such had spurred modest improvements in anticipation of its eventual development as a pleasure resort. Jean Marie Saux, for example, opened a coffeehouse just opposite the property in 1860 with the intention of providing refreshments to future park visitors. The following year, the New Orleans City Railroad opened two streetcar lines that made the area around the park more accessible, one on Metairie Road from New Basin Canal to Bayou St. John and the other running up Esplanade Avenue to the Bayou St. John Bridge.[24] Little was done, however, to improve the grounds themselves before the end of Reconstruction and, as a result, they were difficult to distinguish from the semi-rural suburbs in which they sat. Audubon Park suffered a similar fate, though its genesis was rooted in the postbellum era. The park was the product of a bill that Republican Governor Henry Clay Warmoth ushered through the State legislature in 1870. While the legislation established a Board of Park Commissioners to manage the existing City Park property, the body of Warmoth appointees used their powers to purchase an entirely new tract of land from two of the governor's political allies at a price far above its appraised value. In doing so, they mortgaged the City Park property and established a new park tax to fund the expense.[25] The deal had obvious signs of cronyism and self-dealing that not only

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[23] Lake Douglas, *Public Spaces, Private Gardens: A History of Designed Landscapes in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 47; Sally K. Evans Reeves & William D. Reeves, *Historic City Park, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Friends of City Park, 1982), 4.

[24] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 4.

[25] Ibid, 7-9. The initial bill championed by Warmoth, and passed by the State Legislature in 1870, gave the governor authority to establish the Board of Park Commissioners to manage the City Park property, but Warmoth waited a full year to fill the positions. In the meantime, Malet A. Southworth and Robert Bloomer, Warmoth's political allies, purchased a former sugar plantation known as the Foucher Estate for $600,000. Shortly afterward, the governor had another bill passed by the Legislature that expanded the powers of the Board and allowed it to purchase land anywhere in New Orleans. Southworth and Bloomer initially offered the Foucher tract to the Board for $1.5 million but accepted $800,000 after an independent appraisal valued the land at only $334,000. Resentment over the

fueled the stereotype of the greed-driven carpetbagger but soured the public on the idea of investing any further in either park. As a result, both properties remained largely unimproved by the end of the decade.

Despite their lack of development, both parks hosted the occasional picnic and Fourth of July celebration.[26] It was much more common, however, for them to serve more illicit uses during the 1860s and 1870s. City Park, for example, gained a reputation as a site for illegal activity due to its distance from the urban core. Reports of assaults, murders, and suicides within its grounds were not uncommon.[27] The ground beneath the park's enormous live oak trees was also the preferred site for dueling, a practice that was outlawed in 1850 yet persisted within the secluded property.[28] More significant than the spaces that they provided for clandestine activities, however, was both parks' function as a commons for those who lived in the vicinity. Located on the outskirts of the city, City Park and Audubon Park were in the midst of the land on which the city's poorest residents foraged for subsistence and local dairy farmers grazed their cattle. Gilbert Shaw, a Union soldier from Massachusetts stationed on the Bayou St. John, adjacent to City Park, took note of this practice as he described the peculiar habits of the local farmers in an 1863 letter home: "There are no fences here," he explained, "[and] every body lets his cattle go just where they want too [sic]. Each man puts his brand…on every cow. They let them run until they have a calf [and] then take them home [and] milk them about five months [and] then let them run until they have another calf."[29] The municipal government's failure to meaningfully develop

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obvious impropriety resulted in Warmoth's Board being disbanded immediately after Home Rule was regained in 1877.

[26] "The City," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 17, 1861; "The City," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 2, 1865; "City Park and Police," *The Weekly Louisianian* (New Orleans, LA), May 21, 1871; "Private Picnic at the New City Park," *New Orleans Republican* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 11, 1872.

[27] "Mysterious Murder," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 26, 1859; "Recorder Fremaux's Court," *The New Orleans Crescent* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1860; "Another Tragedy," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 25, 1869; "Love and Suicide," *The New Orleans Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 24, 1874; "Attempted Suicide," *The New Orleans Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 28, 1876; "The Last of a Life," *New Orleans Republican* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 26, 1876.

[28] The Picayune, *The Picayune's Guide to New Orleans* (New Orleans: Nicholson & Co., 1896), 30; "Local Intelligence," *The New Orleans Crescent* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 12, 1860.

[29] Correspondence from Gilbert Shaw to Parents, 1863, MSS 278, Folder 4, Gilbert Shaw Letters, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.

park property meant that such behavior persisted after the war as well. Jean Marie Saux, for example, tended cattle in City Park on behalf of the neighboring dairy farmers in order to supplement his coffeehouse's lack of revenue as late as 1876.[30] Such an arrangement speaks to both the reliance of the city's farmers on the commons and the lack of formal park usage.

Local and state Democrats pointed to the unimproved state of the parks as evidence of the failures of the broader Reconstruction project both before and after Home Rule was regained in 1877. Warmoth and his fellow Republicans justified the enormous investment that the city had made through the Audubon purchase with the promise of grand pleasure resorts, a vision which stood in stark contrast to reality. A reporter for the *Times-Democrat* described this juxtaposition when he travelled to City Park in the spring of 1872. As he rode the streetcar up Esplanade Avenue toward the park, he imagined what awaited his arrival:

> A broad, even lawn, with green, waving grass, cool forest trees, hung with festooned moss, and resplendent in their leaves and soft, spring buds, their gnarled trunks stretching in one endless colonnade until lost in the distance. White-shelled roadways, on which the city fathers drove their elegant teams; sparkling fountains, besides which children and their nurses whiled the happy hours away; soft, flowing streams, besides whose banks fond lovers walked in sweet simplicity and where fair, white swans glided about with their own bright eyes reflected in the cool depths below.

This idealized vision of the park was very much in keeping with the image promoted by urban parks throughout the country. They were intended to provide a picturesque setting that conformed to middle- and upper-class leisure activities. Indeed, the *New Orleans Republican* had assured its readers in 1870 that improving City Park would "procure for all our people

[30] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 4; "City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 4, 1876.

unexampled means of health and enjoyment…[and] prepare our city for its coming metropolitan career of prosperity and influence."[31] What the reporter for the *Times-Democrat* found in 1872, however, was quite the opposite. Utilizing a racist caricature to underscore the property's lack of sophistication, the reporter relayed his experience:

> He saw a wide waste of common, a few large oak trees on a bare ridge, a rickety fence, on which sat a darkey minding cows:
>
> "Hellow!"
>
> "Hellow yu-sef."
>
> "Where's the Park?"
>
> "Dis am de Park."
>
> Our reporter was astonished. Aghast, the Park! its beautiful drives, its fountains, its cool streams…On his left was a common dirt road, stretching almost for a mile, muddy, and cut up by cattle; on his left a sort of waste common, intersected by a filthy drain, which he was informed "am de bayou." A hundred yards further down was what is called the Park proper, a group of really splendid oak trees, on a bare ridge, cut up by cows…On the other side of the bayou was a sort of "scrub" timber of "wild haw" and "black jack" bushes, among which fed a herd of cows, who munched away, perfectly at home, as if the property was fully theirs. There was not even a single stick or stone to show that it is what it is pretended to be, a place of enjoyment for the citizens of our city.[32]

By combining the common-use practices of the dairy farmers with racist stereotypes of black New Orleanians and contrasting the resulting image with that of the idealized park, the reporter levelled an indictment of Reconstruction leaders in general. The unimproved condition of the

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[31] "The New Orleans Park," *The New Orleans Republican* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1870.
[32] "A Times Reporter in the Country," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 31, 1872.

park was made a physical embodiment of the perceived injustice of Federal occupation and Republican rule. According to his telling, the carpetbaggers had plundered the white public's wealth and given what was rightfully theirs to others (i.e. the formerly enslaved) to misuse. Similar complaints were raised with regard to Audubon Park in 1879. In this instance, however, the essence of the message had changed with the overthrow of Reconstruction. Rather than use the park's neglected state to condemn Republican administration, it was presented as a potential route to municipal redemption under Democratic leadership. The *Times-Picayune* lamented the fact that "this spacious and beautiful tract of land…has been for years a mere vulgar pasture, while possessing all the advantages of situation and environment for a park." By reclaiming and improving the tract, the paper insisted, it could be transformed into a pleasure resort worthy of a city "of the extent and importance of New Orleans."[33] While the political message of each of these articles differed, they both framed the use of the land as a commons as a fundamental wrong to be righted.

Despite the general dissatisfaction with cattle occupying the city's parks, municipal leaders took advantage of the habit for the sake of political patronage after Home Rule was regained. While Democrats had reclaimed the city government in 1872, Republican retention of the Governorship had kept control of the parks out of reach. This changed in 1877. After the election of Democratic Governor Francis T. Nicholls and the abolition of Warmoth's Board of Park Commissioners, the parks were placed under the authority of the city's Police Administrator, and thus the local Democratic faction known as the Ring. The Ring was a descendent of the antebellum Democratic machine that catered largely to the urban working-class and focused on patronage as means of maintaining political power.[34] The position of Park Keeper, appointed by the Police Administrator, presented a new job for a loyal ally. With regard to City Park, Police Administrator Diamond appointed local attorney P. A. Peyroux to the

[33] "The City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 3, 1879.
[34] Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age*, 44; Nystrom, *New Orleans after the Civil War,* 192-193.

position, who in turn hired Jean Marie Saux as a subordinate to care for the property. As the city's financial situation left no funding to pay Peyroux's salary, he was given the authority to charge for the privilege of pasturing cattle on the grounds and keep the proceeds as compensation. He passed the responsibility on to Saux, who charged the dairymen a dollar to a dollar and a half per head of cattle and split the receipts with Peyroux.[35] A similar situation seems to have been instituted in Audubon Park at the same time. In October of 1877, complaints were heard from the dairy farmers of the Sixth District who were unable to afford the grazing fees required to access the park. "It was suggested…," one paper explained, "that the Upper City Park be thrown open as a pasture to these poor people and not kept closed, as it is now, for the exclusive use…of the mules and horses of street railroad companies and a favored few others."[36] No official reprieve was granted. This can be seen as the beginnings of the enclosure process. The privatization of pasture rights certainly limited access to the land, but as this was focused only on the park properties for the sake of patronage, it did little to counteract common-use practices in general.

The 1880s marked a turning point in terms of how municipal leaders viewed both park improvements in particular and urban development more broadly. While their steadfast obstructionism may have succeeded in frustrating Republican ambitions during Reconstruction, it now left New Orleans' conservatives with a city that appeared "decidedly backwards" in comparison to southern locales such as Atlanta that had eagerly welcomed northern capital after the war. New Orleans had no sewer system, its waterworks produced an undrinkable liquid that left residents reliant on the use of cisterns, and its streets were unpaved thoroughfares that transformed into impassable quagmires after heavy rain. Now in undisputed control of the Crescent City, local Democrats not only needed to address the various urban issues plaguing New Orleans, but had to temper anti-Yankee sentiment in order to attract the outside

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[35] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 9.
[36] "The Pound Puzzle," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Oct. 10, 1877.

investment that they needed to carry out improvements.[37] In short, New Orleans' initial resistance to northern influence after the war created obstacles to the formation of a comprehensive New South agenda. The modernization efforts that began in the 1880s had to both compensate for lost time and overcome widespread skepticism toward urban development that had been building for nearly two decades.

The need to address New Orleans' inadequate infrastructure brought Joseph A. Shakspeare, Reformer candidate for mayor, to office in the election of 1880. The Reformer faction of the local Democratic Party was defined in opposition to the business-as-usual patronage politics and outright corruption of the Ring. The group represented the interests of the commercial and professional classes and drew much of its support from the city's elites. Balancing the city's budget was their top priority, but they also ran on a platform of reducing the number of city employees and rooting out corruption, funding public schools, investing in infrastructure, and a reducing crime.[38] Shakspeare, the forty-three-year-old proprietor of a local ironworks, was a natural face for the economically-focused political renewal for which the Reformers advocated. The crowning achievement of his two years in office was the restructuring of the city's debt, signed into law in 1882, which allowed the bulk of it to be redeemed by 1895. While Shakspeare and his fellow Reformers did not explicitly promote the New South agenda, they mirrored the movement's philosophy and tactics with their focus on economic development and appeal to the city's upper and middle-class voters.[39]

It was not long before the cattle that roamed on New Orleans' periphery came under Shakspeare's scrutiny. Wandering cows had been a persistent impediment to the city's development, obstructing or undoing improvements in various ways. Suburban residents, especially those in the Sixth and Second Districts (those which encompassed Audubon and City Park, respectively), frequently complained of the damage done to private property by the

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[37] Ross, "Resisting the New South," 66-67.
[38] Nystrom, *New Orleans after the Civil War*, 192-193; Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age*, 44.
[39] Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age*, 64.

animals. Fences were uprooted, gardens were devoured, and sidewalks were destroyed.[40] The streetcars that ran along St. Charles Avenue, connecting the city and the suburb of Carrollton, were often stalled by cattle on the tracks. The "continual whistle of the engines" used to drive them away was, according to the *Times-Picayune*, "a screaming nuisance to all who hear [it]."[41] Most significantly, the modest urban improvements that the city was able to fund were undone nearly as soon as they were completed. John Fitzpatrick, Administrator of Public Works, blamed the cows for the dire condition of the streets beyond Claiborne Avenue in January of 1881. Upon inspecting his department's work in that area, Fitzpatrick found the streets "in an impassable condition," with some roads behind Hagan Avenue containing holes "nearly three feet in depth and some eight feet in diameter." The most prominent contributing factor, he explained, was the constant passing of cows that pastured on the commons: "As they travel in one another's footsteps their paths, after a rain, can be seen on the shell-roads, where the hoofs have cut through and these spots are the nuclei for deep holes, which are soon made by passing vehicles."[42]

While the existing pound ordinance—the municipal law that required the impoundment of free-roaming cows—prohibited the movement of cattle across public roads, its enforcement had been uneven and fraught with controversy, resulting in violent clashes between pound-catchers and the dairy farmers. Shakspeare pushed for a stricter enforcement of the laws to abate the cattle nuisance, but it quickly became apparent that regulation alone would not be enough. The dairy farmers had organized and began to resist what they viewed as an overreach on the part of the pound-catchers. In 1874, the dairymen of the Sixth District formed the Dairymen's Co-operative and Mutual Aid Society in order to present a unified front during the physical

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[40] "City Council," *The New Orleans Bulletin* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 25, 1875; "The Pound Question," *The New Orleans Daily Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 6, 1878; "The Goats and Cows," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Oct. 1, 1881.
[41] *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 9, 1879.
[42] "Municipal Matters," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 18, 1881.

altercations that surrounded enforcement of the pound ordinance at that time.[43] By 1881 their numbers had expanded to include farmers in other districts, while their tactics had grown more sophisticated. By 1889, there were said to be 1,000 registered members of the society.[44] In August John F. Bremer, the group's president, sent a letter to Mayor Shakspeare contesting his administration's interpretation of the ordinance. The pound-catchers had been impounding unattended cattle found anywhere within the pound limits, but, as Bremer explained, "the sum and substance of the ordinance is to prevent cattle…from roving on the streets and banquettes, and certainly not from grazing on the open lots without impinging on the streets and banquettes."[45] In other words, the city had the authority to prohibit cattle from damaging streets and sidewalks, but it could not prevent them from using the commons. If the cows were to be removed from New Orleans' suburbs, it would not be through the existing pound ordinance.

The city's public parks presented a possible solution. At the same time that Shakspeare was grappling with the dairy farmers, he set about reorganizing municipal park administration. Two ordinances that passed in April and July of 1881 placed City Park and Audubon Park, as well as New Orleans' six public squares, under the control of private management boards.[46] As this removed the parks from the purview of the Police Administrator, it can be seen as in keeping with the Reformers' vow to eliminate patronage opportunities. But it was also a means of altering the character of the suburban territory surrounding New Orleans. The new boards were comprised of private citizens, most of them wealthy residents who lived in the vicinity of the parks and had a vested interest in seeing them improved. The transfer would, in theory, circumvent municipal funding issues by requiring each Board to make improvements "at its own expense or by such other means as it can provide through private contributions" and put the

[43] "The Dairymen," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 16, 1874.
[44] "The Cow Question," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 3, 1889.
[45] "In Committee," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 9, 1881.
[46] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 10.

parks in the hands of those whose property values would be benefitted by a nearby public park.[47] Thus, the Reformers and the new park commissioners shared a common desire to see the back of town transformed into a residential development.

The local press lent its support to the initiative as well. In discussing park improvement during this period, the Shakspeare-aligned papers consistently presented the use of parkland as a common as diametrically opposed the ways in which parks functioned in other cities across the country (i.e. as spaces for middle-class leisure activities). "During the pleasant days of spring, summer and fall the great parks of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and other cities are filled with people," a writer for the *Times-Democrat* explained before juxtaposing such cases with the scene in Audubon Park. "Now it is only a pasture ground for stray cattle. It ought to be enclosed at once, and laid out in accordance with some definite plan for its improvement."[48] Another article raised a similar point in the spring of 1881:

> Everybody knows how [the parks] have been converted into cattle pastures; how the lordly live-oaks…which in other cities would be regarded as of priceless value, have been chopped down…for fire-wood, and how the school children have actually been afraid to go a-Maying there lest the horned cattle should dispute their right to enjoy the grateful shade of the leafy monarchs of the field.[49]

According to such articles, the persistence of cattle in the parks prevented New Orleans from keeping pace with other cities. While two large-scale public parks would normally stand as evidence of metropolitan sophistication, two that had been abandoned and ceded to roaming cows had the opposite effect. As one local park advocate plainly put it in 1891, parks in such a

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[47] The Audubon Park Commission, *Glimpses of Audubon Park*, 1919, 6-8, RG500 2004.28.40, Folder 22, Gurley Papers, The Louisiana Historical Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.
[48] "Our Public Parks," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 2, 1880.
[49] "Let's Have a Park," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA) Mar. 10, 1881.

condition were "a disgrace to the city."[50] If the animals could be removed, and the behavior associated with their presence eliminated, a step toward conforming New Orleans to contemporary urban standards would be taken.

The efforts of the Shakspeare administration to reenergize park development, however, proved unsuccessful. Despite the hope that the Boards would be able to rally private investment, their efforts languished without municipal funding. Modest work such as the erection of fences and gates was carried out, but nothing near the significant landscape design needed to transform the tracts into pleasure resorts was accomplished. In the case of City Park, it proved nearly impossible to even gather the quorum of commissioners required to decide what improvements were necessary.[51] Furthermore, what basic steps the City Park commissioners managed to take were met with resistance from the neighboring dairy farmers. In July of 1881, P.A. Peyroux, then a member of the Board, reported to Mayor Shakspeare that overnight "1200 feet of the fence around the park had been pulled down by parties whose cattle had been put off the grounds."[52] The stalled efforts led Jean Marie Saux, also one of the new commissioners, to revert back to his former practice of renting the privilege of pasturing on the grounds. In March of 1882, the *Times-Picayune* complained that "no improvement whatsoever is visible in the Lower City Park since the commission appointed by the City Council have taken charge of the ground" before detailing complaints from citizens who accused Saux of leasing the grounds to an individual dairyman.[53] Saux defended himself by explaining that he had a man employed to make sure no cattle entered the portion of the park used by the public and claiming that the complaints did not originate from citizens unable to use the grounds for leisure, but from "the dairymen residing in the vicinity, who have been in the habit of driving their cattle into the Park for pasturage" and

[50] "The Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1891.
[51] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 10.
[52] "The Cattle in the City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA) Jul. 26, 1881.
[53] "The City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 29, 1882.

"can do so no more under the existing order of things."[54] Those upset, he insisted, were those unable to afford the now-privatized pasture.

Regardless of who initially voiced the complaints, the controversy caused the City Council to abolish City Park's Board of Commissioners the following month.[55] Strangely enough, with the abolition of the Board the City Council became resigned to formally leasing the grounds as a pasture. L. Andre Burthe, "Judge of Civil District Court and long-time cattle dealer," was allowed to graze his cows on the land for a fee $41.65 per month. This arrangement lasted until 1888 when Burthe, who had moved to Alabama to take a position as treasurer of the Southern Car Works, was found to be in default of the lease.[56] Despite its ultimate failure, this arrangement is significant. The political philosophy of the city leaders can be read in their decision to grant grazing privileges to a cattle dealer rather than any of the dairy farmers. Rather than use pasture rights for the sake of patronage, as the Ring had, privatization was used to benefit Reformer interests. If cattle were to be allowed on the grounds, it would be done in a way that benefitted both the business-class and the city coffers.

While the Board of Commissioners for Audubon Park did not suffer from the same dysfunction as that of City Park, it was equally wanting in terms of funding. However, a new opportunity to develop the grounds was presented in 1883. That year the park was selected as the site for the forthcoming World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition. In September, the City Council agreed to lease the park to the private company in charge of the exposition under the condition that they provide for the "permanent improvement and embellishment of the grounds."[57] When questions regarding the legality of leasing public property to private interests were raised, the City Attorney relied upon the park's use as a commons as justification for the decision. He admitted that "if there were, indeed, and in fact, a park, with all the

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[54] Ibid.
[55] *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 5, 1882.
[56] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 10; "City Hall," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Feb. 7, 1888; "City Hall," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 1, 1888.
[57] "Local Law Givers," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 26, 1883.

improvements, conveniences, etc., it could be seriously questioned whether the city could permit any use…of it which would curtail the normal enjoyment of it by the public." "But the city has no 'park,'" he explained. "She is…in possession, as owner, of a piece of property, having, it is true, theoretically a specific dedication, but without sign or beginning toward the execution of it, *a wild common*, not used for public or private purpose, and with no means to change this condition [emphasis added]."[58] This legal rationale reveals the divergent values placed on land by the city's elites and the inhabitants of the rural outskirts. Whereas the farmers and landless poor valued the suburbs for the natural resources derived therefrom, municipal leaders believed their true value could only be realized after residential development.

The decision to use Audubon Park as the site of the exposition brought it into direct contact with the emergent New South movement in New Orleans. Technically meant to commemorate the appearance of cotton in the international market, the event's organizers hoped to replicate the effects of Atlanta's International Cotton Exposition (1881) by making the exposition, as Joy Jackson describes it, "a manifestation of the city's commercial renaissance" in the 1880s in order to announce New Orleans' "emergence into active competition again with other American cities for more business, industry, and capital."[59] While the city's economy was nowhere near its pre-war state, it had been modestly reinvigorated in the early 1880s. Jetties constructed at the mouth of the Mississippi were completed in 1879, providing access to larger commercial vessels by deepening the waterway, while the harbor was linked with the grain fields of the Far West in 1883 via a junction between the Southern Pacific railroad and the eastern lines. The result of such improvements was a much-needed stimulus for New Orleans' economy, initiating a gradual recovery from the hardships of the post-war years. The exposition was both a result of this commercial reinvigoration and an attempt to prolong its effects.[60] The exposition itself, however, was a financial failure. After opening with a significant portion of its buildings

[58] "The Cotton Exposition," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 4, 1883.
[59] Jackson, *New Orleans in the Gilded Age*, 204.
[60] Ibid, 207-208.

still under construction, it closed with a deficit in June of 1885 after running for only six months. It soon reopened under new management as the American Exposition but closed again in March of 1886, this time permanently.[61] While the fair was not the catalyst for an economic boom that Atlanta's had been, it did energize the local business community. More significant, however, was the impact it had on Audubon Park. The exposition succeeded in turning local attention toward the site, laid the foundation for its broader development, and set the surrounding area on the course to become the preferred residential neighborhood for the city's wealthiest citizens.[62]

As the exposition closed its gates, a renewed interest in improving Audubon Park emerged. By April of 1886, a proposal to re-form the park's Board of Commissioners was under consideration by the City Council. The impetus for the action was a desire amongst municipal leaders not to let the modest improvements which the exposition had brought to the grounds go to waste. As one newspaper explained, "the improvements made by the Exposition management on the grounds will be a nucleus of value, and there is no reason why wide-awake commissioners can not…arrange a park unexcelled in any Southern city."[63] The improvements were the nucleus of a park, indeed. By no means were the grounds in the condition of a fully landscaped park but walking paths had been laid out and flowerbeds had been planted. This was certainly more than the Board had managed to accomplish in its three years at the helm. The centerpiece of the improvements was the exposition's Horticultural Hall – an immense greenhouse that contained a collection of tropical plants. This structure remained in the park until it was destroyed by a hurricane in the early twentieth century (see Figure 2).[64]

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[61] Ibid, 204.
[62] Douglas, *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, 54; Lewis, *New Orleans*, 53-54.
[63] "Our New Orleans Letter," *The Donaldsonsville Chief* (Donaldsonville, LA), Apr. 24, 1886.
[64] Douglas, *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, 55.

Figure 2 – Detroit Publishing Co., Publisher, *Horticultural hall, Audubon Park, New Orleans*, ca. 1890, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016798491/.

By May of 1886 the City Council passed an ordinance returning control of Audubon Park back to the Board of Commissioners. The new Board was to be composed of twenty-four members, including the Mayor, the Commissioner of Police and Public Buildings, and the Commissioner of Public Works. The remaining seats would be filled by representatives of each district of the city to avoid accusations of sectional favoritism of the American sector over the Creole.[65] While energized by a renewed interest in park improvement, the Board was again hamstrung by a lack of financial support. As was the case previously, they were left to their own devices to fund their efforts. According to a *Times-Picayune* account of the park's history published in 1891, the new incarnation of the Commission "had full charge," but "was hampered

[65] Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1907, Audubon Park*, 34, SB 483.N5 A7 1907, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.

for lack of means, and improvements amounted to but little."[66] Their most significant accomplishment was renaming the park after the Haitian-born Louisiana naturalist, John James Audubon in 1886.[67] Otherwise, they could afford to do little but attempt to maintain the improvements implemented as part of the exposition.

As the commissioners struggled to continue the park's development, the commons crept back in. By the spring of 1886, just after the exposition's closure but prior to the Board's reorganization, complaints were received by the City Council from residents of the Sixth District regarding the pound ordinance's lack of enforcement. "St. Charles Avenue and the neighboring streets," they claimed, were "overrun by cattle, resulting in damage to the sidewalks and property."[68] The Council appears to have acted, ensuring that cows found on streets and enclosed property were impounded, but the park soon complicated the matter. The pound ordinances prohibited animals from entering the park, but the lack of funding prevented the commissioners from keeping the fences in repair. The dairy farmers of the Sixth District submitted their own petition to the city in October of 1887, complaining that the condition of the fences allowed cattle to wander into the park, despite having been initially set to pasture outside of the pound limits, at which point they were seized by the police until the farmers could pay for their release. The petitioners requested relief from the "excessive pound fees," as they believed responsibility lay with the city for keeping the park enclosed if it was to be off limits as a pasture.[69] The stalled park development and return of the cattle dampened the brief hope that the exposition had inaugurated Audubon Park's emergence as a true pleasure ground. "The summer has gone without anything having been done for Audubon Park, which has gone from bad to worse," an exasperated columnist wrote in an 1886 issue of *The Times-Democrat*. "If

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[66] *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1891.
[67] "Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 27, 1886.
[68] "Municipal Matters," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 13, 1886.
[69] *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Oct. 5, 1887.

nothing is done toward redeeming [it] by next summer, the commission might as well be dissolved and the park abandoned to its former condition of a cow pasture."[70]

The spirits of the park advocates were lifted when Shakspeare was elected for a second term as mayor in 1888. The return of the reform-minded executive emboldened Audubon's commissioners to push for the regular source of funding that they desperately needed to carry out substantial work on the park. They lobbied for the establishment of a property tax of one-quarter of one mill, collected for ten years, to be used exclusively for the park's improvement. They succeeded in getting the proposal placed on the ballot to face a public vote during the election in November of that year. The commissioners, aided by the local press, steadfastly campaigned on behalf of the measure, explaining to the public that, if New Orleans wanted to stand alongside the nation's other great cities, its citizens needed to commit to creating a large public park. "No one doubts that New Orleans needs a park," *The Times-Democrat* stated the day before the election, "yet there is some hesitation about voting the tax, without which we cannot get one." Audubon Park, the paper continued, was on the cusp of greatness and would be more easily transformed than the parks of other cities. "Central Park was but a mass of rocks and almost treeless when work was begun there, whereas at Audubon Park we start with groves of oaks, unequalled anywhere in the country, while to the side is the magnificent sweep of the Mississippi." If only sufficient funding was available, Audubon Park could be "made a great one at a very small cost."[71]

Despite the efforts of the park advocates, the tax was resoundingly defeated. As of November 9th, the vote tally stood at 603 in favor of the tax and 2,056 against.[72] The failure of the tax to gain public support appears to have been due to the sectional tension between Uptown and Downtown that the composition of the Board was meant to prevent. As *The Times-Picayune* explained, "the vote against the tax came principally from the down town, where there is

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[70] "Do We Want a Park?" *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Oct. 18, 1886.
[71] "The Audubon Park Tax," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 6, 1888.
[72] "City Hall," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 9, 1888.

opposition to improving the upper part of the city at the expense of the lower districts."[73] Downtown residents, it appears, felt no obligation to pay for the improvement of Audubon Park when City Park remained completely neglected in their midst. The defeat was a crushing blow to the Audubon Park commissioners. Convinced that public opposition was insurmountable, several members of the Board resigned. Mayor Shakspeare floated the idea of replacing all of the commissioners with a "board of ladies" that he felt would be more effective in swaying public opinion on the matter.[74] Prior to the failed tax, the only successful fund-raising effort on behalf of the park had been carried out by a contingent of public-spirited women (mostly middle-class socialites), who had hosted a charity ball in 1887 and used the proceeds to construct a granite gateway to the grounds (see Figure 3).[75] Such work is a prime example of southern women, who increasingly joined social clubs and civic organizations in the late-nineteenth century, taking advantage of the changes wrought by the New South to expand their public roles. Unlike Atlanta's Grant Park, New Orleans' parks presented an opportunity for white women to move beyond their antebellum identities. There were, to be certain, limitations placed on the transcendence of gender roles. While the *Picayune* had, perhaps in jest, stated that "the best thing in the world that could happen to Audubon park would be the resignation of the gentlemen controlling it…in favor of their wives, sisters, cousins and aunts," women were relegated to an auxiliary Board that was subordinate to the one run by men.[76] This division of power is indicative of the balance that Joan Marie Johnson explains white southern women had to strike in their effort to cast themselves as New Women during this period: their demands for greater autonomy could not be seen as challenging white supremacy or patriarchal authority.[77]

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] "The Improvement of Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 30, 1887; *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 4, 1887.
[76] "Woman's World and Work," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 11, 1888; *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 18, 1888.
[77] Joan Marie Johnson, *Southern Ladies, New Women: Race, Region, and Clubwomen in South Carolina, 1890-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 4-5.

Figure 3 – Charles L. Franck Photographers, *Saint Charles Avenue entrance gates, Audubon Park*, ca. 1920, Louisiana Digital Library, http://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/hnoc-clf%3A10352.

At the same time that he was throwing his support behind the park tax, Shakspeare once again initiated a crackdown on the grazing practices of the dairymen. In June of 1888, the police carried out a large raid on Metairie Ridge, in the vicinity of City Park, during which a large number of cattle were impounded. The dairymen successfully petitioned Shakspeare for the release of their cows, claiming that, because the animals had been under the watch of keepers, as required by the pound ordinance, no law had been broken. Conceding "that the pound ordinances were defective," the mayor relented but vowed to submit revised regulations to the City Council.[78] In the meantime, the local press sounded a now-familiar refrain regarding the obstacles that the cattle posed to the modernization of New Orleans:

[78] "A Cattle Drive," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 30, 1888.

> The swamps back of New Orleans and the rear streets of the city are no fit place for grazing cattle. This is recognized the world over, and no city of 10,000 people or more, save this, offers its thoroughfares as free pasture. People living in the cow neighborhoods lead a miserable life on account of this almost criminal leniency to the dairymen, and *nothing perhaps conduces more to prevent the building up of the rear precincts than these roaming cattle*, which trample down gutters, ruin trees and banquettes, and convert the streets into a series of ruts and stagnant cow wallows [emphasis added].[79]

According to this argument, the problem was not simply that the cows damaged infrastructure but prevented residential development in the back of town. The dairymen countered on the same terms. They took a contingent of city councilmen on a tour of the area and argued that it was the frequent trading of property amongst real estate speculators, not the practices of the dairymen, that had led to neglect of the suburbs. A journalist covering the event relayed their argument: "A good deal of property not owned by them has been sold and resold so often for taxes that it is hard to trace the real owner…The land would be overgrown with high weeds and be a dwelling for reptiles, a hiding place for unsavory characters and a general nuisance, were it not for the cattle grazing there."[80] Furthermore, far from destroying the land, the dairymen contended, they had actually improved it: "Whatever other good roadways there are in the territory mentioned were made by the dairymen, who have also repaired bridges and made other improvements for their own benefit."[81] In an attempt to head off the new pound ordinance, the farmers proposed a compromise: they would erect and maintain fences, at their own expense, on each side of Canal Street in order to keep cattle off of the road while allowing them to remain on the commons behind Hagan Avenue. It was even proposed that the dairymen could hire a gatekeeper to ensure that vehicles could move freely on the road. The councilmen admitted that

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[79] "The Pound Ordinance," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 7, 1888.
[80] "A Tour with the Dairymen," *The Time-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 18, 1888.
[81] Ibid.

the proposition "would effectively accomplish the objects sought by the pound ordinance."[82] The City Attorney, however, ruled that the city did not have the legal right to give the dairymen such authority. In seeming contradiction to the rationale that handed control of Audubon Park to the exposition company, he stated that "public roads and streets cannot be appropriated to private uses."[83]

A revised pound ordinance was drafted the following month which extended the pound limits to encompass the Hagan Avenue commons as well as the length of St. Charles Avenue leading to, and including, Audubon Park (see Figure 4). Furthermore, it ensured that any cattle "found running over banquettes, through ditches and on the streets, *commons*, or *open lots*, or trespassing on private property, whether…*in charge of a driver or not* [emphasis added]" were subject to seizure.[84] The effect was to exclude livestock from all potentially habitable parts of the city, thereby freeing it up for residential development. The pound ordinance was soon followed by a revised dairy ordinance, which was intended to go beyond regulating the movement of cattle by directly addressing the industry that they fueled. Under the ordinance, it was deemed unlawful to establish or maintain a dairy within the Sixth District.[85] Significantly, this only applied to the Uptown area that included Audubon Park where there existed the greatest potential for land speculation. Indeed, supporters of the ordinance framed the law as a means of protecting real estate interests. Homeowners along the major thoroughfares testified that the cows damaged property and deterred renters and buyers. "The demand for property in that locality [is] good," they insisted, "and the day the dairymen moved their dairies, that day their land [will] increase in value." The dairymen cried foul, claiming that the law was only for the benefit of the wealthy who had moved to the area long after the dairymen had built roads and sidewalks in the area. "The milkmen had made the Sixth District," one stated, "not the men residing in the great

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[82] "The Pound Ordinance," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 11, 1888; "The Pound Ordinance," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 18, 1888
[83] "The City Hall," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1888.
[84] "City Hall," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 2, 1888.
[85] "The City Hall," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 8, 1888.

residences on the avenues." The landowners scoffed at the idea. "The dairies [are] like the Indians of the Far West," one responded, "they…have to give way to the march of improvement."[86]

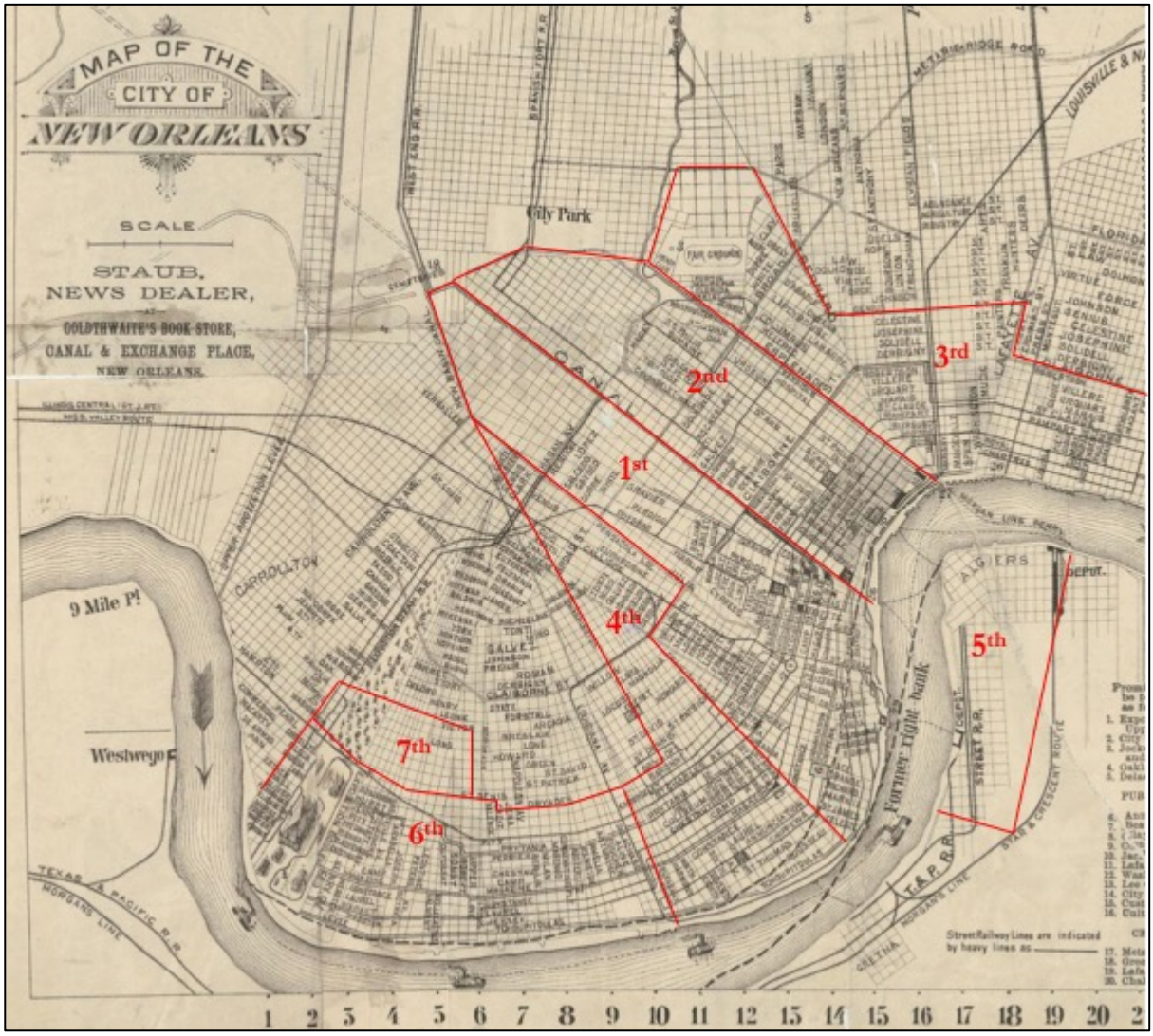

Figure 4 – Map showing approximate boundaries of pound districts established in 1888.

[86] Ibid.

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As the 1880s came to a close, New Orleans' parks entered a new phase of development. The failure of the Audubon Park tax appeared to put an end to the prospect of securing municipal funding once and for all and forced the city's park advocates to reassess their strategy. As City Park was still without a managing board, Audubon Park was the first to be addressed. Having been rebuffed by the public at the ballot box, J. Ward Gurley, president of the Audubon Park Board of Commissioners, turned to the private sector for assistance. Gurley was well-positioned for the task. A prominent local lawyer, he maintained close connections with the city's business leaders and politicians.[87] In January of 1890, Gurley approached the New Orleans Board of Trade, a body that was deeply concerned with improving the appearance of the city, with the proposition that they join the commissioners of Audubon Park in establishing a formal association. This private association, he explained, would fund the park's improvement by charging its members $10 in annual dues while soliciting additional donations from public-spirited citizens. It would function as an auxiliary of the existing Park Commission, giving that body complete control over how the money was allocated.[88] The Board of Trade enthusiastically agreed, quickly forming a committee to work alongside counterparts from the Park Commission to draft a charter for the new organization. By May the Audubon Park Improvement Association was formally organized with a membership of 350 of the city's most prominent citizens, Mayor Shakspeare among them.[89]

The Association moved swiftly to grow its ranks and acquire contributions. In doing so, its members made the improvement of Audubon Park the exclusive project of the city's elite.

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[87] "News of the Two Parks," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 27, 1903. Gurley's reputation as a public-spirited citizen, as well as his political connections, earned him a nomination as the United States District Attorney for the Parish of Orleans in 1900. He maintained this position alongside his role as president of the Audubon Park commission until his assassination by a disgruntled former client in 1903.
[88] "Board of Trade," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 25, 1890.
[89] "Audubon Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 23, 1890; Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1907, Audubon Park*, 35, SB 483.N5 A7 1907, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.

One of its first actions was to distribute 250 subscription lists to "secretaries of the various commercial bodies and exchanges of the city" in order to add men of means to their ranks.[90] The group also worked to raise awareness of their efforts amongst New Orleans' influential citizens. The society columns of the local newspapers began championing the Association's progress, encouraging their readers to contribute.[91] Appealing to the cultured tastes of such citizens, the Audubon Park Ladies' Auxiliary Association staged an opera, the proceeds of which were transferred to the Association.[92] This initial drive culminated in a public talk by Rev. William A. Snively, an Episcopal preacher who had gained a national reputation as an orator and writer. Addressing a large crowd at Grunewald Hall in December of 1890, Snively spoke of the public parks he had seen during his travels across America and Europe. Pointing to the investments made by the citizens of New York, Chicago, and Baltimore in beautifying their cities, he urged his audience to do the same. Three things could improve Audubon Park, Snively explained: "time, patience, and money." But, he quipped, "we cannot wait for time."[93] The efforts of the Association proved successful. As early as June of 1890, the group's membership had reached 500, guaranteeing at least $5,000 to begin improvements.[94]

Impressed by the success of the Audubon Park Improvement Association, prominent Downtown residents hoped to rally their own neighborhood constituency in order to replicate the organization on behalf of City Park. Victor Anseman, a florist who grew up on Metairie Road, had long wanted to improve the park, but his various petitions on the matter were repeatedly rebuffed by the disinterested City Council. It was not until he enlisted the aid of Aristée L. Tissot that any progress was made. Tissot, a former judge for the Second District Court and long-standing Democratic figure aligned with the Ring faction, lived on the Bayou St.

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[90] "Audubon Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 23, 1890.
[91] "New Orleans Notes," *Louisiana Review* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 16, 1890; "Catherine Cole Causerie," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 7, 1890.
[92] *Louisiana Review* (New Orleans, LA), Oct. 1, 1890.
[93] "Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 4, 1890.
[94] *Louisiana Review* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 18, 1890.

John, almost directly opposite the park.[95] With his help, Anseman was able to assemble a group of commercial elite and politicians, most of whom resided in the mansions on Esplanade Avenue, to form the City Park Improvement Association in the summer of 1891.[96]

Figure 5 – Board of the City Park Improvement Association, ca. 1898, in Federal Writers Project, *New Orleans City Park: its first fifty years, compiled by workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the state of Louisiana; sponsored by the Board of Commissioners of City Park* (New Orleans: Gulf Printing Co., 1941).

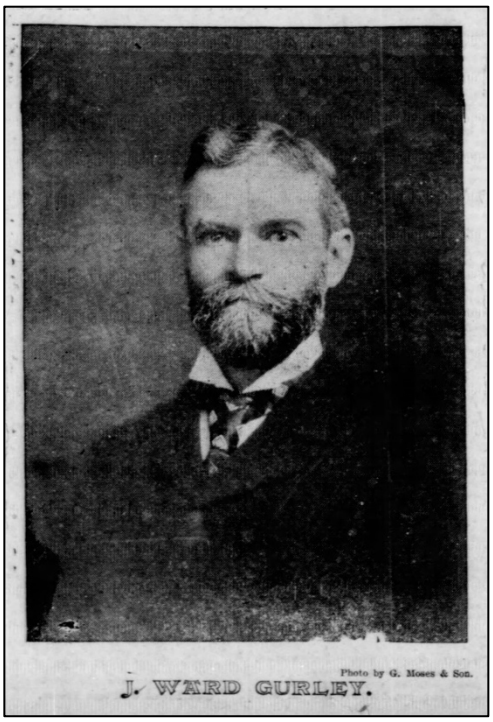

Figure 6 – J. Ward Gurley, President of the Audubon Park Improvement Association, in *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA) Jul. 21, 1903.

[95] Nystrom, *New Orleans after the Civil War*, 212-213.
[96] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 10-12.

The idea quickly gained the support of the city's ruling class. Leading newspapers such as the *Times-Democrat* applauded the efforts of the "best known and most influential of the down-town residents" to reclaim the park from its neglected state, while the *Louisiana Review* framed their work as an absolute necessity. "New Orleans certainly needs parks," a writer for the paper explained, but "it is almost impossible for people living on this side of Canal street to patronize Audubon Park, which is seven or eight miles distant." Improving City Park, they contended, would solve this problem.[97] J. Ward Gurley addressed a citizens' meeting about the idea following a resolution passed by the Audubon Park Commissioners. The Audubon managers wanted to express "their hearty approval and co-operation in the movement for the improvement of the Old City Park" in order to avoid the sectional tension that had torpedoed the Audubon Park Tax three years earlier. "Audubon Park [is] as much the property of the people below Canal street as it was those of the Sixth District," he explained, "and vice versa, as regards City Park."[98] The City Council, eager to rid itself of responsibility for the park, transferred control of the property over to the Association in August.[99]

Upon gaining authority over the park, the members of the City Park Improvement Association inspected the grounds to get an adequate sense of the work that needed to be done. It was then that they came face to face with the uses that had defined the space long before its designation as a public park. The *Times-Picayune*, in covering the commissioners' tour, described an array of subsistence activities that went far beyond the mere grazing of cattle:

> During their rounds they noticed several milkmen cutting the grass and hauling the hay without authority, but claiming that the grounds where they were cutting were not fenced in. Others were hunting and many large boys were trapping birds, and on several trees

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[97] "The Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 16, 1891; "New Orleans Notes," *Louisiana Review* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 12, 1891.
[98] "The Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 17, 1891.
[99] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 12.

> were leaning common ladders evidently used for gathering moss. Several of the fine trees were found injured. In front were several parties picnicking under the splendid oaks, showing the usefulness of the park even in its present neglected condition. During the tour of inspection someone set fire to the grass in the northeast corner of the park…It was supposed that the fire originated from the burning waddings of a hunter's gun.[100]

The scene described by the paper illustrates the myriad ways in which low-income New Orleanians living on the city's periphery relied on the resources of what was, in name only, City Park. Dairy farmers, confident in their right to access unenclosed land, cut grass to feed their cattle; birds were trapped and larger animals were hunted for food; and the Spanish moss which abounded on the park's many live oaks was harvested for domestic use or sale.[101] Tellingly, the article juxtaposed these activities with those of middle-class leisure, such as picnicking, which demonstrated "the usefulness of the park even in its present neglected condition." This framing is significant, as it reinforces what Nate Gabriel has describes as a "new knowledge of the city," in which the city is understood to be a wholly capitalist space and the park (representative of nature more broadly) is reified as a non-economic one. Such designations served to constitute urban subjects that would disseminate their knowledge throughout the rest of the city, thereby consolidating capitalism's dominance over the urban environment.[102] Park space was, therefore, only "useful" insofar as it presented the natural environment as a source of leisure; any use of the space which showed nature to be a means of self-sufficiency undermined the perceived supremacy of capitalistic exchange.

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[100] "Lower City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Aug. 31, 1891.
[101] "Our Moss Factories," *The New Orleans Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Dec. 1, 1880. Spanish moss had been traditionally gathered by locals for domestic use, particularly for stuffing mattresses. By the 1880s, however, it fed a lucrative, though inconsistent, commercial market as manufacturers purchased the material for various uses, such as upholstery. This market provided a source of income for low-income residents, primarily "negroes and poor white men," according to *The New Orleans Democrat*, but also for farmers whose crops had been ruined by the city's regular flooding.
[102] Gabriel, "The Work that Parks Do," 123-125.

It was the task of both Associations to use their respective park space to eliminate the agrarian behavior of the commons and replace it with that which reinforced the capitalist conception of the city for which New South boosters strived. The primary means of achieving this goal was through explicit regulation. Shortly after their inspection of the City Park, the commissioners proposed rules that prohibited the activities that they had witnessed. The report of the executive committee presented at the Association's monthly meeting in September recommended that "the gathering of moss and shrubs, the shooting and trapping of birds and other practices of the sort be prohibited under pain of a fine of $10." They soon had signs posted throughout the grounds warning visitors of these new rules.[103] Similar regulations were formally established for both City Park and Audubon Park in 1896 through an act of the State Legislature and a corresponding municipal ordinance. These rules prohibited cutting or damaging any plants in either park, hunting or discharging firearms, disturbing or killing birds, fishing without a permit, and, of course, allowing animals to stray within the grounds. The penalty for violating any of the regulations was a fine of no more than $25 or thirty days in jail.[104]

In addition to the explicit regulation of behavior within the park, the park managers battled the commons by physically enclosing the land. While the Audubon Park commissioners had inherited a fence from the exposition and managed to erect gates in the 1880s, City Park remained largely without physical boundaries in 1891, as the grass-cutting farmers made apparent.[105] As Sally Reeves explains, one of the City Park Association's first concerns was the erection of a fence to both keep cattle out and establish "an architectural boundary that would proclaim [the park's] rebirth." Accordingly, they had a 1,300-foot iron fence constructed along the front of the park on Metairie Road, while the remaining sides of the property were enclosed

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[103] "Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 10, 1891 & "Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 17, 1891.
[104] *New Orleans City Park Improvement Ass'n. Annual Reports of Officers for Year 1903-'04*, 26-29, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082505383&view=1up&seq=7; Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1898, Audubon Park*, 76-77, SB 483.N5 A7 1898, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.
[105] "Into Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 22, 1886.

with barbed wire.[106] By demarcating the limits of the park, the commissioners were able to restrict the movement of people and animals while exerting control over the natural resources that had made the land such a fruitful commons. The grass in both parks that had provided a free means of feeding the dairy farmers' cattle, was now cut and sold to the highest bidders.[107] Interestingly, the pasturing of cattle in City Park was not entirely prohibited, but privatized. Similar to the arrangement with cattle dealer L. Andre Burthe in the 1880s, the park's managers granted grazing privileges in the back section of the park, which remained "in a state of wilderness," so that "an income could be derived while the cost of cutting the weeds would be greatly reduced."[108] Such an arrangement was significant for several reasons. In addition to providing the park commissioners with a revenue stream, it subjected the dairy farmers to a greater degree of municipal authority. Whereas city managers had struggled regulate the movement of cattle through the pound ordinance in the past, the enclosure and commodification of the commons forced the farmers to submit to a de facto arm of civic government. Furthermore, the regulation made access to the pasture exclusive to those with the means to pay the grazing fees, which were set at $70 per month.[109] This forced many of the poorest farmers further away from the city and its developing suburbs as they sought free pastures in the direction of the lake.

These efforts to eliminate the commons were complemented by the work of the commissioners to associate the parks with conceptions of middle-class leisure. Initial steps were taken in this direction through grand festivals hosted on the grounds that were intended to both showcase the semi-improved parks and raise additional funding to continue the work. In April of 1891, the Audubon Park commissioners put on their first fête champêtre, or garden party.

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[106] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 16.
[107] Proceedings of the City Park Improvement Association (December 16, 1891), 52, http://neworleanscitypark.com/cpia-board-minutes; Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1891, Audubon Park*, 7, SB 483.N5 A7 1891, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.
[108] "Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 17, 1891.
[109] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 17.

Thousands of citizens attended the event, during which they were treated to games, music, horse races, bicycle parades, and military drills. Rather than sparse fields occupied by grazing cattle, visitors entered the park through gates "decked out with flags and bunting" and looked over "shrubbery in…new and verdant covering," refreshment stands and "booths…bedecked with flags," and an elegantly decorated dancing pavilion.[110] The City Park commissioners followed suit, throwing their own festival in the spring of 1892.[111] These became annual occurrences at both parks, in addition to various May Day festivals and school picnics.[112] As structured events, these festivals functioned as introductions to proper park usage. In addition to showcasing improvements and raising revenue, they attracted large segments of the public to the parks and forced them to interact with the spaces according to middle-class social norms, furthering the land's association with leisure in the public consciousness.

The festivals also helped to foster a sense of communal investment in the improvement and maintenance of both parks. This was particularly true in the case of Audubon Park, the commissioners of which consistently emphasized the fact that the park belonged to every member of the public. J. Ward Gurley, for example, during a speech given at the inaugural fête champêtre, explained that it was the responsibility of every New Orleanian to maintain the park as residents of a modernizing city:

> Every man, woman and child should learn to regard it as his and her right to use and enjoy, and his and her duty and obligation to protect and care for this property. You cannot afford to be indifferent about it. It has cost you too much. It is of too much

[110] "For Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 12, 1891.
[111] "Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 30, 1892.
[112] "Festival at the City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 26, 1892; "A Festival for the Lower City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 28, 1894; "McDonogh's Memory and Merry May Day," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 2, 1896.

> importance to you in the future. As the city grows you will need it more and more—all of it. Its entire length and breadth, and even more.[113]

While such rhetoric was necessary for an organization that relied on public contributions to carry out its duties, it also provided every citizen with a personal stake in the park's development. By referencing the financial investment already made and presenting the growth of New Orleans as an inevitability, Gurley framed the space's designation as a public park as a necessity. In doing so, he made the improved park a symbol of civic identity and gave the public a reason to oppose its return to the commons. The Ladies' Auxiliary Association took this concept a step further during an Arbor Day event that they hosted at the park in 1891. They sent invitations to "every benevolent, military, Masonic, Pythian and firemen association in New Orleans" asking them to purchase trees to be planted on the grounds. Each tree would then stand as a "lasting tribute to the patriotic pride and public spirit of the organization[s]."[114] The move went beyond simply asserting that members of the public had a vested interest in the park's development by giving that interest physical form. By contributing trees to the beautification of the grounds, the various civic groups reaffirmed their claim to the property as members of an urban public. This claim was assured as long as the land was maintained as a park.

For several years immediately following their establishment, both Boards carried out piecemeal improvements as sufficient resources were available. In 1891, the Audubon Park commissioners spent the bulk of their funds on repairing the Horticultural Hall, but they had enough remaining to construct a new carriage road and plant some foliage.[115] The managers of City Park took similar steps in 1892. After the fences around the park were erected, benches and refreshment booths were brought onto the grounds and a dancing pavilion was constructed.[116]

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113 "For Audubon Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 12, 1891.
114 "New Orleans Notes," *Louisiana Review* (New Orleans, LA), Sep 16, 1891.
115 Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1891, Audubon Park*, 10, SB 483.N5 A7 1891, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.
116 "The Lower City Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 17, 1892.

By the end of 1893, the Board had approved a general plan for the park designed by George H. Grandjean, a local civil engineer. Grandjean's plan included curvilinear walks and drives laid out in Olmstedian fashion that showcased the park's ancient oaks while looping around an artificial lake to be created from the Bayou Metairie (see Figure 7).[117] The lake, completed in 1895, became the centerpiece of City Park, covering an area of eight acres and dotted with small islands and peninsulas.[118] The efforts of both Boards were bolstered in 1896 when the State Legislature passed a bill that required an annual appropriation of $15,000 for each park from the city's reserve fund. This law—the result of a coordinated lobbying effort by members of both park commissions—provided the park managers with the financial certainty to undertake more comprehensive improvements. The following year the City Park Improvement Association began acquiring additional land for the park, which included property that fronted both the Bayou St. John and Metairie road belonging to Mrs. Bordeaux, a local farmer whose animals had a reputation for wandering into the park. This acquisition, along with two more in 1897 and 1898, doubled the size of City Park and set it on a course of improvement that lasted into the 1930s.[119] Acting on a similar desire for a comprehensive plan, the commissioners of Audubon Park entered into a contract with the Olmsted Brothers, the sons who had taken control of Frederick Law Olmsted's firm after his retirement, in 1898. This started a decades-long relationship between the Olmsted Brothers and Audubon Park during which Olmstedian design principles were used to accentuate natural topography of the southern locale.[120]

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[117] "Lower City Park Improvements," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 16, 1893.
[118] Thomas Henry Ryan, *Historical souvenir - New Orleans City Park : on the occasion of the fourth grand festival and fete champetre / under the auspices of the N. O. City Park Improvement Association, Sunday and Monday, June 2nd and 3rd, 1895*, n.p., MSS 527, William Russell Pamphlet Collection, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.
[119] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 21-25.
[120] Douglas, *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, 57-59.

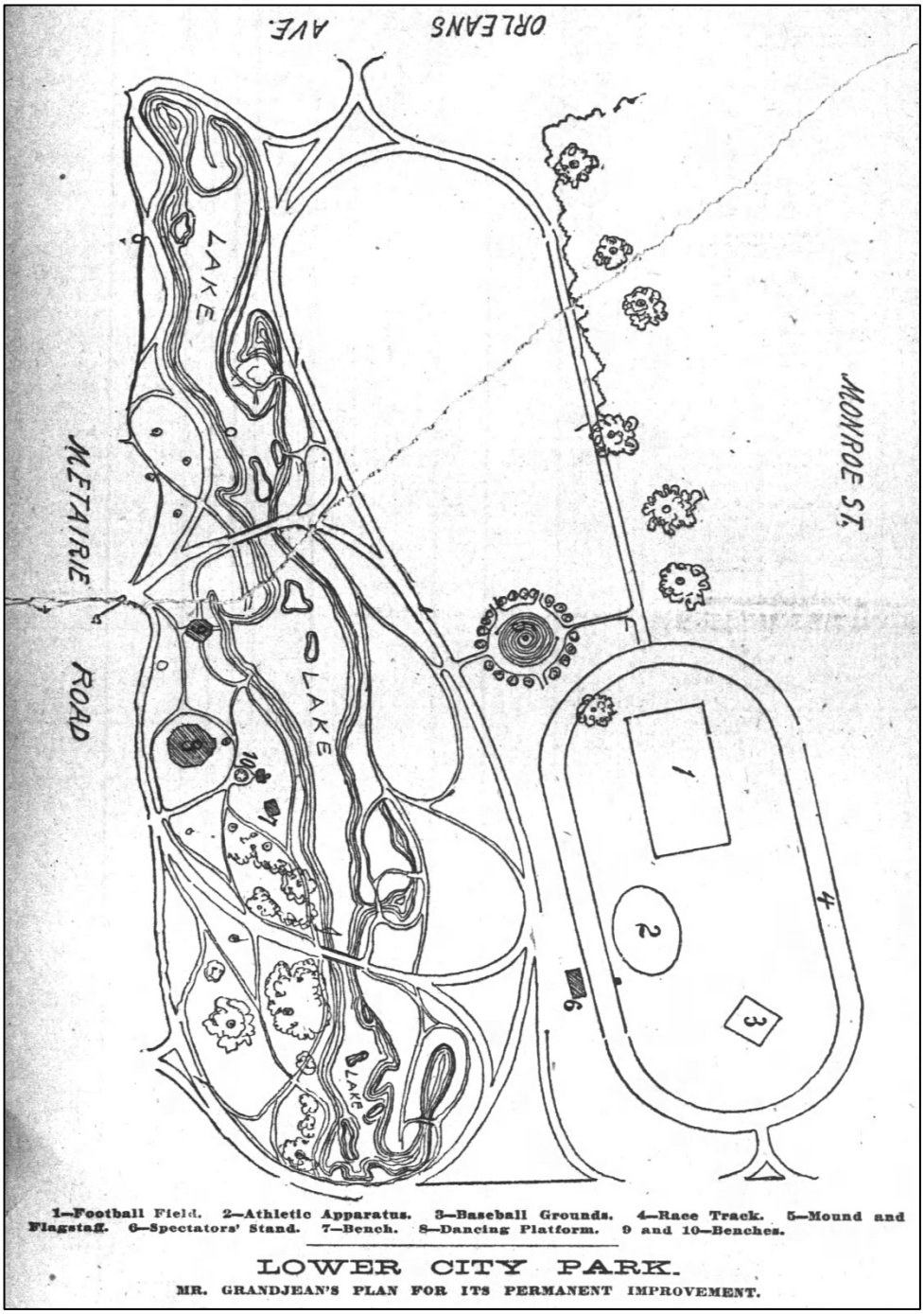

Figure 7 – George H. Grandjean, *Lower City Park*, 1893, in *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 16, 1893.

While the initial improvements carried out by the Boards may seem insignificant in comparison to those that were instituted after 1896, they worked toward the same end. The ultimate purpose of the work was not simply to change the appearance of the grounds, but to alter the public perception of both the parks and the neighborhoods in which they were located. The parks would aid in presenting the adjacent areas as prosperous suburban extensions of the

city, rather than agrarian hinterlands that stood in the way of urban development. This is evident in the type of activities to which the designs and improvements catered. As was the case in Atlanta's Grant Park, and other Olmsted-inspired parks throughout the country, the spaces were designed with middle- and upper-class leisure activities in mind. The carriageways provided extensive drives for the wealthy to showcase their equipages; the broad walking paths created space for promenading; and the lakes and lawns encouraged genteel sports. The society column of the *Times-Picayune* applauded the Audubon Park commissioners for laying out a "lady's mile" to allow the women of New Orleans to ride their horses in style as they do in London's Hyde Park, while concerts of classical music put on by the Carrollton Railroad were said to attract "people of the most cultivated and refined character."[121] The commissioners of both parks continued to encourage private picnics to be held on the grounds. These were not modest family outings, but opulent feasts that drew large crowds in their finest clothes to dine beneath the famous oaks.[122] Seventy-eight picnic permits were granted for City Park in 1894 alone, each of which drew an estimated crowd of five hundred.[123]

By promoting such activities, the park commissioners not only catered to New Orleans' wealthier residents but promoted behavior that corresponded with the suburban environment they hoped to create. This aim is evident not only in the activities that were encouraged within the parks, but in those that were prohibited. In addition to criminalizing behavior associated with the commons, the official rules adopted by both parks in 1896 explicitly forbade "boisterous, indecent or vulgar language" as well as anything deemed to be a "nuisance to the public decency."[124] The park commissioners made sure to avoid providing any accommodations that

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[121] "Catherine Cole Causerie," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 18, 1891 & "A New Pleasure Resort," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jun. 19, 1894.
[122] Reeves, *Historic City Park*, 18.
[123] Minutes of the City Park Improvement Association (September, 1894), 201, http://neworleanscitypark.com/cpia-board-minutes.
[124] *New Orleans City Park Improvement Ass'n. Annual Reports of Officers for Year 1903-'04*, 26-29, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082505383&view=1up&seq=7; Audubon Park Association, *Year Book, 1898, Audubon Park*, 76-77, SB 483.N5 A7 1898, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.

might encourage such behavior. When the idea of building a racetrack in City Park for "gentlemen who wished to speed their horses" was proposed in 1893, the members of the board balked over fears that it would encourage gambling. Similarly, the commissioners of Audubon Park rejected a proposal to open a beer hall on the grounds in 1896 due to concern that the sale of alcohol would "convert [the park] into a gathering place for hoodlums."[125] The local press did its part to reinforce what was deemed proper behavior as well. In 1891, the *Times-Picayune* published an article that detailed the journey of Mrs. Juley Robinson, a presumably fictionalized black resident, as she travelled to Audubon Park to "get something to eat for nothing":

> The Audubon park, as is too well known, is at present intersected by a choice variety of ditches—some deep—some shallow—all mossed over with ferns, vines, 'nigger heads' and wild four o'clocks and beautiful white lily…Along these ditches, almost any day, can be seen a motley collection of men, women and children, mostly black. The men generally are too old to do any more serious work, the women are often too lazy, and here and there amongst them one can discern a manifestly thrifty individual, alike unto this 'portrait of a lady' given in this true story, who comes crawfishing to save money…When the monotony of crawfish catching begins to pall on the not-easily-palled African temperament, Mrs. Robinson sets her bucket, in which she has thrown a handful of earth, so the fish can have something 'to chaw on' in the notch of a tree, while she sets to gathering pepper grass, or poke, or night shade, any and all of which are fine for greens.[126]

While the article does not explicitly condemn Robinson's use of the park, it utilizes a blatantly racist caricature to juxtapose the use of the park as a common with its intended function as a

[125] "Lower City Park," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Nov. 16, 1893 & "No Liquors Sold at Audubon Park," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 13, 1896.
[126] "How to Live Comfortably, Though Poor," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Apr. 26, 1891.

space for middle-class (i.e. white) leisure. By explicitly racializing common-use activities—despite the fact that the common was used by New Orleanians of various racial and ethnic backgrounds—the paper sought to delegitimize such practices in the eyes of their white readers by playing on the increasing social division of the emergent Jim Crow South. Rather than a legitimate source of subsistence, the commons became a tool that perpetuated the black laziness that many white southerners believed resulted from the abolition of slavery. It bred behavior that was antithetical to life in the modern city premised upon industrial production and market-based consumption. It was, according to the article, a free resource that sustained the "hundreds of poor people living…around the edge of New Orleans [like] a dusky rime…which may collect under the rosy finger nail of a beautiful but careless maiden."[127]

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In terms of transforming the unruly commons into a residential neighborhood that reflected New South ideals, Audubon Park proved to be more successful. This is due, primarily, to the fact that middle- and upper-class settlement had been trending in an Uptown direction even before the park's establishment. As the nineteenth century progressed, the residential development of the American sector that began after the Louisiana Purchase continued pressing upstream. In 1833, the New Orleans and Carrollton Rail Road Company established a line that linked Downtown with the suburb of Carrollton, located adjacent to the western boundary of the land that became Audubon Park. This opened up the area between the Garden District and Carrollton and encouraged further settlement, especially along St. Charles Avenue—the broad thoroughfare which bisected the Garden District and extended to the entrance of Audubon Park—on which the streetcar ran.[128] The ample land upon the levee formerly occupied by

[127] Ibid.
[128] S. Frederick Starr, "St. Charles Avenue: New Orleans, Louisiana," in *The Grand American Avenue, 1850-1920*, eds. Jan Cigliano and Sarah Bradford (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994), 156.

plantations further enticed real estate developers and home-builders to continue this trend. As Richard Campanella notes, "for over one hundred years, [they] had every economic, geographical, and cultural reason to focus more effort on uptown than downtown."[129] And so they did. Ideally situated "about halfway between the clatter of the docks [on the riverfront] and the stench of the backswamp," essentially bisecting the natural levee, St. Charles Avenue blossomed into the "main residential artery of the American city."[130] As such, it attracted New Orleans' wealthiest residents, especially those of the younger generation who adhered to the New South creed (see Figure 8). For those who were eager to celebrate publicly their new-found wealth, "a residence on St. Charles Avenue was the perfect way to make such a statement."[131]

Figure 8 – Detroit Publishing Co., Publisher, *St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, Louisiana*, ca. 1890, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016797877/.

[129] Campanella, *Geographies of New Orleans*, 95.
[130] Lewis, *New Orleans*, 43 & Campanella, "An Ethnic Geography of New Orleans," 707.
[131] Starr, "St. Charles Avenue," 163.

This process of making the Uptown area surrounding Audubon Park into an elite suburban enclave culminated in the creation of Audubon Place in the mid-1890s. Located off of St. Charles Avenue, immediately opposite the northern boundary of the park, Audubon Place was an exclusive gated community intended for the city's elite. It was consciously modelled after the "beautiful [private] parks that do so much to make life pleasant in the North and West," encompassing a rectangular area of 616 feet by 8,000 divided into 30 individual lots and bisected by a 130-foot-wide avenue, 50 feet of which was "reserved for ornamentation with floral designs and handsome shade trees." The broad central road was paved with gravel, lined with concrete curbs and gutters, flanked by granite sidewalks, and illuminated with electric lights (see Figures 9 and 10).[132] The building lots, too, were outfitted with water, sewage, and electrical connections, providing residents with the foremost comforts of modern urban life.[133] The community promised would-be residents both personal privacy and a means of publicly displaying their social status. To underscore its exclusivity, Audubon Place's large iron gate, emblazoned with its name, was locked at night and manned at all hours by a police officer who exercised "supervision over all attempting to enter." "Tramps and beggars and book agents," the community's investors insisted, "cannot enter this region." Additionally, the cost of property within the grounds ensured that they would only be populated middle- and upper-class residents. The social makeup of Audubon Place "will be regulated to a great extent by a minimum cost of the houses, which will be set at $6000," the proprietors explained. This was "sufficiently low to permit anyone in moderate circumstances to build or rent; but sufficiently high to prevent the erection of hovels in close proximity to handsome structures, thus spoiling the general

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[132] "Beauregard Place," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), May 21, 1893; "Audubon Place Gates Almost Open," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 25, 1894.

[133] While such modern amenities successfully attracted the wealthiest New Orleanians to Audubon Place, they were not without their dangers. As Philip Rice and his family, residents of Audubon Place, discovered in the winter of 1899, the recently harnessed power of electricity could be both a blessing and a curse. In February of that year, Rice awoke to find his home on fire, ignited by faulty wiring. While he and his family managed to escape unharmed, their house was burned to the ground along with all of their possession, resulting in an estimated loss of $35,000. "Houses Destroyed," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Feb. 13, 1899; "Live Wires Sow Fires," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Feb. 27, 1899.

appearance."[134] The establishment of such a community was an indication that New Orleans, at least in its Uptown portion, was developing according to the New South ideal. Not only did the grounds themselves reflect residential trends that had become "so popular in northern cities," but the eagerness of the city's elite to move there suggested a willingness amongst the population to conform to a northern way of life.[135] Such signals were crucial to the New South's outward-facing agenda.

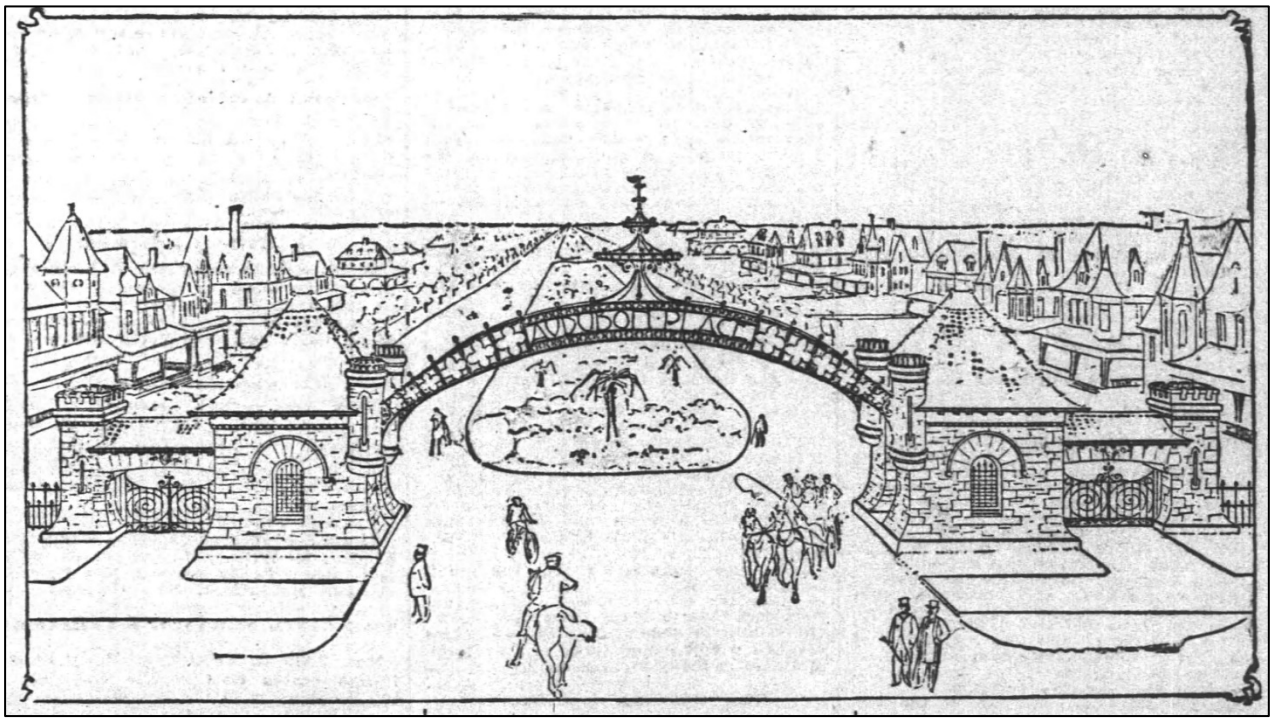

Figure 9 – Concept Design of Audubon Place, in *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA) Mar. 25, 1894.

[134] "Audubon Place Gates Almost Open," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 25, 1894.
[135] Ibid.

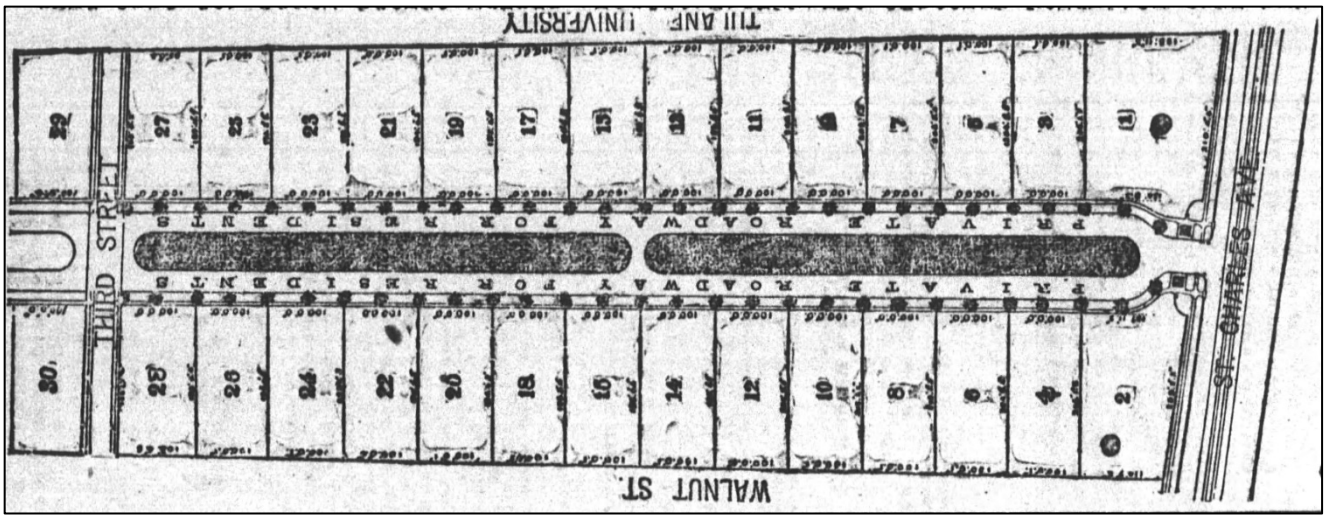

Figure 10 – Available Residential Plots in Audubon Place, in *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA) Mar. 25, 1894.

Beyond helping to market the city, however, the establishment of Audubon Place also served as evidence that the New South strategy of courting outside investment was successful. The community was carved out of a swath of land known as the Bonner tract, purchased in 1893. While the exchange was facilitated by local real estate firm Robinson & Underwood, it was financed by "a party of St. Louis and Chicago capitalists."[136] In an interview with the *Times-Picayune*, George H. Blackwelder, a member of this northern syndicate, claimed that the urban improvements already implemented had drawn their attention to the city. "It was rapid transit which really called our attention to New Orleans," he explained, "and it was the electric [streetcar] line on St. Charles avenue which induced us to make our investment. When the [electric] cars came we came with them, and more capitalists will come in the same way."[137] Similarly, when the group moved to expand the acreage of Audubon Place in 1898, Samuel Bowman, another of the northern capitalists, pointed to Audubon Park as the reason for the community's location. It made sense to him that "new and handsome homes [were] being built on the very threshold of the park," for there was "not a finer place in the city, or for that matter

[136] "Real Estate," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 21, 1893; "Audubon Place Gates Almost Open," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 25, 1894
[137] "Real Estate," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 21, 1893.

in the south."[138] Such investment was seen as a glimpse of things to come and, as such, fueled the New South narrative in New Orleans. The *Times-Picayune* insisted that "the keen-sighted promotors of New York and Chicago have come to see in New Orleans the future great city of the country; a city…destined to be the focus of greater commercial activity than has ever been known in the United States."[139] Mr. Bowman agreed, claiming that after the various improvements made possible by northern capital were instituted, "the old conservative element that has so long…throttled the progress of the town will open their eyes in wonderment."[140]

Residential development was not the only factor which contributed to the sense that the New South movement had gained a foothold in Uptown New Orleans. In 1893, Tulane University, "the self-styled 'Harvard of the South,'" was moved from Downtown (where it had been initially located in 1888) to the land directly opposite Audubon Park, bordering what would become Audubon Place. The move helped make the area around the park on of the city's "most favored locations for the scholarly and affluent."[141] Tulane's administrators certainly welcomed the institution's association with the social elite. In fact, they had attempted to purchase land adjacent to their campus in 1893 "in order that the college could control the class of citizens in the immediate vicinity…[by] selling land to such persons as the faculty deemed advisable to have as neighbors." They were beat to the punch, however, by the Audubon Place syndicate. J. Ward Gurley presumably felt that an exclusive residential neighborhood in the immediate vicinity would be a greater benefit to the park, for, when Tulane's administrators brought a legal challenge to the real estate deal, he agreed to represent the capitalists in court.[142] Ultimately, the result benefitted both parties, as Audubon Place ensured "as desirable a class of neighbors as the college could itself regulate" while the university had "a tendency to bring in the cultured and

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[138] "Gossip Gathered in Hotel Lobbies," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 31, 1898.
[139] "Audubon Place Gates Almost Open," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 25, 1894.
[140] "Gossip Gathered in Hotel Lobbies," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 31, 1898.
[141] Lewis, *New Orleans*, 53-54; Starr, "St. Charles Avenue," 167.
[142] "Beauregard Place," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), May 21, 1893.

conservative element" which the capitalists hoped to entice.[143] But the university also helped combat the perception that New Orleans existed within the 'backward' South. According to various guidebooks of the period, Tulane University, along with the Newcomb College for women which was under its administration, made New Orleans "an educational center" that offered "the highest training in academic branches."[144] As such, city boosters could claim to meet both the residential and educational standards required by northerners.

Facilities within Audubon Park itself further aided uptown's New South conformity. In 1889, when the park commission was still struggling to fund its operations, it agreed to lease fifty acres of the park to the Louisiana Sugar Experiment Station, the mission of which was "to investigate the successful growing of the sugar cane and sorghum, and their manufacture into sugar."[145] This was part of a broader push throughout the South to bring the promise of technological advancement to the region's main industry. As C. Vann Woodward explains, New South boosters championed scientific, diversified agriculture as a means of lifting rural farmers (the majority of the southern population) out of the poverty which dogged them since the war's end.[146] Raising a variety of crops with cutting-edge machinery and techniques would not only produce abundant harvests, so the logic went, but would lessen the economic impact of a single crop (i.e. cotton) dipping in the market. The location of the station in the park echoes the land's former use as a common yet reveals the divergent conceptions of land-use held by the city's elites and rural working class. While the reliance on park land by farmers and the landless poor for livelihood or subsistence was unacceptable to members of the ruling class, they had no qualms with sacrificing the same public land to agricultural practices that supported their economic vision. The common-use practices that resisted capitalistic appropriation were

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143 Ibid; "Gossip Gathered in Hotel Lobbies," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jan. 31, 1898.
144 George Wallace Bauerlein, *The Book of New Orleans and the Industrial South* (New Orleans: Searcy & Pfaff, ltd., 1919), 56.
145 *First Annual Report of the Agricultural Experiment Station of the Louisiana State University and A. & M. College* (Baton Rouge: The Advocate Book and Job Print, 1889), 9.
146 Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 176-178.

replaced by modern, scientific farming methods which promised to boost crop yields across the state and invigorate a primary sector of Louisiana's economy.

With this goal in mind, Dr. W. C. Stubbs, the director of the station, set out to make his portion of the park "a miniature of Louisiana" by planting "everything that can be raised on…[the] soil." He was also given authority over the Horticultural Hall, in which he placed "every plant obtainable."[147] Stubbs encouraged the public to visit the site in order to spread knowledge of this new approach to farming as widely as possible. In 1890, soon after the facility was opened, he held an exhibition so that the public could see the "sugarhouse in full running order."[148] They were also invited to tour the Horticultural Hall and see that the same exotic fruits "brought here in vessels…eaten and enjoyed" could also be grown in Louisiana. To further emphasize this point, Stubbs had a pineapple raised in the hall sent to the mayor in 1891.[149] The presence of the station in the park was, indeed, successful with regard to raising awareness of scientific agriculture amongst the public. In an 1899 school essay which described the principle attractions of New Orleans, sixteen-year-old John Wilson made sure direct his readers to the institution where "sugarcane is raised…and ground and the latest improvements in machinery and cultivation are tried and studied."[150]

The station did more, however, than simply familiarize the public with the New South movement's agricultural aspirations; it provided a new generation of farmers with hands-on training in order to make those aspirations a reality. In 1891, the Audubon Sugar School, operated under the guidance of Dr. Stubbs, opened on the grounds of the park (see Figure 11).[151] Within this school, utilizing the station's fields, laboratories, and processing facilities, Stubbs commenced the "instruction and training of the State's youth in the scientific management and

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147 "The Experiment Station," *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, LA), Mar. 15, 1889.
148 Sugar Experiment Station," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Aug 12, 1890.
149 "Tropical Trees with Strange Fruit," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul 5, 1899; "Compliments to the Mayor," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), Jul. 2, 1891.
150 John Alexander Murray Wilson, "What One Sees in New Orleans," 1897, n.p., MSS 362, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.
151 "Audubon Sugar School," *New Iberia Enterprise* (New Iberia, LA), Apr. 10, 1897.

control of sugar estates."[152] Within its first five years of operation, the school enrolled sixty students from across the South and as far away as Spain. Approximately half of the student body, however, was from Louisiana, "mostly sons of the sugar planters…desiring to take intelligent control of their planting and manufacturing interests."[153] It was exactly these students which New South boosters desired to reach. By receiving training in the tenets of industrial farming, the descendants of Louisiana's elite planter class would, they hoped, transition the state's agricultural sector away from the plantation model toward one that could keep pace with the nation's modernizing economy. Stubbs and his supporters had reason to be confident in their efforts. In 1900, for example, he received a letter from sugar farmer A. A. Morrow thanking him for the training that he had provided. Morrow had planted five acres of his fifty-acre plot using techniques and equipment that he had learned of from the School, leaving the remaining land to be planted with his traditional method. The five acres produced thirty-five tons of sugar cane per acre while the rest yielded only sixteen tons per acre. "Had it not been for the [new methods]," he insisted, "I could not have cultivated the amount of land that I did with the mules I had."[154]

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[152] William Scheppegrell (ed.), *Glimpses of Audubon Park: Annual Souvenir Book of Audubon Park New Orleans, Louisiana* (New Orleans: The Audubon Park Commission, 1917), 38.
[153] "Audubon Sugar School," *New Iberia Enterprise* (New Iberia, LA), Apr. 10, 1897.
[154] "The Louisiana Sugar Planter's Association," *The Weekly Messenger* (St. Martinville, LA), Dec. 22, 1900.

Figure 11 – *Experiment station, Audubon Sugar School*, 1887, Louisiana Digital Library, http://www.louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/lsu-ua-uap%3A307.

Features both in and around Audubon Park as varied as the Sugar Experiment Station and Audubon Place converged to make Uptown an embodiment of the New South ideal. By the end of the nineteenth century it had blossomed into a sprawling residential neighborhood characterized by opulent homes, refined culture, and technological progress as opposed to a common populated by working-class farmers and free-roaming cattle. Guidebooks began emphasizing its features, directing tourists to the area above Canal Street. *New Orleans: a Descriptive View Book in Colors* (1913), for example, described St. Charles Avenue as "the show street of New Orleans," and encouraged its readers to take the streetcar journey down its length to see "the palaces of the sugar and lumber kings" which adorned either side.[155] Another guide, written in 1912, described Audubon Park as a "spot of imposing beauty…in the upper part of the city…surrounded on three sides by the residential section of splendid mansions."[156] As such

[155] *New Orleans: A Descriptive View Book in Colors* (Denver: H. H. Tammen Co., 1913), 8.
[156] *Winter in New Orleans, season 1912-1913* (New Orleans: Southern Pacific Company, 1912), 41.

publications demonstrate, Audubon Park and the subsequent development which it attracted allowed New Orleans' promoters to frame Uptown as a concrete example of the city's New South potential.

City Park, on the other hand, was less successful in projecting a sense of New South modernity onto the city's suburban outskirts. Whereas the area surrounding Audubon Park was well on its way to becoming a residential enclave for New Orleans' elites by the close of the century, City Park remained situated amidst undeveloped rural land. A major reason for this discrepancy was rooted in the cultural and economic divide that existed between the older Creole Downtown and the newer American Uptown. The notoriously insular Creole community had been reluctant to mix with new arrivals following American acquisition of the city and, for the most part, chose to maintain a concentrated presence in the French Quarter. Consequently, the Quarter became confined between the downstream Faubourg (suburb) Marigny, home to working-class Irish and German immigrants, and the American Uptown as the nineteenth century progressed. As the American sector continued to move upstream, it took the city's commercial focus with it. This meant the bulk of new infrastructure, private investment, and residential development was concentrated upriver by the post-war period.[157]

This is not to say, however, that there was complete lack of urban development in the direction of City Park. The park was tethered to the older portion of the city by Esplanade Avenue, a broad boulevard that ran from the river along the eastern edge of the French Quarter before terminating at the park's entrance. Esplanade served as "the great nineteenth century artery of suburban Creole New Orleans," standing as Downtown's version of St. Charles Avenue (see Figure 12).[158] As the Quarter grew increasingly crowded the Creole elite began erecting impressive homes along this route in a lake-ward direction, but not with the speed with which Uptown development approached Audubon Park. While a handful of large estates were built on

[157] Lewis, *New Orleans*, 37-40.
[158] Ibid, 39.

extensive lots on the upper portion of the avenue, close to the park, in the 1860s and 1870s, most homes did not reach this area until the early 1900s through the 1920s.[159] As a result, the area surrounding City Park was not, as of the 1890s, experiencing the pressure of suburban development to the extent that the neighborhood around Audubon Park was. This is reflected in New Orleans guidebooks of the era. *The Picayune's Guide to New Orleans* (1897), for example, described City Park as being located "among market gardens and dairies" as opposed to the "southern mansions" that characterized Uptown.[160] This lack of residential encroachment reinforced the perception that New Orleans was divided into "two separate and distinct phases of life, two epochs of history," with Uptown advancing rapidly into the future and Downtown firmly fixed in the past.[161]

Figure 12 – *View of Esplanade Avenue. North Johnson at Esplanade Avenue*, 1880-1920, Louisiana Digital Library, http://www.louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/lsm-gfm%3A695.

[159] Mary Louise Christovich, Sally Kittredge Evans, and Roulhac Toledano, *New Orleans Architecture, Volume V: The Esplanade Ridge* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1977), 124.
[160] *The Picayune's Guide to New Orleans* (New Orleans: The Picayune, 1897), 5 & 40.
[161] Ibid, 6.

The other major reason for City Park's failure to convert the commons into a residential suburb at the same rate as Audubon Park was technological in nature. For most of the nineteenth century New Orleans lacked the ability to drain the backswamp to the extent necessary to make it suitable for large-scale habitation. Pumps and drainage canals were in place, but they were "unable to keep pace with the average rainfall of 60 inches per year, let alone major downpours."[162] As a result, much of the land surrounding City Park remained undesirable swampland, hardly suited for a suburban neighborhood. Whereas Audubon Park's position on the natural levee provided ample dry land on either side, only giving way to low-lying ground beyond St. Charles Avenue, City Park was sandwiched between low-lying ground on the city side and swamp on the lake side. This left little space for home-building. It was not until 1893 that the city government appointed a committee to develop a systematic drainage plan. Even then, the plan took decades to be fully implemented and priority was given to areas with the highest real estate values.[163] This meant that neighborhoods such as the Garden District were drained before the backswamp. As a result, residential development reached Audubon Park quicker than it did City Park (see Figure 13 and Figure 14).

[162] Colton, "Basin Street Blues," 242.
[163] Ibid, 243-245.

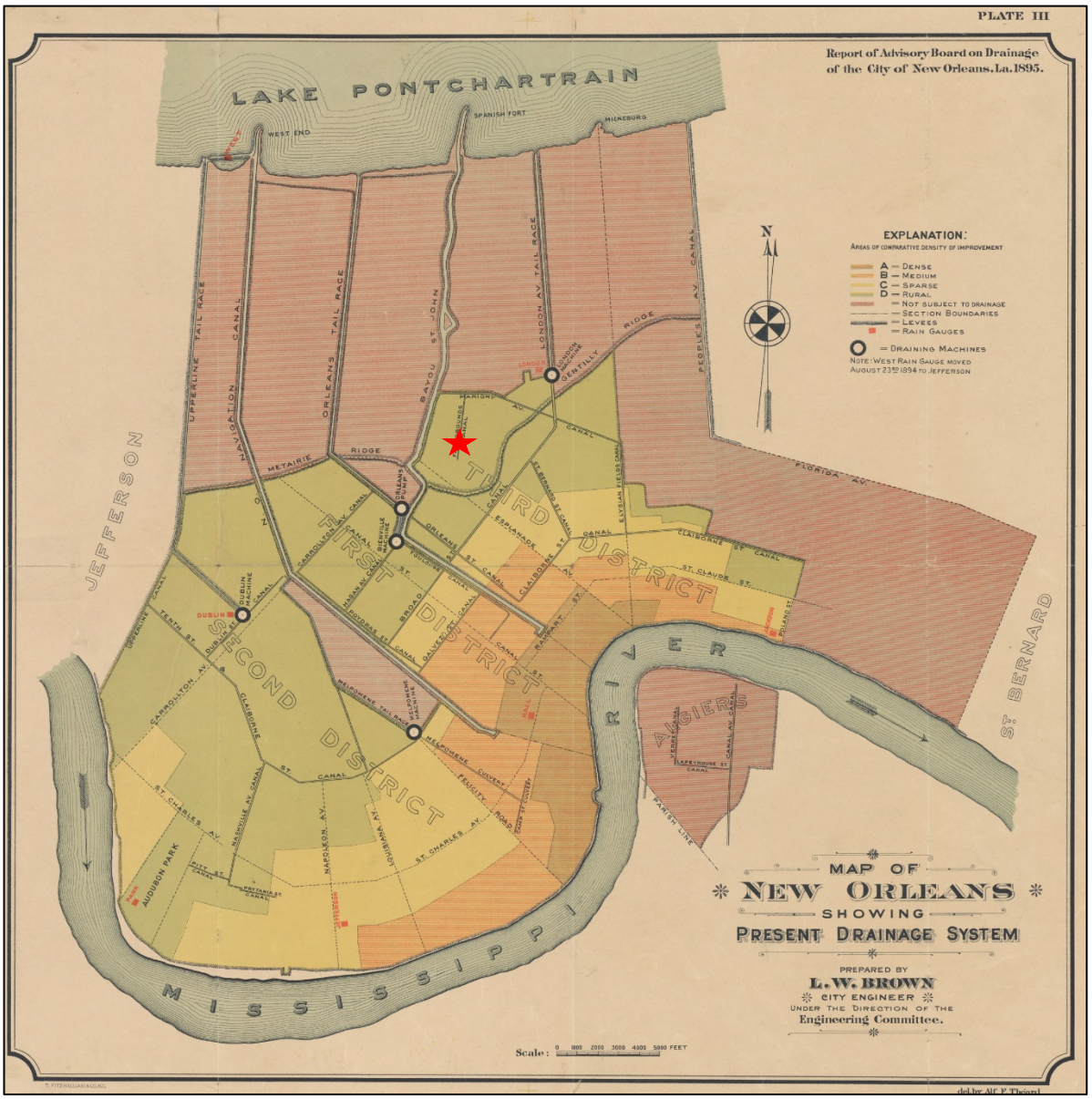

Figure 13 – *Report of Advisory Board on drainage of the City of New Orleans, La., 1895*, 1895, New York Public Library Digital Collections, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c64a1f30-22b9-0135-3ba2-7597c1b2bcc4#/?uuid=ea0902a0-22bc-0135-0e23-0fbd1bd4afb2. This map, created by the 1893 drainage committee, illustrates the "density of improvement" throughout New Orleans. As of 1895, "sparse" improvement (yellow) had nearly reached the border of Audubon Park, while the area around City Park (approximate location indicated by star) was still largely "rural" (green) or completely undrained (red).

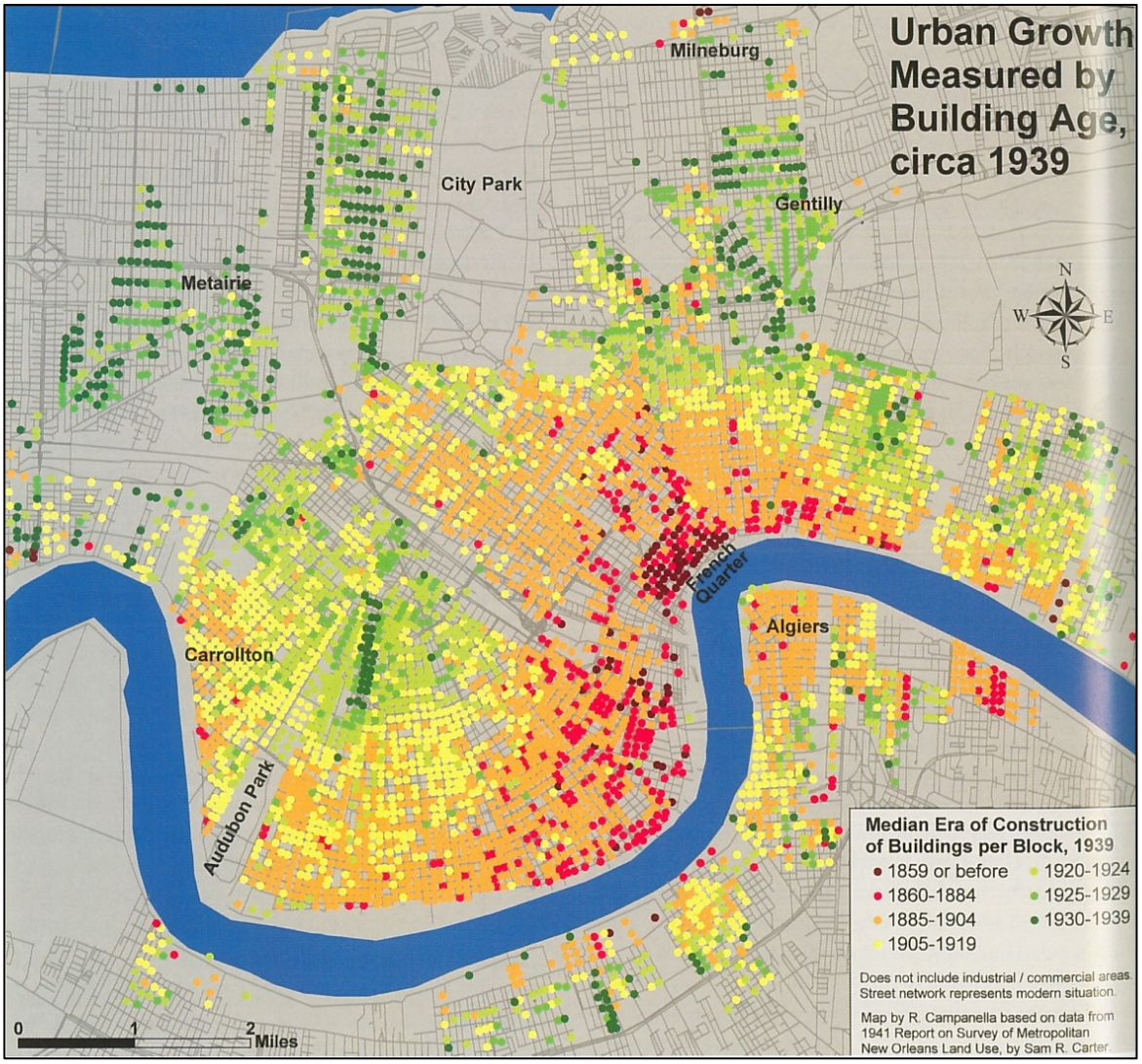

Figure 14 – *Urban Growth Measured by Building Age, circa 1939*. From: Richard Campanella. *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm*. Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2006. P. 96. This map shows a high concentration of buildings built between 1885 and 1904 on the eastern edge of Audubon Park, whereas most development does not reach the southern border of City Park until 1905-1919.

The combined effect of such factors allowed the commons to remain in the area surrounding City Park longer than it did Uptown. Pushed out of the Sixth District by the mid-1890s, the rural working class was relegated to the yet undrained backswamp that bordered City Park's western edge. Indeed, evidence of the dairy farmers' common-use practices in that locale can be found even after New Orleans transitioned into the twentieth century. In 1903 the City Park Improvement Association wrote to Mayor Paul Capdevielle echoing complaints heard twenty years prior. "A large number of Cows are allowed to roam at large on City Park Avenue,"

the letter explained. The animals "enter in the Park, causing great damage, and necessitating the employment of our employees almost daily to put them out. We would be obliged to you for such action as will stop this nuisance which is contrary to law."[164] No such complaints were found from the Audubon Park Association. It was only as the effects of the new drainage system began to reach Lake Pontchartrain that the character of the back of town was permanently altered and residential development took hold. At this point, City Park finally underwent major improvements. Classically inspired architecture characteristic of the City Beautiful movement, such as a peristyle (1907), the New Orleans Museum of Art (1911), a casino (1913), and a bandstand (1917), were placed on the grounds. In the 1920s the park was expanded to encompass 1,300 acres and the Chicago-based landscape architecture firm Bennett, Parsons, and Frost were contracted to develop an overall design plan. Finally, between 1934 and 1940, the Works Progress Administration invested $13 million and employed 14,000 men to further improve the park.[165]

Despite their differing rates of progress, both City Park and Audubon Park played fundamental roles in the effort of New Orleans' elite to combat the commons and clear the city's suburban outskirts for residential development. The enclosure of each park allowed the city's modernizers to juxtapose the common-use practices which, up until the late-nineteenth century, had defined the life between the urban core and Lake Pontchartrain with their vision of suburban development. The subsequent improvement of the parks encouraged real estate speculation, which framed suburbanization of this area as an inevitability. Furthermore, the regulation of park space promoted behavior which corresponded with middle- and upper-class leisure, thereby molding the public into urban subjects supportive of the suburban project. These effects combined to both physically remove the dairy farmers and landless poor from areas desired for real estate development and delegitimize land-use practices that ran counter to the

[164] Correspondence from City Park Improvement Association to Mayor Paul Capdevielle, July 17, 1903, Box 2, Mayor Paul Capdeville Records, 1900-1904, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.
[165] Douglas, *Public Spaces, Private Gardens*, 49-50.

speculative economy on which such development was based. The path was then clear for New Orleans to expand rapidly as it entered the twentieth century.

Chapter Four

Louisville, Kentucky: Reform and Recreation in a Border State

In the spring of 1887, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* called its readers to action. Helmed by Henry Watterson, a New South spokesman of national renown on par with his Atlanta-based counterpart, Henry Grady, the paper was a consistent champion for the advancement of its home city. The article published on this occasion, however, was not the standard rose-tinted prophecy of prosperity characteristic of most post-war southern boosterism. Instead, it was intended to make readers acknowledge that their city's status could not be taken for granted and encourage them to undertake the work needed to carry Louisville into the future. "In the drowsy old Southern days before the war," the column read, "it required little effort for Louisville to maintain its supremacy as the great city, next to New Orleans, south of the Ohio river." But, the article continued, the situation had changed since peace returned to the nation. Not only had reintegration into the Union forced the self-styled metropolises of the South to "shape themselves for comparison with the great cities north of the Ohio," but a fierce regional rivalry had emerged as each vied to attract the ensuing influx of people, capital, and industry. "In this new competition," the paper warned, "it is already obvious that Louisville can not remain as it has been if it hopes to preserve its importance…That there is a new demand on their energy is a thought every day impressing itself more forcibly on the people of Louisville, and suggesting new and greater efforts."[1]

The warning was not exaggerated. Though its wartime experience was in many ways less severe than that of cities further south, Louisville nonetheless underwent significant changes

[1] "Occasional," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Mar. 13, 1887.

following Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The city's near monopoly of transportation from the upper Ohio Valley to the South, for example, evaporated as the railway replaced the river as the nation's primary means of conveyance, slowing trade and challenging the supremacy of Louisville's merchant class. At the same time, the rapid growth of the West meant that cities such as Chicago and St. Louis now dwarfed the once-larger urban centers of the Ohio Valley.[2] In order to survive, Louisville needed to pivot away from national competition and, instead, focus on securing a strong regional position within the South. By all accounts it appears to have done so. The city's manufacturing capacity expanded as new industries, such as woodworking and leather tanning, were introduced to replace those that had been lost, while its mercantile economy adapted to the challenges presented by the rise of rail. This brought Louisville to what George Yater describes as a "comfortable and prosperous plateau" by the 1880s and allowed its leaders to turn their attention to heeding the *Courier-Journal*'s call to distinguish their city from its southern peers by making Louisville a bastion of the New South – a city that enthusiastically embraced northern-style modernity while maintaining a distinctly southern identity.[3]

This chapter examines the contributions that Louisville's system of three, interconnected parks made on behalf of this effort. More specifically, it argues that the network of greenspace helped rally the various segments of the city's diverse population around the New South movement. By design, the spaces themselves promoted the idea of civic cohesion. The network of parks and parkways spanned much of the city and showcased a variety of unique landscapes, pushing residents to travel to outside of their respective areas in search of different scenery and activities. This encouraged members of the public to view Louisville as a whole rather than an amalgamation of disparate neighborhoods. At the same time, the park system provided the ruling class with a means of minimizing the differences between various groups of Louisvillians and fostering the broad civic identity needed to carry out their city-wide agenda of reform and

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[2] Geroge H. Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County* (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1987), 95 & 118-119.
[3] Ibid, 119.

modernization. By conditioning access to park space upon conformity to particular behavior, the city's leadership encouraged residents to transcend their regional, ethnic, or class differences and act as a single, cohesive public responsive to the dictates of municipal authority. This not only projected the image of an ordered urban society to the rest of the nation but provided Louisville's elite with a population supportive of their New South vision.

In many ways Louisville was uniquely suited to combine what were understood to be the best elements of life above and below the Mason-Dixon line. While its boosters very much considered the city part of the South, its location within a border state meant that the city shared economic and ideological connections with the North as well. With over 225,000 enslaved people in the state as of 1860, both Kentucky, generally, and Louisville, specifically, were tied to the rest of the South by the peculiar institution.[4] Yet the state's allegiances were by no means clear at the outbreak of the war. In the election of 1860, for instance, Louisville followed the rest of Kentucky in passing over two of their native sons, Democrat John C. Breckinridge and Republican Abraham Lincoln, and supporting Constitutional Unionist John Bell for the presidency.[5] Bell's platform focused almost exclusively on maintaining the Union and was conspicuously silent on the issue of slavery. Even after Lincoln's victory Kentucky's leaders hoped to stay out of the impending conflict, maintaining an official position of neutrality until the Confederate seizure of Hickman and Columbus, two towns along the state's few miles of Mississippi shore, pushed the General Assembly to side with the Union in September of 1861.[6] Within Louisville, in particular, regional sympathies amongst the white population were largely divided along economic lines. The wealthy merchants, whose trade was mostly with the South, typically sided with the Confederacy while the rising industrial leaders, professional men, and

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[4] Victor B. Howard, *Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1862-1884* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 2; Anne E. Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 11.
[5] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 16.
[6] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 85.

blue-collar workers tended to support the Union.[7] While local men enlisted in both armies, state-wide recruitment numbers suggest majority support for the North: between 90,000 and 100,000 Kentuckians fought for the Union, while only 25,000 to 40,000 did so on behalf of the Confederacy.[8]

Kentucky's decision to side with the North meant that Louisville was spared much of the hardship faced by other southern cities. It faced no physical destruction or economic blockade. In fact, its use as a major supply center for Union forces in the western theatre served as a stimulus to its stagnating economy.[9] The state's loyalty was further rewarded with an exemption from Reconstruction. President Andrew Johnson granted Kentucky's request for an end to martial law in October of 1865, freeing the state of federal interference significantly earlier than those states that had joined the Confederacy. Furthermore, the fact that white males were never disenfranchised meant much of the state's antebellum power structures remained intact.[10] Ironically, the leniency shown by the federal government in reward for Kentucky's loyalty allowed for the rise of what some scholars have described as "neo-Confederatism."[11] In a remarkable pivot, the state's wartime allegiance to the Union was replaced with widespread sympathy for the prostrate South. Primarily fueled by what they understood as Lincoln's betrayal of his promise to leave slavery untouched, Kentuckians consistently voted conservative Democrats into office as soon as the war was over. The governorship, for example, was continuously held by former Confederates or politicians with open Confederate sympathies between 1867 and 1894.[12] This was accompanied by popular embrace of the Lost Cause, evinced by Confederate monuments erected across the state as early as 1869.[13] Louisville was no

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[7] Ibid, 83.
[8] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 2.
[9] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 86-87; Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 302-303.
[10] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 33-37.
[11] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 96.
[12] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 24-25, 33, & 43.
[13] Ibid, 84.

exception to this trend. Attracted by the prospect of a physically unscathed commercial center free from military oversight, ex-Confederate officers moved to the city and established themselves in professional positions. This influx, paired with the resentment engendered amongst much of the white public by the federal government's decision to use Louisville as the headquarters for the Military Division of the South, kept the mayor's seat in the hands of the Democrats from 1863 to 1896.[14] At the same time, however, there remained a persistent Republican minority within the city. Comprised of a smattering of wartime Unionists, northern transplants, and formerly enslaved African Americans, this cohort served as a consistent source of opposition in municipal politics throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century.[15]

With a geographical location that straddled the nation's regional divide, Louisville's leaders were able to pitch their city as the "Gateway to the South" – a manufacturing and transportation center that offered northern capitalists a means of extending their trade deep into the former Confederacy.[16] Promotional material for the city consistently pointed out that Louisville had "contributed generously of both encouragement and substantial aid" to the South during its darkest days after the war, resulting in a deep bond evident in the continued expressions of "love and confidence and material patronage of that people."[17] At the same time, it insisted that the city's unique mix of northerners and southerners presented a welcoming environment for all would-be residents, regardless of their wartime allegiances. After returning home, one guidebook from 1895 explained, Louisville's former Confederates had "their swords…beaten into plowshares" and had been "excellent citizens" ever since, encouraging northern businessmen to "[flock] hither by the hundreds" without fear of lingering animosity.[18] While this heterogenous population provided a unique means of means of marketing the city, however, it came with inherent challenges. Despite the insistence of promoters that Louisville's

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[14] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 95.
[15] Ibid, 96.
[16] *Louisville: Nineteen Hundred and Five* (Louisville: The Commercial Club, 1905), 22.
[17] *The Industries of Louisville, Kentucky, and of New Albany, Indiana* (Louisville: J. M. Elstner & Co., 1886), 14.
[18] *Louisville of To-Day* (Louisville: Consolidated Illustrating Company, 1895), 76-77; *The Industries of Louisville*, 14.

population was united by their common desire for the city's economic advancement, its constituent groups nonetheless had interests that were at times at odds with one another. Ensuring Louisville reached the New South ideal, then, required balancing the competing concerns of its residents.

The "new and greater efforts" demanded by the *Courier-Journal* materialized in various ways across the city throughout the 1880s. Like Atlanta and New Orleans, Louisville sought to proclaim its metropolitan status by hosting a grand fair. The Southern Exposition, as the event was called, opened in the summer of 1883 and ran for four consecutive years, framing Louisville as a hub of cultural sophistication and technological innovation. The area of town in which it was located, now known as Old Louisville, blossomed into a residential enclave for the city's elite as stylish mansions were quickly erected to greet the fair's visitors. Modern infrastructure, too, was constructed across the city. By 1887, for example, Louisville boasted ninety-four miles of street railways, more than double any other city of its size, which allowed the city to expand residential development into its rural suburbs.[19] At the same time, new sources of leisure and recreation were established. Fontaine Ferry Park, a private pleasure resort that gained widespread popularity in the 1890s for its state-of-the-art bicycle track, was opened in 1887 and William F. Norton's Amphitheatre-Auditorium was completed in 1889, bringing famed orchestras and opera singers to the city.[20] In addition to reshaping the environment of the city and the daily lives of those within it, these various physical changes were important outward-facing signals that proclaimed Louisville's New South status.

These alterations to the urban environment were made concurrently with a push for social and political reforms throughout the city. As champions of industrialization and urbanization, New South boosters, like reformers across the country, felt compelled to address what were understood to be the unfortunate by-products of modern society. Urban ills such as

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[19] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 122.
[20] Samuel W. Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways* (Louisville: Holland Brown Books, 2013), 35; Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 126.

poverty, crime, prostitution, disease, and political corruption threatened to drag the lower classes—and, with them, the whole of society—into physical and moral chaos. It was the responsibility of the civic elite, the elite themselves insisted, to ensure that did not happen. The solution, they believed, lay in expanding the centralized authority of the municipal government and ensuring that it was overseen by business leaders who would run it according to business principles.[21] This would transfer power away from corrupt politicians and invest it in paternalistic members of the upper classes who had the moral and administrative knowledge needed to implement city-wide reforms.

More, however, was needed than simply concentrating administrative power in the hands of the city's business leaders. As Mary Ryan explains, actualizing the civic society that reformers envisioned required collapsing the differences inherent in a heterogenous urban populace to create a homogenous 'public' responsive to the decisions made by an elite-run government.[22] If the public remained divided according to small group identity—whether such groups were determined by race, class, gender, ethnicity, neighborhood, or region of origin—reformers risked having their initiatives thwarted by competing interests or, even worse, being kept from power entirely by machine politicians savvy enough to mobilize the necessary combination of constituencies. In order to modernize the city according to their vision, reformers needed to ensure that individuals identified as metropolitan citizens before all else. Subsuming small group differences within a broader civic identity would, in theory, allow all individuals to appreciate urban reforms made in the name of the "public good," regardless of whether or not they felt the direct impact of such reforms.

This emergent ideology was clearly present in Louisville. Starting in the 1880s charitable organizations overseen by middle- and upper-class citizens were established to provide direct

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[21] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 260-261; William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xii-xiv.
[22] Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998), 259-303.

uplift to the working class and poor through services such as settlement houses and free kindergarten. At the same time, attempts to weaken the local Democratic machine run by "Papa John" Whallen were made through the standardization of voter registration and the establishment of an independent oversight board for the police force.[23] It is true, as Don Doyle and others explain, that all New South boosters were aligned, to some extent, with this broader agenda of social progress. Indeed, regardless of one's humanitarian sympathies, it was widely acknowledged amongst the region's modernizers that "upgrading the South's human capital" was a "prerequisite to economic development."[24] They understood social reform and urban improvement to be two equally important sides of the same coin: the latter modernized the physical environment while the former ensured the public adjusted to the new ways of living that it demanded. However, the reform movement in Louisville was, if not more successful, more cohesive and clearly articulated than in the other case studies examined in this thesis. This was due to the more robust presence of Republicans and northern transplants that resulted from the city's unique position within a border state. Unlike in New Orleans, where reformers struggled against a strong public aversion to what were perceived as Yankee innovations, Louisvillians were much more accustomed to northern ideas of urbanization. So, while they never directly controlled the city government during the period under examination, the persistent influence of these individuals led to a more successful integration of northern-style reform methods into the local New South movement than was seen in cities further south.

The city's park initiative was, perhaps, the starkest example of this unique combination. The idea of bringing public greenspace to Louisville emerged from an 1887 meeting of the Salmagundi Club, what its members described as "a social and literary organization whose membership commanded public respect and confidence."[25] This private group in many ways

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[23] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 128 & 130-131; Harrison, *A New History of Kentucky*, 250.
[24] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 260.
[25] Andrew Cowan, "The Public Parks and Parkways," in *Memorial History of Louisville from its First Settlement to the Year 1896*, ed. J. Stoddard Johnston (Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1896), 339.

embodied the reformers' ideal of New South leadership. It consisted of the city's most influential men, many of them leaders in local industry, who came together to work towards the economic advancement of their home city. What is more, the group's membership—which included former Confederate and Union officers, native Republicans and Democrats, and new arrivals from North and South—was representative of the city's distinct demographics.[26] This diversity, however, at times led to opposing strategies with regard to how best to modernize Louisville. The two figures most central to the park initiative, Andrew Cowan and John Breckinridge Castleman, each of whom would eventually serve as president of the Board of Park Commissioners, are a clear illustration of this inherent tension (see Figures 1 & 2). Cowan, a Scottish-born Union colonel who settled in Louisville in 1866, fit the standard mold of northern reformers. He was a Republican and local business leader who consistently championed public improvements and "good government," most noticeably in his fervent campaign against the Louisville Gas Company's monopoly over the city's utilities.[27] Castleman, a Confederate major who arrived in the city in 1867, on the other hand, did not see machine politics as incompatible with the goals of the New South movement. As will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, he was invested in maintaining the supremacy of the Democratic Party and leveraging his connections therewith for personal gain.[28]

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[26] Prominent members of the Salmagundi Club included Basil W. Duke, former Confederate general and subsequent progenitor of the Lost Cause; Henry Watterson, editor of the *Courier-Journal* and prominent New South spokesman; and John Mason Brown, who served as a colonel in the Union army before establishing himself as a lawyer in Louisville.

[27] Eric Burnette, *Parks for the People! Profit, Power, and Frederick Law Olmsted in Louisville* (Louisville: Holland Brown Books, 2017), 9-10 & 21-22; Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 115. The Louisville Gas Company had long enjoyed a monopoly over the city's gas supply, but the arrangement was up for renewal by the Louisville General Council in 1887. The proposed charter would extend the Gas Company's monopoly for another fifty years while establishing a high ceiling for chargeable rates and requiring no quality control. Believing this to be a source of political corruption at the expense of the public, Cowan successfully killed the charter through a series of articles he wrote for the *Courier-Journal*.

[28] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 33-34.

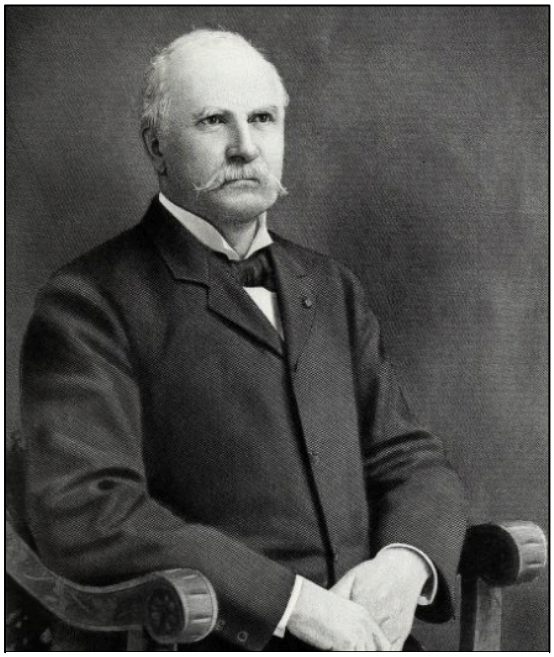

Figure 1 – Andrew Cowan, in J. Stoddard Johnston, *Memorial History of Louisville from its First Settlement to the Year 1896* (Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1896), 339.

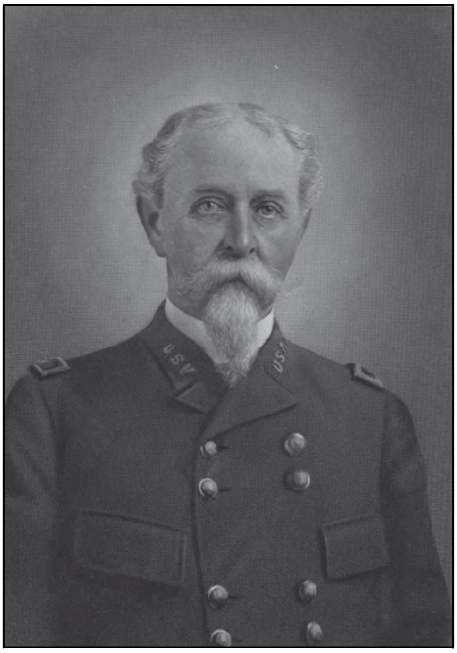

Figure 2 – John B. Castleman, in E. Polk Johnson, *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians: The Leaders and Representative Men in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activities* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), 945.

Their shared commitment to civic improvement, however, provided an avenue through which the club's members could overcome their political differences and wartime allegiances. It was Cowan who proposed the idea of a park system to his fellow Salmagundians via his colleague Thomas Speed during the meeting in 1887, and in doing so he brought his affinity for the North to bear on his adopted hometown.[29] After having "been for a long time engaged in studying the parks and methods of other cities," he proposed a system of parks that embodied the cutting edge of landscape design.[30] Unlike the other case studies considered in this thesis, the plan that Cowan envisioned did not consist of one, or even two, independent greenspaces, but a

[29] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 15. Cowan's use of Speed as a proxy reveals the internal divisions within Louisville's New South reform movement as well as the limits of the Republican/Northern influence discussed above. Burnette speculates that Cowan had Speed, a fellow Republican but native of Louisville, present the idea as his own because the rest of the club would be hesitant to embrace this particular form of "Northern innovation" if it came from someone perceived to be a carpetbagger.

[30] Cowan, "The Public Parks and Parkways," 340; Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 15. Burnette speculates that Cowan had Speed, a fellow Republican but native of Louisville, present the idea as his own because the rest of the club would be hesitant to embrace this particular form of "Northern innovation" if it came from someone perceived as a carpetbagger.

comprehensive system of three landscaped parks connected by manicured drives, or "parkways," in the style that Frederick Law Olmsted had pioneered in Buffalo, New York, in 1868 and was subsequently adopted by other northern cities such as Chicago and Boston (see Figure 3).[31] Not only would such a system be on par with those of larger cities, thus giving Louisville a potent outward-facing sign of New South modernity, but it would aid in developing the sort of broad civic identity that Cowan and his fellow reformers desired. Olmsted himself would later emphasize this point after being hired to consult on the project in 1891. In delivering his recommendations to the Board, Olmsted stressed the need to make each of the three parks "of a character distinct from that which you will develop within either of the other two, the distinction being determined in each case by regard for the existing topographical peculiarities of the particular site." Doing so would ensure the system was understood as a comprehensive whole for the good of the entire city, rather than separate amenities provided "for the benefit of a particular division of the community," and thereby avoid the sort of internal divisions that hamstrung New Orleans' park initiatives.[32]

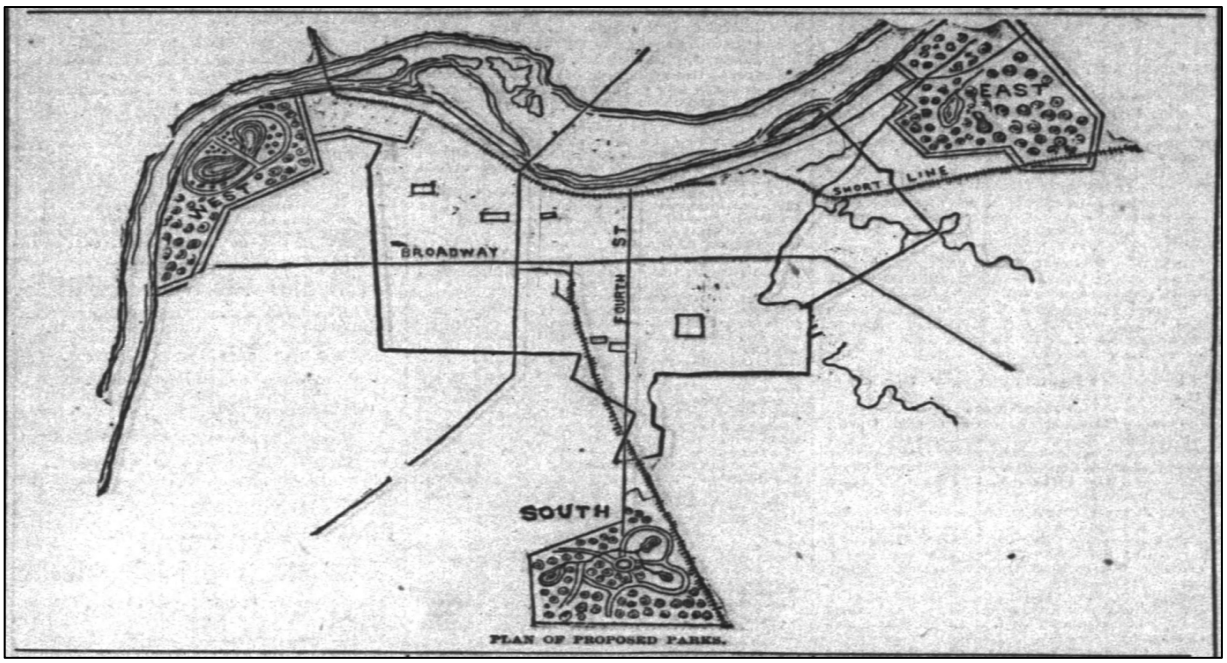

Figure 3 – *Plan of Proposed Park*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Jun. 5, 1887.

[31] For more on the Buffalo park system, see Francis R. Kowsky, "Municipal Parks and City Planning: Frederick Law Olmsted's Buffalo Park and Parkway System," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 46, no. 1 (1987).
[32] "A Park System," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 20, 1891.

The Salmagundians enthusiastically embraced the idea. Soon after the 1887 meeting they formed a special committee to scout potential locations, write legislation to establish a Board of Park Commissioners, and rally public support.[33] While the Park Act drafted by the club was quickly approved by the mayor and city council in 1888, its arrival in the State Legislature so near the end of its session meant that it could not be presented to that body until it next met in 1890.[34] In the meantime, Mayor Charles D. Jacob took matters into his own hands and risked embroiling the project in the very sort of political chicanery that Cowan sought to avoid. In 1889 Jacob used $98,000 of his own money to purchase a tract of land atop a hill south of city known as "Burnt Knob." Encouraged by a group of landowners—which included Meriwether Lewis Clark, proprietor of the nearby Churchill Downs racetrack that was struggling to stay afloat—he intended to convert the land into a park and construct a "Grand Boulevard" in the style of Paris' Champs-Élysées leading to it from the city. As the boulevard would pass by Churchill Downs, Clark stood to benefit financially from the increased traffic along the route.[35] Jacob then convinced the City Treasurer to reimburse him for the full price of the purchase, plus interest, without the City Council's approval. The Council nonetheless approved of the boulevard project after the fact and commenced work on its construction.[36] Jacob saw to it that Clark was hired as Chief of Parks at a generous salary of $3,000 a year, putting him in charge of the park's improvement. Despite his clear financial interest in ensuring that the project was a success, Clark had no experience in landscape architecture and his "improvements" were, at best, haphazard.[37] Nonetheless, the park, initially referred to as Jacob Park, and boulevard eventually served as the nucleus of the subsequent park system.

The State Legislature and Governor approved the Park Act early in the 1890 legislative session, formally establishing a six-member independent Board of Park Commissioners with the

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[33] Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 112.
[34] Cowan, "The Public Parks and Parkways," 340. At this point in time, the State Legislature met every two years.
[35] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 26-27.
[36] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 134.
[37] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 24-28.

power to select and purchase park sites. Control over Jacob Park and boulevard was transferred to the Board, and by 1892 they had purchased additional acreage to the east and west of the city.[38] These three sites would come to be known as Iroquois Park, Cherokee Park, and Shawnee Park, respectively. As already mentioned, the Board hired Frederick Law Olmsted—at this point seventy years old and nearing the end of his career—to advise on the design and improvement of the parks. Following his initial recommendations, the Board saw to it that the park system showcased three unique landscapes: steep hills in Iroquois that provided sweeping views of the city, rich forests in Cherokee, and broad, flat expanses of lawn in Shawnee that allowed visitors to take in the breadth of the Ohio River. While his guiding philosophy of topographical diversity was essential to the formation of the park system, it is important, as Samuel Thomas points out, not to overstate Olmsted's role in bringing parks to the city. Rather than being solely responsible for the park system, Olmsted was an advisor who offered his advice with regard to plans that were already in motion long before his arrival.[39] This was a relationship that was maintained between the Board and the Olmsted family firm long into the twentieth century, even after Frederick's death.

From the outset the park initiative was couched in the New South agenda. The numerous articles published in Watterson's *Courier-Journal* in favor of the scheme explicitly framed the proposed parks as outward-facing urban features that would aid in cementing Louisville's status as a modern metropolis. "If outside capital should turn its gaze on this promising field for profit, and real estate investors should come from the Northern and Eastern cities," an article from March of 1887 explained, "they would look for the common evidences of enterprise and prosperity that are associated with the ideas of occupation of land."[40] The "ideas of occupation of land" referred to in this passage relate to an underlying ideology that guided all civic boosters in the New South, especially those who advocated for urban greenspace. Certain

[38] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 134-135.
[39] Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 11.
[40] "Occasional," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Mar. 13, 1887.

physical features of the modern urban environment were needed not only to signal to outsiders that one's city was progressing according to predictable, established patterns but their direct benefit to property values fueled the speculative real estate market, in particular, that was understood to be particularly alluring to northern capital. Parks, as the "indispensable feature[s] of every city of any pretension the world over," were the clearest forms of such evidence.[41] Another article published that June claimed parks were not only necessary for attracting the outside investment needed to establish new industries, but to secure the labor on which they would run:

> When we make such provisions for the pleasure and health of the people the best class of mechanics will more readily be induced to settle here and will remain when they come. Employers of highly skilled labor know how difficult it has always been to keep the best class of skilled workmen permanently. They find here no recreation for themselves, while their wives and children, finding small relief from the discomfort and monotony of their pent-up cottages, grow discontented and flit elsewhere.[42]

By providing the healthful and wholesome sources of leisure which reformers insisted were essential to a stable urban society, parks would attract and retain the skilled and content workforce that proved so elusive in the home cities of northern capitalists. This was a particularly pressing concern for Louisville's industrialists, for whom organized labor had been a persistent source of frustration since the Panic of 1873.[43] At the same time, they would "put

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[41] Ibid.
[42] "Public Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 5, 1887.
[43] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 115-117 & 130; Nancy Schrom Dye, "The Louisville Woolen Mills Strike of 1887: A Case Study of Working Women, the Knights of Labor, and Union Organization in the New South," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 82 (1984). There were several large strikes in Louisville in the final decades of the nineteenth century, some of which resulted in violent clashes between demonstrators and police. This led to political organization through groups such as the Workingmen's Party, the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor. The success of these efforts varied but they were nonetheless seen as persistent threats by the city's leaders.

Louisville abreast of her sister cities in respect to energetic action and vigorous self assertion [sic]."[44] According to these interpretations, then, first-class parks would not only jump-start the process of industrialization in Louisville, but they would distinguish it from amongst the other southern cities with which it was competing by fostering a cohesive population rooted in an idealized "better class" of working citizen.

Yet, the park system did more than simply offer a potent outward-facing sign of New South progress capable of attracting individuals desirous of the modern city that Louisville's reformers envisioned. It also fostered the broad civic identity that reformers believed to be necessary for the enactment their agenda. It did so through a system of accommodation similar to that which Jon Teaford claims characterized municipal politics across the country during the same period.[45] Whereas the system that Teaford identifies relied upon the strategic *distribution of authority* within city government to "achieve an uneasy balance" between competing political forces, however, those in charge of Louisville's parks attempted to do the same with the city's social forces through a *distribution of access*. In short, by making accommodation within these public spaces conditional upon conformity to the behavioral expectations set by the city's reformers, the parks functioned as a means of minimizing social difference and fostering cooperation between the public and civic authority. As the following analysis will make clear, this process supported reformers' ambitions in three ways: politically, by encouraging cooperation between local Democrats and Republicans as well as mutual respect for Confederate and Union wartime experiences; recreationally, by privileging "active" pastimes within the grounds in order to popularize the parks amongst the middle- and upper-class citizens who were understood to be the model for all others to emulate; and socially, by ensuring that the behavior of the working class, black community, and women adhered to elite, white expectations. Ultimately, reformers

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Jon Teaford, *The Unheralded Triumph: City Government in America, 1870-1900* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 6-7.

hoped, this would result in a cohesive population responsive to, and supportive of, the dictates of a city government focused on making Louisville a New South metropolis.

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From the moment of its conception Louisville's park system was intended to be a politically neutral institution, yet the effort to make it so revealed a tension within the New South movement that was, perhaps, unique to this city's border state context. The belief that public services should be administered by disinterested elites was central to the reformer ideology to which Cowan subscribed, yet other civic boosters—while equally interested in Louisville's economic advancement—were resistant to straying from party politics, especially if doing so involved the appearance of ceding control to Republicans. Convinced that Louisville's Democratic machine would view the parks as a source of patronage and self-dealing rather than civic pride, the Cowan-aligned Salmagundians urged John Mason Brown, their colleague tasked with drafting the legislation that would establish the park system, to do so in a way that ensured "partisan politicians could never get control of…the Parks."[46] To this end, Brown crafted the Park Act so that the initial slate of six park commissioners was voted on by the public in a separate election prior to the Act itself, giving them the opportunity to scrap the initiative if it was discovered that any member of the Board was personally interested in any land schemes.[47] Furthermore, they solicited the backing of the Commercial Club—an apolitical group of the city's young professionals who sought "to advance and promote all measures of improvement" for Louisville—to make the parks' intended purpose clear.[48] Their best efforts, however, proved

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[46] Andrew Cowan, "Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan at a Meeting of the Conversation Club and also at a Meeting of the Salmagundi Club, Louisville, Ky.," 1913, 4, MSS. A. B668, Folder 48, Temple Bodley Collection (1852-1940), Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.
[47] Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 114-115.
[48] *Illustrated Louisville: Kentucky's Metropolis. Its Growth, Resources, Commerce, Manufactures, Financial Interests, Public Institutions, and Prospects* (Chicago: Acme Publishing and Engraving Co., 1891), 41

to be insufficient. Soon after Brown's Park Act was approved by the State Legislature, John Castleman introduced an exclusively Democratic ticket of park commissioners which included himself as a candidate and had the backing of the Party's local machine as well as Watterson's *Courier-Journal*.[49] His motivation for doing so stemmed from the very financial interests that reformers opposed. Like Atlanta's Lemuel P. Grant, Castleman owned real estate that he hoped to increase the value of with a nearby park. Upon settling in Louisville after the war, he purchased a tract of land east of town that he developed into his personal estate known as Castlewood. With the Board of Park Commissioners in friendly hands (including his own), he intended to sell a portion of Castlewood to the city for park purposes.[50]

Fearing that, if elected, Castleman's Democrats would corrupt the park project from the outset, a group of local businessmen approached Cowan and asked him to stand as an opposition candidate. After initially resisting, Cowan joined two other Republicans and three Democrats on a ticket that embodied the reformers' political ideal. This "Calico Ticket," so-named for its bipartisan composition, was made up of private citizens, not career politicians, willing to set aside their partisan differences for the sake of public improvement (see Figures 4 & 5). When the dust settled after the election in July of 1890, the local Democratic establishment was faced with an unexpected outcome. While Castleman and his fellow Democrat Gottleib Layer had made it through, four of the six Calico candidates had been elected as well. More shocking was the fact that two of the successful Calicos were Republicans, Andrew Cowan and German immigrant E. C. Bohne.[51] This was a conspicuous and unwelcome failure of the Democratic machine in what had increasingly come to be known as a one-party town. While the

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[49] "The Nigger in the Wood Pile," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 27, 1890. This article, which announced the paper's support for the Democratic ticket of Park Commissioners on the eve of the election, claimed all candidates were disinterested, public-spirited citizens and that any claims to the contrary were part of a Republican plot to gain a foothold in local politics.

[50] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 36-37.

[51] Ibid, 37-38; Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 126. Ironically, the election of Cowan and his fellow Republican was due to the same sort of political wrangling that her personally detested. The son-in-law of John Fizner, one of the Calico Democrats, had created a political organization to get himself elected jailer and used to help Fizner as well. Cowan and Bohne, running on the same ticket, were carried, incidentally, by the same forces, receiving fewer votes than any of the other winners.

Calicos failed to get an entirely reform-minded Board elected, they successfully upset the smooth operation of business-as-usual politics in the city. The Board's machine-backed Democrats found themselves in a position of having to compromise with both skeptical members of their own party and a Republican minority.

The Board's bipartisan makeup resulted in a delicate equilibrium between its competing factions. Denied absolute control over financial appropriations and site selection, the machine Democrats were forced to abandon their most nakedly self-interested plans. Cowan, for example, successfully thwarted Castleman's attempt to sell the Board a portion of his estate, thereby allowing him to propose alternate park sites selected for the sake of aesthetic potential rather than financial benefit.[52] As Cowan's understanding of an urban park's usefulness was intimately linked to Olmstedian design philosophy, he believed it to be of paramount importance that land purchases were made with a given site's natural advantages in mind. In exchange for control over site selection and subsequent improvement, Cowan gave the Board's Democratic members freedom to engage in a degree of business-as-usual machine politics. As he put it, "I left the distribution of places and patronage to the members who demanded and loved that sort of thing."[53] This allowed the Democrats to dispense park jobs to voters and influential allies in order to shore up political support. For example, after Reuben T. Durett, one of the Democrats who failed to get elected in the summer of 1890, was selected to fill a vacancy on the Board caused by the death of Calico Democrat John Finzer in 1891, he received numerous letters from prominent Louisvillians recommending individuals for positions that ranged from park police to park superintendent.[54] This mutually-beneficial dynamic, however, did not mean that the Board

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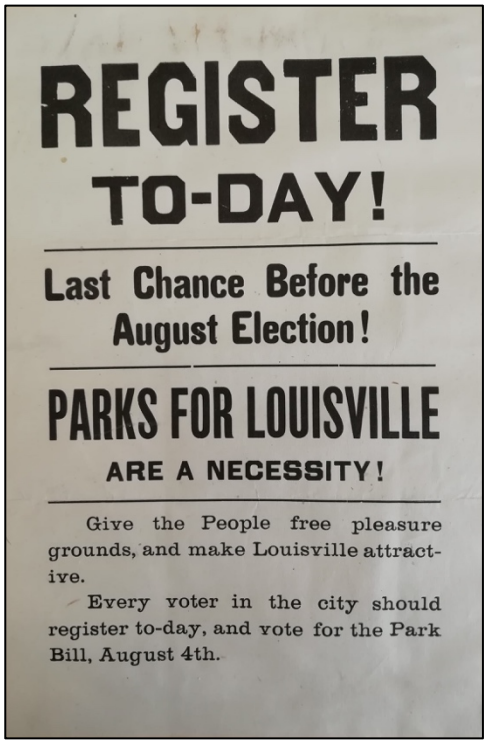
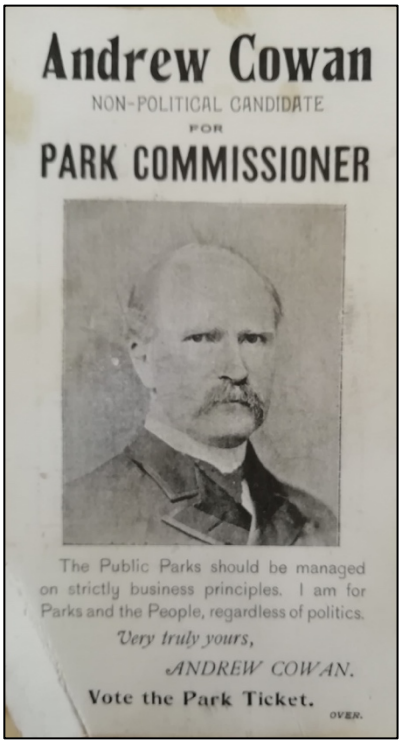
[52] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 52.
[53] Cowan, "Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan at a Meeting of the Conversation Club and also at a Meeting of the Salmagundi Club, Louisville, Ky.," 16.
[54] Letter from W. Bonnie to Col. R. T. Durrett, April 29th, 1891, MSS. A D965c, Folder 78, Reuben T. Durrett Papers (1824-1913), Added Papers (1883-1910), Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky; Letter from J. Krack to Col. R. T. Durrett, July 2nd, 1891, MSS. A D965c, Folder 68, Reuben T. Durrett Papers (1824-1913), Added Papers (1883-1910), Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

was without political rivalry. Both parties vied for control of the Board, causing it to switch from Democrat to Republican hands several times over the remainder of the decade.[55]





Figures 4 & 5 – Election leaflets, in "The Park System of Louisville and the Services of Col. Andrew Cowan," MSS. A .B668, Folder 48, Temple Bodley Papers (1852-1940), Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

While internal power-sharing was resisted by some of the commissioners, they were much more willing to use the parks to promote political cooperation amongst the public. As in any other aspiring New South city, overcoming residual sectional tension from the war was essential. Louisville was particularly suited for such as task. Despite its drift toward neo-Confederatism in the post-war years, both its wartime experience and regional ambiguity meant that it could appeal to those who sympathized with the North's struggle to maintain the Union or the South's Lost Cause. Recognizing their city's advantage in this regard, the commissioners opened the parks to commemorative events. Unlike those held in Atlanta's Grant Park, however, these gatherings catered to both Union and Confederate veterans. In 1894, Louisville's boosters had successfully lobbied to have the following year's encampment of the Grand Army of the

[55] "The Park Commissioners," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 15, 1893; "Almost a Clean Sweep," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 6, 1895; "Freed from the Band that Ruled to Ruin," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 3, 1897.

Republic (GAR)—the national organization of Union veterans—hosted in their city. Only the second time that the annual gathering was hosted in a border state, and the first time south of the Ohio River, the event was laden with symbolic importance. Men wearing Union blue peacefully entering a city that had, at least according to post-war revisionism, been aligned with the Confederacy and receiving a warm welcome from its residents was a potent example of sectional reconciliation.[56] Furthermore, the event brought real material benefit to the city. Not only would the thousands of attendees spend their money in Louisville's hotels and restaurants, but laudatory national coverage of the city's embrace of their former enemies had the potential to translate into an openness to all northerners, particularly those with idle capital to invest. With this in mind, the commissioners eagerly offered their assistance.

While elements of the GAR celebration were held throughout the city, the commissioners took advantage of the opportunity to draw attention to their new park system. In May of 1895, just over three months before the encampment, the *Courier-Journal* reported that the three major parks were being decorated in anticipation of the "thousands of strangers who will be drawn to Louisville in September." Ernest Kettig, Superintendent of Shawnee Park, had already arranged "great flower-beds welcoming the G. A. R." there and intended to complete similarly elaborate designs, such as an enormous American flag, in Cherokee and Iroquois parks "as rapidly as possible."[57] Such decorations not only invited the encampment's attendees to visit the parks, but converted them into spaces of public commemoration and reconciliation. The most striking example of this was a ceremonial tree-planting in Cherokee Park carried out by members of the Women's Relief Corps and Ladies of the GAR (LGAR), two unofficial auxiliary branches of the all-male organization. Emily E. Woodley, former president of the LGAR, transported a young tree "wrapped in an American flag" with her from Philadelphia along with a can of earth from Independence Square.[58] On the first day of the encampment, she and her

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[56] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate* Kentucky, 103-104.
[57] "Welcome to Old Kentucky," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 26, 1895.
[58] "A Tree of Peace," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 11, 1895.

colleagues, in a procession of seventy-five carriages, rode to the park where they were joined by Andrew Cowan and John Castleman, who served as representatives of the Union and Confederate armies, respectively. The soil from Independence Square was placed in the hole and the tree set on top of it. Cowan and Castleman then approached the tree, shook hands above it, and declared "that any feeling that might have existed between the North and South had been totally obliterated, and that…the war is over."[59]

While such ceremonies helped to promote sectional reconciliation amongst Louisville's citizens, the park commissioners also leveraged their positions to maintain a distinctly southern identity for the city. Early in 1890, a group of Louisville's elite women organized to have a Confederate monument erected somewhere in the city.[60] While the Women's Confederate Monument Association, as the group was formally known, labored for years to raise the necessary funds for the monument's construction, it had a much easier time finding its eventual location. In January of 1891, the Board offered the Association a spot at the corner of Third Street and the Southern Parkway, ensuring that the tribute to "the memory of Kentuckians who fell while fighting for the Lost Cause" would sit prominently on Louisville's most famous street.[61] Despite having been undertaken several years prior, the monument project rapidly accelerated ahead of the GAR encampment in 1895. On May 25th of that year, after having been declared a holiday by the City Council, the cornerstone of the monument was laid amidst much public celebration. Two months later, just over a month before the Union veterans were due to arrive, the completed monument was officially unveiled (see Figure 6).[62]

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[59] Ibid.
[60] "The Confederate Monument," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Feb. 8, 1890.
[61] "Arch or Monument," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jan. 5, 1891.
[62] "Official Proceedings," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 25, 1895; "Put In Place," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 26, 1895; "The Tribute of Women," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 31, 1895.

Figure 6 – *Confederate Monument, Louisville, Kentucky*, ca. 1904, Furnas Family Album Collection, University of Louisville Photographic Archives, https://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/furnas/id/283/rec/1.

The construction of the monument was fast-tracked to ensure that it was erected before the Union veterans arrived. Indeed, Henry Watterson gave a benefit lecture five months after the monument had gone up to help pay off the debt which the Association had incurred to see that that was done.[63] This caused quite a stir amongst some of the GAR members. When John Castleman, who, in addition to his role as park commissioner, had been a member of the Citizen's Committee responsible for bringing the GAR to Louisville, suggested in 1894 that the monument might be unveiled *during* the event with the help of the former Federal soldiers, the veterans condemned his "foolish attempt to turn [the event] into a glorification of the lost

[63] "Seats Selling Fast," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 2, 1895.

cause."[64] A GAR post from Pennsylvania even threatened to boycott the encampment altogether.[65] As Nina Silber has pointed out, such mixing of Union and Confederate commemorations often presented obstacles to reconciliation throughout the period.[66] The rush to have the monument dedicated before the encampment, then, was another attempt to balance the city's competing identities: Louisville's Confederate sympathizers had a physical manifestation of their southern identity to greet northern visitors and Union veterans were spared active participation in a celebration of their former enemies. The compromise proved successful. The previously spurned Pennsylvania post did, indeed, attend the encampment and actively rebuffed the notion that southern commemoration would have kept them away. As one of its members explained, "for us to object to a monument to the Confederate dead would be the greatest petty practice conceivable…We honor the men who contended so nobly for what they conceived to be the right principle and we firmly believe that they are as much entitled to commemoration…as are our own heroes."[67] Reciprocity, in this case, secured the reconciliation Louisville's boosters had desired.

The city's park commissioners further rewarded the public's accommodation of the Union veterans by hosting a Confederate reunion in Shawnee Park in 1897. Like the reunions held in Grant Park during the prior decade, this event encouraged Louisvillians to remember the Confederate dead according to the mythology of the Lost Cause. The 3,000 attendees were divided into smaller "bivouacs" to hear wartime reminiscences of vaunted ex-Confederate leaders, one of whom was John Castleman.[68] The speakers regaled their audiences with stories of the "military genius" of Confederate officers, such as General Nathan Bedford Forrest, as well as the bravery of southern soldiers, a single one of whom was able to "clean up ten Yankees." More importantly, they made sure to place Kentucky squarely within the secessionist narrative. Judge

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[64] *The Indianapolis Journal* (Indianapolis, IN), Oct. 3, 1894.
[65] *The Franklin Repository* (Chambersburg, PA), Sep. 28, 1894.
[66] Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, 60.
[67] "The True Story," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 14, 1895.
[68] "Stories," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 7, 1897.

H. W. Bruce explained that although "many people believe that Kentucky…had no part in the Confederacy," he was certain that "the fellows present knew differently." He then supported his claim by recalling his own involvement in the state's ill-fated sovereignty movement.[69] Such oratory not only celebrated those who fought for the South during the war but solidified the state's post-war drift toward a Confederate identity.

While Shawnee Park was not a sanctified landscape—one consciously set apart from its surroundings and dedicated the to the memory of the war—like Atlanta's Grant Park, its naturalistic setting nonetheless aided in generating nostalgia for a fictive antebellum past. As the *Courier-Journal* put it, "the deep braying of the old 'swamp angel' and 'Black Bess' [two cannons used for a Confederate salute], the sunshine and the flowers, arguments of war and peace, will blend and fill the hearts of veterans with indescribable emotions, and the sons and daughters with happiness."[70] The event further compensated for the site's historical distance from the war with allusions to the state's antebellum past. While Kentucky's connection to the Confederate project could rightly be questioned, its relationship with the institution of slavery was indisputable. Demonstrating a conscious effort to affirm the state's slave-owning past, the reunion's organizers engaged attendees in idealized recreations of plantation society. The veterans and their families, for instance, gathered in the shade of the park's trees for an ample picnic meant to exemplify "the spirit of courtesy which has always characterized the South," before being serenaded by a sextet of "plantation singers" who produced "songs once heard around the cabin door."[71] Such representations of the mythologized past, in which life for white southerners was characterized by abundance, hospitality, and the faithful service of enslaved African Americans, made the Lost Cause central to Louisvillians' civic identity by affirming their place within a broader southern culture despite the city and state's wartime experience.

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[69] "A Group of Confederate Yarns and Reminiscences," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 19, 1897.
[70] "Will Be A Great Day," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 10, 1897.
[71] Ibid; "Reunion," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 12, 1897.

While the parks facilitated balance between the city's northern- and southern-aligned residents by providing space for both Union and Confederate commemorations, they also aided the reformers' goal of amalgamating the two into a single public. They did so by encouraging Louisvillians to transcend their sectional identities and bond over a shared national heritage. Similar to the way in which, as Reiko Hillyer explains, Richmond, Virginia, and St. Augustine, Florida, drew upon a colonial past in order to minimize their Confederate associations for the sake of attracting tourists, Louisville's park system alluded to the city's pioneer heritage in order to reaffirm the public's status as citizens of the United States.[72] This process started with the names of the parks themselves. In an echo of colonization itself, Cowan and his fellow business-minded Salmagundians viewed Native culture as a neutral medium on which a collective, white-centric American future could be built. They pushed to have the parks named after prominent tribes in an explicit effort to avoid them being dragged into the partisan politics of which they were so wary. As Cowan explained in a retrospective account of establishing the parks, "the streets and the Fire Engine houses, the public school houses and every conspicuous property of the City, were then named by 'the City Fathers' in honor of themselves or their henchmen."[73] If this habit was continued with the parks, it risked alienating certain segments of the public from what were supposed to be spaces open to all. And in a divided city such as Louisville, where partisan politics stood as a proxy for competing wartime identities, it also risked jeopardizing the process of reconciliation by proclaiming total allegiance to one side or the other. Shawnee, Cherokee, and Iroquois were not only "familiar, distinct, [and] recognizable" names that were "pleasing to the ear," according to Major J. M. Wright, prominent local businessman and Union veteran, but they were "a summary of the Indian and pioneer history of Kentucky" with which all Louisvillians could identify.[74] Additionally, the supposed relationship between these particular

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[72] Hillyer, *Designing Dixie*, 6.
[73] Cowan, "Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan at a Meeting of the Conversation Club and also at a Meeting of the Salmagundi Club, Louisville, Ky.," 2.
[74] "Suggestions on Park Names," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 2, 1891.

tribes and the land was emblematic of Louisville's New South aspirations. According to the Commercial Club, "Kentucky…was regarded by the Indians as an almost earthly realization of the spiritual 'happy hunting grounds'…[and it] was set apart as neutral land, whither all the tribes came in season to hunt, and which none was to possess as residence."[75] By drawing on this history, the park names alluded to the image of Louisville championed by the city's business class: "neutral land" that catered to the financial interests of North and South alike.

Further references to Kentucky's frontier past were found on the grounds of the parks as well. In 1896, for example, a tree was discovered within Iroquois Park with an inscription that read: "Z. Taylor, 1835, Deer Hunt." The Board claimed that it was "beyond all question carved by the President Zachariah Taylor in person soon after he captured the great Indian Chief Black Hawk, during the Black Hawk war in Illinois in August, 1832."[76] They erected fences around the tree, along with another close by that was marked with the name of Taylor's cousin, Hancock Taylor, in order to protect them for the interest of future generations. These relics were not only suggestive of a national history that was deeper than Civil War but provided a means through which Louisvillians could measure the progress of their city. The hunt in which the Taylors took part in 1835, after all, took place at a time "when wild deer abounded in the suburban districts close to Louisville [which was] then little more than a village."[77] By looking back to the city's humble pioneer beginnings, visitors engaged in a narrative of linear progress that bolstered the ambitions of Louisville's New South boosters. The modernization for which they advocated became a logical extension of a historical process that downplayed the brutal reality of the United States' continental expansion and glorified those who brought "civilization" to the wilderness. The Board further reinforced this narrative in 1906 by placing a statue of Daniel

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[75] "What to Name the Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) May 15, 1889.
[76] "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Louisville Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1896* (Louisville: Sowle Printing and Engraving Co., 1897), 693.
[77] Ibid.

Boone sculpted by Enid Yandell in Cherokee Park (see Figure 7).[78] The unveiling was part of a larger Kentucky homecoming event that invited the state's wayward sons and daughters to return and celebrate a romanticized interpretation of their history. After dedicating the monument to "the hardy pioneer…chiefly responsible for the colonization of Kentucky," for example, visitors were brought to a replica fort and stockade that had been constructed in the park. There they were entertained by a mock battle between "settlers" and "Indians," after which games and dances representative of the period were put on to celebrate "the victory of the settlers."[79] These celebrations encouraged the public to set aside their former allegiances to North or South and embraced the mythology of a common origin.

Figure 7 – *Daniel Boone Statue, Cherokee Park, Louisville, Kentucky*, 1926, Caufield & Shook Collection, University of Louisville Photographic Archives, https://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cs/id/5274/rec/1.

[78] Yandell was a Louisville native and professional sculptor. Despite having left the South to pursue her career in both New York and Paris she maintained a connection with Louisville's elites, especially her childhood friend Reuben T. Durrett. For more on Yandell's life and work, see Juilee Decker, *Enid Yandell: Kentucky's Pioneer Sculptor* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2019).
[79] "My Old Kentucky Home," *American Citizen* (Kansas City, KS), May 18, 1906.

The parks also helped connect Louisvillians to a broader national identity by serving as sites of patriotic celebrations. As early as 1891 all three parks were popular destinations for Fourth of July revelry, attracting thousands of visitors each year for picnics and fireworks displays.[80] More formal events, such as the celebration of George Washington's birthday in Iroquois Park in 1894, reminded the public of their place within the nation through explicit appeals to a shared history.[81] A striking example of this was an 1895 Independence Day event hosted by the Kentucky Sons of the American Revolution in Cherokee Park. Children in dresses of red, white and blue accompanied by parents carrying American flags and wearing "badges of the national colors" gathered in the park to hear a prayer and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. The entire crowd then joined together in singing a rendition of 'America,' the words of which "reverberated through the woodland…to thrill the crowd with patriotic enthusiasm." Such communal displays of patriotism allowed those who took part to temper their wartime antagonisms and bond over a shared national identity, or, as Reverend W. B. Jennings put it during his address to the gathering, "to renew our vows of enthusiastic devotion to our country…and arouse the spirit of pure Americanism."[82] Yet the aim of the event was not simply to bridge the bloody chasm left by the Civil War; it was an attempt to foster the reformist vision of politics through assimilation, especially with regard to Louisville's substantial immigrant population. As Reverend Jennings explained, Louisville, like much of the nation, had "suffered a peaceful invasion" of foreigners who divided the electorate into "an Irish vote, a German vote, a Mormon vote, [and] a Socialist vote" and allowed corrupt politicians to rise to power by pandering to their various interests. But such patriotic celebrations, he contended, combatted the threat by blurring ethnic difference and encouraging "men of business ability and moral integrity" to exercise their power at the polls.[83] By providing space for such events, then,

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[80] "Independence," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 5, 1891; "A Day of Enjoyment," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 5, 1894.
[81] "Patriots Assemble," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Feb. 23, 1894.
[82] "Patriots Were There," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) Jul. 5, 1895.
[83] Ibid.

Louisville's parks both fostered a broader sense of belonging amongst the public while inspiring the business class—which reformers believed to be best suited to wield municipal authority—to exercise its political power.

Patriotic sentiment was also instilled through displays of militarism. The broad lawns of Shawnee Park, for example, were often used for public inspections of the Louisville Legion, a local volunteer militia first organized in 1839. Hundreds of citizens travelled to the park in order to watch the soldiers in full uniform conduct their drills. According to the *Courier-Journal*, the impressiveness of the martial spectacle was heightened by the park's natural scenery: "the regular lines of blue uniforms and white leggings on the light green field and against the dark background made a picture that was worth going a good ways to see."[84] The unit was a prime example of the post-war reconciliation which Louisville's boosters intended the city to embody. Despite having been mustered on behalf of the Union during the Civil War, the Legion was now commanded by John B. Castleman (who had since been promoted to Colonel), the former Confederate officer who had once faced the prospect of exile over charges of espionage against the United States.[85] Such public exaltations of the Legion demonstrated Louisville's ability to overcome wartime differences by bonding over points of civic pride. This local reconciliation would eventually be channeled into national reunion when Castleman led the Legion, then filled to capacity with volunteers, to Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War.[86]

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[84] "A Fine Showing," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 31, 1895.
[85] Burnette, *Parks for the People!*, 36-37.
[86] "Filled," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 29, 1898; Cardon, *A Dream of the Future*, 89. As Cardon explains with reference to southern expositions, the imperialistic trends taking hold of American society during this period offered a means of reconciliation for the North and South. Through shared sacrifice and reward, it seemed likely that "foreign wars could remake a united nation."

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Louisville's parks further facilitated the reformers' New South vision through the recreational activities that they promoted. Large-scale urban parks of the nineteenth century were designed with "receptive" forms of recreation in mind in accordance with Olmsted's own reformist philosophy. "Exertive" recreation, such as ball-playing, would, in Olmsted's opinion, only distract from the quiet contemplation of natural scenery in which the park's salutary effects lay.[87] The parks of Louisville were no exception. This should come as no surprise, given that Olmsted himself consulted on their design and construction. Indeed, when he presented his opinions of the park sites selected by the Board in 1891, he urged its members to develop each into "a treasure of rural and sylvan scenery" while making "provisions on neither site for any form of recreation, the means for which will be in a marked degree discordant with, or subversive of, the natural character of the site."[88] Ensuring the ability of visitors to commune with nature, in short, should be the Board's primary focus. Olmsted's sons, John C. Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., continued to stress this central idea to Louisville's park commissioners once they took over their father's firm after his retirement in 1895.[89]

The Board, at least initially, heeded Olmsted's advice. In 1891, the commissioners hired Emil Mahlo, Olmsted's hand-picked candidate, to serve as Park Engineer. Having worked as an assistant engineer on the construction of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park in the 1870s, Mahlo had first-hand experience designing a naturalistic space that facilitated receptive recreation. He brought this knowledge to bear on Louisville as he drafted topographical maps of each of the city's parks and oversaw their subsequent improvement.[90] The influence of both Olmsted and Mahlo can be seen in the activities that took place in the parks, especially in the early years. As

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[87] Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," 73-80.
[88] "A Park System," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 20, 1891.
[89] Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 171-173.
[90] Ibid, 144-146.

was the case in the previous case studies, Louisville's parks primarily catered to genteel middle- and upper-class forms of leisure. Picnics were the most common means through which most visitors engaged with park space. Frequently these were put on by elite social circles—the society column of the *Courier-Journal*, for example, routinely posted notices for outings of the city's most respectable young women—yet it was also an activity that extended to a broader swath of the middle-class. Social clubs and churches, especially those which catered to Louisville's large German immigrant community, held gatherings in the parks, while the city's public schools hosted annual picnics for children and their parents (see Figure 8).[91] The latter events, which attracted up to 25,000 attendees to Cherokee Park each year, was "a somewhat severe strain on the park," the Board admitted, but the sight of "thousands of young people enjoying themselves in the most beautiful surroundings" was, nonetheless, "a most convincing object lesson as to the value of parks."[92]

[91] "Entertainments," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 18, 1892; "Society," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 6, 1893; "Picked Up," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 6, 1892; "Sunday at the Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 25, 1893.

[92] "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Louisville Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1896* (Louisville: Sowle Printing and Engraving Co., 1897), 691; "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Annual Reports of the City of Louisville for the Fiscal Year Ending Aug. 31, 1897, and Dec. 31, 1897* (Louisville: Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1898), 452.

Figure 8 – *What the Parks Are For—A Picnic Party in Eastern Park*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), May 20, 1900.

The winding roads within the parks, as well as the smooth surface of the Southern Parkway, also offered enticing routes for carriages, spurring an increase in pleasure driving in the city. Like all of Olmsted's parks, the drives were specifically designed so that the park's pastoral views could be taken in from the comfort of carriages.[93] The cost of such vehicles, however, made this the exclusive activity of Louisville's elites. As an 1896 article noted, prior to the creation of the parks it "was an unusual thing to see a stylish, up-to-date carriage in the city…[but now] the lines of fashionable carriages to be seen on the drives any afternoon are sufficient to make the heart of the average Kentuckian swell with pride."[94] On week-day evenings it was not uncommon to see the Southern Parkway crowded with vehicles carrying

[93] Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape*, 89.
[94] "Handsome Teams and Carriages," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 5, 1896.

passengers to Iroquois Park and back to town.[95] Other activities, such as open-air concerts in the spring and summer months, encouraged visitors to engage in receptive leisure within the parks.[96]

The fact that the park system was established in the 1890s, however, meant that it was opened to the public at a point at which the Olmstedian vision of park use was being challenged. As scholars such as Roy Rosenzweig have noted, the design and function of America's urban parks was altered in response to public calls for active recreation toward the end of the nineteenth century.[97] The same was true for Louisville, though with a key difference. Whereas this transition in northern parks has been attributed to working-class demands for active recreation, Louisville's park commissioners responded to distinctly upper-class cries for the accommodation of sports within the grounds. This distinction makes sense when one considers that it was this segment of the population that lay at the heart of the reformist vision of New South society. If the expertise and integrity of the business class made it the example to follow with regard to the administration of government, then the same must be true when it came to leisure. Allowing exertive recreation would not only appease those who were understood to be the most important members of society but would provide a model of public behavior for all others to follow. Accordingly, the Board actively prioritized the recreational demands of these citizens and began devoting space within the parks to athletic activity in 1895. That year Emil Mahlo, who had, until then, dutifully managed the parks according to Olmsted's philosophy, resigned his position as Park Engineer, apparently under pressure from the Board's new sport-focused member, Robert C. Kinkead.[98] What followed was a steady acquiescence of the Board to the demands of middle- and upper-class Louisvillians' for active recreation in exchange for their continued support of park development. The construction of tennis courts in Shawnee Park was

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[95] "Sunday at the Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 25, 1893.
[96] "Free Park Concert To-day," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 11, 1896; "Subscribed $200," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 3, 1896; "Park Day Music," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 28, 1899; "Park Concerts," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 15, 1900.
[97] Rosenzweig, "Middle-Class Parks and Working-Class Play," 218; Taylor, "Central Park as a Model for Social Control," 423.
[98] Thomas, *The Origins of Louisville's Olmsted Parks & Parkways*, 168-169.

approved in 1896, following public petitions submitted to the Board; a nine-hole golf course was developed for Cherokee Park in 1897; and, in response to the sport's immense popularity, ten baseball diamonds were constructed across the various parks by 1915.[99]

The most vivid example of this emergent relationship can be seen in the Board's embrace of the local cycling community. Bicycle-riding had become a national obsession by the 1890s, both solidifying a new means of amusement for the public and, more significantly, dramatically altering the way in which urban Americans interacted with the space of the city.[100] But, as Evan Friss has noted, the high cost of a set of wheels meant the activity was limited to the middle and upper classes until the end of the century.[101] The majority of those who cycled, then, were the members of the public that reformers sought to elevate as archetypes of civic identity. This fact is evident in Louisville. The numerous private cycling clubs established throughout the city during this period often "number[ed] in their ranks the best young and old business men in Louisville."[102] The daughters of the elite, too, embraced the trend. The *Courier-Journal* noted in the spring of 1893 that twenty-five "society girls" had been taking lessons from the wife a well-known physician, determined to "learn to ride and make use of the machine on the streets independent of public criticism."[103] Two years later, an additional forty women were reported to be attending one of the local riding schools, the daughter-in-law of Andrew Cowan among them.[104] As in cities across the country, the embrace of cycling presented Louisville's female riders with increased autonomy, a point that will be discussed in greater detail below.

All three of the city's parks were natural attractions for Louisville's wheelmen and wheelwomen. The same paved and well-graded drives that encouraged wealthy citizens to ride

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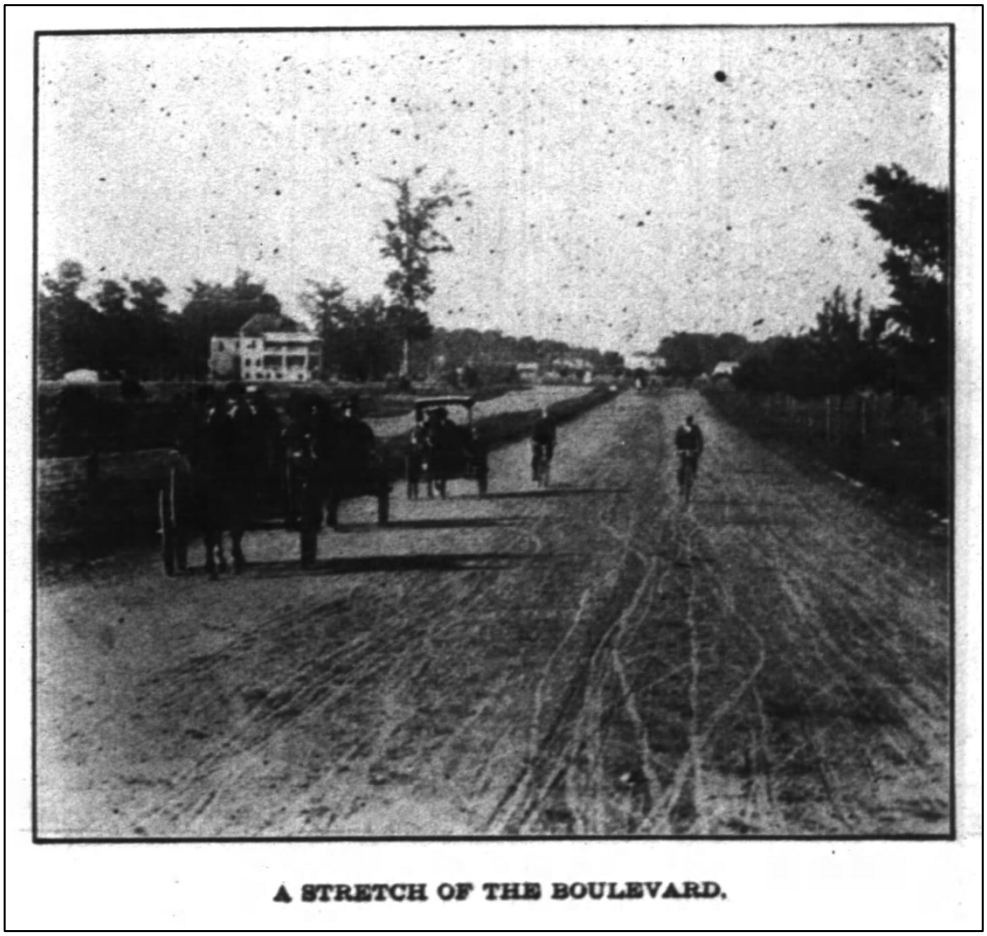
[99] Ibid, 102 & 174; "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Louisville Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1896* (Louisville: Sowle Printing and Engraving Co., 1897), 691-692.
[100] Evan Friss, *The Cycling City: Bicycles and Urban America in the 1890s* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).
[101] Ibid, 43.
[102] "The People on Wheels," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 18, 1893.
[103] "Matters of Common Talk," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Mar. 11, 1893.
[104] "Society," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 14, 1895.

their carriages within the parks proved equally alluring to the cyclists. Furthermore, their respective locations on the suburban fringe of the city were ideal for day trips during which riders could travel several miles by wheel and enjoy a rest in the parks before returning home. The Southern Parkway (the first of the parkways completed) made Iroquois Park especially inviting in this regard (see Figure 9). Society women frequently hosted "wheel parties" in the park; various cycling clubs took regular runs from the city, down the grand boulevard to the park, and back; and the sport's top athletes used the parkway in their attempts to break time and distance records.[105] Its popularity gave rise to various establishments along the route. By the summer of 1896, several roadhouses, cycling clubs, and restaurants had been opened adjacent to the parkway to cater to the city's ten thousand cyclists. The most imposing of these was the clubhouse of the Iroquois Wheeling and Driving Club, a private establishment that counted "in its membership of nearly 500 some of the best people in Louisville" and provided them with a first-class restaurant and live music (see Figure 10).[106]

[105] Ibid; "Society," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 5, 1896; "Business Men on Wheels," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 21, 1893; "The People on Wheels," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 18, 1893; "Notes of a Personal Nature," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 21, 1895; "Going for a Record," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 10, 1894; "Nowlin's Fast Time," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 9, 1895.
[106] "Where Wheels Do Spin," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 21, 1896.



A STRETCH OF THE BOULEVARD.

Figure 9 – *A Stretch of the Boulevard*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Jun. 21, 1896.

THE IROQUOIS CLUB-HOUSE.

Figure 10 – *The Iroquois Club-House*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Jun. 21, 1896.

The Board of Park Commissioners quickly recognized the potential of allying itself with the cycling community. Not only would doing so elevate the sort of healthful and wholesome leisure activities that reformers championed but rallying middle- and upper-class Louisvillians around a single issue would generate the political momentum needed to ensure that park improvements were continued. In exchange for the active political and public support of the wheelmen, the commissioners ensured that the parks—and the Southern Parkway in particular—were conducive to bicycle-riding. The wheelmen had already proven themselves to be an effective political force within municipal politics after successfully backing Mayor Henry Tyler and eight additional candidates on a "wheelmen's ticket" in 1893.[107] As W. W. Watts, a member of the Louisville Cycle Club, put it after the election: "the attention of the people of the metropolis of [Kentucky]…has been called to the fact that the wheelmen are a political power."[108] The members of the Park Board certainly took notice. When the issuance of $1,000,000 worth of bonds to fund park improvements was put to a public vote the following year, the commissioners made sure to court the recently established cyclist vote. An article in the *Courier-Journal* published on the eve of the referendum reminded the wheelmen that "without parks and driveways leading thereto, Louisville would be a cramped place for bicyclists," before stating that if every one of the 4,500 wheelmen eligible to vote took "the trouble to learn how to vote on the park bond issue…the question will carry."[109] Likewise, the *Southern Cycler*, a Louisville-based cycling magazine, explained that "every wheelman in the city should feel it is his

[107] "The People on Wheels," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 18, 1893. Earlier that year a cycling club of Louisville's businessmen had lobbied Mayor Tyler for a temporary cessation of street sprinkling—a process of wetting dirt roads to limit the amount of dust put into the air—and a mounted police escort along the route of their intended run from the city to Iroquois Park. Tyler obliged, and, in exchange, received the official endorsement of the Louisville Cycle Club, which vigorously campaigned on his behalf and against his primary challenger, ex-Mayor Charles Jacob. All of the other candidates on the wheelmen's ticket were elected, with the exception of one whose endorsement was rescinded.
[108] "Kentucky Division," *The Bicycle World & L.A.W. Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (1893): 40.
[109] "For Bicycle Devotees," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 4, 1894.

duty [to] vote early…when the question is submitted to the people."[110] The bond issue was approved by a public vote in November of 1894.[111]

The wheelmen took their political engagement a step further and solidified their relationship with the park commissioners by electing one of their own to the Board in the election of 1895. Indeed, it was Louisville's cyclists who ensured that R. C. Kinkead, the commissioner who would later augment the Olmstedian model with active recreation, won his seat. Kinkead was not only deeply involved in the local cycling community, evinced by his position as president of the Drivers' and Wheelmen's League at the time of the election, but was exactly the sort of figure that reformers hoped to bring into public leadership. A thirty-six-year-old lawyer and Louisville native, Kinkead was a young professional free from prior political entanglements. He was a representative of the new generation of the New South. In an interview with the *Southern Cycler*, he echoed reformers' distaste for career politicians, claiming surprise at the Republican Party's decision to nominate him, yet recognized the opportunity to further shape the parks to the benefit of city's cyclists: "I never sought or held office, and my nomination in this instance was entirely unsolicited, but believing I could be of some service to my fellow wheelmen…I have accepted the nomination and now ask your support."[112] The same article urged its readers to support Kinkead out of the collective interest of all wheelmen, regardless of any personal misgivings they might have about voting for a Republican:

> Only a wheelman…can understand the wants of the wheelman, and the wheelman, in justice to himself, should see that his vote goes for Robert C. Kinkead, regardless of his

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[110] *The Southern Cycler* 1, no. 1 (1894): n.p., RB 796.05 S727, Rare Book Collection, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

[111] Despite passing the public referendum, the bond issue was later overturned by the Court of Appeals which ruled that the proposal needed to be approved by two-thirds of all eligible voters. As only 30,000 people voted on the issue, the threshold was not met. "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Louisville Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1896* (Louisville: Sowle Printing and Engraving Co., 1897), 685.

[112] "Robert C. Kinkead," *The Southern Cycler* 2, no. 1 (1895): n. p., RB 796.05 S727, Rare Book Collection, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

> party affiliation, for as park commissioner he will be always open to any new and practical idea from any lover of pleasure secured by riding or driving.[113]

Thanks to the support of his fellow cyclists, Kinkead won more votes than any of the other candidates running for seats on the Board.[114] From his new position, he ensured that the reciprocal relationship between the commissioners and the Louisville's cyclists was carried on for the remainder of the decade and beyond.

In addition to their political engagement, the city's cyclists became enthusiastic public advocates on behalf of the parks. Through various events they put on over the course of the 1890s they encouraged their fellow citizens to visit the parks and openly celebrated improvements made thereto. In 1894, for example, they city's wheelmen and wheelwomen hosted a massive parade to celebrate the official completion of the Southern Parkway and did so again in 1897 when a dedicated cycle path was completed along the route. Both events, which drew tens of thousands of spectators, explicitly honored the work of the Park Board. The commissioners were given seats on a dedicated observation stand in order to watch the procession of approximately 2,000 cyclists, bedecked in elaborate carnivalesque costumes of blue and white (the official park colors), as it made its way down the boulevard to Iroquois Park.[115] At the end of the 1897 parade, members of the Iroquois Wheeling and Driving Club passed a resolution that "complimented the Park Commissioners on the many privileges they had given to the wheelmen upon the parkway" before urging them to commence work on the Eastern and Western Parkways.[116]

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[113] Ibid.
[114] "More Official Returns," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 16, 1895.
[115] "Louisville's Cycling Carnival," *The Southern Cycler* 1, no. 3 (1894): n.p., RB 796.05 S727, Rare Book Collection, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky; "Wheelmen's Carnival," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Oct. 16, 1894; "Carnival on Wheels," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Nov. 8, 1894; "Parade To-Night," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) Oct. 8, 1897.
[116] "Not Many in Line," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) Oct. 9, 1897.

Likewise, the parks were central to the National Meet of the League of American Wheelmen (LAW) when it was hosted by Louisville in 1896. The event, a major economic and publicity boon to the city generally, was a unique opportunity for the Board to showcase the park system to thousands of visitors from across the country. The *Southern Cycler* published detailed directions from the center of the city to all three parks in advance of the Meet so that attendees could visit them at will during their week-long stay. Time was also allocated for organized runs to each park within the official program.[117] The *Courier-Journal* reported that the visiting cyclists, upon returning from a ride to Cherokee Park, "were extravagant in their praise of the roads over which they passed and declared they were inferior to none over which they had run."[118] Another costumed parade was held on the Southern Parkway, culminating in a watermelon feast on the grounds of Iroquois Park at which an estimated 3,000 cyclists gathered.[119] Incorporating the park system into the Meet itself not only revealed it to outsiders, but presented it as an essential component of the city's environment.

In exchange for their public promotion and active political engagement on behalf of Louisville's parks, the commissioners physically altered the park system to accommodate the wheelmen. Ahead of the LAW Meet, for example, R. C. Kinkead urged his fellow commissioners to complete the proposed driveway through Shawnee Park to Fountain Ferry Park, the nearby private cycling track at which many of the Meet's races were to be held. He also pushed to have electric lights installed along the Southern Parkway so that wheelmen would be able to make night runs to Iroquois Park without the aid of lanterns.[120] A concourse was also constructed at the entrance of Iroquois Park to serve as a resting place for cyclists who had made the ride from town.[121] When the Kentucky division of the LAW sought to construct a memorial to one of their

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[117] "How to Reach the Parks," *The Southern Cycler* 2, no. 18 (1896): n.p., RB 796.05 S727, Rare Book Collection, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.
[118] "Jokers and Smokers," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 12, 1896.
[119] "Burlesques in Order," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 13, 1896.
[120] "Improvements," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Feb. 19, 1896.
[121] *Louisville Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 1896*, 694.

deceased members, the Board gave permission for the stone fountain and bench, designed by Enid Yandell, to be placed on the Southern Parkway (see Figure 11).[122] Most significantly, the commissioners altered Olmsted's design for the Parkway itself for the sake of the wheelmen. In 1897, W. W. Watts, writing on behalf of the wheelmen, petitioned Castleman, then president of the Board, to take steps to ensure the safety of cyclists after a female rider was killed in a collision with a carriage on her way to Iroquois Park. In response, the Board converted what Olmsted intended to be a bridle path on the Parkway into a dedicated cycle path. The annual report of the commissioners for that year described the change as a necessary response to the increasing number of cyclists, "who to day [sic] outnumber the pedestrians a hundred to one," and, in doing so, explicitly acknowledged the reciprocal relationship that had emerged between the two groups:

> That the park system must be considerably affected and arrangements made for accommodating this new element is a matter of course; a prompt recognition of this fact by the Board is evidenced in the arrangement of the Southern Parkway, and provisions will be made throughout the park system, wherever possible, to further the interests and promote the comfort of those who use the wheel, and to this large body of our citizens, to whom good roads and pretty parks mean so much, we must, in measure, look to awake the dormant interests of the people to the needs of our magnificent parks.[123]

While the changes made were, according to the Board, necessitated by the sheer number of cyclists who visited the parks, this constituency presented a unique means of raising the profile of the park system amongst those members of the public who were supposed to help lead New

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[122] "Cycling," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jul. 23, 1897; "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Annual Reports of the City of Louisville for the Fiscal Year Ending Aug. 31, 1897, and Dec. 31,* 1897, 495.
[123] "Report of the Park Commissioners," in *Annual Reports of the City of Louisville for the Fiscal Year Ending Aug. 31, 1897, and Dec. 31, 1897*, 491-492.

South society. Indeed, it was this strategy which governed the transition from receptive to exertive recreation. By physically shaping the parks according to the latest trends in leisure, the Board elevated middle- and upper-class behavior as the standard to be emulated by the rest of the community. As the following section will show, ensuring that they did so involved a combination of enticement and enforcement.

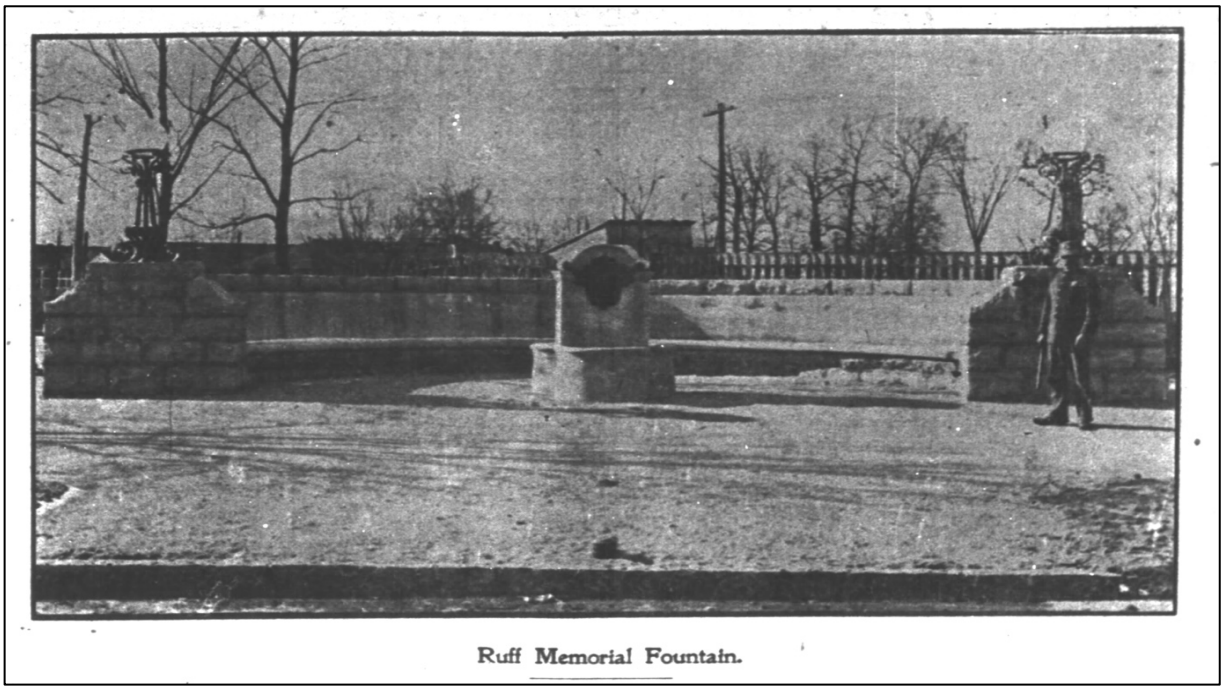

Figure 11 – *Ruff Memorial Fountain*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Feb. 13, 1898.

The park system played a vital role in ensuring that the behavior of particular segments of the public conformed to New South expectations. Louisville, like all southern cities keen to industrialize, needed to attract a skilled workforce in order to fuel this process. One of the main selling points put forward during the early days of the park project, in fact, was that a first-class park system would attract just this kind of labor. As an 1887 article in the *Courier-Journal* explained, "when we make such provisions for the pleasure and health of the people the best class of mechanics will more readily be induced to settle here and will remain when they

come."[124] But the city's elites were also extremely wary of the potential for organization and agitation that accompanied an expanded workforce. Louisville had experienced widespread strikes and violence amongst the working class during the Panic of 1873, which paved the way for the active, yet short-lived, presence of the Knights of Labor in the 1880s.[125] Aware that attracting investment entailed reassuring northern capitalists that they would not experience the working-class volatility that was common in their native cities, Louisville's business leaders sought to avoid any further labor agitation. Thus, the park system was a means of both attracting a skilled workforce and ensuring that its members remained passive and content.

As in the other cities considered in this thesis, this was partially achieved through direct regulation. The rules governing behavior within the parks established by the Board in 1892 were actively modelled upon those of older Olmsted parks in the North, particularly those in New York City and Buffalo.[126] Like the regulations for New Orleans' parks, some of these were intended to prevent appropriations of the natural resources found within the parks. They were combined with additional rules that ensured working-class visitors could not use the space of the park to remove their labor from the workforce. Engaging in business without permission from the Board, for example, was prohibited, as was begging and gambling. Commercial vehicles (which often doubled as personal transport for working-class Louisvillians) were also banned from the parks and parkways. Others, however, were explicitly aimed at preventing the organization of, or agitation by, the working class. Unsanctioned parades and gatherings, for example, were strictly forbidden.[127] Unlike the parks previously examined, these regulations were

[124] "Public Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 5, 1887.
[125] Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 115-117 & 129; Dye, "The Louisville Woolen Mills Strike of 1887."
[126] "To Protect the Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 6, 1892.
[127] "Ordinances," *The Critic* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 24, 1892 found in Minute Book, 10 July 1890 through 19 May 1892, Mss. BK L888, vol. 1, Louisville Parks and Recreation Records, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

enforced by police officers, separate and distinct from the city's police force, that were under the exclusive authority of the Board of Park Commissioners.[128]

The frequency of class conflict in the past, however, made the Board hesitant to engage in a complete clamp-down of behavior associated with the organized working class. Fearful that overtly forceful coercion would elicit the very response they sought to avoid the commissioners occasionally allowed potentially subversive groups within the parks. In 1900, for instance, the local branch of the Social Democratic Party of America held several "agitation meetings" in Shawnee, Iroquois, and Cherokee parks without interference from authorities.[129] Thirteen years later the Socialists of Louisville held a Fourth of July picnic in Shawnee Park at which addresses were given. Unlike their predecessors, they appeared before the Board to request formal permission for their gathering. Castleman and his fellow commissioners, noting that they had recently allowed members of the Women's Suffrage Association to speak at concerts in the park, consented after the socialists agreed that "neither religion nor politics would be discussed at the picnic…other than in an educational way."[130] By making access for such groups contingent upon a blunting of their radical edges, the commissioners acquiesced to their demands for public accommodation while diminishing the disruptive effects of their messaging. The parks' location in the suburbs made them doubly effective in this regard. Providing space for the socialists within the parks meant that their worker-rallying oratory would be removed from the central business district and, thus, the bulk of potential converts. In this way, the parks functioned as a safety valve for working-class antagonism: providing the city's elite with an outlet for labor's discontent while avoiding potentially catastrophic disruption.

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[128] "An Ordinance," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 26, 1892.

[129] Social Democratic Party of America, Branch No. 1, Louisville, Ky., Minute Book, 1900-1904, Mss. BE S678, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky. These meetings were modest in size, attracting no more than fifty people at a time. No record of them can be found in either the local press or files of the Board of Park Commissioners. Given the strict prohibition of unsanctioned political activity within the parks, as well as the *Courier-Journal*'s consistent reporting of park arrests, it can be assumed that the meetings were either not overtly political or not disruptive enough to draw the attention of the park police.

[130] "Park Freedom," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) Jun. 4, 1913; Minute Book, 6 May 1913 through 1 February 1916, Mss. BK L888, vol. 10, Louisville Parks and Recreation Records, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

This strategy is clearly seen when compared to the way in which the parks were deployed in response to less manageable working-class mobilization. In 1894 Kelley's Army, a contingent of the unemployed martialed under the command of labor organizer Charles Kelley, approached Louisville from San Francisco. Their ultimate destination was Washington, D.C., where they planned to join Jacob Coxey and his men in demanding federally-supplied jobs to alleviate the financial hardship that followed the Panic of 1893.[131] Leaders of cities along the Army's route feared its approach, wary of the unrest that might follow Kelley's impassioned speeches delivered to win new recruits and donations. So, when the Army made camp just outside of New Albany, Indiana, in June, Louisville's leaders were determined to keep it on that side of the Ohio River. Rather than use the parks to contain working-class antagonism as they would later do with smaller groups of the city's socialists, municipal leaders deployed them as a means of repelling Kelley and his followers. Shawnee Park, situated on the banks of the river, was an ideal defensive position. Mayor Tyler ordered a detail of police to the park with order to arrest anyone trying to cross the river, explaining that "an army of tramps does not deserve any more consideration than a single tramp" before vowing to "exert every effort to keep them away."[132] A comparison of the two very different responses to labor activists reveals the reformist strategy of mitigating class conflict through the distribution of access to public space. While labor agitation was antithetical to reformers' ideal industrial society, it was tolerated—even accommodated—if doing so minimized its impact. Granting the local socialists access to the parks in 1913, for example, was done only after they had agreed to not engage in open antagonism and acknowledged the authority of municipal leaders. This both appeased radical members of the working class, thus avoiding more disruptive action, while ensuring the power structure of Louisville's New South civic society remained unchallenged.

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131 Benjamin F. Alexander, *Coxey's Army: Popular Protest in the Gilded Age* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), 80-87.
132 "Level-Headed Tramps," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 21, 1894.

A similar distribution of access was deployed along racial lines, as well. As in all New South cities, displaying the capacity to "solve" the race problem was of paramount importance to the white elite of Louisville. While they sought to maintain—due to both pressure from local white populations and their own personal biases—the antebellum racial hierarchy amidst the transition to modernity, New South reformers simultaneously recognized that "black progress was an essential prerequisite to southern progress."[133] For this reason, Louisville boosters such as Henry Watterson called for racial cooperation and even the direct uplift of the black community while recognizing the need for racial segregation and white supremacy. This would, in theory, both free the white South from its reputation for lawlessness and brutality and allow it to pursue industrial progress unburdened by a dependent black population. Watterson and his white peers were not alone in embracing this vision of post-war southern society. Many of the leaders of Louisville's black community, such as ministers and teachers, who were reliant upon the support of the white community were hesitant to challenge racial discrimination and often subscribed to Booker T. Washington's philosophy of self-help and cooperation.[134] The result was a city governed by what George Wright has described as "polite racism," discriminatory race relations that appeared more amicable than elsewhere in the South as long as African Americans accepted "their place" within the lowest caste of society.[135]

Louisville's park system was a means of conforming the city's black population to these new expectations of public behavior and social interaction. The parks were open to black Louisvillians until they were formally segregated in 1924, yet, like those considered in the previous case studies, they were very much understood to be spaces for white use.[136] First of all, access to the grounds themselves was limited for many black residents. Their respective locations

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[133] Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 266.
[134] George C. Wright, *Life Behind a Veil: Blacks in Louisville, Kentucky, 1865-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 25-26 & 156.
[135] Ibid, 4-5.
[136] Jonathon Free, "What is the Use of Parks?: The Debates Over Parks and the Response of Louisville's African American Community to Racial Segregation, 1895-1930" *Ohio Valley History* 9, no. 1 (2009), 22.

in the suburbs meant that the majority of the city's black residents, who lived in the center of the city, needed both the means to pay streetcar fare and the free time to spend a day travelling to and from the parks. Even the middle-class African Americans who could afford the streetcar were certain to face varying degrees of discrimination on all three of the city's lines.[137] Those who managed to reach the parks were greeted with heightened scrutiny from park police. Wright notes that the city's predominantly Irish American police force was instrumental in enforcing Louisville's racial hierarchy during this period, disproportionately targeting African Americans for arrest.[138] While exact arrest numbers are not available for the park police, it appears that they followed a similar pattern. It was not uncommon for the *Courier-Journal* to publish stories of black park visitors being arrested for seemingly minor crimes such as riding bicycles too fast or engaging in "disorderly conduct." A pair of black children caught tipping over a bench in Cherokee Park, for example, were arrested and charged with the latter in 1894.[139] Some arrests involved more serious allegations and tended to reinforce racist stereotypes of black criminality and sexual aggression. Sam Williams, for example, was arrested in Iroquois Park due to an officer's suspicion that the bicycle he was riding must have been stolen. Harry Williams and Joe Gates were both arrested in Cherokee Park in 1893 and 1895, respectively, for the attempted rape of a minor. In Gates' case, at least, the charges were eventually dismissed.[140] While geographical and economic barriers ensured that the demographics of park users skewed white and middle class, the constant police presence and threat of prosecution sent a clear message to black Louisvillians that access to the spaces was contingent upon their submission to white authority.

On certain occasions, however, black residents were actively invited to the parks, but under the assumption that they would conform to the New South social order. This entailed

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[137] Wright, *Life Behind a Veil*, 110 & 52.
[138] Ibid, 71-74.
[139] "The Fun They Had!," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 3, 1894.
[140] "Charged With Larceny," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jan. 3, 1896; "For Attempted Assault," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 16, 1893; "For a Criminal Assault," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 4, 1895.

both accepting the reality of racial segregation and white supremacy while embodying the politics of respectability promoted by both white and black elites. The clearest example of this can be seen in the annual public-school picnic hosted in Cherokee Park. The event, like Louisville's much celebrated public-school system itself, was governed by a strict observance of the color line and clear prioritization of white pupils.[141] Two picnics were scheduled on separate days, one for white schools and one for black schools, with white students consistently given the first slot. This ordering reflected the racial hierarchy that Louisville's elites sought to maintain, as the needs of white children were given priority over those of their black peers. As the *Courier-Journal* put it in its coverage of the black picnic in 1895, "all the swings and merry-go-rounds and other contrivances arranged for the enjoyment of the white children were left, and the colored children enjoyed the use of them."[142] Yet, the event was also an opportunity for white leaders to celebrate the perceived benefits which the new social system had accrued to black Louisvillians. When asked how the treatment of black students by the public-school system's all-white Board of Trustees compared to that of the white children, a group of black teachers were quick to explain that "they have always treated us as well [as our white counterparts]."[143] The result of this white benevolence was a conformity to expectations of respectability that could be interpreted as an improvement for the entire race. As Mayor Tyler put it when he surveyed the crowd of children at the black picnic of 1894—which he described as "the cleanest and nicest looking gathering of colored children I ever saw"—their well-kempt appearance was "certainly a sign of marked advancement among our colored people."[144] In this way the parks not only reinforced the racial stratification of post-war Louisville, but clearly communicated the idea that support from the white community was contingent upon conformity to its expectations of social behavior.

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[141] Wright, *Life Behind a Veil*, 65-67. Louisville had a history of proudly educating white youths at public expense that stretched back to 1832 and in 1882 equal funding for white and black schools was codified into law. Despite this legally mandated equality, however, the city's black schools were systematically under-funded and under-resourced.
[142] "Colored School Children," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 2, 1895.
[143] "The Fun They Had!" *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 3, 1894.
[144] Ibid.

At the same time, the picnics provided middle- and upper-class black Louisvillians with an opportunity to showcase their successful navigation of the post-war environment. Indeed, educational qualifications were important indicators of class position within the black community and the city's black schools, such as Central High School, were understood to be essential steppingstones on the path toward university degrees.[145] Public events that celebrated the black pursuit of education, then, served as affirmations of these class criteria. But the picnics were also a means of publicly celebrating the most accomplished members of the community. The Indianapolis *Freeman*, for example, applauded the trustees for recognizing "the ability of the colored physicians" enough to include James Fitzbutler, Louisville's first black doctor, among the picnic's medical staff in 1896.[146] The ministers, businessmen, and lawyers who comprised the local black elite also joined the students and their parents at the public celebrations. The Louisville Four Hundred, for example, a small group of upper-class African Americans who consciously distinguished themselves from the rest of the community, appeared "out in force" during the 1898 picnic.[147] By providing a space for such communal gatherings, the parks offered, to a limited degree, an opportunity for expressions of pride amongst Louisville's black community.

As these events were put on by white organizers within white spaces, however, they necessarily required acquiescence to white authority. Furthermore, as many of the black leaders subscribed to the same expectations of respectability as their white counterparts, public celebrations of their success aided in conforming the black population to the New South social order. This is not to say, however, that black and white leaders always saw eye to eye when it came to black conduct. At the 1898 picnic, for example, a group of black ministers clashed with the white trustees over a proposal to have the children engage in a cakewalk. Whether it was due to the popular dance's origin in slavery, its contemporary uses in white minstrelsy, or its

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[145] Wright, *Life Behind a Veil*, 137 & 139.
[146] *The Freeman* (Indianapolis, IN), Jun. 6, 1896.
[147] "Cake-Walk," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 12, 1898.

perceived lack of sophistication, the ministers objected to the students partaking in "such a 'disgraceful' thing as a cake walk."[148] The trustees, citing the widespread popularity of the dance, claimed that "there was nothing disgraceful in it" and eventually overruled the preachers.[149] The episode reveals both a divergence in the understood uses of respectability as well as the reality of the parks functioning as spaces of white control. Whereas the black elite believed in adherence to the politics of respectability as an essential means of advancing the interests of their community, white leaders were willing to compromise that image as long as it supported the nonthreatening black caricature that, in many ways, served as the cornerstone of late-nineteenth-century popular culture. As spaces governed by white authority, Louisville's parks were capable of serving both ends.

The parks also encouraged (and compelled) respectable behavior amongst Louisville's women. As Galen Cranz has noted, nineteenth-century urban reformers across the country viewed the presence of women in public parks as crucial to reinforcing the idea of the family unit and the familiar conceptions of morality understood to be correctives to the ills inherent in the modern city. Accordingly, parks needed to be, at all times, respectable environments for middle-class women free from vice, crass behavior, and sexual promiscuity.[150] This was doubly important in cities of the postbellum South. Not only did New South promoters such as Henry Watterson need to protect the public from the dangers that accompanied the urbanization, but they fervently vowed to maintain the traditional role of the antebellum "Southern Lady" as a means of reassuring skeptics that the changes they sought to initiate would not destroy southern culture. This meant preserving women's understood function as protectors of the family,

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[148] Ibid; Megan Pugh, *America Dancing: From the Cakewalk to the Moonwalk* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 15-21. Pugh makes clear that race—and jokes about race—were central to the cakewalk, yet the meaning derived therefrom depended on the audience. Enslaved people had invented the dance during the antebellum period as a means of lampooning their white masters, while white Americans saw in the humorous steps evidence of black primitivism. These perceptions of the dance were further complicated when it became a national, and international, popular culture phenomenon.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Galen Cranz, "Women in Urban Parks," *Signs* 5, no. 3 (1980), S80-S81.

morality, and the manhood of their husbands.[151] In order to achieve this in Louisville, the Board of Park Commissioners made women's access to the parks contingent upon their conformity to expectations of respectability. In exchange, they were granted modest increases of autonomy within the public sphere.

From the moment the park system was opened to the public, the parks were advertised as spaces in which white women, particularly mothers, could safely entertain themselves and their families – public accommodation in which the wives and children of middle-class workers could find "relief from the discomfort and monotony of their pent-up cottages," as the *Courier-Journal*'s 1887 promotional article put it.[152] But the parks did more than simply support those women who had already embraced domestic life; they actively encouraged a new generation to do the same. The society columns of Watterson's paper consistently reported on outings of young women and men to the parks. In groups, often chaperoned, these young people held picnics or bicycle parties, engaging in innocent forms of courtship free from scandal or the appearance of impropriety.[153] In doing so, the *Courier-Journal* reinforced the notion that the parks were spaces in which young women were required to adhere to middle-class expectations of gender. As such, the parks compelled white women to conform to their roles as protectors of morality and encouraged them to pursue formalized romantic relationships that ultimately resulted in reproduction of the family unit and submission to patriarchal authority.

The park police further reinforced this conception of a woman's place in society with the threat of discipline. Anyone who threatened to disrupt the environment of respectability within the parks faced arrest and prosecution. At times this authority was exerted over men, such as the bar patrons accused of offending Sunday visitors to Iroquois Park with "disruptive and immoral conduct" or the young men arrested for "calling out to the young women strolling

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151 Wheeler, *New Women of the New* South, 6-8.
152 "Public Parks," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 5, 1887.
153 "Entertainments," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 18, 1892; *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 6, 1893; *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Sep. 30, 1894; *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Apr. 14, 1895.

in…[Cherokee] park, whether acquainted with them or not," but female visitors, too, were subjected to it.[154] In August of 1893, for example, police in Shawnee Park arrested Nellie Boone and Millie Richardson along with their two male companions. Officers apprehended the group, "who appeared to have been drinking," after a woman complained that they had been bathing in the river along the park "in full view of…a number of men with their families." The report of the incident in the *Courier-Journal* not only listed the names of the women but claimed that they were "inmates of a house of ill-repute at 722 West Green street."[155] Such public charges of prostitution were devastating to women of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as respectability functioned as a form of capital, a woman's claims to which were proportional to the social and economic opportunities available to her.[156] In this way, female park visitors risked more than legal action if they breached social etiquette. Park officers, such as Richard Ramsey, were well aware of this fact. In 1909, Ramsey was put on trial for attempted blackmail of a young man and woman he caught "embracing" in Iroquois Park. When questioned, he explained that "it was the custom in the parks of the city for the guards to solicit bribes where an exposure might mean disgrace to the parties reported to be conducting themselves improperly."[157]

In addition to being spared public shaming, women who conformed to the expectations of respectability promoted by the parks were rewarded with a degree of increased autonomy. While the parks themselves were strictly regulated spaces, their distance from the city required greater mobility in order for women to reach them. Female Louisvillians were now able to venture far outside their usual spheres of movement, without male accompaniment, without fear of judgement. This is particularly true of the women who chose to travel to the parks via bicycle. The increasingly popular vehicles, unlike carriages, which were typically driven by men, or

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154 "Good Order will be Maintained at Jacob Park," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 19, 1901; "Flirting Not Allowed," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Jun. 10, 1895.
155 "Bathing on the Park Front," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 28, 1893.
156 Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7.
157 "Park Guard gets a Two-Year Term," *The Herald* (Louisville, KY), Feb. 12, 1909.

streetcars, which were relegated to a predetermined course, provided women with the ability to move through the city completely independently.[158] With this new autonomy, wheelwomen would ride by themselves, or in groups, out into Louisville's suburbs to reach the parks (see Figure 12). At the same time, cycling required women to shed their cumbersome Victorian dresses in favor of new garments more suited to athletic activity. This revolution in fashion further challenged popular understandings of female respectability and provided women with a greater say over their appearance (see Figure 13).[159] Mrs. Yoshiro, a Japanese immigrant who had moved to Louisville from New York with her husband, for example, turned heads as she rode to Cherokee Park wearing bloomers in 1894, while two female riders in knickerbockers left "a broad wake of paralysis behind them" as they rode down the Southern Parkway in 1896.[160] Such changes were, indeed, significant to the lives of Louisville's women, but it is important not to overstate their reach. Not only was the increased mobility made possible by the bicycle, as previously discussed, largely limited to the upper class, but the accommodation of female autonomy within the parks did not, by design, threaten to completely overthrow previously established gender hierarchies. As these routes of travel took women away from the crowded city center (and the sources of immorality found therein) and ultimately to regulated spaces of the parks, they constituted an expansion of what Sharon Wood calls the "gendered geography" of the city rather than its outright obliteration.[161]

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158 Friss, *The Cycling City*, 162-164.
159 Ibid, 170-173.
160 "Japanese on Bicycles," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 13, 1894; "Jokers and Smokers," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), Aug. 12, 1896.
161 Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets*, 52-53.

Figure 12 – *Fair Cyclists as They Go Spinning Through the Suburbs*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Apr. 12, 1896.

Figure 13 – *Unnamed Female Cyclist*, in *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), Aug. 9, 1896.

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Much like Atlanta's Grant Park, Louisville's park system was part of a conscious effort to conform the city to modern urban standards in service of an explicit New South agenda. It was an important outward-facing sign of progress which proclaimed Louisville's expectations of growth and ability to provide the public amenities that both would-be investors and residents had come to expect of American cities on the eve of the twentieth century. At the same time, Louisville's parks made more of an impact in this regard than Grant Park. Whereas Grant Park only encouraged residential development to the south of Atlanta, the decision to construct a comprehensive park system in Louisville, anchored by three major greenspaces to the west, east, and south, meant that the city expanded its boundaries in every direction. Furthermore, the combination of parks, which each showcased a distinct topography, and parkways allowed Louisville's boosters to boast of a diversity of attractions that cities with a single park could not. The direct involvement of Frederick Law Olmsted added prestige the city's greenspace, allowing Louisville to further distinguish itself from its regional competition.

Yet the park system played a crucial inward-facing role on behalf of Louisville's New South aspirations. The same heterogenous population which made this border city so appealing to both the North and South during the post-war years also brought potential instability. The competing interests of its constituent groups made rallying Louisville's population around a common goal of modernization all the more difficult. The park system helped the city's New South proponents collapse these differences into a broad civic identity supportive of their efforts through a distribution of access that encouraged cooperation between the public and the municipal government. This strategy promoted political, recreational, and social behavior that conformed to the reformist ideology subscribed to by many of the city's modernizers. The bipartisan composition of the Board of Park Commissioners weakened the supremacy of the local political machine and encouraged cooperation between the city's Democratic and

Republican factions, while various commemorative events hosted within the parks met the needs of those who subscribed to Confederate and Union memories of the war while pushing them all toward a common heritage. Accommodation of active forms of recreation within the parks adhered middle- and upper-class citizens to the agenda of modernization while elevating their public behavior as the model for all others to emulate. Potentially "destabilizing" groups such as the working-class, African Americans, and women were given access to public space on the condition that they adhered to expectations of respectability and did not seriously threaten the established social order. In these ways, this system of give-and-take facilitated by the parks gave the public a vested interest in a particular manifestation of urban modernity, and thereby the New South project generally.

Conclusion:
Legacies in the Landscape

In the early-morning hours of June 8th, 2020, city workers quietly removed a statue of John Breckinridge Castleman from its pedestal in a wealthy neighborhood adjacent to Louisville's Cherokee Park. The monument, which bestowed upon Castleman the dubious title of "Father of [the] Louisville Park System," had, since 1996, withstood vandalism and petitions for its removal from those who denounced it as a public celebration of a man who willingly fought to maintain slavery. The public outrage that followed the killing of Breonna Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old black Louisvillian, by local police in March, however, generated a level of public pressure great enough to bring it down.[1] One month later, the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors monument, which loomed over Chimborazo Park from its position on the neighboring Libby Hill, was taken down as part of a city-wide reckoning with Lost Cause iconography that continues to reshape the built environment of Richmond. In addition to the Soldiers and Sailors monument, several more prominent statues of Confederate leaders, such as J. E. B. Stuart and Stonewall Jackson, that lined the city's famed Monument Avenue have been removed. Rev. Robert Lee IV, a direct descendant of the one-time Confederate military leader, welcomed the decision, along with similar ones made by state and local officials throughout the South, as a long-overdue confrontation with the region's history of white supremacy, declaring hopefully that a "New Cause is upon us."[2]

America's renewed focus on its long history of racial injustice, brought about by the horrifying public spectacle of George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police in May and inspired by the sustained activism of those involved in the Movement for Black Lives, was at the

[1] Ryan Van Velzer, "Controversial Castleman Statue Removed by City Crews Early Monday Morning," *WFPL*, Jun. 8, 2020; Ashlie Stevens, "Castleman Vandalism: A Timeline," *WFPL*, Nov. 28, 2018.
[2] The Associated Press, "Richmond Removes Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Statue," *ABC News*, Jul. 8, 2020.

forefront of my mind as I worked to bring this dissertation to a close during the summer of 2020. Efforts by city leaders, such as those in Louisville and Richmond, to grapple with the complicated history of sites and individuals directly related to this study rendered the subject unavoidable. But the current moment, I believe, also speaks to this project on a more fundamental level. Over the course of researching and writing this thesis, I have been guided by the conviction that the study of parks presented an avenue to understanding the subtle ways in which historical narratives, cultural identities, and social structures formed in the process of modernization in the postbellum South have been crafted and reinforced by public space. Recent events have certainly made the importance of such an understanding to a general audience clearer now than when this project began four years ago. As overt symbols of the Lost Cause are removed from cities across the South, I hope members of the public are inspired to critically examine the less obvious ways that social difference has been built into the landscapes that they inhabit. This study has sought to contribute to that effort, if only modestly.

As advocates of a New South pushed to modernize their region's economy in the decades following the Civil War, they used public parks in similar ways that they, and others, did Confederate monuments. They were didactic tools, intended to teach southerners the fundamental principles of a new postbellum society. Whereas statues were narrowly focused on promoting a particular historical memory, however, parks were capable of addressing a wider range of social issues. By analyzing the motivations that lay behind the creation of these spaces, in conjunction with the designs and regulations that determined their influence on public behavior, this thesis has shown that public parks played a fundamental role in the effort to mold southerners into New South subjects. As the foregoing case studies have made clear, these subjects were intended to be ideally suited for life in an industrial South. They were white, middle-class, politically multivalent, future-oriented, civic-minded, and entrepreneurial. At the same time that parks acclimated southerners to industrial society, however, they ensured their continued adherence to the social hierarchies of the Old South. These spaces were intended to

preserve white supremacy despite black freedom, ensure white women remained tethered to domestic affairs even as they increased their public presence, and maintain a working class responsive to the cues of a ruling elite despite the demise of the antebellum planter class. As is the case with Confederate monuments, the effects produced by these manipulations of the urban environment are not confined to the time in which they were made. These parks aided the formation of a particular vision of post-war southern society and their impact extends to the present. Whether it is in the persistence of racial inequity, patriarchal assumptions, or uneven wealth distribution, the legacy of these spaces and the social ideology that underpinned them is still visible today.

This thesis has sought to shed light on the role of public parks within the New South movement through the examination of four case studies. Chapter One took us to Richmond, Virginia, in the immediate post-war years. There we saw the local Conservative government strategically undertake the construction of two parks—Chimborazo Park and New Reservoir Park—for the sake of consolidating political power after Reconstruction. Chimborazo Park displaced an autonomous black community, simultaneously diluting Republican voting strength and reinforcing notions of white supremacy, while New Reservoir maintained the Conservatives' electoral coalition of working-class whites and industrialists by providing direct economic relief during the Panic of 1873. Chapter Two examined the role that Grant Park played in forging a conceptual link between an agenda of modernization and the romanticized Old South during the formative stages of Atlanta's New South movement in the 1880s. By simulating the supposed conditions of antebellum southern society and framing the New South vision as its logical extension, Grant Park reassured white Atlantans that embracing industrialization and urbanization did not require forsaking their cultural identity.

Chapter Three focused on the ways in which City Park and Audubon Park were improved to aid New Orleans' struggling urbanization efforts. Responding to the agrarian practices that persisted on their city's outskirts due to its unique geography, New Orleans'

leaders used public parks to physically enclose the de facto commons used for grazing cattle, discourage collective land-use, and clear space for private residential development. In Chapter Four, we examined the ways in which Louisville's city-wide park system helped forge a universal civic identity for the heterogenous population unique to that border-state city. By conditioning access to recreational space, Louisville's leaders used Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee Parks, as well as the parkways that connected them, to minimize the differences between the city's diverse social groups in order to form a cohesive public supportive of their agenda. Viewed together, these case studies reveal public parks to be multifaceted tools that allowed city leaders to overcome the various obstacles that stood in the way of making a New South.

When these case studies are compared with one another, a number of important similarities emerge regarding the use of parks by leaders of aspiring New South cities. The contributions that these greenspaces were expected to make on behalf of the movement's outward-facing agenda appear more or less uniform across all of the cities considered in this study. Most obviously, parks were intended to help conform the built environment of each locale to standards previously established by their northern counterparts. Indeed, park advocates across the South utilized a repertoire of stock rhetoric to gain support for their initiatives, describing greenspace as a "necessity" for any would-be metropolis. Often, they pointed directly to northern cities such as New York City, Boston, or Philadelphia to bolster their claims that parks were essential pieces of urban infrastructure. But their perceived benefits went far beyond mere aesthetics. Boosters in Richmond, Atlanta, New Orleans, and Louisville relied on parks to drive residential development in order to fuel an emergent speculative economy made possible by rapid urban expansion. Parks in all four case studies were placed on the outskirts of the city with the intention of guiding the direction of development. In this way they were used as fuel for the New South agenda, simultaneously generating the type of growth considered to be indicative of progress and stimulating economic activity. City leaders were confident, due to the precedent

set by New York City's Central Park, that parks were a guaranteed means of boosting the value of adjacent real estate. They produced the twinned effects of enticing outside capitalists eager for safe investments and filling the city coffers with increased revenue from property taxes. More often than not, those who were most active in these park initiatives—such as Lemuel Grant in Atlanta, J. Ward Gurley in New Orleans, and John Castleman in Louisville—stood to profit from their respective project's success due to their own real estate holdings, indicating a symbiotic relationship between municipal government and private capital that characterized the New South.

Each case study also reveals greenspace being used to effect similar inward-facing changes in service of the New South movement. This is most clearly seen with regard to race. Responding to the reality of emancipation, the leaders of the southern cities considered here used parks to accommodate black freedom while clearly maintaining white supremacy. Crucially, these spaces were not formally segregated before the twentieth century. On the contrary, black southerners were expected to use the parks, though in ways that reinforced notions of their supposed social inferiority. Most often they entered the parks in a professional capacity, either caring for the children of white families or serving white visitors as employees within park facilities. Those who did access the parks for the sake of leisure were expected to show deference to both their white counterparts and park authorities. Even in New Orleans, where extended European influence and unique ethnic demographics bred the potential for a drastically different racial dynamic, the Creole supporters of City Park emulated their Anglo-American counterparts by othering black visitors and strictly regulating their behavior. In this way, parks were used to make manifest the New South claim that the region had embraced racial progress while ensuring that postbellum southern society remained governed by white supremacy.

The parks examined here also contributed to a common New South social vision in terms of class and gender. The formal rules that governed park usage in all four cities were remarkably similar, and often focused on conforming working-class residents to middle- or

upper-class standards of behavior. Most explicitly prohibited the autonomous appropriation of natural resources within the grounds, for example, with the intention of breaking poor residents' habit of independent subsistence and deepening their reliance on the market economy. Behavior that went against middle- and upper-class notions of morality was also strictly regulated. Rules banning drinking, swearing, lewd acts, and boisterous behavior were standard across all case studies and specifically targeted activities associated with the working class. It was believed that such regulations would not only elevate local residents to middle- and upper-class standards of demeanor but attract skilled laborers from elsewhere who desired a home city that provided wholesome recreation for themselves and their families. This was a means of establishing the skilled and compliant labor force on which the New South economy relied. The parks also reinforced antebellum gender roles even as white women experienced increased autonomy due to the changes wrought by both the Civil War and the South's emergent industrial society. They accommodated the increased public presence of white women, providing them with an orderly and safe public space to visit unchaperoned and offering some a means of civic engagement, while simultaneously reaffirming their assumed roles as stewards of the domestic realm. All of the parks, for instance, encouraged older women to take on matronly duties such as caring for children and hosting picnics, and provided younger women with a venue for sanitized courtship subjected to public scrutiny. At the same time, park advocates used the spaces to reinforce notions of the patriarchal household, consistently framing them as sources of leisure that kept fathers with their families outside of work. In these ways, parks maintained antebellum notions of gender despite the drastic changes demanded by the New South.

While the parks considered here contributed to a broad social vision shared by all New South cities, however, a close comparison also reveals variation determined by local circumstances. Each of the preceding chapters make clear that parks were used to address particular social issues that local leaders viewed as the most immediate obstacles to the modernization of their respective cities. Richmond's focus on race-based politics differed from

New Orleans' determination to address the cattle nuisance, for example, and their respective deployment of parks reflects this. But one can also observe different strategies surrounding the key social hierarchies of race, class, and gender that structured this social vision. It is clear, for example, that all of the parks promoted white supremacy by catering primarily to white residents and either excluding black visitors or conditioning their access upon subservience to white authority. Yet this constructed racial hierarchy was wielded toward different ends depending on the city. In Grant Park, for example, black Atlantans were forced into positions of deference through a combination of employment, policing, and violence in order to minimize the perceived change between the Old and New Souths. Black Louisvillians, on the other hand, were actively invited into the city's parks—though only on particular days determined by the all-white Park Board—in order to demonstrate Louisville's commitment to racial progress as well as the supposed benefits of white benevolence. Despite the fact that the strategies of city leaders varied, it is clear across all of the case studies that parks were used to establish a New South dominated by white subjects in the face of black freedom.

No city leader could deny the changing gender dynamics of the post-war South, yet we can see the New Woman accommodated to varying degrees depending on location. New Orleans' parks fostered increased civic engagement for elite white women, as seen in the formation and subsequent success of the Audubon Park Ladies' Auxiliary Association, while Grant Park reinforced more traditional notions of domesticity for Atlanta's female residents. This not only shows a difference in opinion amongst New South leaders as to whether or not the changing roles of women should be accepted but reveals a willingness amongst some to actively incorporate women into New South initiatives, harnessing their increased civic engagement for the sake of pushing the movement forward. Similarly, the case studies reveal parks fostering different relationships between local elite and the working class across each city. In Richmond, for example, New Reservoir Park promoted a close political tie between city leaders and skilled labor through the distribution of direct economic relief. Conversely,

Louisville's leaders used their parks to keep working-class grievances at arm's length, either neutralizing discontent by containing organized labor within the grounds or turning the parks into defensive positions to keep activists out of the city entirely. Both cases demonstrate attempts to adapt antebellum notions of class to the industrial context of the New South.

While this study is the first sustained examination of the interplay between the public parks movement and the New South movement, it is hoped that it will not be the last. There is, indeed, much more to be done to understand the role that public space and leisure played in the creation of a postbellum southern society. Despite my desire to examine on the individual experiences of those members of the public that interacted with these spaces, limits on time and archival access resulted in a study that focuses primarily on the intentions and actions of the New South's ruling class. A more robust examination of the public's response to the methods of social control implemented through these parks would be a worthwhile endeavor and a welcome addition to the scholarship presented here. Did those who used the parks recognize the social designs built into them? Did they accept or reject the attempts by elites to control their behavior through these spaces? Throughout this thesis I have noted instances in which individuals resisted the regulations imposed on them within the parks, but often these anecdotes are derived from newspapers or municipal administrations aligned with, or run by, the New South elite. While I took conscious steps to separate these events from the bias implicit in their sources, they present only part of the story. A more detailed examination of first-hand accounts of park usage would, I suspect, support the idea that social control was not simply accepted by a passive public but was at times resisted, making these parks arenas in which divergent visions of southern society competed.

There is also the question of New South leisure space outside of these municipally run parks. The economic barriers to access, regulations that specifically targeted their behavior, and discrimination that they were certain to face from their white counterparts caused many black

members of the public to avoid these parks entirely. If they did visit for the sake of recreation, they were certainly not free to engage in recreation as they saw fit. Where, then, did these southerners spend their leisure time? What did these spaces look like and how did the activities that they accommodated fit within the New South social vision? Sources uncovered while researching this project point to privately-owned parks and pleasure resorts where black visitors were free from government interference and unburdened by the expectations of the white public.[3] Such spaces, however, came with their own class associations and economic barriers, potentially limiting which members of the black community were able to enjoy them. There is, undoubtedly, much more to this history and it deserves dedicated scholarly inquiry. Similar questions can be asked with regard to those who were left out of the New South social vision entirely, such as Queer southerners. Where did those who went unacknowledged by nineteenth-century southern society congregate for the sake of leisure, self-expression, and community-building? The experiences of such southerners demand to be brought to light and the study of leisure and recreation, I believed, presents a fruitful avenue through which to do so.

These are but a few of the possible directions in which the work presented here can be taken. Ultimately, I hope it encourages scholars to critically examine public space as a fundamental element of southern history. This study has combined two seemingly disparate fields of scholarship in order to reveal the central role that public parks played in modernizing the postbellum South. In doing so, it has broadened our understanding of the New South movement. In addition to its economic agenda and nation-wide promotional campaign, the New South movement involved the implementation of a distinct social vision throughout the region. There were, of course, many ways in which New South leaders attempted to actualize this vision, but the construction of public parks was a method adopted by many. These parks were not merely pieces of urban infrastructure with which modernizers could improve the built

[3] "Colored People fit up a Park," *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY), May 24, 1888; "Magno's Message," *Richmond Planet* (Richmond, VA), May 15, 1897; "Picnic and Sham Battle at Island Park," *The Richmond Planet* (Richmond, VA), Jul. 25, 1891.

environment of their cities, though they certainly served that function. They were tools of social control capable, through intentional design and explicit regulation, of influencing public behavior and transforming southerners into New South subjects. Their use as such proved successful in some cases and failed in others, yet parks remained a critical feature of the post-war urban South. Their legacy is felt not only in the persistence of the physical space that they created, but in the society they helped to establish.

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Gilbert Shaw Letters
John Puysegur Map
Joseph A. Shakspeare Collection
"What One Sees in New Orleans"
William Russell Pamphlet Collection
World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition Collection

Library of Virginia
Miscellaneous Richmond City Council Papers, 1865-1870

The Louisiana Historical Center
Dueling Subject File
Gurley Papers
New Orleans: Description and Travel
Record Group 68
Travel Guides Subject File

National Archives
Virginia Freedmen's Bureau Office Records

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