Southern Progress and Southern Honor: Slavery and Jim Crow at Auburn University

by

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Abstract

Slavery built Auburn University physically, ideologically, and monetarily. After emancipation, slavery's impact on Auburn does not vanish, instead it transforms into the violence of the Jim Crow South. Auburn played a key role in helping to develop the ideology and enforcement of the Jim Crow society in East Alabama. White supremacy changes form and emerges in new ways in the late nineteenth century, most notably in the 1895 Auburn Race Riot, the attempted lynching of a local Black man by a mob of Auburn students. The impact of violence such as the race riot and other instances of racial violence and the university's role in perpetuating white supremacy remain to be examined as the community still lives with the legacy of these actions today.

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George Turk felt the cold night air and his heart racing out of his chest as he listened to the hollers of the angry crowd gathered outside. There were dozens of men outside, maybe even a hundred of them. All were white, and most were cadets from the college in the small town of Auburn, Alabama. From the crowd came shouts for him to come out of the house. George could only imagine what the mob would do to him if he came out. He would at least face a beating, but stories of white mobs shooting, hanging, and burning Black men might have weighed on George's mind as he waited in the house. George looked over at Will Tarver and the others in the house, afraid of what would happen to them if he surrendered. Finally, George decided to stand his ground and told the crowd of cadets and other young white men, "I am not coming anywhere." Then the shooting started.[1]

On the night of March 3, 1895, a white mob consisting of students from what was then the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (currently Auburn University) fired dozens of shots into a Black home located on what is now the campus of Auburn University. The violent events of this race riot did not occur in a vacuum. Instead, the 1895 Auburn Race Riot stands as only one link in a chain of white supremacy that exists throughout the history of Auburn University as well as the town that shares its name.[2] Enslavers inexorably tied Auburn and Auburn University together with slavery from its founding. While slavery in Auburn ended with emancipation in 1865, the afterlife of slavery continues to exist long past that date. The afterlife of slavery refers to the ongoing negative impacts felt by Black people in America even after slavery's legal demise in 1865. The eminent scholar of Black life Saidiya Hartmann first used the term "afterlife of slavery" to refer to the reality that "black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago" which leads to "skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment" for Black people today.[3]

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[1] "WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's House," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), Mar. 5, 1895.

[2] I use the term race riot in this paper to refer to the events of March 3, 1895 because it is the term used by media at the time and I feel as though lynching does not fit this context. Phrases such as attempted murder or attempted lynching would be accurate but would miss the explicit racial component of the event and trying to add in a modifier that the event was racially motivated at the time would be clunky. Furthermore, race riot as being a term for uprisings by Black activists and militants is a usage that came about in the twentieth century as a disparaging term associated with this earlier usage of the term to identify instances of white mob violence against Black people.

Slavery may be dead, but that does not mean it has lost its power to wound. Slavery's specter haunts the institutions and structures it created, including the physical campus of Auburn University. In death slavery is harder to see, but its presence can still be felt. People perpetuate slavery's afterlife by the reanimating forces of systemic and individual racial violence, both physical and otherwise, which devalue Black suffering and celebrate those who cause or have caused Black suffering. The Lost Cause myth is a prime example of this celebration of Black suffering. The Lost Cause is a popular historical narrative and memory that celebrates "the Confederacy and its soldiers despite their defeat on the battlefield… [and] justified racial discrimination."[4] The Lost Cause emerged as the dominant form of historical memory in the South, and, eventually the whole nation. By the early twentieth century, Auburn University was no exception. The afterlife of slavery in Auburn is strongest in the late nineteenth century, where a culture of white supremacy shaped by the Lost Cause and Jim Crow emerged. The 1895 Auburn Race Riot is not just the most visible example of the violence of white supremacy in the town. The riot represented the culmination of decades of racial tensions under a culture of white supremacy in Auburn. Finally, an account of the 1895 race riot acts as a case study of what slavery's afterlife in Auburn and distorting history have wrought at the dawning of the Jim Crow Era.

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[3] Saidiya Hartmann, *Lose Your Mother A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route (*New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 6.

[4] Adam Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2020); 2, 7.

Historiography

Local studies of slavery go back to the beginning of the twentieth century and have increased in recent years as the United States attempts to deal with its racist past. In the first decades of the twentieth century, historians such as Meriweather Harvey and James K. Turner conducted studies of slavery in Auburn, Alabama, and Edgecombe County, North Carolina.[5] These microhistories represented an early precursor to later studies of slavery in individual places such as specific towns and universities. Today, Harvey's *Slavery in Auburn, Alabama,* remains the only real academic study of slavery in the area. But like most works of Southern history from the early twentieth century, Harvey and Turner's work both present an overall positive description of slavery and life in the Old South.

Scholars have again been producing local studies of slavery only in the past twenty years. Most of these recent studies focus on the university's institutional history rather than the university's geographic area. The modern revival in studies of slavery at universities started in the 2000s with schools like Brown and William & Mary's studies into their institutions' ties to enslavement. Brown's report detailed the ties of the university's founders to slavery and led to the university apologizing for its past. Additional responses to the report include the construction of a monument to the enslaved people whom Brown's founders sold to produce the wealth used to found the university, and the creation of a center for studying slavery in all its forms. William & Mary's committee produced *The Lemon Project Report*, named after a man enslaved by the university. The Lemon Project updates the report every few years as they continue to do further research into the university's ties to slavery. Schools such as William & Mary and Brown started a movement among universities across the to study slavery at their institutions.[6] While the Lemon Project focuses on William & Mary as well as the nearby community of Williamsburg, Brown's report focuses almost exclusively on the university itself, and monographs which cover multiple universities also tend to just focus on the universities instead of the areas they are a part of.

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[5] John David Smith*, An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865 – 1918*. (Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 174, 179.

Most of these institutional studies of slavery have been undertaken at universities in the northern and mid-Atlantic regions United States, but there have also been efforts by some universities in the American South to examine the role of slavery at their institutions. Early institutional studies in slavery and monographs on the subject centered on northern universities and had more of a focus on the eighteenth century, most likely because of a lack of pushback from university stakeholders such as donors. Some southern universities, such the University of Georgia and the University of Mississippi, have funded projects to explore their deep ties to slavery, but many universities have not created similar projects. These failings by universities to move beyond the college tour version of history have spurred academics from these institutions to undertake their own research into the subject.

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[6] The first major monograph to be written on slavery at the university, Craig Steven Wilder's Ebony and Ivy, focuses heavily on the Ivy League universities to discuss the foundational role slavery played in making the modern American university. By examining universities that had less obvious ties to slavery, Wilder helped spur scholars across the country to research their own institutions and contributed to a geographic clustering of these studies in the northeast and mid-Atlantic. Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York, Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

Individualized efforts undertaken without institutional support give greater freedom for academics to use a variety of mediums and forms to analyze slavery at the university. Scholars have looked at their individual universities' relationships to slavery and its afterlife through collections of essays. These collections cover universities through the lens of legal, social, or cultural history to give a wide-ranging and dynamic look at how slavery is tied to the university.[7] These microhistories, which cover slavery and beyond, help to tell the larger story of slavery at the university beyond emancipation, especially the understudied story of Jim Crow violence and the university. These compiled works share a common theme: that slavery has been foundational to the university since its inception, and that the universities being studied in the collected works have not done enough to try and reckon with the past and make amends. The compiled works also move the conversation outside of the academy, with essays that discuss the authors' personal experiences with racism on campus rather than viewing racism as a merely academic matter. The compiled works seek to include the community that their respective universities are a part of to work towards truth and reconciliation with the past sins of the university.

In Charlottesville, Chapel Hill, Tuscaloosa, Clemson, or elsewhere, the effects of slavery and racial violence go out beyond campus – taking the form of symbols such as monuments as well as physical violence – and therefore the community must also be involved in the process to address the past. There are not easy solutions offered up here; instead, these works raise questions for universities as well as other communities in the area need to address together. Building on this prior scholarship, this thesis examines slavery in Auburn and racial violence at Auburn during the Jim Crow era as both informing and being informed by each other. Furthermore, the gap in the university studies of race on campus between slavery and the Civil Rights Movements must be filled by addressing the long-understudied violence of the early Jim Crow era by universities. The focus in studying slavery and the university is not limited to just the university. Instead, this thesis will focus on the places where town and gown violently clash. From the birth of Auburn in a slave society and later as an institution that worked to instruct students in the racial ideology of the South as well as enforce this hierarchy within its own domain.

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[7] Leslie M. Harris , James T Campbell, and Alfred L Brophy, eds, Slavery *and the University: Histories and Legacies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019); Beatrice J. Adams . *Scarlet and Black: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016); Rhondda Robinson Thomas. *Call My Name, Clemson: Documenting the Black Experience in an American University Community* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2020; Treadwell, Henrie Monteith. *Invisible No More: The African American Experience at the University of South Carolina* (University of South Carolina Press, 2022).

Slavery in Auburn and the Creation of The University

Slavery built the wealth of the town and the college. Part of the mission of the college was for the young men of Alabama to carry on the values of the Southern slave society. Residents of antebellum Auburn further sought to defend slavery in the strong pro-slavery rhetoric of early citizens and visitors to Auburn such as the "prince of fire-eaters," William Lowndes Yancey. Finally, enslavers forced enslaved people to construct the university itself. Utilizing sources such as census records, slave schedules, agricultural records, financial records, speeches, and newspaper articles, this thesis will illustrate the centrality of enslavement to the founding of Auburn. The lives of the enslaved workforce who generated the wealth of Auburn were ones of hard labor and constant fear of violence, including the violence of family separation. Auburn and the surrounding community in East Alabama were a slave society where slavery and mastery defined a person's status within Auburn's society.[8] The enslavers at the top of the social hierarchy wanted to secure a place for themselves and their children.

In 1856, enslavers in Auburn hoped to perpetuate Southern slave society by founding the East Alabama Male College; they did so using wealth generated by enslaved labor. When the college's first students matriculated into the 1859 class, the Board of Trustees consisted of forty-nine members, a combination of Methodist ministers and local Methodist enslavers.[9] Simeon Perry and Nathanial Scott, the wealthiest of the town's remaining white founders, as well as new arrivals such as Addison Frazer, Emory T. Glenn, and Dickinson Halliday, were all on the Board of Trustees[10]. Additional notable local enslavers on the Board of Trustees included such other prominent local citizens as J.W.W Drake, who enslaved forty-four people, and local home-builder James W. Kidd, who enslaved eleven people.[11] Together these men helped found a school to continue the slave society of the South. Sons of white enslavers from throughout the South came to EAMC to learn the basics of Latin and Ancient Greek.[12] The students also learned what EAMC president James Dowdell, who enslaved fifty-six people on two different properties, termed "Southern progress and Southern honor."[13]

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[8] "I slavery stood at the center of economic production, and the enslaver-slave relationship stood at the center of all social relations." Ira Berlin. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 8.

[9] East Alabama Male College, *Catalogue 1860-1861*, East Alabama Male College: Auburn, AL, 1860.

[10] Addison Frazier had a 1600 acre plantation with at least sixty-five enslaved people who brought in a cotton crop worth around $99,000 in 1860 while Glenn had a 1500 acre estate where at least sixty-six enslaved people harvested 56,000 lbs of cotton that same year. The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29; Year: 1860; Census Place: Northern Division, Macon, Alabama; Page: 830; Family History Library Film: 803014;* Census Year: *1860*; Census Place: *Northern Division, Macon, Alabama*; Archive Collection Number: *M279*; Roll: *27*; Page: *5*; Line: *14*; Schedule Type: *Agriculture;* Cohn, David L. *The Life and Times of King Cotton*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956, 132.

[11] The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29;* The National Archives in Washington DC*; Washington DC, USA; Eighth Census of the United States 1860;* Series Number: M653; Record Group: Records of the Bureau of the Census; Record Group Number: 29

[12] Ancient Greece and Rome formed the foundation of a supposedly superior white civilization that was the inheritance of the enslaver class.

The mission of the East Alabama Male College was not just to educate young men in academic subjects, such as reading and arithmetic, but also in the values of the South. In the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, most wealthy young men from the South went to colleges in the Northeast such as Harvard or Yale. By the 1850s, sectional disagreements over slavery's future in the United States cultivated a fear in southern enslavers that their sons would learn the values of abolitionism at Northern universities. In response, enslavers across the South raised funds for the construction of new colleges to educate the young men of the South in the values of their fathers: the new doctrine of slavery as a positive good and the necessity of its survival to promote economic enrichment and white supremacy. In addition, the founders of EAMC promoted the progress of the white race and emphasized that Southern honor meant subjugating non-white people. These young men learned to preserve their patrimony in the slave society like their fathers who financed their studies.

One of the students in the first class at EAMC was William James Samford, the son of William F. Samford, a farmer, enslaver, and fierce advocate for slavery. William F. Samford enslaved about sixty-five people on his 1,700-acre plantation that now sits across from the campus of Auburn University.[14] Samford wanted his son to continue the cycle of white supremacy in the South and use enslaved Black people to build up his wealth. The younger Samford was one of many of the students who had such a sense of "Southern honor" instilled by EAMC that they joined the Confederate cause to defend the right of southerners to keep and expand slavery. After the war, William J. Samford served as a segregationist politician and ran on a promise to disfranchise Black voters to become Governor of Alabama in 1900. Moreover, he lent his name to the most prominent building at his alma mater, Samford Hall.[15]

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[13] Ibid*;* James Sasnett," East Alabama Male College," Tuskegee Republican, November 18, 1858.

[14] The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29; Census Year: 1860; Census Place: Northern Division, Macon, Alabama; Archive Collection Number: M279; Roll: 27; Page: 15; Line: 5; Schedule Type: Agriculture*

Enslavers also used pro-slavery rhetoric to defend and advance the Southern slave society. William F. Samford defended slavery consistently in his newspaper columns and ran for governor as a "Southern Rights Party" candidate in 1859 and was an ardent advocate for EAMC.[16] Samford was a widely known newspaper editor among radical Southern writers. [17] For example, through his writings against "Black Republican[s]…who come armed with federal power to eliminate the South," Samford demonstrated his belief that the destruction of slavery was equivalent to the destruction of the South. [18] Samford aligned himself with the radial group of Southern writers known as "fire-eaters", who argued strongly for protecting slavery at all costs. William Lowndes Yancy, an Alabama congressman and perhaps the most prominent of these radicals, frequently visited Auburn. Yancy was so extreme in his views about the South that he almost ended his political career when a letter he sent an Auburn resident named James Slaughter was made public. Slaughter was a newspaper writer who worked with Samford at the *Auburn Gazette* and a vocal fundraiser for EAMC.[19] Yancey told Slaughter that his goal was to "fire the Southern heart—

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[15] Auburn University. *The Samfords of Auburn*. Auburn, Ala: Auburn University, 1962, 1-32.

[16] "The Independent Candidate for Governor, Again," *The Weekly Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), July 29, 1859; William F. Samford, "The Auburn College," Advertiser and Gazette (Montgomery, AL), November 2, 1859.

[17] Samford was described as being part of "a noble band of Southern Right men who believe in secession." William F. Samford, The Leaguers against the Intriguers," *The Weekly Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), October 27, 1858. Samford wrote this article under his Zeno pseudonym

[18] Ibid.

[19] James S. Slaughter, "The Male College at Auburn," *Montgomery Weekly Alabama Journal*, December 29, 1855.

instruct the Southern mind —give courage to each other, and at the proper moment, by one organized, concerted action, we can precipitate the cotton States into a revolution."[20] As ardent advocates of secession, Yancy and his fellow Southern radicals in Auburn sought to preserve enslaved labor and the system that had made them wealthy at any cost. The enslavers' wealth and ideology were the college's foundation. However, the actual construction of the university was wrought by the hands, backs, and minds of enslaved workers.

Enslaved labor constructed the first building on EAMC's campus, and the oldest buildings owned by the university today. In 1856, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, a committee comprised entirely of enslavers, hired R.N. R. Bardwell "and five negro carpenters for the term of one year three thousand dollars and board, and clothes for the negroes" to build what would become the main campus building.[21] Bardwell enslaved these five carpenters who ranged from between the ages of twenty-five and forty; these scant details are all that the trustees recorded about the men who built the university.[22] When the new college began matriculating students in 1859, the building constructed by the enslaved labor under Bardwell, commonly known as Old Main, housed all classrooms and libraries.

Bardwell and the carpenters he enslaved were not the only builders of Old Main. The Executive Committee directed Bardwell to "boss the negroe (sic) workman he may employ at seven dollars per month" and "employ additional hands to complete the work" quickly.[23] There is no definitive list extant today that records the total number of people forced to labor under the commands of RNR Bardwell. However, the names of some of these men survive in the records of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Jiles, Wils, Man, Alf, Luce, Bill, Aron, Oren, and Mar used their labor to construct Old Main. The Board of Trustees compensated the enslaved builders of the school with pecks of fruits and vegetables and pounds of meat. Each man received a different amount of food which most likely correlated to his age and size.[24] These meager rations helped ensure the enslaved workforce would stay healthy not for their own sake but for that of their enslavers.[25] Later the Executive Committee specified it would hire "hands abled bodied at $1.00 per day and other hands in propirtior [sic] hands found by owner [and] also employ a supertendant [sic] at $2.00 pr day" to complete the construction of the college prior to the arrival of students in the fall.

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[20] Eric H. Walter, *William Lowndes Yancey and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 221.

[21] "December 6, 1856," Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the East Alabama Male College, Auburn University Dept of Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University. (hereafter cited as Minutes of the Executive Committee)

[22] The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29.*

[23] "June 30, 1857," Minutes of the Executive Committee; "June, 1858," Minutes of the Executive Committee.

Members of the Board of Trustees continued to benefit financially while enslaved people built EAMC by hiring out the people they enslaved. When EAMC hired enslaved laborers to build the school, the college hired people enslaved by men on the board of trustees. In 1857 treasurer of the Board of Trustees William J. Robinson settled his subscription which helped to fund the university and "included one thousand dollars to pay hire for negroes," and the College paid fellow board member J W.W. Drake $145.50 for a "negro" in February and March 1857.[26] Also, in 1857, the college paid another member of the board, who also happened to be a founder of the town of Auburn and local political leader, Nathanial J. Scott, $20.82 for "hire of Sam," one of the dozens of people Scott enslaved on his plantation Pebble Hill.[27] Slave labor acted as the key driver of all life in Auburn, and the university merely became an extension of the slave society that constructed EAMC. The line between town and gown did not exist in the late 1850s, and today the line is still blurred. especially when it comes to the history of enslaved people and their labor at Auburn. Auburn was, is, and always will be a company town. And the company that controls it is one built on slavery and removal.

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[24] A majority of the men received three pecks and six pounds of meat, but the rest received less, with Mar receiving only one peck and two pounds of meat for an unspecified amount of time. Ibid.

[25] "Ma[rch] 5, 1859," Minutes of the Executive Committee.

[26] Treasurer's Ledger Book 1857-1876, *Records of the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance at Auburn University*, Auburn University Department of Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

Lost Cause and Transition

Slavery in Auburn did not disappear with the legal end of slavery and after the Civil War. Slavery may have died, but the ghost of slavery remains as part of the long afterlife of the peculiar institution. Slavery's ghost is not static, however. White supremacy is the most visible sign of slavery's specter after the Civil War because instead of dying white supremacy transformed. White supremacy became focused on the segregation of Blacks and whites and would eventually become codified in what became known as Jim Crow. The myth of the Lost Cause is a key part of this transformation from slavery to Jim Crow. Colleges acted as key sites of production and reproduction of the Lost Cause myth.

After the Civil War, the East Alabama Male College reopened its doors in 1867 but struggled financially.[28] In 1871,the State of Alabama acquired the college as a land grant college and changed its name to the Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College.[29] Auburn organized students into a corps of cadets like other land grant colleges of the nineteenth century. Auburn became part of a new crop of military universities that populated the South after the Civil War fueled by the creation of new land grant universities under the Morrill Act. Auburn and other Southern military colleges championed the idea "that scholarly virtues were the marks of an honorable man and a worthy citizen," as exemplified in the soldiers of the American Revolution and the Confederacy. [30] No longer were the young men at Auburn and other Southern schools merely students, now they were cadets. The cadets' activities of good and virtuous citizenship did not stop at the edge of campus. The cadets became "part of the pageantry and symbolism of the Lost Cause… [and] symbolized the noble past and hopeful future of the South," where white supremacy continued to remain unchallenged since time in memoriam.[31] A public memorial culture of Confederate valorization created a Confederate "political and social victory" in Auburn and across the South.[32] Auburn cadets participated in the funeral procession of Confederate President Jefferson Davis a month after also attending the unveiling of the Confederate monument in Auburn's Pine Hill Cemetery.[33] Cadets dressed in gray acted as the vanguard for the continuation of the Lost Cause. The mythic heroism of the Confederate dead and the portrayal of the Old South as an idyllic time and place inspired young whites such as the cadets of Auburn to try recreating this invented Old South in the New South. Participation in Lost Cause pageantry acted as one way to strive towards the Confederate ideal, but so did fighting their own battles for white supremacy, whether physical or intellectual.

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[27] List of Notes Due/Payable EAMC 1856 – 1863, *Records of the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance at Auburn University*, Auburn University Department of Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

[28] "The East Alabama Male College never recovered its prewar momentum…a board committee appointed to eliminate the $10,00 college debt recommended that each citizen of Auburn make a personal donation to the school." Dwayne Cox, *The Village on the Plain: Auburn University, 1856 – 2006* (Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, 2016), 6.

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[29] While Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College was the official name of the university, most people referred to the school colloquially as Auburn and hereafter this paper will also refer to the college as such in order to not confuse readers with more names.

[30] Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military Tradition, 1839 – 1915* (Chapel Hill, NC and London, UK: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3.

[31] Ibid, 6.

[32] Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), xii.

[33] "A SOLEMN TRIBUTE," The Daily Advertiser (Montgomery, AL), May 30, 1893; "Several Interesting Items of Local and General Interest.," newspaper clipping in Mell Scrapbook #8, *Mell Scrapbooks 1891-1906*, Special Collections, Ralph B. Draughon Library, Auburn University, Auburn, AL, 4.

Professors and students at Auburn perpetuated the myth of the Lost Cause. George Petrie, the founder of Auburn's history department and the university's first football coach, emerged as a leading proponent of the Lost Cause. Earlier Petrie had shared "the fruits of his research on slavery in Alabama" with students at the John Hopkins University to encourage them to study slavery as well.[34] Later, Petrie wrote an article which praised Samford as a forgotten hero of the fire-eaters "William F. Samford: Statesman and Man of Letters" in 1904,. Petrie convinced his students such as Meriweather Harvey to write histories of the Lost Cause, including her booklet *Slavery in Auburn*. Harvey focused on the community of Auburn, though instead of any one person in *Slavery in Auburn and* used surveys that she conducted with fellow history student H.C. Nixon to inform her examination of slavery in Auburn. Nixon and Harvey sent out surveys asking enslavers and formerly enslaved people about the peculiar institution in Auburn with standard questions about daily life for enslaved people, instances of loyalty, and their attitudes towards poor whites.[35] From the responses, Harvey then produced *Slavery in Auburn*, Alabama, which details the daily life of enslaved people in Auburn but depicted a neutered version of slavery where "the worst whippings" on plantations were by enslaved parents instead of enslavers. Furthermore, other professors at Auburn in the late nineteenth century were themselves Confederate veterans..[36] Professors worked to indoctrinate students at Auburn into becoming true believers in the Lost Cause and to defend Southern honor just as the honorable Confederates had done years before.

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[34] John David Smith*, An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865 – 1918*. (Carbondale, IL, Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 140.

[35] H. C. Nixon responses to questionnaire on slavery and newspaper, LPR91, Alabama Dept. of Archives and History.

Universities not only played a vital role in perpetuating the myth of the Lost Cause but also in enforcing Jim Crow through violence. Students at colleges across the United States were involved in an incalculable number of incidents of racial violence, most of which have gone unrecorded or without comment. Only the most extreme examples like the 1895 Race Riot or the 1923 lynching of James T. Scott in Columbia, Missouri, by community members and students have survived the violent silencing of Black pain in the archive.[37] White Americans bought the myths of the idyllic Old South plantation and, in turn, sought to make their reality fit the imagined plantation of racial harmony through white supremacy.[38] White and Black performances of racial deference in imitation of the plantation past allowed the perceived vision of the past formed by the university to be reinforced by violent enforcement of white supremacy by college students and graduates. Jim Crow violence on university campuses has received little to no scholarly attention. The active silencing of Black voices in the process of archiving often intentionally discounted Black suffering and helped maintain the myth of racial harmony under white supremacy.[39]

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[36] Notably, former Confederate General James Henry Lane, who served on Stonewall Jackson staff and whose men accidentally killed Jackson, taught engineering at Auburn in his later years Auburn University, *The Glomerata* (Auburn, AL: 1897), p 37, Auburn University Department of Archives and History, https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/gloms1897/id/23301/rec/1, accessed on October 23, 2021.

[37] Soren C. Larson and Jay T. Johnson. "Seeing the Bridge: The Lynching of James T. Scott and the Spectral Agency of Place." *Southeastern Geographer* 58, no. 1 (2018): 21–27. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26409154.

[38] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South*, 1890-1940 (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 238.

[39] Michel-Rolph Troulliot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beancon Press, 1995), 48.

The material remains of Jim Crow violence are much more spectral. The physical traces that exist are less obvious than the estates and buildings built on enslaved labor. When made tangible, the product of violence and subjugation become tokens such as a lynching postcard or souvenir relic from the victim of racial violence. Most instances of violent enforcement of white supremacy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century produced suffering but did not lead to death. Death is something that leaves a quantifiable record – a newspaper article, a death certificate, a body. An attempted killing leaves little but memories of trauma and scars on Black bodies. The history of Black suffering under Jim Crow at the hands of the university is "concealed yet important[and] seethe, acting on or meddling present-day realities in a violent or disturb manner… it highlights history that cannot rest" as the ghost of slavery haunts the landscape of the university.[40] In order to exercise the ghost of slavery and its altered form in Jim Crow, scholars and universities must seek to uncover these hidden pasts to begin the process of reconciliation.

1895 Race Riot and Aftermath

The events of the 1895 Auburn Race Riot began when George Turk and a Black woman, probably his sister, refused to make room on the sidewalk for some Auburn cadets. George and his companion had just gotten off the dummy train that ran between Auburn and Opelika when they encountered the Auburn students. Cadet Benjamin Griffin demanded that George apologize to the students for bumping into them. George refuses to apologize and then exchanges words with Griffin before other Black men nearby come to George's aid, and the cadets backed off.[41] Later, Griffin and other Auburn students gathered near the Baptist church by the train station to discuss what happened earlier with Turk when they saw George again. Both the cadets and George exchanged words and threatened each other before the mayor of Auburn came to investigate and made the cadets disperse.[42] George then tried to return home but a group of infuriated Auburn students pursued him. George took refuge at the house of Auburn professor and future university president Charles Thach. Professor Thach calmed the cadets pursuing George and implored them to seek redress via the law.[43] Once the students left Professor Thach's house, George returned to his home next to the west side of the campus near what is now the main classroom building, the Haley Center, and Jordan-Hare Stadium.[44] Soon arriving at his home, seemingly free of his pursuers, the town constable arrived at George's home and arrested him.

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[40] Kate Coddington. "Spectral Geographies: Haunting and Everyday State Practices in Colonial and Present Day Alaska." *Social and Cultural Geography*, no. 1 (2011): 747-748.

Later that same evening, a group of cadets surrounded the town jail where the mayor had taken George. Seeing the large crowd of agitated college students, probably already armed, surrounding the jail, the mayor might have feared that the mob might become like other white mobs in the area and storm the jail to seize George and lynch him.[45] Probably seeing that he could do nothing to stop the crowd, the mayor washed his hands of the matter and released George to the mercy of the mob.[46] Following his release from the jail, George fled west towards his home on the other side of campus.[47] Will Tarver, two Black women, an unknown number of children, and as many as seven other Black adults met him inside his home.[48] Soon a mob of between seventy-five and one hundred cadets and white citizens of Auburn surrounded the house armed with pistols and Winchester rifles.[49] Professor Mell, who lived up the street from George, tried to disperse the crowd of young white men, many of them his students, but to no avail. The excited mob demanded George come out of the house.[50] George refused, supposedly shouting out from the house, "I am not going anywhere and I will kill the first damn man who come in here."[51] Someone then began shooting; most newspaper accounts say that George fired the first shots, but white southern newspapers regularly lied about Black victims of white mobs being violent instigators, so it is very probable that one of the cadets fired the first shots. Regardless of who shot first, the white mob proceeded to fill the house with fifty to one hundred bullets.[52]

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[41] While most papers do not identify the women walking with George Turk at the time of the initial altercation, the Montgomery Advertiser identifies her as his sister. "FROM THE BATTLE FIELD," *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), March 7, 1895.

[42] WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895.

[43] Professor Thach lived a row of houses where several professors lived on what is now Thach Ave near the present site of the Ralph Brown Draughon Library. "FROM THE BATTLE FIELD," *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), Mar 7, 1895.

[44] "Resolutions adopted by the Faculty March 12, 1895," William LeRoy Broun Papers, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

[45] In 1887 a man named George Hart was taken from the jail in the nearby town of Opelika and lynched in a nearby tree. Mayor Little of Auburn probably wanted to avoid angering the mob by trying to stop them further and risk them possibly damaging the jail. Instead he let George Turk take the chances with the mob and face the real possibility of being lynched. "Lynching in Lee," The Montgomery Advertiser, November 7, 1887.

From the house came "the loud cries of 'murder' and 'help'" as the students and townspeople fired all of their ammunition and filled the cool spring air with clouds of smoke, the thunderous blast of their guns, and the flash of their muzzles filling the previously quiet night in early Spring.[53] Inside, one of the mob's bullets pierced George's wrist with a .38 caliber bullet from a pistol, while Will Tarver was shot in the leg and the bullet tore into his femur bone. Another bullet from a cadet's gun hit one of the women in the house in the chest, but her corset's metal ribbing deflected the bullet and left her with a "flesh wound." [54] Shouts of pain joined the screams and the sound of gunfire. Within minutes the guns fell silent as the mob ran out of ammunition, leaving only the screams and groans of the victims inside the home. Once the smoke settled, the mob fled the scene to find more ammunition. Dozens of Black and white citizens of Auburn who heard the shots rushed to investigate, and college officials come to try and take control of the situation. The commandant of the corps of cadets beat taps and assigned a guard over the college armory to stop students from seizing its munitions. [55] John Drake, the college doctor, entered the house to dress George, Will, and Mary or Lillian's physical wounds. The long-term effects of these wounds, in all their forms, remain unaccounted for in the surviving records of the riot.[56]

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[46] - *The Tuskegee News* (Tuskegee, Alabama), Mar 21, 1895.

[47] "WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), Mar 5, 1895

[48] Ibid; "HOT BATTLE: College Students Storm a Negro's House Out of Spirit of Revenge," *The Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, Montana), Mar 15, 1895; "A ROW Between Blacks and Whites," The Orange and Blue (Auburn, Alabama), March 6, 1895.

[49] Ibid; "Somewhat Riotous," *The Eutaw Whig and Observer* (Eutaw, Alabama), March 14, 1895

[50] "FROM THE BATTLE FIELD," *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), March 7, 1895.

[51] WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895.

[52] Ibid; "SHOOT A NEGRO," *The Times* (Streator, Illinois), March 6, 1895; "A ROW Between Blacks and Whites," The Orange and Blue (Auburn, Alabama), March 6, 1895

After the riot, college officials sought to control the narrative around the students' actions. Newspaper reporters scrambled around Auburn that morning interviewing groups of locals with differing accounts of the previous night's events in a rush to satiate the eager readers of newspapers across Alabama, the South, and newswires across the country.[57] By March 6, the story of the riot filled most papers in Alabama and appeared in the leading Southern papers such as the *Atlanta Constitution* and *New Orleans Daily Picayune*.[58] College officials quickly realized the damage that news of the riot could cause their school. Auburn officials wanted to help preserve the fiction of racial harmony in Auburn and the South as well as promote their college and town as a paragon of South virtues and honor. While Auburn's leader's thoroughly embraced Jim Crow, they desired to keep up the appearance of order and respectability. Mobs and riots were a disturbance to the work of educating the sons of the New South. The university needed to adhere to its own ideal of law and order, which liken that of the larger South, rested on a sense of manliness, honor, and racial superiority. College president William Broun promised to punish the students responsible and set up a tribunal as outlined in the Alabama A&M College handbook rules. Professors Thach and Mell, the commandant of the corps of cadets, and the two captains of the corps of cadets were selected to oversee the court martial.[59]

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[53] "College Boys Accused," *The Atlanta Constitution"* (Atlanta, Georgia), March 5, 1895.
[54] Ibid; "A ROW Between Blacks and Whites," *The Orange and Blue* (Auburn, Alabama), March 6, 1895.
[55] Ibid; WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895.
[56] - *The Tuskegee News* (Tuskegee, Alabama), March 21, 1895.
[57] WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895.

The university authorities sought to brush aside the riot to preserve Auburn's image of white respectability while they sought to carry out their own version of justice. The students became indignant at the attempts to punish them and memorialized the riot as a great victory. The new campus newspaper *The Orange and Blue* published an issue on March 6, shortly after the riot, including a front-page story about the riot and an editorial by Joseph A. Duncan defending the rioters' actions. The March 6th paper carried a front-page article about the riot and an editorial defending the actions of the cadets "in accordance with the principals of a Southern gentleman… we do not hesitate in affirming that no one with any manhood would let a negro so grossly insult him with impunity" and that the editorial was "written merely to express what we consider the opinion of the students." [60] While students seemed to be united in their support for the riot as an effective tool for maintaining white supremacy and Southern manhood, the university faculty actively worked to kill all memory of the incident. The faculty suppressed the March 6th copy of the *Orange and Blue* and had the paper reissued without the editorial or any mentions of the riot at all.[61] University officials only refer to the event as "the disturbance" in correspondence and during the Board of Trustees meeting following the end of the semester.[62]

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[58] Reports of the riot would eventually be reported as far awat as Montana and Illinois, " Hot Battle," *The Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, Montana), March 15, 1895 "SHOOT A NEGRO," *The Times* (Streator, Illinois), March 6, 1895.

[59] "The Law Must Be Vindicated," *The Shelby Sentinel* (Calera, Alabama), March 14, 1895; Order NO. 8, March 5, 1895, William LeRoy Broun Papers, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

A little more than three weeks after the riot, the college's court-martial found four students guilty and expelled them from Auburn.[63] The four students expelled were only those "who were discovered with pistols."[64] The four cadets expelled included Ben Griffin, who initially helped stir up the riot with his insults towards George Turk; McElhaney; Bondurant; and Harry Orr.[65] After the trial, President Broun informed Harry Orr's parents via letter that their son's conduct after "some disorder that occurred in College last month was truthfully and highly commendable…[and] his manly truthfulness would have atoned for the violation of college law, had discipline permitted." If Harry wished to return to Auburn the next year, the college "would be glad to receive him" even though he was involved in a violent riot. Harry Orr did return the next year and became an assistant in the school's x-ray lab.[66] The university had promised to uphold law and order and carry out justice for the riot. In the end, they took minimal action.

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[60] The editorial was written by Joseph A Duncan, whose brother Luther Duncan would become a pioneer in the 4-H movement and Auburn's president in the 1930s. - *The Orange and Blue* (Auburn, Alabama), March 6, 1895.

[61] Copies found in the Mell Scrapbooks collections retain handwritten annotations noting that the faculty "suppressed" the paper and identifying Joseph Duncan as the author of the offending articles. "Mell Scrapbook 1," *Mell Scrapbooks*, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

[62] "1895 Board Minutes of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama," *Auburn University Board of Trustees Minutes*, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University; "Resolutions adopted by the Faculty March 12, 1895;" "Letter to Dr. S.M. Orr April 3, 1895"

[63] Additionally, "about twenty cadets were given fifty demerits each, and all of the privileges of commencement were taken away from them" as punishment for their involvement in the riot. - *Tuscaloosa Weekly Times* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), March 20, 1895.

[64] - *The Tuskegee News* (Tuskegee, Alabama), March 28, 1895.

[65] - *The Florence Herald* (Florence, Alabama) · Thu, Mar 21, 1895; McElhaney was an Auburn local, Bondurant was the son of Auburn professor of agriculture – their local roots might have made them easier for eyewitnesses to identify. Alabama Polytechnic Institute *Catalogue 1894-1895*, Alabama Polytechnic Institute: Auburn, AL, 1894, p. 6.

President Broun showed his true feels about the riot in the letter to Harry Orr's parents, where he minimizes the riot as a mere disturbance and values Orr's "manly honesty" over his involvement in a violent riot. By not expelling Orr, and indeed praising him, Broun upholds the perverse sense of Southern manhood and honor which meant a white man could not let a Black man stand up to him and escape punishment. Through his words and actions Broun taught Orr a lesson of about what it truly means to be a Southern man in the eyes of Broun and Auburn. The expulsions, the loss of commencement privileges, and demerits pale in comparison to the suffering of George Turk and the others injured in the riot. The university sought to uphold its own version of justice, where white supremacy is maintained at all costs. Respectability among whites was more valuable than the lives of Black residents of Auburn.

While the university court-martial handed down verdicts and sentences the justice system in Lee County dealt with possible legal consequences for the riot. A local Black woman courageously came forward to publicly accuse two local men of participating in the riot.[67]

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[66] "Letter to Dr. S.M. Orr April 3, 1895,", *William LeRoy Broun Papers*, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University; "Mell Scrapbook 1," *Mell Scrapbooks*, Auburn University Archives and Special Collections, Auburn University.

[67] Elizabeth Kennedy accused Crossland Hare and David Fallangan of being part of the riot. Both men were from prominent local families and their fathers worked for the university. Later, Crossland's brother Cliff became the coach of Auburn's football team and the university's stadium is named after Cliff Hare. Another unnamed Black woman also came forward to accuse several white men for their role in the riot but her name nor the name of the accused are recorded. *Our Mountain Home* (Talladega, Alabama), March 13, 1895; "Warrants Issued," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 8, 1895. Warrants For Two: Both Men Declare They Were Not

Coming forward and accusing these two young white men most could have brought the great risk of physical violence for her and her family during this period of intense racial violence. However, only one of the men accused even went to trial and the local judge almost immediately dismissed the case. [68] These two men were the only people formally charged for the riot, despite dozens of men shooting into George Turk's home. Thus, no one was held accountable for the violence of that night. While other witnesses surely saw the faces of men they recognized in that violent mob, no one else was ever charged. The county courts and law enforcement allowed the university to handle the dispensation of justice for the students involved in the riot. Auburn and the authorities in Lee County saw this as boys being boys and therefore, they abdicated authority to Auburn where the perpetrators of the riot could only face a limited, neutered form of justice because of who they were. The identity of young white men and college students in the south allowed for a different legal process to play out where the university could enforce its own insular justice without the influence of outsiders. Auburn University and civil authorities saw the matter as taken care of and were content that the boys had learned their lesson.

Despite the best efforts of university officials, the memory of the Auburn Race Riot remained strong in the community. In the first two editions of the Auburn University yearbook, *The Glomerata*, the senior classes of 1897 and 1898 both recall the riot. In the first published Glomerata, the historian of the 1897 class reminisces about the 1894-1895 schools that "the Sunday night riot of May 3rd will ever bloom and live fresh in the hearts and minds of those

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At The Riot," *The Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, Georgia), March 8, 1895; Alabama Polytechnic Institute *Catalogue 1894-1895*, Alabama Polytechnic Institute: Auburn, AL, 1894, p. 7.

[68] - *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), March 10, 1895; "A Young Man Charged With Participation in a Riot Discharged," *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), March 13, 1895;

noble heroes who won renown in the 'Battle of Lowland Flats.'"[69] Next year the 1898 seniors reference how "in the year '94 - '95, there were fifty-three additions to this noble class and family, but after numerous examinations and the battle of Dark Town Heights, which occurred in the latter part of the year, there thirteen of us left."[70] Both classes make veiled allusions to the riot and have the riot different names as “battles” where students earned honor and valor in the eyes of their classmates. The legend of that event had only grown to turn it into battles for the students to recall as the great highlight of that year of their college lives. While their fathers and professors, such as former Confederate General James Henry Lane, had tales of the Civil War to act as proof for their defense of Southern honor and manhood, the college boys now had the riot, which they transformed into their own battle. In the Jim Crow South, young white men could again go to battle for the white South, only now the battlefields were Southern towns and institutions like Auburn. The enemy is no longer a willing combatant, but instead, the Black citizens of the South .

The fate of George Turk was left out of most memories of his attack. His character was repeatedly disparaged. Newspapers accused him of being drunk on the dummy train a week earlier and described him as “a desperate and worthless negro” who got what he deserved for his actions.[71] Almost all of the papers claimed that George Turk fired the first shot, likely an invention intended to defend the cadets' actions. Newspapers also reported that other Black residents of Auburn did not like George Turk. Papers repeated in identical language that Turk

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[69] Auburn University, *The Glomerata* (Auburn, AL: 1897), p 37, Auburn University Department of Archives and History, https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/gloms1897/id/23301/rec/1, accessed on October 27, 2021.

[70] Auburn University, *The Glomerata* (Auburn, AL: 1898), p 27, Auburn University Department of Archives and History, https://content.lib.auburn.edu/digital/collection/gloms1897/id/23502/rec/2, accessed on October 27, 2021.

[71] “WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro’s Home,” *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895; “The Law Must Be Vindicated,” *The Shelby Sentinel* (Calera, Alabama), March 14, 1895.

"found no sympathy among his color" and made a point to mention that even though George grew up in Auburn, he had supposedly lived in Atlanta recently.[72] Claiming Turk lived in Atlanta and had no sympathy from other Black residents paints him as an outsider who showed a radical disregard for the subservient social order of white supremacy. These examples of character assassination are typical in white southern newspapers' responses to racial violence. Newspapers worked to denigrate the victim's character to discount the violence done to Black lives and bodies. To further assure readers that the racial status quo remained undisturbed writers made sure to conclude their accounts with assurances such as "most friendly relations exist undisturbed between the whites and the blacks" in Auburn.[73]

After disparaging George's character, the newspapers, some of whom could not even be bothered to get George Turk's name right, never mention him again.[74] Two newspapers reported that George Turk lost his hand or arm due to being shot in the riot, but that could also be based on rumors shortly after the riot.[75] It is hard to say what exactly happened to George Turk after the riot. It seems by 1900, he had moved from Auburn to the nearby community of Loachapoka, Alabama, where he lived as a farmer with his wife and seven children.[76] The scars of the riot most likely remained with George both physically and mentally, regardless of the extent of his physical injuries. The damage caused by the university in allowing its students to attack and almost kill Black people without any severe consequences most likely stayed with Turk the rest of his life. The trauma caused by those representing Auburn did not stop with George Turk, Will Tarver, or anyone else injured on March 3, 1895. Auburn's founders forced Black residents to build the university and the town. For the Black sons and daughters of Auburn, their inheritance was a continued devaluation of their humanity and exploitation of their labor. Thus, the specter of slavery continued to haunt Auburn after the end of the nineteenth century.

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[72] Papers contradicted their earlier statements that other Black Auburn residents came to Turk's aid when Ben Griffin had his initial altercations with Turk downtown. "Auburn Cadets Have Battle With Negroes," *Tuscaloosa Weekly Times* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), March 13, 1895; "Somewhat Riotous," *The Eutaw Whig and Observer* (Eutaw, Alabama), March 14, 1895; WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895. "A ROW Between Blacks and Whites," The Orange and Blue (Auburn, Alabama), March 6, 1895; "FROM THE BATTLE FIELD," *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, Alabama), March 7, 1895

[73] Ibid.

[74] Variations of George's last name found in newspapers include Turkey, Sturkee, Turkee, Cobb, and Dirky.

[75] WENT TO WAR: Auburn Cadets Attack a Negro's Home," *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama), March 5, 1895; Hot Battle," *The Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, Montana), March 15, 1895.

[76] Year: 1900; Census Place: Loachapoka, Lee, Alabama; Page: 10; Enumeration District: 0037; FHL microfilm: 1240025.

Afterlife

The afterlife of slavery continues to affect Auburn even after the integration of the university in 1965. Today the university celebrates the matriculation of Harold A. Franklin to Auburn as its first Black student in 1965 as a great moment. While people should celebrate Franklin's courage to integrate the university, this important event also exposes the continued need for Auburn to work towards racial equality at the university. Franklin integrated Auburn but did not graduate at that time due to his thesis committee refusing to accept his thesis. In frustration, Franklin left Auburn and did not receive his MA from Auburn until 2020 after finally defending his thesis successfully in 2019. While today the state of Alabama is almost one-third Black, Auburn University's freshman class is only 3.2% Black. In fact, Black enrollment at Auburn is on the decline, with the high-water mark for Black enrollment at Auburn, 8.7%, coming in 2007.[77]

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[77] Drake Pooley, "Why Has Black Enrollment Fallen at an Elite Southern University?," *The New York Times* (The New York Times, September 17, 2021), last modified September 17, 2021, accessed October 22, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/opinion/auburn-university-black-students.html.

Today Auburn University owns four plantations, a church built by enslaved labor, and a university classroom building also likely built by enslaved labor. At the time of the 1850 or 1860 Census, there were at least 242 people enslaved on these four plantations and nearby farmland.[78] For scores of people, these four plantations were sights of forced pain and other forms of violence. The stories of the vast majority of the people who lived on these properties now owned by Auburn University, the enslaved, largely remain missing. The former plantation Pebble Hill, now known as the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, features interpretation describing the lives of enslaved people on their website. A historical marker standing outside Addison Frazer's Noble Hall remains the only other testament to the people enslaved at these plantations turned university buildings. Neither the Halliday-Cary-Pick House, now the Cary Center for Philanthropy, nor William F. Samford's Sunny Slope, now called the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, have done work to interpret or even acknowledge that most people who lived on their facilities were enslaved. Furthermore, Pebble Hill and Cary Hall both still offer weddings at these sights of Black suffering and terror in complete disregard for the amount of forced labor and violence that occurred at these houses. Along with two antebellum buildings on campus, Auburn has become the caretaker of these properties built by enslaved labor as well as the memory of those who built these buildings.[79] Together these buildings created by enslaved labor stand as monuments and memorials to Auburn's tacitly acknowledged foundation in slavery.

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[78] The National Archive in Washington DC; Washington, DC; NARA Microform Publication: *M432*; Title: *Seventh Census Of The United States, 1850*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29;* The National Archives in Washington DC; Washington DC, USA; *Eighth Census of the United States 1860*; Series Number: *M653*; Record Group: *Records of the Bureau of the Census*; Record Group Number: *29*,

[79] Originally Langdon Hall, now a classroom building, served as the chapel and auditorium for the antebellum Female College in Auburn. While there is no explicit documentation that Langdon was built by enslaved labor, it is highly likely given the time and place it was built. Langdon Hall also acted as the main civic center in antebellum Auburn since it was the largest building in town. In 1860 Langdon Hall served as a public forum where William Lowndes Yancy debated Georgia senator Robert Tombs and future Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens on the merits of secession. Tombs and Stephens argued against secession while Yancy argued for it, and even though Yancy arrived late, he still carried the day based on the reactions of the audience of East Alabamians.

The 1895 Auburn Race Riot acts as a poignant case study in the harm that Auburn has inflicted on the local Black community and how the culture of white supremacy violently manifests itself in the nineteenth century and today. The scars of slavery and Jim Crow and evidence of their centrality to the building of the city and college remain present yet mostly go unacknowledged. The university has numerous buildings named after notorious racists such as George Wallace, lesser-known segregationists, and former Confederates. While Auburn's campus lacks the Confederate monuments of other Southern universities and no longer allows its fraternities to parade around in Confederate regalia, the specter of slavery remains. Black students still face reminders of the terror of slavery and the Jim Crow South, with incidents such as a noose found tied in a campus dorm. The descendants of the formerly enslaved people and victims of white violence like George Turk still live in the area. To these descendant communities, Auburn University largely remains a place to educate young white people. Most Black people on campus are laborers, just as it was in the antebellum era.

Slavery and racial violence are at the core of Auburn's history. The university has yet to embark on a genuine process of truth and reconciliation about the role slavery played in building the university and the continued racial violence and exploitation at Auburn following

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Additionally, the Auburn University Chapel, the oldest public building in the town of Auburn, with bricks made by people enslaved to Edwin Reese. Reese had his enslaved laborers construct the Chapel as the first Presbyterian Church in Auburn. At other times the building has existed as an Episcopal Church, YMCA, military hospital, and theatre before reverting to a chapel again in 1976. Mollie Hollifield, *Auburn: Loveliest Village of the Plain*: Auburn Bicentennial Committee, 1975, 14-16; Floyd, W. Warner, "Auburn Players Theater". *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*. National Park Service, 1973.

emancipation. The university and the community of Auburn must acknowledge this history and work to make amends. Studying slavery at Auburn is essential if the Auburn family ever wants to make the university the welcoming place it advertises itself to be.

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