

Asphalt Politics in the Deep South: Race, Housing, and the Interstate Highway System in Atlanta and Birmingham

by

Maurice Robinson

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Auburn, Alabama
August 4, 2012

Keywords: Interstate Highway System, Alabama, Georgia Sunbelt South, highways,
Bureau of Public Roads

Copyright 2012 by Maurice Alexander Robinson

Approved by

David Carter, Chair, Professor of History
Tiffany Sippial, Professor of History
William Trimble, Professor of History

Abstract

This thesis explores how the Interstate Highway System was partially responsible for the transition of the American South from a rural agrarian-based society into a more urban industrialized society. With this cultural and economic shift, political and social alignments were beginning to change as well. The Interstate Highway System's development and political dynamics were not the same across the United States of America, and they unfolded in unique ways in the American South given its history of both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation. The development of the Interstate Highway System was lauded for the economic benefits that were projected to come. As the Interstate Highway System passed through many southern cities, however, politicians, planners, and business elites in cities like Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama, relied upon existing patterns of housing segregation to determine highway routes. Using mostly federal dollars, politicians and community leaders in those cities and across the American South found various ways to reaffirm the strained race and class relations that were a cultural hallmark of the American South.

Acknowledgments

This thesis would never have been completed without the support and belief of my family and friends. Thank you to my parents, Toy and Stacia, my sister Jaylin, my grandmother Oneita, and my aunts and uncles. I want to thank Dr. Carter for his deep knowledge of American History and personal insights into the world of graduate work. I certainly would not have continued my history studies without the help and mentorship of Dr. Sippial, Dr. Trimble, and Dr. Noe. I would like to thank my professors in the Auburn University History Department for inspiring me and keeping me on track. All of my fellow graduate students in the History Department have been wonderful and I appreciate the camaraderie that was built from struggling, laughing, and working together. This has been a trying but fun and rewarding experience.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Creation of an Interstate Highway System	11
Presidents and Funding	18
The American South and the Interstate Highway System	22
Chapter 2: Race and Housing in Atlanta	29
Atlanta’s Compromises	32
Chapter 3: Birmingham’s Housing Codes and Interstate Routes	45
Birmingham’s Suburbs Against the Interstate Highway System.....	54
Forest Park Has a Grassroots Plan.....	69
Conclusion	68
Bibliography	75

Introduction

For all of its economic and industrial benefits, the Interstate Highway system adversely affected the social landscape of the urban American South, either by displacing whole African American neighborhoods or by leaving central urban centers to decay with the exodus of many middle-class whites to the burgeoning suburbs. Although federal coffers supplied vast sums of money, it was ultimately city leaders who decided where Interstate Highway routes would run. In many instances white southern politicians and business leaders at the heart of urban planning decisions used federal funds to buttress Jim Crow, laying out highway routes that reinforced existing patterns of segregation in urban housing, allowing whites to continue to avoid having to live in social proximity with African Americans. The evolution of the Interstate Highway System in the American South was exceedingly complex. Moving beyond the federal mandate of providing high speed limited-access roads to spur national and regional economic growth, the development of the Interstate Highway system in Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama, illuminates how political, social, and economic concerns came to play an even more important role in shaping a technological process than might be expected, as social processes and the power wielded by white urban elites trumped came to supplant the primacy of engineering decisions.

The manner and method in which social change associated with the construction of the Interstate Highway system occurred is unique to the two types of urban centers that

are representative of the American South. In the twentieth century, Atlanta, represents the top tier of urban metropolises in the American South. With a larger population of both whites and African Americans, white leaders in cities like Atlanta were typically more willing to compromise on matters related to race relations. Industrial centers such as Birmingham, on the other hand, are emblematic of younger urban centers that grew in a more haphazard fashion. In the case of Birmingham white political and business leaders fostered an environment of overt racism and were extremely committed to the maintenance of the status quo, making political, economic, and social decisions accordingly. The Interstate Highway System gave city leaders of these middle-tier urban centers the federal funds to permanently and visibly segregate residential neighborhoods. For Birmingham, the Interstate Highway routes were akin to concrete barriers or walls cordoning off neighborhoods that were situated along the periphery of segregated neighborhoods established by race-based housing codes.

According to historian Raymond Mohl, the Interstate Highway System destroyed various African American communities.¹ George Curry, a well-known African American minister in Montgomery, voiced his discontent concerning Interstate-85's route through approximately 300 occupied homes. As the leader of the Property Owners Committee, Curry was able to gather approximately 1,150 signatures on petitions sent to various federal, state, and local leaders that both protested the proposed routes of Interstate-85 and Interstate-65 and gave an alternative cost-saving route. Curry, as well as many others, believed that the proposed routes were racially motivated, in order to displace various

¹ John F. Bauman and others, *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 238.

well-known African American leaders.² Many African Americans in Montgomery viewed the construction of the Interstate Highway system in Alabama's capital as retribution against its veteran Civil Rights leaders such as the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy. In their minds, the fact that Abernathy's residence was located in the path of the proposed Interstate Highway System was no coincidence. A memorandum from the Bureau of Public Roads Records catalogued Rev. Curry's assertions:

Rev. Curry alleges that the routing of this highway will uproot a Negro community, which has no place to relocate, and two Negro churches. It is claimed that there is a nearby alternate route which would cost \$30,000 less. Rev. Curry charges that the proposed routing of the highway is designed by State and local officials to purposely dislodge this Negro community where many of the leaders of the fight for desegregation in Montgomery reside. Rev. Curry said that in a recent conversation with a Mr. Sam Englehardt, Alabama's Highway Director, Mr. Englehardt stated that it was his intention to get Rev. Abernathy's church.³

Abernathy himself wrote to President John F. Kennedy in 1961 raising similar concerns.⁴

The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956 had been spearheaded by many people, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but Ralph D. Abernathy, was a local resident of Montgomery who along with many others spoke out vocally against defenders of segregation. With other forms of intimidation having failed, some white segregationists in Montgomery may have come to view the Interstate Highway System as the best legal

² *George W. Curry and the Property Owners Committee, A Petition Appeal*, April 28, 1960 (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, Correspondence, 1912-65), Box 1665.

³ Berl I. Bernhard to Hyman Bookbinder, June 29, 1961 (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, General Correspondence, 1912-65), Box 1664.

⁴ Ralph D. Abernathy to John F. Kennedy, October 3, 1961, telegram (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, General Correspondence), Box 1664 (Library of Congress).

method to punish a group of people who had challenged the city's segregationist status quo under the guise of eminent domain and rights-of-way.

Cities in the American South underwent a profound transformation in the years following World War II, with hallmarks of these changes including notable de-concentration of inner-city populations, the transfer of economic activities to the suburban periphery, the deindustrialization or reorganization of urban manufacturing, and a racial conversion of residents that left a number of the largest cities in the American South with a majority African American population before the last decade of the twentieth century. A variety of federal and state policies added to these extensive changes, for instance mortgage and tax policies, public housing plans, and metropolitan redevelopment proposals. Strongly associated to these dominant inner-city transformations was the building, after 1956, of the U.S. Interstate Highway System. The Interstate Highway System was a 42,600-mile connection of speedy, limited-access highways that connected cities across the nation. When various politicians and freeway engineers decided that the newly envisioned Interstate Highway System must go through the middle of the metropolitan cities, they made a momentous choice, but as well a decisive choice. Without a doubt, the Interstate Highway System's inner-city highways, or expressways, did not just go through the inner city but the expressways tore all the way through residential neighborhoods and demolished huge areas of urban land, apparently to make possible automobile travel.

Rising African American population stress on restricted urban residential resources made it inevitable that displaced African Americans, pushed into zones of transition, normally blue-collar white localities on the edges of the African American

ghetto where inexpensive homes dominated. These newly created second ghettos were forming after World War II, as whites began moving to the suburbs and as African Americans migrated out of the South to the urban North. Nevertheless, interstate highway building sped up the development of second ghetto formation, helping to shape the sprawling, crowded ghettos of the contemporary American municipality. Government housing and highway policies, altogether, have helped to construct the much more strongly concentrated and ethnically segregated landscapes of modern-day American cities.

Chapter One provides a historical overview of how the Interstate Highway System came into being and how the Interstate Highway System affected social and political spheres. Chapter Two will follow how the existing housing codes and historical issues of Atlanta impacted the routes and regional make-up of the city. Chapter Three will highlight the creation and public contention of the Interstate Highway System's effect on Birmingham and its suburbs. Planners used the legally defensible concept of "slum prevention," which had been legitimated in the 1954 Housing Act, as a defense for using Interstate 65 to separate largely African American neighborhoods from all-white neighborhoods. Slum prevention enabled a northern planning firm to justify the employment of federal interstate highway and urban renewal monies to erect what was in effect a large wall separating a middle-income white neighborhood from a lower-income African American neighborhood. The notion that city and regional planners could employ slum prevention to defend the maintenance of racial segregation in a city whose residents had already employed bombing to "prevent neighborhood racial change reflects badly on the profession of public administration and planners. These professions were used by

officials in order to claim moral legitimacy, in regards to having reached these routing decisions. Both of the aforementioned cities, Atlanta and Birmingham are representative of the urban American South. Rural areas of the American South had Interstate Highway development, but the negative and positive impacts were felt on a smaller number of landowners. Some rural landowners did not mind the access the larger markets and saw the eminent domain funds as extra income on land that was not of much use. However, where the Interstate Highway System does not go, is a story and research topic upon itself. For example, the initial federal highway plan for an Interstate Highway route was from Macon, Georgia, to Jackson, Mississippi. At that time, in the 1950s, connecting Jackson, Mississippi through Columbus, Georgia, via Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi, was most desirable. Instead, no Interstate Highway routes go through the Black Belt of west Alabama or west Georgia. Curious protests from the public and politicians affected the planning of those routes. More cities could have been added to my study, but the two cities represent all of the major themes and impacts that, I would argue, affected the urban American South during its phases of Interstate Highway building. Atlanta during the 1960s to 1980s was and is a metropolitan city, with a vast urban periphery, similar to Nashville, Charlotte, and Houston. Birmingham, a large city, with a smaller footprint of suburban periphery, is most similar to other large southern cities, such as New Orleans, Memphis, Louisville, and Jacksonville..

The literature of the Interstate Highway System considers it the Third American Transportation Revolution, following the name after the idea and book *The Transportation Revolution*, by historian George Rogers Taylor. Taylor attributes the construction of canals in the Early American Republic as the first economic revolution

attributed to a change in transportation. Taylor and historian Richard White consider the transcontinental railroads as the *Second American Transportation Revolution*. Many Interstate Highway policies and procedures were written and implemented using existing process and methods from those previous projects, such as bidding rules, eminent domain, public hearings, and cost overruns. Some new challenges did arise from this monumental project, such as cost sharing between state and federal governments. Also, new formulas to maintain the Interstate Highway Systems arose as well. City planners, such as New York City's Robert Moses, were responsible for what many consider the social and physical decline of urban areas.⁵ Dominant city planners were sometimes allowed to make personal decisions that were not beneficial to the majority of citizens. This example shows that final route decisions were not always based on sound engineering designs, but were usually drawn to the preference of technocrats or politicians.⁶ [some sort of explicit reference to "social construction of technology" either in text proper or in footnote, definitely need to add citation(s) to Bijker essay or book both here and in bibliography] Southern urban planners took cues from other national colleagues on how to implement their priorities. Annual conventions allowed ideas to transfer and foster. The American South's urban planning is unique in that planners and city leaders had de facto racial and social tools at their disposals, such as Jim Crow laws. While other cities have activism and bureaucracy to contend with on a much larger scale, the urban American South dealt with urban planning on a local level that rarely had

⁵ Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson, eds., *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 46.

⁶ Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor Pinch, *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 33.

federal or even state oversight. Even with the federal oversight of the Interstate Highway System, the will of the local civic leaders and planners were, more times than not, realized.

Historians such as Kevin Kruse wrote a local study on Atlanta titled, *White Flight*. His work helped show how Atlanta's whites fled Atlanta during the 1960s and 1970s. The migration of whites from Atlanta proper to the newly created suburbs was aided by the Interstate Highway System, with local and regional politics at play. His book, among others, highlights that the routes of the Interstate Highway System were sometimes continuation of existing racial and housing codes, which were holdovers from Jim Crow.

Geographer Charles Connerly's book, *The Most Segregated City*, highlights the extreme side of how whites in Birmingham chose to maintain Jim Crow residential and housing codes. The contrast between city politics of Atlanta and Birmingham are remarkable and stunning. There are a number of historians and geographers who have written on social and political dynamics of the Interstate Highway System. They are usually paragraphs or parts of an overall Civil Rights narrative or local history, which does not weave or has not attempted to understand just how important the Interstate Highway System was to building of their urban cities. The move of southerners from farms to cities started before World War II, but modern southern cities can partially attribute their make-up, success, and failures to how local and federal politics allowed some to dictate routes of the Interstate Highway System. With the planning of local leaders, such as chamber of commerce's, city councils, county boards, real estate developers, and wealthy retail and industrial owners, cities across the American South were able to use federal funds to preserve Jim Crow racial lines. Twentieth century

disinvestment tactics, such as “redlining” and “blockbusting” by realtors, bankers, and insurers were widespread and commonplace. Redlining was the practice of withholding credit from an entire neighborhood, based on either ethnicity or race. Blockbusting was a real estate practice in which real estate agents and builders would severely depress housing values by provoking the fear of racial emigration to their neighborhoods, causing the mostly white homeowner to sell their house for a loss.⁷ This practice allowed builders to funnel the frightened white home owners into newly-built suburbs and then allowed the shady real estate agent to buy the houses for below market value prices. The previously white-owned houses were then sold for a substantial profit to anyone who bought, but mostly minorities. These tactics along with arbitrary political planning create blight in once valuable inner cities. The intentional or unintentional real estate depression allowed urban areas to maintain very low market values, which made certain routes through poor areas economically feasible.

What was considered a legal remedy to reimburse a homeowner whose house was in the route of a proposed Interstate Highway was both ingenious and wrong. Some local leaders in the case studies, either used federal funds, to move out whole areas of African Americans for already built homes that were for sell due to white flight or the Interstate Highways were used as concrete walls to forever demarcate the racial boundaries of tax-paying citizens. The positive economic growth of the American South would not be what it is today without the Interstate Highway System. The racial and class problems of the American South could have been solved, if the correct leaders and planners were able to

⁷ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 66-67.

construct what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights proponents described as the “beloved community.” My research will also substantiate the manner in which the urban American South’s social and racial dynamics influenced the planning and construction of the Interstate Highway System.

Chapter 1: Creation of an Interstate Highway System

For the record, the Interstate Highway System was not constructed according to President Eisenhower's Autobahn-inspired dream of moving military transports throughout the United States during wartime. If at all, his 1919 trans-continental highway survey assignment as a young U.S. Army officer had a more profound impact than anything else. Now that the popular time-tested myth is debunked, a more concise historiography is needed and available.

The modern Interstate Highway System is a federally funded project. A mix of state, local, and federal agencies oversee the planning, construction, and maintenance of the current Interstate Highway System. At the beginning of the 1950s, U.S. congressional delegations began to try to draft legislation that would find a way to provide funding for the immense project. Earlier interstate highway bills in Congress were hard to pass for a number of sessions. Many congressional politicians were leery of creating a federal agency that would make decisions on the state and local levels. To solve this point of contention, southern politicians such as Senator Albert Gore, Sr., of Tennessee and Senator Lister Hill of Alabama began to spearhead legislation that would leave the regional and local decisions of planning and implementation in the hands of local authorities on the state, county and city levels. A proper understanding of the federal laws that created the Interstate Highway System is necessary. African Americans and anyone

else affected by the Interstate Highway system's placement were compensated. No one was left homeless. The breaking up of whole neighborhoods was detrimental to the social and cultural fabric of many African American communities. Many African Americans of lower economic classes lived next to African Americans of higher economic classes, such as doctors, attorneys, and teachers. This very important factor was missed when former neighborhoods, which had relocation assistance, did not have enough funds for newly built homes, but instead were forced to enter into housing projects. By only living amongst of the same lower economic class, values and positive examples of progress were largely eliminated. But no lawsuits were adjudged for the displaced, since federal laws were created to compensate the displaced. Unfortunately, in the urban American South, the majority of displaced were African American. In an era marked by the Civil Rights Movement, how did the federal government fund and try to legally protect the potentially displaced? Most importantly, how did the American South react?

The federal legislation that forms the present body of law relating to the Federal and Federal-Aid highway programs in the United States is now largely codified in one deceptively compact volume, title 23 of the United States Code. This collection of laws is, in fact, the result of a long and often painful evolutionary process that began about the turn of the century and which has drawn on the skill, intellect, and energy of thousands of dedicated and talented people in all of the states and in the federal government.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 and related legislation by the Eighty-seventh United States Congress formed only a tile or two in the whole mosaic of the law which affects the development of what many consider to be the finest system of highways

in the world. The work of the Eighty-seventh Congress produced a significant number of items of very substantial importance to the highway program.

The Act of 1961 which came out of the first session of the Eighty-seventh Congress, is the most important law for finalizing the financing of the federal highway system. By this law, Congress approved the estimate of cost of completing the Interstate System as a basis of apportioning Interstate funds for fiscal years 1963 to 1966. The apportionment of \$2.6 billion Interstate authorization for the fiscal year 1964 was made on 21 September 1962.⁸ The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1961 increased the Interstate System authorizations through fiscal year 1971 by a total of \$11.56 billion. That act also provided for a two-year extension of time for the States to enter into agreements with the Secretary of Commerce for control of outdoor advertising adjacent to the Interstate System. Authority was further provided in the law for a state or political subdivision to use the airspace over or under the Interstate System for non-highway purposes under specified conditions. Title 2 of the 1961 Act increased funds, certain of the highway user taxes to assure adequate revenues for timely completion of the Interstate System. These are only a few of the important accomplishments of the first session of the Eighty-seventh Congress.

The 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act is perhaps not so familiar to most; therefore, this chapter proposes to examine some of the provisions of this more recent national highway legislation in greater detail. The most important provision of the new law was without question the authorization provided to allow the continuation of federal funding

⁸ U.S., Bureau of Public Roads, David Black, General Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives, 88th Congress, 2nd Session, 1965, House Document No. 56.

of the primary highway system – known commonly as “ABC funding” – and public domain road programs. Congress provided \$950 million in highway trust fund authorizations for the ABC highway program for fiscal year 1964 and \$975 million for fiscal year 1965.⁹ President John F. Kennedy in his 28 February 1961 message on highways had recommended that authorizations for the ABC program be increased at a rate of \$25 million every two years until \$1 billion level was reached.¹⁰ The Public Works Committee of both the House and the Senate, in considering the legislative history of the 1956 Act and subsequent highway legislation, observed, however, that the intent of Congress had been that there be a progressive increase of \$25 million *each year* in funds authorized for the ABC program until the \$1 billion annual level was reached.

The 1962 Act also provided authorizations for appropriations from the General Fund for the various federal public domain road programs totaling \$358,550,000 for fiscal years 1964 and 1965. This was an increase of \$103,050,000 over the last biennial authorization for these programs, and included authorizations for a new category of public domain roads; that is, the roads and trails that were selected by the Secretary of the Interior for development, protection, administration, and utilization of the public lands and resources under his control.¹¹ The Secretary of Commerce approved the location, type, and design of these projects and supervised their construction. In the past, most of

⁹ Frederick Cron, “Highway Design for Motor Vehicles, An Historical Review, Part 4: The Vehicle Carrying of the Highway,” *Public Roads* 39, 2 (December, 1975): 96.

¹⁰ American Association of State Highway Officials, *A Policy on Geometric Design of Rural Highways-1965* (Washington, D.C.: 1966), 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

the roads were constructed on Bureau of Land Management lands in forested areas by timber sale purchasers following requirements of their contracts. The standards of the roads they provided were inadequate, however, and full resource development had been impossible.

The provision of the new law that received the widest attention at the time was the most controversial item of highway legislation before the second session of the Eighty-seventh Congress. The section was concerned with the relocation of families and businesses displaced as a result of federally aided highway construction.¹² This is now section 133 of title 23, United States Code. Briefly, the law provides two things.

First, before the secretary's approval of any project for right-of-way acquisition or construction with federal aid, the state highway department must give satisfactory assurance that relocation advisory assistance shall be provided for the relocation of families displaced. Second, those states that pay moving costs of displaced families and businesses are entitled to treat such payments as reimbursable project costs to a maximum of \$200 in the case of an individual or family and \$3,000 in the case of a business concern, including the operation of a farm or nonprofit organization. The allowable expenses for transportation in the case of a business cannot exceed the cost of moving fifty miles.¹³

President Kennedy recognized the importance of relocation assistance in his message to Congress, stating: "To move toward equity among the various federally

¹² Ibid., 33.

¹³ Ibid., 68.

assisted programs causing displacement, I recommend that assistance and requirements similar to those now applicable to the urban renewal program be authorized for the Federal-aid highway program.”¹⁴ The bill introduced in the House and referred to the House Public Works Committee contained language almost identical to the Urban Renewal law concerning relocation.

In hearings on the bill before the Roads Subcommittee, considerable opposition to the measure developed. Controversy between the sponsors and the opponents of the bill concerned the basic philosophy of the legislation, its cost, the degree to which highway construction might be slowed or stopped, its comparison to the somewhat similar provision in the law since 1956 for reimbursement of the cost of relocating utilities, and the need for relocation assistance in terms of the number of families and businesses that would be affected. The bill as reported out of the House eliminated the requirement of assurance by the state highway department that decent, safe, sanitary dwellings would be provided, adequate to accommodate displaced families and accessible to their places of employment.¹⁵ It retained, however, the provision for state assurance of the existence of a “feasible method” for relocation of displaced families, as a condition precedent to project approval by the Secretary. Debate on the floor of the House on the measure centered entirely on the meaning and effect of this requirement and whether the Secretary of Commerce should have the authority to determine that a method to accomplish relocation was “feasible” before project approval. Representative John F. Baldwin, Jr., of California

¹⁴ N.D. Lea Transportation Research Corporation, *Lea Transit Compendium: Reference Guide* (Huntsville, Ala: N.D. Lea Transportation Research Corporation, 1975), 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

offered an amendment deleting the “feasible method” language altogether and substituting therefore simply the requirement that the State highway department give satisfactory assurance that relocation advisory assistance of rights-of-way for any Federal-aid highway.¹⁶ The “Baldwin Amendment” was adopted by a vote of 236 to 159. This version of the measure was also voted by the Senate and is now applicable to all projects approved after the effective date of the Act. The Bureau of Public Roads has published Policy and Procedure Memorandum 21-4.4 prescribing the procedures to be followed by the States in implementing the law.

As far as the reimbursement of moving costs is concerned, the law affected only those states that under their own laws could make relocation payments. As of 1964, a dozen states, not including Alabama, had expressed statutory provisions in some form respecting payment of moving cost. Certain states, such as Alabama, have made payment for costs of moving or incidental to the moving of personal property from highway rights-of-way as a result of constitutional interpretation, condemnation, or other legal order or proceeding. Most state legislatures promptly moved to take advantage of the new provision. As far as the advisory assistance requirement is concerned, this provision applied to Federal-aid projects in all states, irrespective of whether the state could legally make payments of moving costs.

The total additional cost to the trust fund as a result of this new law could not be predicted with assurance. In hearings before the House subcommittee estimates ranged as high as \$200 million. Based on the maximum payments provided for in the bill, however,

¹⁶ E. H. Holmes, “The State of the Art in Urban Transportation Planning, or How We Got Here,” *Transportation* 1, No.4 (March, 1973): 379.

the cost was not to exceed \$75 million from the Highway Trust fund to the end of the program in 1972.¹⁷ This figure was derived from data provided by the states themselves. The experience of the Housing and Home Finance Agency demonstrated that an average relocation payment of about \$65 is paid to families and about \$1,150 to businesses.¹⁸ Instead of the maximums authorized by the bill, the cost was roughly one-third of the estimated \$75 million, based on those researched amounts. Although many officials and academics are credited with the current incarnation of the Interstate Highway System, a push from the executive branch was the real catalyst for making the system a reality.

Presidents and Funding

Although various federal, state, and local governments have engaged in the development of transportation since the founding of the United States, the 1950s marks the first time that highway routes were given the same funding and planning incentives as canal and railroad construction. Bold political leadership and compromise in the 1950s are credited with the helping make a uniformed automobile network come to fruition. Ideas and limited routes for an interstate highway go back as far as the mid-1920s. The Great Depression put a halt to many plans, due to low funding and diverted interest. Some attempts were made in the 1930s to incorporate an Interstate Highway System along with the other great public works projects of the era. Congress and the states were

¹⁷ Transportation Research Board, *Highway Capacity Manual* (Washington, D.C, 1985)

¹⁸ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976, A History of the Federal Aid Program* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), 11.

unable to agree upon a logical funding plan, however. Two important transportation reports of the 1930s and 1940s, “*Toll Roads and Free Roads*” and “*Interregional Highways*,” helped spur interest in coming up with solutions and ideas for how a national uniformed transportation network could become a reality. As early as the 1940s, larger cities such as Atlanta, Birmingham, Nashville, and New Orleans started designing and constructing highways that were routed through large parts of the city. These early projects were minimally funded with federal support. The Bureau of Public Roads started a half-and-half funding plan as late the 1930s, to encourage the growth of highways.¹⁹ In the 1940s President Harry Truman’s cabinet did very little to progress a system of linked highways. Even with Bureau of Public Roads officials urging his administration’s support for an interstate system, funding for urban policy was seen as more important in addressing public housing and clearing away ghettos. It was not until President Dwight Eisenhower’s administration that a plan for combining urban policy with interstate highways come to fruition. Pete Davies writes in his book, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age*, that Dwight Eisenhower was heavily influenced in the importance of highways when he traveled across the United States for a U.S. Army survey.²⁰ His team journeyed across the country during a time when the definition of a highway was defined based on the locality and condition. National uniformity of highways was nonexistent. This problem and other factors led to President Eisenhower spearheading the Interstate Highway System.

¹⁹ U.S., Bureau of Public Roads, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, U.S. House of Representatives, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, House Document No. 272.

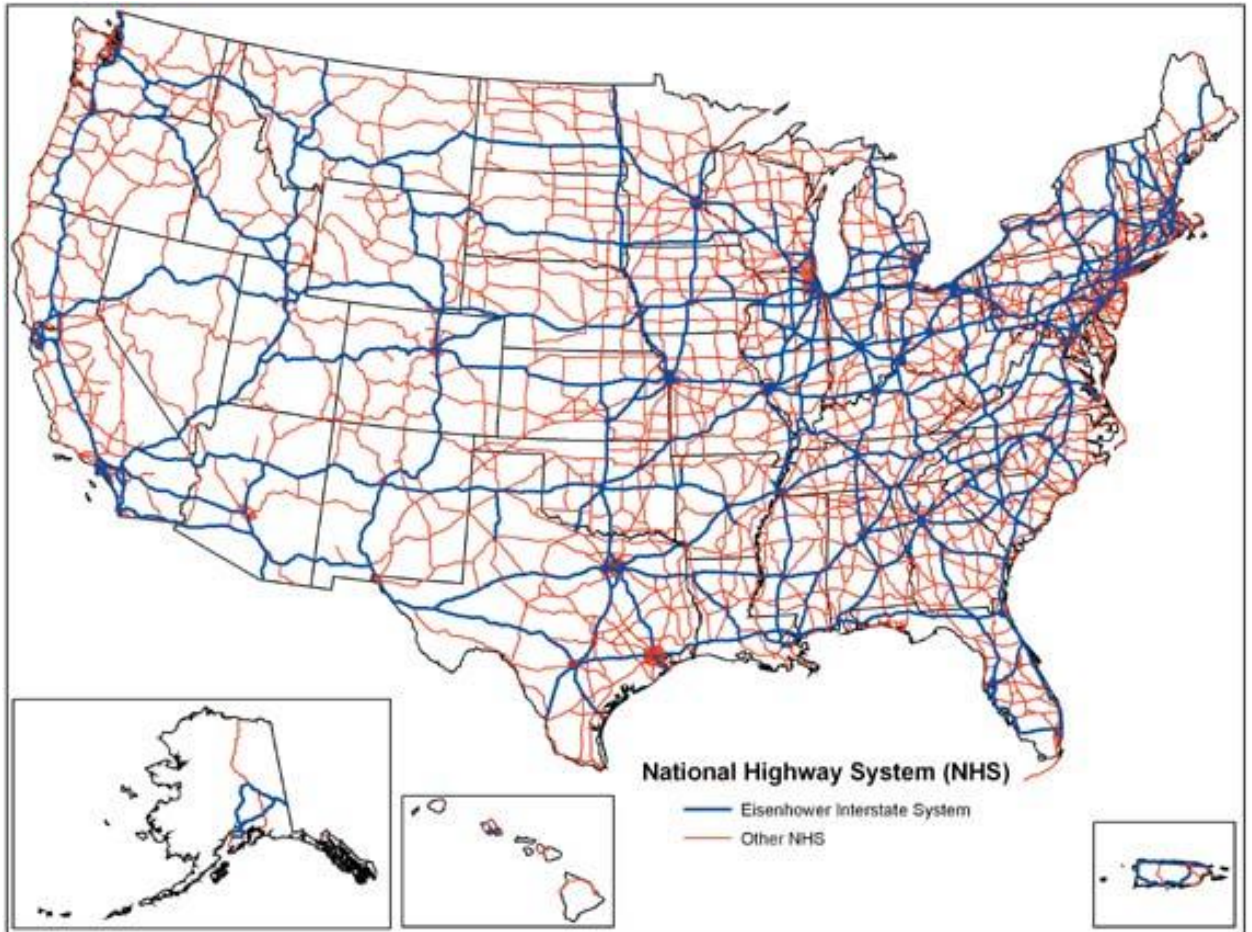
²⁰ Pete Davies, *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age* (New York, 2002), 214.

As with many presidents, President Eisenhower created an advisory committee to focus on the problems that were affecting the growth of cities. Post-World War II economic growth in the 1950s, caused suburbs and urban areas to grow at very fast rates. According to geographer Raymond Mohl, urban centers and suburbs in the 1940s “absorbed 81 percent of the [nation’s] population growth.”²¹ The trend of urban growth, in the 1950s, grew at an even faster pace than the 1940s. The population growth of the urban city started to spread to the fringes of the city boundaries, causing many middle-class whites to move to newly created suburbs. A number of factors contributed to the internal migration of whites to the suburbs and African Americans to the urban centers. Preferential government tax credits, loans, and amortization rates, along with the rise of car buying, allowed for feasible intra-city migration. While those who moved to the suburbs enjoyed the change of scenery, many still drove to offices located in the center of the urban centers that they were trying to get away from. Congestion of the older highways caused many urban planners to rethink how cities should be planned out. While road congestion was rising, public transit was declining. The preference and social status of driving an automobile was worth more than the cost and time efficiency of various public transportation routes. These major problems influenced how President Eisenhower would mold his domestic policies, especially urban policy.

President Eisenhower’s advisory committee on urban affairs saw a number of issues that would interfere with any transportation solutions. The plethora of jurisdictions, whether municipal, county, regional, or neighborhood, made

²¹ Raymond Mohl, *The Making of Urban America* (Lanham, Maryland, 1997), 17.

implementation of any solution unattainable. Transportation planning was done at best on a state level. The president's committee saw the answer being solved by a regional approach, rather than by municipal or state vantages.



(Source: Map from Federal Highway Administration)

The American South and the Interstate Highway System

Protests over highway location, design, construction, and related factors have been nation-wide, and a search of newspapers and other media reveals numerous objections and complaints by such groups as conservationists concerned with the preservation of historical sites and school officials and boards of education.²² A host of complaints were also heard from citizens and organized groups relative to the more general areas of economics, aesthetics, racial problems, and similar facets of the Interstate Highway System's effect.²³ The seriousness of the social problems is reflected in the following statement from a major national magazine:

War is too serious a matter to leave to the military, wrote Talleyrand. Highways, claim a rising chorus of angry citizens, are too serious to leave to traffic engineers. The analogy isn't too fanciful. In New Orleans, Milwaukee, Boston, New York, Atlanta, and a score of other cities, desperate bands of home owners, school officials, churchmen, businessmen, conservationists, architects, and urban planners are waging pitched battle against highway engineers. The engineers want

²² See, for example, "Old Trees Saved in West Chester," *New York Times*, July 31, 1963, p. 31:5; "California Group Fights to Save Redwoods from Expressways," *New York Times*, December 15, 1963, p. 86:2; "Pressures Mount on Road in Dunes," *New York Times*, July 25, 1965, p. 16:1; "Roads vs. History," *New York Times*, October 21, 1961, p. 20:2; "Beauty and the Beast," *Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 1966, p. 18:4; "Trouble at Truno," *Wall Street Journal*, November 2, 1966, p. 18:1; "Up a Tree," *Newsweek*, April 20, 1964, p.68. See also "U.S. Blocks Apartment Project at Mrs. Kennedy's Home," *New York Times*, November 16, 1963, p. 1:2; "U.S. Will Restudy Route in New Jersey," *New York Times*, November 10, 1963, p. 130:3; "Economic Impact of Elevated Expressway on Vieux Carre Areas to be Minimum," *New Orleans Time-Picayune*, January, 1967, p.4. Representative articles concerning school officials and boards of education include: "Litigation Over Land at End," *Birmingham Post-Herald*, July 1, 1968, p. 33; "Board Continues Fight for \$485,000," *Birmingham Post-Herald*, February 6, 1965, p. 1; "School Site Settlement Appeals Set," *Montgomery Advertiser*, March 4, 1965, p 2:5. School officials were beginning to realize more and more the need for comprehensive and integrated planning, as is reflected in the following statement: "In recent years there seems to have been an increasing tendency to use educational consultants to deal with school problems. This tendency is an important sign that we need to move in the direction of comprehensive community and metropolitan planning.

²³ Representative articles include: "Seattle Freeway Plans Stir Criticism," *Engineering News-Record*, September 2, 1967, pp. 66-67;

to build freeways that rip through residential and commercial areas, carve up parks, bulldoze historic sites, and displace homes, schools, and businesses.²⁴

In New Orleans, for example, the battle raged as loudly as any place in the nation because of the decision to build an elevated freeway along the Mississippi River bank into the downtown area proximate to the Vieux Carre. This was bitterly opposed by many citizens in spite of the endorsement of the downtown businessmen. The struggle became so bitter that Morris Ketchum, Jr., the president of the American Institute of Architects, resigned from the Bureau of Public Roads Advisory Committee on Highway Beautification. Ketchum stated that he was “in a petunia-planting job” and that “interstate highways are being built through cities with disastrous results.”²⁵ After a long and bitter controversy, it was decided to cancel the roadway and to reallocate its interstate mileage to the proposed Metropolitan New Orleans Beltway, even though that involved an outlay of many additional millions of dollars and took additional years to complete.²⁶

Numerous other instances of similar problems could be cited. For example, the elevated Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco so embittered citizens that construction of the new expressway was halted. In Milwaukee, a group managed to get the issue of expressway location on the ballot in a city election, in spite of the engineers’ vows to continue on schedule with the original plan. The controversy raged and continued to rage in Alabama and in areas proximate to it. Consider the following problem of Atlanta:

The dispute resembles battles in New Orleans, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and other cities that challenge the high priority given to demands for transportation. It

²⁴ “The War Over Urban Expressways,” *Business Week* (March 11, 1967), 94.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁶ “Proposed Expressway Is Cancelled by Volpe,” *New Orleans Time-Picayune*, July 2, 1969, 1:8.

involves the argument that limited access highways can be the walls of new ghettos and can unwillingly force new patterns upon a whole city's physical development. The Atlanta dispute began when highway engineers planned a route for Interstate 485 that took it through the heart of the Morningside-Lenox Park area, about 900 acres of largely middleclass homes.²⁷

The controversy related to highway location also caused differences of opinion to evolve between the public and private citizens in a given area. In the New Orleans situation, for example, Mayor Victor Schiro stated in support of the proposed riverbank location that "when people can't get downtown, the city dies." In Atlanta, after a bitter debate, the aldermen concurred with the highway department plan to route the highway through Morningside-Lenox area on the grounds that the highway should be built as rapidly as possible to relieve the crowded expressway system. Several of the aldermen complained, however, that the city was "blackmailed" by the state highway department's warning that it might lose federal funds if the proposed route for the expressway was not approved. Therefore, plans were approved for the route to go through the protesting neighborhood.²⁸

Within Alabama, the Department of the Interior refused to allow the construction of I-65 across the Tennessee River and through Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge until the Bureau of Public Roads had made modifications in routing and construction that amounted to an additional cost of more than \$3 million. This was done to preclude destruction of a haven for thousands of Canadian geese.²⁹ In 1969, the proposed 15th Street extension in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, caused a flurry of protests because of perceived

²⁷ "Atlanta Groups Fight Road Route," *New York Times*, January 29, 1967, 41:1.

²⁸ "War Over Urban Expressways," *op.cit.* 94.

²⁹ "U.S. Withdraws Highway Protest," *Birmingham Post-Herald*, May 6, 1966.

excessive land usage on the part of the State Highway Department.³⁰ Other complaints in Tuscaloosa were related to “great noise and inconvenience” that would be caused by construction of the road.

In August 1969, Alabama was threatened with the loss of millions of dollars because of the lack of an effective program for highway safety. As was stated: “Unless Alabama submits a second and more acceptable program by September 15, the Bureau (National Highway Safety Bureau) can stop authorization of \$3.2 million in safety funds already earmarked for the state and cut 10 percent from the state’s federal highway funds, a cut worth about \$10.4 million.”³¹

A major part of the Interstate Highway System’s problem was that highway planners traditionally felt no pressing need to consider citizens’ complaints which were often token and unorganized. Furthermore, highway planners gave little consideration to the more far-reaching, but less quantifiable, effects of their actions, such as loss of neighborhood identity and similar adverse effects upon the quality of environment. The highway planners apparently felt that they had fulfilled their responsibility to the affected citizens simply through monetary compensation for the land and or buildings taken, through the process of rights-of-way acquisition. Plans therefore were often formulated for the location, design, and construction of highways based only on such limited information as design specifications, information on terrain, and rigid engineering specifications to the exclusion of environmental, attitudinal, and other human related

³⁰ “Gripes Are Aired on 15th Street Project,” *Tuscaloosa News*, July 11, 1969, 2.

³¹ “State May Lose Road Funds,” *Birmingham Post-Herald*, August 28, 1969, 1.

factors. Furthermore, these plans traditionally were formulated by individuals with similar backgrounds, specializations, and professional interests. Little or no communication occurred with the affected and or interested groups and individuals, other than at required public hearings. Because of this type of approach, plans were developed and in effect imposed upon citizens without their support of the planned investment.

Decisions developed in the above manner were based upon supposedly “objective” criteria or guidelines which the decision-makers felt could be defended in terms of economics, efficiency, or similar standards. Generally, architects and planners complained that engineers dominated highway building. The engineers, in turn, were concerned mainly with moving traffic rapidly and safely. While these standards have produced splendid roads in rural areas, in urban neighborhoods the same approach, according to urban critic Lewis Mumford, “has about the same result... as the passage of a tornado or the blast of an atomic bomb.”³² San Francisco architect Lawrence Halprin stated that, “Every major city in the U.S. has suffered major disasters at the hands of freeways whose only planned function was to move traffic without concern for other values.”³³ Urban planners at Arthur D. Little, a Cambridge research group, stated this viewpoint, “The Bureau of Public Roads has stressed the importance of social, aesthetic, and historic considerations in highway planning,’ also stating, “It has not translated this into practice. Highway design and location remain almost totally guided by strict engineering considerations.”³⁴ In fairness, however, it must be stated that areas in which

³² “The War Over Urban Expressways,” 98.

³³ *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

serious problems have occurred are limited. In Alabama, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Montgomery were the primary cities where citizen complaints were lodged in significant amounts. As was stated by real estate appraisers:

According to a recent report by the Bureau of Public Roads, the extent of the protest against freeways is much less than one might assume from some newspaper and magazine articles. The report found that serious objections to freeways have occurred in only 15 out of 23 cities where freeways are currently under construction.³⁵

For the majority of public policy decisions, this is a valid premise. For many decisions related to the investments, such as the Interstate Highway system, the results were controversial and reaction often transcended rational boundaries, mostly because such issues as location and right-of way affected individual citizens and various interest groups in different ways and with different degrees of severity. The reactions were especially strong when citizens did not have a major part in the initial planning process and had not been adequately informed of the effects of the investment upon their area.

Daniel P. Moynihan set the stage for the conflict that he perceived would be the inevitable result of this approach to planning. As he stated in 1960:

The crisis has come. It has been impossible for the cities to resist the offer of unprecedented amounts of money, however futile they might know it would be to spend it on highways alone. In one metropolis after another the plans have been thrown together and the bulldozers set to work. Here and there, as in Milwaukee, a vigorous and established planning authority has been able to get intolerable plans redrawn. But in general, the program is doing what was expected: throwing up a Chinese Wall across Wilmington, driving educational institutions out of downtown Louisville, plowing through the center of Reno. When the interstate runs into a place like Newburgh, New York, the wreckage is something to see.

³⁵ Richard Braun, "Freeways and Cities," An address delivered to the Education Seminar, American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers, Washington, D.C. (March, 1969), 9.

Down the Hudson, Robert Moses is getting set to build Canal Street Expressway, the first hundred-million-dollar mile.³⁶

New approaches to the planning of Interstate Highway System investments were beginning to occur. The average affected citizen in the American South was African American. Understanding the conflicts between planners and the ideals of elected officials is profound and necessary. The factors of consideration for the highway planners and engineers were cost and most direct routes. The local elected officials were concerned about the social status quo and the wants of the local leadership. Unfortunately, in the American South, these various factors were usually trumped by the voting power of the local elected officials. Chapters 2 and 3 will give the local histories of how the Interstate Highway routes were chosen in Atlanta and Birmingham and will examine the extent of the social impact that selected routes had on these cities. It can be argued that the Interstate Highway routes follow along either old existing railroad routes or were, in Birmingham's case, built as generic concrete barriers to demarcate the racial boundaries of cities.

³⁶ Daniel P. Moynihan, "New Roads and Urban Chaos," *Reporter*, 22 (April 14, 1960), 19-20.

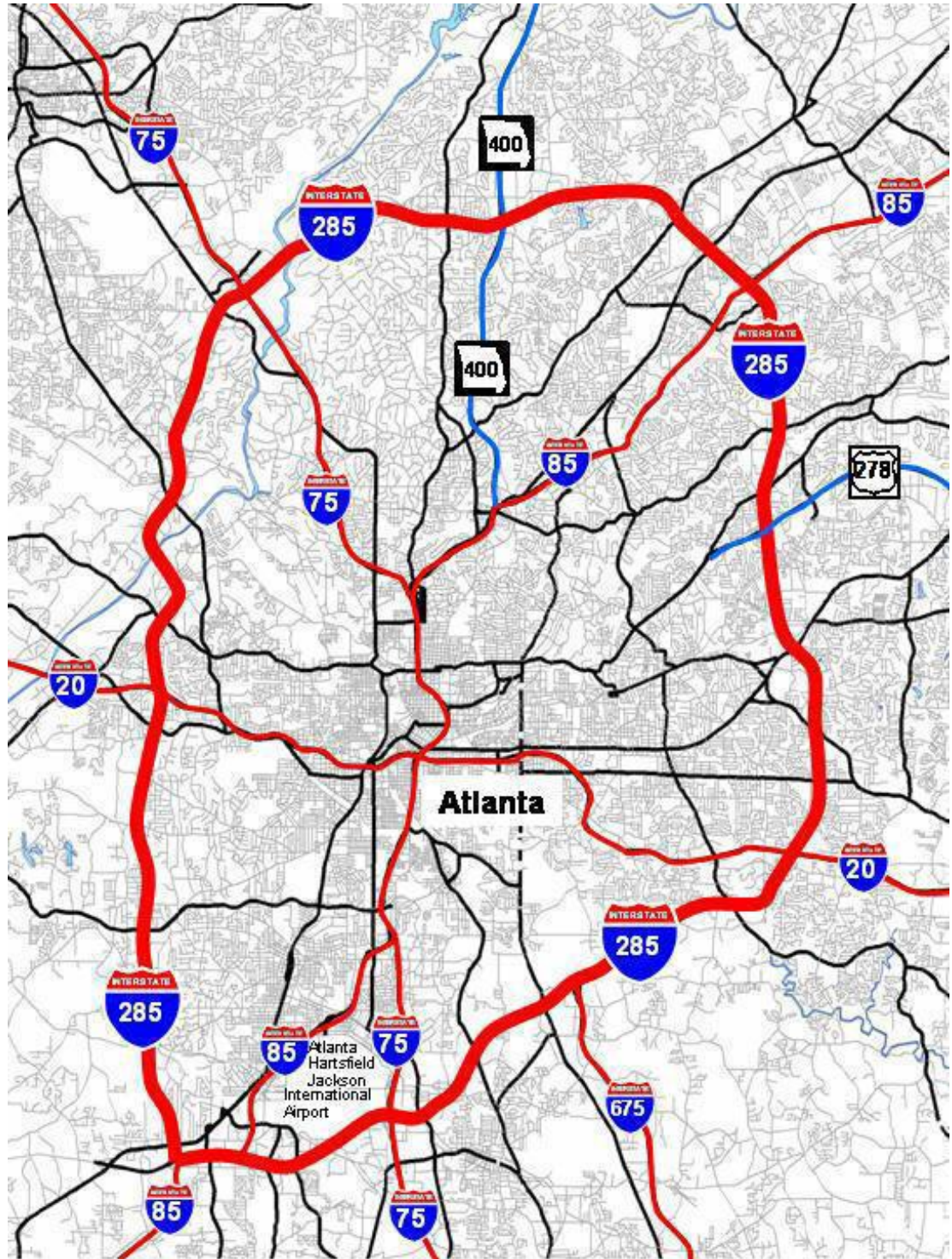
Chapter 2: Race and Housing in Atlanta

Democratic Senators Albert Gore, Sr., of Tennessee and Lister Hill of Alabama led the U.S. Senate in making sure that the federal government did not have absolute authority on the final routes of the project. Some senators, seeing the potential abuses of local politics on a national scope, were successful in allowing the Bureau of Public Roads to establish accountability guidelines and monitoring that favored the potentially displaced. The majority of the project, which was rural, was constructed without much concern of displacement or eminent domain problems. Urban centers were hotbeds of contention, however, with issues such as proper eminent domain compensation and sometimes wholesale neighborhood displacement proving to be especially divisive.

As the Interstate Highway System developed in areas where its arteries ran through urban southern centers, an increasingly common pattern is notable: highway routes usually followed existing housing or racial codes of the respective city. Some cities in the American South had informal or loose rules of racial housing, such as Montgomery and Atlanta. But, a small number of urban centers in the American South such as Birmingham had enforceable housing and race laws that were legally enforced as city ordinances. In a number of cases the evidence suggests that city leaders in the American South used federal funding either to maintain strict Jim Crow racial lines or to

facilitate “white flight” from southern urban centers that were transitioning from rigid segregation to nascent racial equality.

Should racial and ethnic groups live in segregated communities or should they live dispersed throughout the general housing population? This social problem as to where people should live was an important issue for urban dwellers in cities across the United States. The negative solutions for southern cities were sometimes subtle but were largely overtly obvious and discriminatory. In cities across the American South, discriminatory housing policies were in place long before the planning of the Interstate Highway System. However, the Interstate Highway System afforded some politicians and planners the opportunity to use federal dollars to further divide their respective communities and neighborhoods along racial lines. A number of cities, in the 1950s and 1960s, dealt with situations that were local and special. How one city solved a problem was different from how another city created a new challenge. What is clear is that local forces, rather than national forces controlled how and when interstate routes would traverse through their cities. Local real estate industries were affected by a number of local forces: government, financial institutions, builders, and real estate brokers. The way in which Atlanta handled race relations is noteworthy. Atlanta had varying degrees of prejudice but understanding how local leaders dealt with its housing issues, will explain why certain interstate routes were chosen.



(Source: Map from Georgia Department of Transportation)

Atlanta's Compromises

Those acquainted with the South know that there is no one "South," but many and diverse "Souths" The status of African Americans, their opportunities, and the social and economic progress they have been made are not the same everywhere. This issue seems to be most apparent in real estate, especially in Atlanta.. Interestingly, African Americans in the late nineteenth century settled into undesirable areas near the industries in which they were allowed to work. In many cases, temporary company housing, from railroad and heavy industry companies, turned into private homes. Informal, de facto, lines of race caused whites and African Americans to build communities near opportunities of employment. Atlanta had a political tradition of including African American community leaders in some dealings. Although not perfect, the white leadership and business community knew the advantages of portraying to the nation that race relations were not as problematic, compared to other similar sized southern cities. Racial compromise, with the input of African American leaders, helped lessen the Interstate Highway displacement of African American neighborhoods in Atlanta. Highway planners in Atlanta chose their routes on cost more than race. The unfortunate reality was that the African American neighborhoods, for the most part, had substantially lower real estate values than white neighborhoods. It was cheaper, using federal housing assistance funds to the displaced, to buy cheap land and then build new housing for African Americans with the federal funds that were recently acquired. The factors of new housing by African Americans and new development by mostly white construction owners and suppliers were seen as beneficial. The Interstate Highway System was detrimental to African Americans whom were renters. Renters made up a majority of the

urban African American population They did not own property. Although the government did give some assistance to displaced renters, it was not enough to buy a home. With no substantial development of apartments or other real estate ventures designed to accommodate the influx of African American renters, many of Atlanta's African Americans had to apply for federal housing assistance, which led to the growth of federal projects. The Interstate Highway System is a factor in the population increase of Atlanta's housing projects; a social history has had a negative impact on African Americans in Atlanta. The Interstate Highway system also allowed whites in Atlanta to flee the city. The term "white flight" applies to the idea of whites leaving the urban center to continue living in racial and class segregation. The Interstate Highway System allowed the surrounding counties and cities of metro Atlanta to be a financially feasible commute from the downtown businesses and industry. The mass relocation of whites from Atlanta proper allowed African Americans to wield considerable voting power in one of the nation's largest cities. This ebb and flow of racial politics hurt economically poor African Americans, but helped the middle-class African Americans gain substantial political and economic opportunity.

In 1950, Atlanta ranked twenty-third among cities of the nation in population, with just under half a million. Since the 1890s, Atlanta has shown a consistently strong and highly self-conscious orientation toward change and progress.¹ Despite the recurrent stress upon the "southern way of life," and the ubiquity of regional symbols and myths, it is less narrow in outlook than most cities of the region and any other of Georgia. The

¹ Kevin Kruse, *White Flight* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 41.

participation of African Americans in local politics has been particularly significant and has provided an important lever for improving housing and gaining access to real estate sites. In 1946, 24,137 African Americans were on the registration books and eligible to vote in Atlanta elections, as compared to 56,854 whites.² One of the objectives of extending the city limits in 1952 was to add a large number of white voters, and in turn reduce the significance of the African American vote. However, in 1953, Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University, was elected a member of the Atlanta Board of Education, defeating his white opponent by a margin of 10,000 votes, many of them whites. In the same election, two African Americans were elected members of the city Democratic Executive Committee. For the first time since 1870, Atlanta had elected African American to municipal offices. One writer summed up the effects of African American political activity as follows:

Through the efforts of Negro leaders, the Negro voters have been educated on the issues of the day. Before casting their votes they have studied and have been told of the merits and demerits of each candidate. This wise policy has resulted in a friendly administration being elected in 1949 and in 1953, both in county and city. Negro policemen have been hired. Police brutality has been reduced to a minimum. Race-baiting groups such as the Klan and the Columbians have been suppressed. City officials have been more courteous and sensitive to the demands of Negroes. Courtroom decorum has improved. In city planning the city fathers began looking at the needs of all citizens regardless of color... Better streets, lights, sewers, water, and sidewalks have made Negro neighborhoods attractive. In addition, modern school buildings have been erected to accommodate the growing Negro population.³

In 1955, Atlanta had a population of 492,000 and its Standard Metropolitan Areas, as defined by the Census Bureau, a population of 814,000. In the late 1950s, there

² Fulton County Department of Registration and Election, Documents and Information, container 2, 1946.

³ Clarence A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," *Phylon* (1955): 349-50.

was a very heavy white in-migration into the metropolitan Atlanta, only slight African American in-migration. Between 1950 and 1955, in-migration accounted for less than 10 percent of the growth of the African American population, as compared with nearly 60 percent of the growth of the white population. Since 1940, almost all of the growth of the white population took place outside the city of Atlanta, which was the typical growth pattern of many American cities in this period of great suburban housing developments.

As with many cities, railroads made Atlanta. They had a decisive effect on early street patterns and the location of residential units. Their effect was more decisive on residential sites for African Americans. “Across the tracks” and “down by the railroad” were quite accurate designations of the early settlements of African Americans, and retain validity today for more African Americans than whites. Many of the early African American residents were railroad workers who settled close to their places of work: the land blighted by railroads and their attendant nuisance features was cheap and undesirable for residential purposes, and so it was more available to low-income African Americans; and railroad lines often served as barriers, marking off or pocketing residential enclaves.

The earliest African American settlements were near the central railroad stations and in the southeast. Just before and for a considerable period after World War I, the predominant movement was eastward. Barriers such as railroad lines and white residential districts to the east and south slowed up or stopped expansion in this direction. When subsequent moves to expand northward were slowed by white resistance, the mounting pressure for more and better housing turned the movement westward.

The West Side of Atlanta included both good and bad housing. The Atlanta University district was one of these areas of mixed quality, including housing that ranged from the row of Atlanta University faculty houses on Beckwith Street⁴ to the notorious “Beaver Slide” slums which were later demolished to make way for the first public housing project for African Americans in the United States, University Home.⁵ Techwood Homes, in northwest Atlanta by Georgia Tech and Coca Cola, was the white housing project counterpart.

The main features of housing for African Americans in the Deep South towards the end of the war, and to a large extent at present, was the substandard conditions of a number of housing and rental properties. There was also a frequency of crowding, and conditions to sustain a growing populace inside a restricted area, was undesirable and detrimental. The African American population overflowed the maximum possible use of existing facilities with the result that African American families had been forced to seek housing in fringe areas of white occupancy. Racial friction developed between white and African American residents, with sporadic violent outbursts.

Public housing for whites was used, in at least one instance, to serve the purpose of African American containment. In the early 1950s, when African American expansion on the West Side in and around Mozley Park was threatening white residential and business sections to the south and west, efforts were made to stop the perceived African

⁴ This strip of about two blocks with less than a dozen houses, until the 1960s, was referred to as “Ph.D. Row.” Until the mid-1940s, these blocks of Beckwith Street, a section of Boulevard in northeast Atlanta, and Hunter Road practically consumed the list of premium, prestige areas.

⁵ Hubert M. Jackson, “Public Housing in the Atlanta Story” *Phylon*, First Quarter, 1958, 21-24.

American advance. The “answer” eventually arrived at by city officials was the erection of Joel Chandler Harris Homes for whites, a 510 unit public housing project.⁶This was erected at a site chosen as a dividing line despite the protests of African American leaders.

As a result, the problem set for the African American community just after World War II was where and how to expand. And the Atlanta community gave an amazing demonstration of organizational, political, and financial ability in greatly expanding the supply of housing available to African Americans, even within the rigid frame of segregation. The story begins in late 1946, when the pressure for good housing for African Americans had been accentuated by the general housing shortage, the return of African American veterans, a rising African American population, a new political and economic strength producing a new concept of what was desirable and possible. At this time, the Atlanta Urban League, which played the crucial role of catalyst throughout this whole development, called a meeting of representatives of business, social agencies, and government to discuss measures to provide housing for African Americans.

An important project in which the Atlanta Urban League played an instrumental role was “High Point Apartments,” developed by Housing, Inc. Option, was taken from the Methodist Church in late 1949 on a tract of land earlier marked for African American expansion. Immediately, several problems confronted the developers” getting the proposed express highway shifted; getting the land rezoned for apartment-house use by the Fulton County Commissioners; submitting an application to FHA in time for

⁶ Atlanta Housing Authority, Harris Homes plan and layout.

processing before expiration of Section 608 of Title VI (March 1, 1950); and overcoming the objections of adjacent white residents who did not want African Americans living on this property. The developers hastened to solve these problems as quickly as possible. It was alleged by Housing, Inc., that the express highway had been shifted from its original position onto the property proposed for the project at the instance of white real estate developers. When local efforts to restore the highway project to its original position failed, a delegation went to Washington, D.C., to seek assistance from the federal Bureau of Public Roads.

County officials responded favorably to the proposal for rezoning the land. The County Planning Commission, after a public hearing in January, 1950, recommended that the land be rezoned for apartments, and the county commissioners finally accepted the Planning Commission's recommendation. The chief obstacle to the rezoning was the active and vocal opposition of white citizens from nearby Lakewood Heights. They objected to any further African American occupancy in this South Atlanta area, which had always been a major African American residential center, and in which African Americans owned significant amounts of both developed and undeveloped property. Probably the most important device in getting approval for the project was the creation of a buffer zone. Twenty-seven acres of land were cut off from the project acreage and designated for industrial development, separating the white and African American communities.

Another hurdle arose, when the FHA State Director refused to accept the developers' application for the stated reasons that the rents, \$40 to \$70, were too high for

African Americans, a multi-story building with efficiency apartments was not suited to the African American market, and the project was too ambitious because it included a community center, auditorium, and playgrounds in addition to 384 efficiency apartments.⁷

Again a delegation proceeded to Washington, D.C. During this trip, the delegation discussed the project and issues with civil service workers of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA). The delegation represented to the HHFA Administrator, Raymond Foley, and FHA officers that local FHA action was not based on any analysis of the African American market in Atlanta, and that while about five thousand Section 608 units had been built for white Atlantans, only twenty-four had been built for African Americans.⁸

The trip to Washington evidently produced results, since the FHA rescinded its unfavorable decision and agreed to issue mortgage insurance on a 452-unit project. Final approval was given on the last day Section 608 was in force.

The fourth and last problem was met head on when the County Commissioners convened February 1, 1950. A hundred or more white residents appeared in opposition to the proposed rezoning of the area for apartments. But the County Commissioners voted to approve the project unanimously.

⁷ Federal Housing Authority, Box 42, Raymond Foley

⁸ At this time, an application by Aiken involving 209 units was being processed. It was later approved at the same time Highpoint was approved, 28 February 1950.

While members of the African American community and their supporters in various agencies proceeded to extend the area of African American residence in Atlanta, the Metropolitan Planning Commission was engaged in preparing a plan for Atlanta's expansion. No representative of the African American community was a member of the policymaking or technical staff of the commission, but the technical staff did keep in touch with leaders and groups in the African American community. In 1952, the commission issued a major planning document, *Up Ahead*, to guide Atlanta's growth. This document accepted and elaborated the idea of African American expansion area developed by the Temporary Coordination Committee on Housing (TCHH.)⁹

The concept of "Negro area" had, of course, no more legal or moral validity when the Planning Commission proposed it than when the TCCH first spoke of it; but if the commission had been ostrich-like about the facts of race and housing and proposed or planned residential sites in a neutral manner, the chances are that the already restricted African American population would have been even more disadvantage in competing for desirable and needed sites. In addition, by 1952, the commission's proposals were implied acceptance of what the African American was already accomplishing on its own; but the approval was important politically and in terms of getting the support of public opinion for what the African American community was doing.

Of course, the Planning Commission was not wholly motivated by concern for the welfare of African Americans. Its specific proposals and arguments, its concern for natural boundary lines, for example, made it clear that preservation and rationalization of

⁹ Metropolitan Planning Commission, *Up Ahead, A Regional Land Use Plan for Metropolitan Atlanta*, February, 1952.

the system of residential segregation was a major goal. Nevertheless, there was recognition in the commission's recommendations of the legitimate needs of African Americans for living space. On this elementary level, white and African American leadership could and did cooperate. By 1955, all six areas named by the TCHH in 1946 as expansion areas, and four of those named in *Up Ahead*, had been occupied or taken by African Americans.

The areas for African American expansion were generally open and not yet built upon. But almost everywhere there were some whites already settled. While the Civil Rights Movement took place with the blessing of officialdom, there was, nevertheless, tension and conflict. A Klan-like group calling itself "The Columbians" was active during the period of greatest tension; bombings, burnings, and other forms of coercion were used to keep African Americans from moving in.¹⁰ The local newspapers, the *Constitution* and the *Journal*, condemned and fought the Columbians and helped discredit the group. The support of opinion leadership, in turn, aided the Civil Rights Movement.

Of the post-World War II tension areas, perhaps the most crucial for African Americans and whites was Mozley Park. The expansion into the Mozley Park area took place after African Americans had occupied new expansion areas beyond. The section is named after the city park located there, which was itself one of the main bones of contention in the struggle to keep African Americans out of the area. In addition to houses, African Americans wanted the park and the school adjoining it; many of the whites were even more determined to keep African Americans out of the park and the

¹⁰ Kruse, *White Flight*, 42-50.

school than they were to prevent them from buying the houses. The significance of the park as a symbol can perhaps be seen in the fact that even after the transition of the section from a white to an African American neighborhood was conceded, some die-hard whites were proposing that the park be destroyed and converted into a housing development.

What happened in the transition of the Mozley Park section is significant not only because it illustrates some of the problems which arise when African Americans move into a “restricted” area in Atlanta, but because it has had a continuing effect on the thinking and the activities of buyers, sellers, builders, financing agents, and city officials involved in similar situations in other parts of Atlanta. The rationale being whites need somewhere to go or flee to when or if African Americans start to gain ground and move into white neighborhoods. The Interstate Highway System was an outlet for many whites who felt their way of life changing.

In the period immediately following World War II, Aiken and other African American contractors began building homes on the West Side, in the direction of Mozley Park. In an effort to fix Westview Drive, as the southern limit of African American expansion, the white residents did not allow African American builders to build within one hundred yards of Westview Drive; the paving of streets feeding from the new African American developments in Westview Drive stopped one hundred yards short of that thoroughfare.¹¹ Before the Interstate Highway System’s construction in Atlanta, many roads in Atlanta were considered racial boundaries. These *de facto* borders seemed to be

¹¹ Kruse, *White Flight*, 60.

natural barriers for white and African American residents. According to Historian Kevin Kruse, I-20's final path and construction was drawn and built along these previously demarcated boundaries. In Atlanta's Adamsville neighborhood these made-up borders were considered helpful social guideposts for both white real estate agents and potential homebuyers.¹²

Seeing the Interstate Highway System as more of a barrier and not as solely a positive economic conduit, Atlanta's city leadership saw I-285, a by-pass extension of the Interstate Highway System, as a helpful economic and class perimeter. According to Kruse's work, I-285 was more harmful to Atlanta's corporate and social dynamics. The suburbs outside of I-285 saw a dramatic influx of former Atlanta residents as well as an increase of corporate transfers from Atlanta's central business district. Ironically, the perceived inclusiveness of I-285 for Atlanta's elite, ended up being a substantial factor in allowing the suburbs to become feasible outlets for both white flight and corporate exodus.¹³ The Interstate Highway System not only created a clear economic and class boundary, but it allowed a majority of white Atlantans to abandon Atlanta's impending racial and social diversity. The negative consequences of the Interstate Highway System are visible and undeniable.

This problem was unique to Atlanta, but it highlights how highways and roads were seen as natural boundaries to where whites and African Americans could live. Furthermore, the research shows that African American leadership was consulted and, at

¹² Ibid., 86.

¹³ Ibid., 243.

the minimum, was heard. Many African Americans were negatively affected by the route placement of the Interstate Highway System, but compromise was sought and sometimes reached by white leadership and African American leadership. Another city in the Deep South, which had somewhat similar racial and political dynamics, approached the housing and transportation issues in a profoundly different way.

Chapter 3: Birmingham's Housing Codes and Interstate Routes

Founded in 1871, Birmingham has been called “The City of Perpetual Promise,” a southern city without a past.¹ Its promise was tied to the combination of iron, coal, and limestone found in it and its geographic area. Employment is and was heavily concentrated in mining, manufacturing, and construction. Compared with other metropolitan areas of the South, wage levels were relatively high.

The Birmingham Standard Metropolitan Area had a 1950 population of 559,000, of which 209,000 or about two-fifths were African American. These populations can be compared with the 1950 Atlanta Standard Metropolitan Area's 672,000, including 166,000 African Americans. In Birmingham, as in Atlanta, the white population grew more rapidly than the African American population, especially since 1940. As of 1960, the population of metropolitan Birmingham is ranked eighth among metropolitan areas of the entire South, and third among those of the lower South, being exceeded by New Orleans and Atlanta. The lack of diversification, the vulnerability of Birmingham's economy to economic fluctuations, and the manner in which human and natural resources were exploited during much of its history give substance to the old local maxim, “Hard

¹ George R Leighton, “Birmingham, Alabama: The City of Perpetual Promise,” *Harper's Magazine*, August, 1937.

times come first to Birmingham and stay the longest.” According to some Birmingham residents, these adverse factors appear to have delayed realization of the “promise.”

The company town along with cheap convict labor set the social and economic tone and did much to mar and upset the social and physical landscape. The mines and furnaces, unsatisfied in their demand for labor, made use of convicts who were leased to industrial bosses and entrepreneurs.² Most of the convicts were African Americans. The notorious convict-lease system was not abolished until 1928. People in Birmingham today refer to certain settlements as having been started by escaped or released convicts. Many older persons have parents who talked about their time in the convict lease system. According to Leighton: “When a convict miner was worn out . . . his sentence would sometimes be cancelled, and he would make his way into town. There are families . . . today descended from such workers which can boast ‘murderers in the third generation.’”³

Company towns, company housing, and the general frontier-like climate helped to fix the housing pattern also: “scattered about were tracts bought by land speculators and crammed with ‘nigger houses,’ then and now described as among the most profitable investments in the city.”⁴

Birmingham’s relatively short history has been notable for both industrial and racial tension and violence. It was not until the 1930s, with the protection of federal

² William Warren Rogers et al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994),

³ Leighton, *Harper’s Magazine* (August, 1937): 235.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

legislation, that labor was successful in sustaining organization. The United Mine Workers and the steel workers' unions organized both African Americans and whites while soft-pedaling or evading the social equality issue.⁵ By the 1930s, Birmingham had become a strong union town, and the income of its industrial workers had risen significantly. In 1936, the steel industry undertook a major expansion and modernization of its facilities and began to treat the local industry as something better than a step-child of Pittsburgh.⁶ War and defense production fostered the further expansion of industry and increased payrolls.

Birmingham African American workers and families enjoyed higher incomes than those of any other city in the Southeast, but their housing was among the poorest. The 1950 Census reported a median family income for African Americans in Birmingham of \$1,849, compared with \$1,695 in New Orleans, \$1,681 in Atlanta, and \$1,617 in Memphis. In 1955, a market survey conducted by Birmingham newspapers reported a median African American income of \$2,348, a money increase of 27 percent over 1950.⁷ The inferior housing dynamics of Birmingham African Americans as compared to Atlanta African Americans, although the former had higher money incomes on the whole, serves to focus attention on the differing characteristics of the two populations and on the different social climates in which they lived. The Birmingham African Americans, who

⁵ Many union members and leaders in the Birmingham area have been in the forefront of the twentieth-century White Citizens' Council movement.

⁶ 1965 *Benjamin F. Fairless* Memorial Lectures. Carnegie-Rochester Conference *Series* on Public Policy. 15, 151

⁷ *Birmingham News* and *The Post-Herald, Birmingham, Number One Test Market of the Deep South* (1955).

were industrial workers, were mostly concentrated in unskilled industrial jobs. Another difference between the two communities was a less developed intellectual leadership. Birmingham did have important economic leaders, such as A.G. Gaston, but Atlanta African Americans had the very important local political positions, which helped lobby and protect on the behalf of African American interest.

From the close of World War I until the end of World War II, the most decisive factors affecting the areas of residence of African Americans in Birmingham, and to a great extent the supply of housing available to them, were the legal, extralegal, and illegal acts and policies of local government and its representatives. These, combined with the violence and terror which in some measure, were fostered and always permitted to go unpunished by an all-white county and city law enforcement, gave a grim outline to the story of efforts by African Americans to expand their residential enclaves or to open up new ones. Birmingham, in common with many other southern and border cities, enacted ordinances for racial zoning during and after World War I. Other cities abandoned such legal efforts after the United States Supreme Court decisions had declared them unconstitutional, but Birmingham was unique in the persistence with which it continued to apply such as rules, up until the late 1950s. Whereas African Americans in Atlanta wanted to live beyond their perceived racial boundaries, African Americans in Birmingham insisted more strongly, than most urban African American communities, on staying within their prescribed boundaries.⁸

⁸ Charles Connerly, *The Most Segregated City* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 55.

Racial residential zoning enforced by city officials, although long invalidated by the highest court, was a fact in Birmingham until the 1950s. Legal penalties for violation of the zoning “laws” were never applied; they were not needed because of the rarity challenge, the readiness of officials and others to use violence and threat of violence, and the important administrative device of “the certificate of occupancy”⁹ which could be withheld by the inspector’s office for reasons within his discretion, including the race of occupants.

The early racial zoning ordinances, dating from 1915, were rather vague and general as to specification of areas, although mostly explicit in laying prohibitions onto African Americans.¹⁰ A city ordinance adopted in August, 1919, declared it to be “a misdemeanor for a member of the colored race to move into . . . or having moved into, to continue to reside in, an area in the city of Birmingham generally and historically recognized at the time as an area for occupancy by members of the white race.”¹¹

In 1926, under enabling authority granted by the Alabama State Legislature in 1923, Birmingham adopted a comprehensive zoning ordinance specifying the areas in which whites and African Americans were permitted to live. The city was divided into five districts: white residential, “Negro” residential, commercial, light industrial, and

⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰ Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 98-104.

¹¹ Sections 1606 and 1607 of the 1926 Birmingham, Alabama zoning ordinances.

heavy industrial. The white and “Negro” residential districts were further subdivided. African Americans were allowed to continue living in thirty-seven small areas.¹²

The administration of these zoning laws was entrusted to three agencies of the local government. The chief building inspector, whose duty was to approve or disapprove all plans and specifications for building, to issue building permits, to inspect all buildings for compliance with regulations, and also to issue occupancy permits upon approval of various buildings.¹³ The Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments had the duty of formulating plans for future building, zoning, hearings, and deciding appeals in connection with the enforcement or application of zoning ordinances, and making recommendations to the City Commission. The latter body was allowed to amend or repeal the regulations or district boundaries on recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Board.¹⁴

The general effect of the racial zoning ordinances, and their intent, was to freeze African American residences within their de facto boundaries and already established neighborhoods. The editor of the African American *Birmingham World* stated that practically every plan submitted by the Zoning Board of Adjustments for the purpose of expanding African American residential sections had been rejected by the City Commission.¹⁵ Frequently, however, the City Commission had approved zoning changes to enlarge the areas reserved for white occupancy, with the result, among others, that

¹² Connerly, 31.

¹³ Connerly, 32.

¹⁴ Connerly, 32

¹⁵ Emory O. Jackson Papers, 1965-1970, *Birmingham World* Office files AR 70, box 2.

African Americans had been deprived of the use of property owned by them in those areas. In Atlanta, African American ownership of land in developed areas was a major instrument in the African American housing advances following World War II. In Birmingham, similar use of African American owned property was barred by the zoning laws and the method of their enforcement.

It was reported in Birmingham's African American newspapers that the Chief Building Inspector had, on several occasions, refused to issue building permits to African Americans on the sole ground of their race. He, apparently, also refused to issue occupancy permits to African Americans after having previously issued them building permits, and after they had completed the building their homes in accordance with approved plans. Some African American residents claimed that it was often very difficult to determine what areas were actually open to them and that any controversy involving the interests of white citizens was automatically resolved to the white citizen's advantage.¹⁶ In Atlanta, the voting power of African Americans afforded them some consideration at the hands of local officials; Birmingham officials need to only consider the interests of their white citizenry, since the vast majority of African Americans were disenfranchised. According to Jefferson County's 1959 voting records, African Americans made up 40 percent of Birmingham's population, but they represented only 3 percent of the electorate.

A survey of state of Alabama and Jefferson County court cases from 1910 to 1955 reveals that prior to the mid-1940s African Americans brought no legal challenge of the

¹⁶ Ibid., box 3, AR 1102.

Birmingham racial zoning laws. In that year, however, and in subsequent years, a number of legal actions were undertaken with the expectation that the legislation would be declared contrary to the U.S. Constitution.

Whereas Atlanta had *de facto* buffer zones, Birmingham had no such residential boundaries. Because of this, legal action was preferred in trying to do away with unconstitutional zoning laws. A noteworthy trademark of Birmingham's defense of racial regulations and policy was the use of violence. In December, 1946 Ms. Alice P. Allen, secretary to the president of Miles College, filed a lawsuit in opposition to the city of Birmingham. She challenged the validity of the colorized zoning laws. After she bought a house in an area known as North Smithfield, a handful of white residents pressured her from moving in and before she moved in, and the windows of her house were shattered. According to the court case, she apparently lived on the wrong side of the street. She reported the incidents and vandalism to city hall. The city officials advised her that she could not love there, but that she could lease or sell the house to some white person to get a return on her investment.¹⁷ The incident was a big deal among the African American community. Before the case came to trial, the City Commission rezoned the block for residential purposes with no race stipulation, thereby making it possible for Allen to move into her house.¹⁸ The city of Birmingham thought that they had avoided a potential lawsuit, which could waste resources if challenged.

¹⁷ *Allen v. City of Birmingham*, December 1946.

¹⁸ Birmingham Public Library, Department of Archives and manuscripts, *Birmingham World*, January 14, 1947.

In 1947, the city was not able to avoid a court test of its racial zoning. In January 1947, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Matthews, after having ascertained from city officials that the property they desired to purchase for a new home was subject to “Negro” occupancy, went ahead and bought a lot and built a home in what is known as the East Thomas area.¹⁹ It was located about three blocks from the nearest white resident, and a block and a half from a thoroughly built up African American neighborhood. After the home was completed, a city official refused to grant them a permit to occupy it, on the ground that the area had been zoned for white residents. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), they led a lawsuit against the Birmingham as well. The NAACP alleged that racial provisions of the city’s general zoning code were in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.²⁰

U.S. District Court Judge Clarence Mullins found that the city zoning laws were unlawful and unconstitutional. He also issued an injunction against its further enforcement. The court noted that the United States Supreme Court and the Supreme Courts of the states of North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina had declared similar ordinances in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.²¹ Less than three weeks after the court decision, the house owned by the Matthews family was dynamited and destroyed by unknown person. The bombing occurred at about eleven o’clock at night, but according to newspaper reports, police did not come to investigate until the following day, after a visit was made to the city hall by the Matthews’ attorney. No one was apprehended for the

¹⁹ *Matthews v. City of Birmingham*, 87 Fed Supp. 538.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 87 Fed Supp. 538.

²¹ *Birmingham World*, August 1, 1947.

bombing.²² The decision of the District Court in the Matthews' case did not settle the issue. City officials continued to withhold building and occupancy permits from African Americans in the disputed area; the City Commission enacted further and more specific prohibitions of African American residence in certain areas; unfortunately, "unknown persons" continued to bomb the homes of African Americans.

Birmingham's Suburbs Against the Interstate Highway System

As the Interstate Highway System grew over the decades, urban centers in the American South faced massive traffic congestion, mostly between the suburbs and the central business district. Trying to build new expressways to alleviate congestion brought the same problems to whites that initially affected African Americans. Birmingham and the suburb of Forest Park are the best examples of white citizens trying to stop plans that were not based on race but still brought to light the social dynamics of resources at the disposal of whites. Using the designation of "historically significant," allowed many suburbs to skirt around rules of eminent domain and preserve neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, many African American neighborhoods at the beginning of the Interstate Highway System's creation were not deemed "historically significant."

The primary problem facing the City Planning Department in the development of such a plan was the purchase of the rights of way through neighborhoods and around adjacent roads. Should the homeowners in the areas in the path of a proposed new

²² *Birmingham News-Age Herald*, August 19, 1947; *Birmingham Post*, August 19, 1947.

freeway not agree to sell the desired property to the city, then the city could exercise its power of eminent domain and begin condemnation of the property.²³ The same applied to state and federally funded highway programs. Those involved in the administration of city government did not want this to happen. Their plans sought a different route, in building the new freeway; passage would be constructed through older neighborhoods of the city, neighborhoods which were deemed to be “blighted areas” where owners were more likely to sell willingly.²⁴

The plan was written in booklet form and unveiled in August, 1970. As the solution for the traffic problems was placed on the drawing boards of the engineering department, it was given the name “*The 1990 Land Use Plan.*” It specified that a six-lane freeway would be built to by-pass such heavily traveled roads as those near Key Circle, Vulcan, Southside, and Forest Park. The freeway would span the western to eastern areas of the city, as well as the southeastern portion, and would provide rapid transit into the city as it by-passed much-used and congested roads.²⁵ The plan, which was to handle traffic problems through the year 1990, would include an expressway from around the Charley Boswell Golf Course on Highland Avenue northwest to connect with North Birmingham Municipal Airport. A study was conducted of neighborhoods in the path of the freeway. The community of Forest Park was included in that study. Consideration was given to the age of the homes as well as the overall condition of the houses at the

²³ J. Wayne Flynt, “The Ethics of Democratic Persuasion and the Birmingham Crisis,” *Southern Speech Journal* 35 (Fall 1969): 46-47.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁵ Interview, Tarkenton Dillard

time the study was commissioned and, based on the conclusions, some white middle-class neighborhoods were labeled as “blighted and dying areas.”²⁶ Forest Park was one of those targeted areas.

Many white residents were silent when plans to demolish the traditionally west end African American neighborhoods became a reality. The belief, by state and federal planners, that the greater good of urban renewal would trump the social and class problems of a city, became a reality for lower and middle-class whites also. Forest Park, exemplifies that sentiment better than most neighborhoods across the American South.²⁷ In May 1971, the shock of the impact the plans for proposed changes would have on Forest Park dealt a devastating blow to the struggling neighborhood as information about those plans became common knowledge. The first news of the changes centered on a suggestion to cut out the median in the center of Clairmont Avenue and remove the trees lining both sides of the street. Because much of the traffic from the eastern area of the city and over the mountain flowed down Clairmont Avenue, the street was not wide enough to accommodate the volume of traffic. “No Parking” signs were put up on both sides of the street. Many house had no off-street parking, there was no place else to leave cars. This was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Although then-mayor George Seibels had proposed a citywide community development program, there was still no neighborhood association to represent residents on twenty-three affected streets and inform them of the possibility of changes soon to take place. This was accomplished by flyers hand-delivered door to door to every house in Forest Park.

²⁶ Flynt., 49.

²⁷ Birmingham *Post-Herald*, July 20, 1990.

In June 1971, the Birmingham Regional Planning Commission published a *Breakthrough Implementation Plan*, a preliminary proposal providing assistance to Operation Breakthrough. This report dealt with current population numbers, existing projects, housing demands, zoning requirements and projected growth areas through the year 1900. Although the report was primarily concerned with housing, it also defined the region's housing demands as being in the suburbs, rather than in the inner city. The plan for the proposed freeway was discovered by a David Vann who, at the time, was serving on the Birmingham City Council and was a resident of the Forest Park neighborhood. An attorney by profession, Vann shared an office with Chervis Isom who was also a resident. These two men joined others in assuming a leadership role to defeat the land use plan which, if implemented, would cause the destruction of Essex Road, Clairmont Avenue, and Cliff Road. At the same time, other residents of Forest Park and neighborhoods throughout Birmingham were alerted to plans for the freeway by articles printed in both the major newspapers. The land use planning was created by the Planning Commission, and components of the original plan suggested that Niazuma and Pawnee Roads would become four-lanes. Immediately upon being advised of this, a group of concerned citizens paid a visit to Mayor Seibels, who was sympathetic to the residents, and that phase of the plan was abandoned.

After the "no parking" signs appeared on Clairmont Avenue, other bits and pieces of proposed changes exchanged in conversation and through newspaper articles. When the initial article about the land use plan was disclosed, it was in a front-page article printed by the *Post Herald*, the morning newspaper. Many residents learned of the plans to construct an airport freeway through Forest Park while eating breakfast. The route

would connect Red Mountain Expressway with other sections of the city by dissecting the Forest Park neighborhood and would not only call for the removal of well-known foliage, but also century-old homes that were in the path of the freeway.²⁸

Ironically, in the early 1970s, with no neighborhood association through which neighbors could meet one another and become acquainted, the only active organizations with enough solidarity and strength to exert pressure on City Hall were the two major garden clubs, Forest Park and Cliffside. Many members of the two garden clubs got the idea that they were the only ones who could prevent the construction of the freeway. Meeting at the homes of various members, plans residents drew up to chart a course to preserve the neighborhood of Forest Park. At these meetings the plan was conceived to form an organization to represent the neighborhood as it prepared to battle for its continued existence.²⁹ It was called “The Forest Park Protection Association.” A neighborhood association was formed when the two groups merged and held their meetings at the Avondale United Methodist Church, solely to address the problem of the freeway.

The newly formed group had no money for postage, so subsequent meetings were publicized by flyers delivered door to door by school kids. The following meetings were held at Avondale School is where the Forest Park Neighborhood Association was formally created.

²⁸ David J. Vann Papers, 1959-1979, Birmingham Archives files AR 113, box 16.

²⁹ Ibid., box 19.

A group of women from the garden clubs then arranged a meeting with Mayor Seibels to explain their concerns about plans for the freeway. According to records, the meeting date was scheduled for 2:00p.m., and the ladies did not leave the mayor's office until after five o'clock. When it was delivered to Forest Park residents in the Sunday, June 4, 1972, edition of *The Birmingham News*, every resident of Forest Park was alerted to the latest threat to the neighborhood. In a full page article under the headline "Pro and Con Arguments to be heard on 20 Year Street Planning Programs," residents were stunned to read that an action program had indeed been formulated by the planning commission coordinating future plans for public works, business expansion, and housing programs with future plans for solving transportation problems through the year 1990. The plan outlining the freeways proposed to put the highway through "dilapidated areas" and those areas were outlined in orange on a map. The highway went through the orange area. The urban renewal concept at the time purported to "rid the city of undesirable homes." The article reported that in August 1970 city planners had unveiled a twenty-year street-planning program designed to improve traffic conditions around Birmingham and the suburbs. Of concern to Forest Park residents was that portion of the plan calling for the freeway to extend around Charley Boswell Golf Course northwest, connecting with North Birmingham and providing easier access to the Birmingham Airport. When Forest Park resident Mary Lois Forbes learned that the freeway would be built with six lanes going over her historic home, which had also been home to two governors and other well-known citizens of Birmingham, she went door to door to alert her neighbors. According to memos of the Forest Park Association, a past P.T.A. president of Avondale School owned a printing business and donated all the hand delivered flyers. In the city of

Birmingham records, real estate businesswoman Lillian Cooley and her husband, Grady, spoke at meetings of the Birmingham City Council condemning the project.³⁰

At the same time that Forest Park residents were mobilizing through a newly formed neighborhood association to fight the proposed freeway plans, another group had also organized and was making its voice heard at Birmingham City Hall. The second group, the Birmingham Action Coalition (BAC) was made up of businessmen and women throughout Birmingham and surrounding municipalities. Their concern was for the larger effects the transportation plan would have on every area in Jefferson County. They were joined by officials from the city, among them Alton McQuarter, city engineer, as well as leaders from Mountain Brook. Their objections concerned the connection of the freeway with a major thoroughfare in that city. The larger plan was referred to as the Birmingham Regional Transportation Plan, It called for Fifth and Sixth Avenues South to become a one-way pair, tying together into a six-lane expressway, emptying into Jefferson Avenue around Seventeenth Street Southwest.

Curiously enough, some of the chief critics of the plan were city officials in Birmingham who joined citizens in proclaiming that the transportation plan was not needed. The plan was defended by Bill Moody, the planning staffer who directed preparation of the original projects. He insisted that it was designed to route freeways between neighborhoods where they would help, rather than hinder the local residents. He further stated that the idea was to provide the best traffic service with the least disruption of people, businesses, and industry. Apparently, that was not the end result that the BAC

³⁰ Minutes from Birmingham City Council meetings, September 1970.

felt would be accomplished by construction of a freeway. They suggested that the various phases of the transportation plan be examined and a study made by the new Transit Authority with the idea of possibly reducing the need for automobile traffic.

Bill Ricker was, in 1972, executive director of Operation New Birmingham (ONB). He assured members of the BAC that ONB's Community Development Committee (which Mayor Seibels had by that time put into effect, and which was headed by former City Council President M.E. Wiggins) had been keeping in close touch with the development of the proposed plan, He offered to meet any group of residents concerning the problem. And a problem it was one which would not go away.³¹ A meeting of the Birmingham City Council was scheduled for seven-thirty p.m. on Thursday, June 8, 1972, on the second floor of the Municipal Auditorium (Boutwell Auditorium). On the night of the appointed meetings, the auditorium was filled to capacity by 7:00p.m. and the meetings began. Among those in attendance were Nina Miglionico and Angie Grooms Proctor, who spoke up for preservation of Forest Park neighborhood. As a result of their involvement, both were later elected to serve on the city council. The Friday, June 9, issue of *the Birmingham, News* reported that seven hundred persons filed into the auditorium to attend the public hearing.

Forest Park Has a Grassroots Plan

³¹ ³¹ David J. Vann Papers, 1959-1979, Birmingham Archives files AR 113, box 21.

Some neighborhoods came up with other methods and strategies, which would either halt or revise future projects that were federally funded. As the 1970s dawned, Forest Park was a community of older homes and picturesque tree-lined winding roads. According to the mostly all-white residents, they faced a crisis that threatened to destroy the very essence of the neighborhood. Many of the older homes around the perimeter of the community had been sold to developers who leveled them and built multi-story apartments on the sites.

Also, believing the area to be a “blighted and dying neighborhood,” the city of Birmingham had plans to build a freeway through Forest Park, resulting in the destruction of many of the residences, and thus changing the very façade of the entire area.

A group of Forest Park residents who had lived there for many years as well as more recent home buyers met and organized the Forest Park Community Association (FPCA) Their first priority was to convince city officials that Forest Park was not a “dying” area, but rather a thriving community desiring nothing less than to be allowed to continue to survive undisturbed by unwanted intrusions.

So effective were their efforts that the city of Birmingham abandoned the proposed highway route in favor of a more reasonable plan which would spare the older, mostly white, neighborhoods. With the revised plan, Forest Park was “saved” from becoming fragmented by a six-lane freeway cutting through the area.³²

³² Ibid., box 23.

In order to ward off future city or federal use of eminent domain, the FPCA's then-president Hank McCarl formed the Forest Park Historical Committee to research the history of Forest Park in an effort to have the neighborhood named as a National Historic District. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places would afford the residents of the neighborhood a measure of protection against any federally funded projects that threatened destruction or other unwanted change to the area.

In May 1977, Sam Frazier, newly elected president of the neighborhood, sped up efforts toward listing in the National Register. Catherine Browne was appointed chairman of the historical committee, and over forty volunteers throughout the community were organized to continue research. The first milestone toward National Registration was passed a year later when the neighborhood achieved registration as a State Historic District. And, at the same time, Frazier persuaded the nine members of the Birmingham City Council to declare Forest Park a "City Historic District" as well.³³

Robert MacLeod, a law student, was hired by the association to help continue with research required for the National Register. This research, although encompassing the information already gathered for the Alabama Register, called for much more detailed information than forms from the state government. In its completed form, which took an additional year and a half, the National Register application included 700 typewritten pages as well as almost 700 photos. Several photographers shot all 626 structures in the area, as well as making 8" x 10" photos of streetscapes and significant houses throughout the district.

³³ Interview with Jim Frazier

The National Register committee required a brief statement of historical significance as well as a general description of the area and a detailed history. In one of these texts there was an explanation of a justification for the boundaries of the district and descriptions of all of the various themes of architecture in the area. In addition to these requirements, a determination was made of the percentage of historic buildings which did not contribute significantly to the area.

A partial narrative met requirements for nomination to the State of Alabama Historic Register. Detailed records were kept of sources used and a copy was typed along with separate pages of inclusive street numbers and pages identifying the name of the district, classification, multiple ownership and location of legal descriptions on each parcel of property.³⁴

On Thursday, May 8, 1980, the Alabama State Review Board met at the Alabama Historic Commission, located in the Lurleen Wallace Museum in Montgomery. Among the sixty items of business to be discussed was a petition from the Forest Park Community Association for registration on the National Register of Historic Places. Being on the historic list of the National Register makes private owners eligible for federal grants and for historic preservation and it provides limited protection through comment by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the effect of federally

³⁴ Forest Park Community Association, Birmingham, AL., *Association Board Summary and Background* (1992), 4.

financed, assisted or licensed undertakings on historic properties, such as the Interstate Highway System.³⁵

If a property is depreciable and located in a district already listed on the National Register and if the property contributes to the district, there are also certain provisions in the Tax Reform Act of 1976 that may apply. At the time, in 1980, Section 2124 of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 encouraged preservation of historic depreciable structures by allowing favorable tax treatments for restoration. In addition, the Tax Reform Act discouraged the destruction of historic structures and for new construction on the site of demolished historic buildings.³⁶

If the property contained coal resources and was listed in the National Register, certain provisions of the Surface Mining and Control Act of 1977 made it less likely that surface mining of coal would be permitted by the state or federal governments. With the Birmingham metropolitan area being a coal and iron hub, the state of Alabama route planners had to make numerous revisions to routes in the Birmingham metropolitan area because of this clause.³⁷

While laws pertaining to preservation may appear to be restrictive when applied to an individual homeowner, they actually offer a measure of protection in that, with any federally funded project which threatens listed properties, there must be an impact statement and hearing on the project.

³⁵ General Explanation of the Tax Reform Act of 1976, H. R. 10612, 94th Congress, Public Law 94-455.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, General Explanation of the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, General Explanation of the Tax Reform Act of 1976.

At the May 1980 quarterly meeting of the Alabama State Review Board, that committee, headed by Milo Howard, made a unanimous decision to recommend that the historic district of Forest Park, having met and complied with all the requirements necessary for inclusion, be nominated as a district worthy of preservation. The petition for nomination, the completed survey on each piece of property in the area, and the letters from interested parties for and against nomination were sent to Washington, D.C., where a final determination was made in Forest Park's favor

Due to a number of resident volunteers of Forest Park, their suburb was spared from Interstate Highway projects. City and state of Alabama planners had to contend with the rules that made certain areas off-limits. The strategy of historic registration was used by other suburbs and distinct neighborhoods across the American South. The passing of the 1976 Tax Reform Act gave many concerned residents across the American South the tools and methods needed to protect their homes and way of life, whenever eminent domain was slightly suggested as a method to push through a city or federal project. An understanding of the 1976 Tax Reform Act is suggested.

In 1976 Congress passed the Tax Reform Act designed to make more appealing the preservation of historic buildings and to discourage their destruction. Before 1976, there had been no effective means of preserving historic buildings and other areas of historic importance. But in that year, the federal government recognized that preservation, which in the past had been left to private groups and funds, must become a national effort.³⁸ That was the year when Congress passed the National Historic

³⁸ Tax Collector's and Assessor's Records, Jefferson County.

Preservation Act (NHPA) establishing a process for identifying and recording structures or districts considered significant, either historically or architecturally. According to NHPA, if federal funds or a federal agency was involved in either the demolition or reconstruction of a structure listed in the National Register, an impact hearing must be held before the license is granted.³⁹ Ironically, Congress did not expect their law to be used as a strategy, by concerned citizens, to thwart federal projects, such as the Interstate Highway System.

³⁹ General Explanation Of The Tax Reform Act of 1976 (H. R. 10612, 94th Congress, Public Law 94-455).

Conclusion

Cities and communities in the American South saw important changes in the years after both world wars. Some of the changes dealt with many issues, such as the economic activity of businesses in Central Business Districts (CBD), suburban communities, huge repositions of populations in the center of cities, and the overturn of racial demographics, which created significant African American urban majorities. A number of federal, state, county, and city policies led to these massive modifications. The best examples are mortgage and tax rule changes, along with city redevelopment programs, mainly public housing. These urban landscape changes owe most of the modifications to the development of the 1956 Interstate Highway System. The Interstate Highway System is a linkage of federally funded highways that provides automobile travel at higher speeds across the United States of America. Planners, politicians, and engineers made purposeful decisions that allowed the Interstate Highway System to pass through the mid-section of many of the American South's most populated urban centers.

The Interstate Highway System, as a whole, brought about many positive changes to the American South. The need for faster and smoother automobile travel led politicians and planners, on the local and state levels, to make arbitrary plans that reduced large urban areas and displaced established communities. With an official policy of cost containment and eminent domain, low-income and mostly African American

communities were either destroyed or dramatically altered. There are not many government policy undertakings that have produced such a striking and long-lasting effect on the twentieth century. The American South's transformation from a majority based rural agricultural system to a much more urban and industrialized region, took a lot of planning, compromise, and funding. Nearly all of the construction of the Interstate Highway System was done over the span of twenty years, from the 1960s to the late 1970s. The results of the undertaking created lasting challenges and issues. New planning and academic ideas of how to deal with urban and suburban space were allowed to be tested on a wide demographic range. The reorganization of those various spaces were sometimes in the best interest of the public, but in the American South, the interests of the economic and politically powerful trumped those of the community as a whole. Regional urban hubs were being linked to newly created suburbs, allowing easier and faster automobile travel between those communities. The future promises and benefits of urban mass transit were stifled and curtailed, due to funding being diverted to automobile interests. While the Interstate Highway System allowed the city centers, malls, and new neighborhoods to grow, the housing of both the middle and lower classes were destroyed on a previously unheard of scale.

The social and physical consequences were believed to be justified by the number of construction jobs and economic activity that a large federal infrastructure plan would have on the American South, as well as the nation. The real estate schemes and social division were negative consequences that have had the most lasting impact. Historian Mark Gelfand, stated: "No federal venture spent more funds in urban areas and returned

fewer dividends to central cities than the national highway program.”¹ State and local developers, politicians, realtors, and construction companies foresaw the Interstate Highway Systems as an excuse or reason to clear away undesirable homes and city blight. The ideas for implementing these changes or urban reform were desired as far back as 1935.² The crucial funding problems were not solved until 1956. There is no denying that vast amounts of low-income housing were demolished in the quest for implementing the United States’ greatest federal public works projects. 1965 staff reports, from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Public Works, show that starting from 1960 to 1964; thousands of low-income residential homes were demolished, in direct relation to the Interstate Highway System.³ Geography expert Alan Altshuler states that during the 1960s, in the middle of the system’s development, the “highway system would displace a million people from their homes before it was completed.”⁴ The most affected group of citizens was African Americans. In the American South, routes for the Interstate Highway System ran through the heart of mostly African American communities. Displaced urban citizens did not have the advocacy channels, which were needed in order to lobby with various federal and state transportation organizations. Memos from the Bureau of Public Roads and other transportation departments across the American South show that the agencies thought that their purpose was solely to fund and

¹ Mark Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1966* (New York, 1975), 222.

² Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia, 1987), 43.

³ Mark Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1941-1956* (Lawrence, Kan., 1979), 51.

⁴ Alan Altshuler, *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967), 339.

develop expressways. They believed that the social effects of the Interstate Highways System's construction were the problem or concern of other government organizations.⁵ In 1957, a federal civil servant in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) stated sadly: "It is my impression that regional personnel of the Bureau of Public Roads are not overly concerned with the problems of family relocation."⁶ Sadly, it is true that at the height of the Interstate Highway System's development, not much was done to combine the interstate project with government and private housing construction. Little was provided in regards to relocation funding for dislocated households, shops, or communal foundations, such as places of worship and schoolhouses.

Unfortunately, lower-class African Americans were the most negatively affected by the Interstate Highway System's construction. The United States saw a shift in priorities in home and automobile ownership. Transit systems such as MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) in Atlanta and the Metro System in Washington D.C., exemplified the precarious social problems of housing and mobility in the American South. By the 1960s, transit systems in the American South were seen as the vehicle of lower classes and mainly minorities. The federally lobbied automobile culture and Interstate Highway System gave white Americans a cost effective tool to escape heterogeneous urban neighborhoods, in favor of homogenous suburbs. As gentrification in urban centers ramp up, the old housing models will be put to test, but

⁵ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Public Works, *Study of Compensation and Assistance for persons Affected by real Property Acquisition in Federal and Federally Assisted Programs* (Washington, D.C., 1965), 24

⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

this in reverse, as gas prices and changing attitudes about the benefits of living in metropolitan periphery change.

A noticeable arrangement came about, instigated by local and governmental representatives with the cooperation of nonpublic entities such as the Urban Land Institute, of using interstate highway building to do away with blighted urban communities. These blighted urban areas were then developed into profitable urban space. Interstate highway planners were fully aware of the social ramifications of highway placements and positions. There was plenty of awareness that entire wards and districts would be decimated along with many residents being displaced. This known course of action was calculated and considered approvable, the benefits of new highways and economic stimulation was considered the best way in which to make urban areas more effective and useful. Interstate developers and CBD builders had collective reasons for doing away with blighted neighborhoods. A real-estate developer in the late 1950s believed that doing away with urban blight was necessary “for higher and better uses.”⁷

Congress supplied the bulk of the funds for the Interstate Highway System’s development. State and county transportation departments across the American South collaborated with municipal representatives in the selection of certain highway placements. The greatest effect of state and municipal highway placements, in the American South, was that the Interstate Highway System could be used, purposefully, to implement the racial and housing motives of segregationists. The compulsory displacement of citizens from the newly developed CBDs created a realignment of

⁷ National Commission on Urban Problems, *Building the American City* (Washington, D.C., 1969), 81.

communities. Some geographers and historians, such as Arnold Hirsch, have coined these newly developed neighborhoods and movement as second ghettos and second ghetto formation.⁸ The first ghetto formation of African Americans is considered to have begun during the World War I era. This era is noteworthy for the thousands of southern African Americans that flooded into the northern industrial areas. Hirsch's second ghetto formation lasted from 1933-1968 and is distinguished by federal intervention. Federal funding sponsored the creation of high-rise public housing. The increased African American population, post-World War II, caused a strain on federal and municipal funds for housing. This post-World War II transition from African American relocating to the fringes of racial housing boundaries caused many whites to move to new residences or arbitrarily enforce residential zoning codes. Interestingly, this process was made faster by the Interstate Highway System development.

The creation of the Interstate Highway System through urban centers of the American South illustrates how local and state governments manipulated the interstate highway program into separating white and African American neighborhoods. Although the Interstate Highway System had no implicit racial agenda, its implementation at the local and state level along with the complicity of the federal government, in the form of U.S. congressmen, permitted southern urban officials to use it to separate the races in the same way that many southern cities used racial zoning for years to maintain racial segregation.

⁸ Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), 20.

These two cases, Atlanta and Birmingham, illustrates the moral ambiguity of planning and the ways in which planning permits legally and morally legitimate concepts to be transformed in coded concepts and terms that are used to discriminate against the disadvantaged.

In the American South, the de facto housing and residential segregation that was previously lax in enforcement became more intense and compressed. The post-World War II American South owes much of its current, social and cultural, settings to the construction of the Interstate Highway System. Federal and state transportation plans, of the 1950s through 1970s, are directly responsible for the current urban problems that are found in cities across the American South.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Ralph D. Abernathy to John F. Kennedy, October 3, 1961, telegram, (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, General Correspondence), Box 1664.

Alabama Department of Transportation. Human Resources Bureau. *On-The-Job Program* (February 2006). Montgomery:
<http://www.dot.state.al.us/Docs/Bureaus/Human+Resources/On-the-Job+Training/On-the-Job+Training+Program.htm> (accessed September 24, 2008).

Alabama Department of Transportation. *Official Highway Map*. Montgomery: 2008.

Alabama Highway Department. *Fifty-Fourth Annual Report*. Montgomery: Walker Printing, 1965.

Alabama Realtors Association. *AAR Capitol Report - 1976*. Montgomery: Alabama Realtors Association, 1976.

T.M. Alexander, Sr., Papers, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture.

Allen v. City of Birmingham, December 1946.

American Association of State Highway Officials. *Policies on Geometric Highway Designs*. Washington, D.C.: 1950.

American Association of State Highway Officials. *A Policy on Geometric Rural Highways*. Washington, D.C.: 1954.

American Association of State Highway Officials. *A Policy on Geometric Design of Rural Highways-1965*. Washington, D.C.: 1966.

American Association of State Highway Officials. *A Policy on Arterial Highways in Urban Areas*. Washington, D.C.: 1957.

American Petroleum Institute. *Highway Statistics and Financial Data*. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads. New York: American Petroleum Institute, 1964.

Automobile Manufacturers Association. *Automobile Facts and Figures, 1963 ed.*

Benjamin F. Fairless Memorial Lectures. Carnegie-Rochester Conference *Series* on Public Policy.

Berl I. Bernhard to Hyman Bookbinder, June 29, 1961, (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, General Correspondence, 1912-65), Box 1664.

Birmingham City Council minutes, September, 1970.

Birmingham Post, May 31, 1949.

Birmingham World, August 1, 1947.

Birmingham News-Age Herald, August 19, 1947.

Business Week, March 11, 1967

George W. Curry and the Property Owners Committee, A Petition Appeal, April 28, 1960. (Bureau of Public Roads: Records, RG 30, Correspondence, 1912-65), Box 1665.

Forest Park Community Association, *Covenants and Bylaws*.

Highway Research Board. "Social Effects of Modern Highway Transportation." In *Indirect Effects of Highway Improvement*, Bulletin 327. Washington: National Academy of Sciences – National Research Council, 1962.

Highway Research Board, *Highway Capacity Manual: Practical Applications of Research*. Washington, D.C.: Special Report 120, 1965.

Home Loan Bank Board, Washington D.C., *Application of A.G. Gaston, et al.*, January 12, 1956.

Emory O. Jackson Papers, 1965-1970.

Matthews v. City of Birmingham, 87 Fed Supp. 538.

New Orleans Time-Picayune, July 2, 1969.

Newsweek, April 20, 1964.

New York Times, January 29, 1967.

State of Alabama v. Monsky, Belle 1968.

Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, U.S. Senate. Washington, D.C., 1967., 276, RG 406.

Taff, Charles A. *Commercial Motor Transportation*, 3rd ed. Homewood, Il: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1961.

Tax Collector's and Assessor's Records, Jefferson County, 1950-1970.

Transportation Research Board, *Highway Capacity Manual*. Washington, D.C, 1985.

U.S., Bureau of Public Roads, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, U.S. House of Representatives, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, House Document No. 272.

U.S. Congress, House. *Final Report of the Highway Cost Allocation Study*. 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961.

U.S. Congress, House Document No. 272. 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Toll Roads and Free Roads*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939.

U.S. Congress, House Document No. 379. 78th Congress, 2nd Session, *Interregional Highways*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Public Works, *Study of Compensation and Assistance for persons Affected by real Property Acquisition in Federal and Federally Assisted Programs*. Washington, D.C., 1965.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, *Highway Statistics 1962*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964.

U.S. Dept. of Commerce, *Highway Capacity Manual: Practical Applications of Research*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950.

U.S. Federal Works Agency, Public Roads Administration, *Highway Practice in the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949.

U.S. Dept. of Transportation, *America's Highways, 1776-1976, A History of the Federal Aid Program*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979.

David J. Vann Papers, 1959-1979, Birmingham Archives.

Secondary Sources:

- Altshuler, Alan. *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Anderson, Terry H. *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Ayers, Jr., Drummond. "Washington: White Roads Through Black Bedrooms," *New York Times*, December 31, 1967.
- Bacote, Clarence. "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," *Phylon*, Fourth Quarter, 1955.
- Bartley, Numan V., and Hugh Graham. *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.
- Ballon, Hilary and Kenneth Jackson, eds. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.
- Bauman, John F, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian, eds. *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America*. University Park: Pennsylvania Press University Press, 2000.
- Black, Earl, and Merle Black. *Politics and Society in the South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Chapman, H. H. *The Iron and Steel Industries of the South*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1953.
- Cobb, James C. *Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984.
- Connerly, Charles. *The Most Segregated City*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005.
- Cron, Frederick. "Highway Design for Motor Vehicles, An Historical Review, Part 4: The Vehicle Carrying of the Highway." *Public Roads*. Vol. 39, No.2, December, 1975.
- Davies, Pete. *American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2002.
- Dodd, Donald B., Wynelle S. Dodd. *Historical Statistics of the South, 1790-1970*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1973.

- Flynt, J. Wayne. *Poor But Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.
- Flynt, J. Wayne. "The Ethics of Democratic Persuasion and the Birmingham Crisis," *Southern Speech Journal* 35, Fall 1969.
- Franklin, Jimmie Lewis. *Back to Birmingham: Richard Arrington, Jr., and His Times*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.
- Friedlaender, Ann Fetter. *The Interstate Highway System*. Oakland: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1965.
- Gelfand, Mark. *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1966*. New York: Simon and Shusters, 1975.
- General Explanation Of The Tax Reform Act of 1976, H. R. 10612, 94th Congress, Public Law 94-455.
- Gutfreund, Owen. *Twentieth Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Hilliard, David. *The Black Panther*. New York: Atria Books, 2007.
- Holmes, E. H. "The State of the Art in Urban Transportation Planning, or How We Got Here." *Transportation*. Vol. 1, No.4, March, 1973.
- Holmes, E. H., and J.T. Lynch, "Highway Planning: Past, Present, and Future." *Journal of Highway Division*.
- [Hughes](#), Thomas and [Trevor Pinch](#), eds. *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*. Cambridge: [MIT Press](#), 1987.
- Jackson, Hubert. "Public Housing in the Atlanta Story" *Phylon*, First Quarter, 1958.
- Johnson, Charles, and Herman Long. *People vs. Property: Restrictive Covenants in Housing*. Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1947.
- Kelly, John F. *Industry and Freeways, in California Land Economic Studies*. Sacramento: Department of Public Works, Highway Transportation Agency, 1962.

- Kruse, Kevin. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Larsen, Lawrence. *The Urban South: A History*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1990.
- Lemly, James H. *Expressway Influence on Land Use and Value, Atlanta, 1941-56*. Atlanta: Georgia State College of Business Administration, 1958.
- Mertz, Paul E. *New Deal Policy and Southern Rural Poverty*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978.
- Meyer, Stephen. *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
- Mills, James. "Light Rail Transit: A Modern Renaissance." *Light Rail Transit*. Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 1975.
- Mohl, Raymond. *The Making of Urban America*. Lanham: Praeger Press, 1997.
- Moynihan, Daniel P. "New Roads and Urban Chaos," *Reporter*, Vol. XXII, April 14, 1960.
- N.D. Lea Transportation Research Corporation, *Lea Transit Compendium: Reference Guide*. Huntsville, Ala: N.D. Lea Transportation Research Corporation, 1975.
- Nunnally, William A. *Bull Connor*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991.
- Philips, Ulrich Bonnell. *A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1908.
- Rabinowitz, Howard. *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
- Rhodes, Jr., Farwell. "Toll Factors for Indiana Turnpike." *Traffic Quarterly*. 23, no. 2 (January 1960): 26-35.
- Rodriguez, Joseph. *City Against Suburb: The Culture Wars in an American Metropolis*. Westport: Praeger Books, 2000.
- William Warren Rogers et al. *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994.
- Rose, Mark. *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1941-1956*. Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1979.

- Salmond, John A. *The Conscience of a Lawyer: Clifford Durr and American Civil Liberties, 1899-1975*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990.
- Seely, Bruce. *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.
- Southerland, Henry deLeon. *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806-1836*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.
- The South at Work: Employment in the South, 1969-1989*. Durham: Institute for Southern Studies, 1989.
- Taft, Philip. *Organizing Dixie: Alabama Workers in the Industrial Era*. Edited by Gary Fink. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981.
- Upchurch, Jonathan. "The New Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices: An Overview." *ITE Journal*. Washington, D.C.: Vol. 59, No.4, 1989.
- Vuchic, Vukan. *Urban Public Transportation: Systems and Technology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1981.
- Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 1966.
- Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies. *Comprehensive Planning for Metropolitan Development*. Washington, D.C.: 1970.
- Yarbrough, Tinsley E. *Judge Johnson and Human Rights in Alabama*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981.