Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Dawnya Green April 9, 2025

Slave Religion, Methodism, and Marble: Legacies of Slavery Etched into Emory University's Campuses

by

Dawnya Green

Dr. Michelle Gordon
Adviser

African American Studies

Dr. Michelle Gordon

Adviser

Dr. Dianne M. Stewart

Committee Member

Dr. Kiela Crabtree

Committee Member

2025

Slave Religion, Methodism, and Marble: Legacies of Slavery Etched into Emory University's Campuses

By

Dawnya Green

Dr. Michelle Gordon
Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

African American Studies

2025

Abstract

Slave Religion, Methodism, and Marble: Legacies of Slavery Etched into Emory University's Campuses

By Dawnya Green

This thesis provides a counternarrative to the reductionist story of Emory's involvement with slavery by going beyond the standard recognition of the university's place in the Methodist Church's split in 1845. The project examines the importance of slavery and its defense in campus curriculum and student life, including in the development of scientific knowledge and medical education in the state, and it also considers the university's efforts to recognize its "entwinement" with slavery by hosting national conferences and artist Charmaine Minniefield's Praise House Project. This is an interdisciplinary thesis that draws on institutional archival records, conversations, oral history, religious history, slavery studies, and memory studies. Chapter 1 considers the evolution of Methodism's positions on slavery and the roles of Emory faculty and leadership in authoring denominational defense of slavery, which resulted in the splitting of the Methodist Church. The chapter also examines the relationship between the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church and attempts to develop insight into the religious and spiritual lives of Southern Black Methodists, especially, but not only, in Oxford, Georgia. Chapter 2 calls attention to and advances a growing body of research that examines the ways in which slavery factored into multiple areas of Emory's curriculum and campus life across the humanities, sciences, and medical education. The chapter sheds light on Dr. Alexander Means as a "hidden figure" whose deeds are overshadowed in institutional history, but who was a principal proponent of scientific and medical racism with ties to the illegal cadaver trade involving enslaved and free Black people. Chapter 3 draws on Toni Morrison's concept of "rememory" to help piece together my own family story and to consider the cultural work of artist-activist Charmaine Minniefield's contemporary Praise House Project as means to re-member and humanize the history and stories of people whose names we do and do not know who were enslaved at Emory, in Oxford, and surrounding areas.

Slave Religion, Methodism, and Marble: Legacies of Slavery Etched into Emory University's Campuses

By

Dawnya Green

Dr. Michelle Gordon
Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

African American Studies

2025

Acknowledgments

To the Wards, Williams, and every other family in between, I wrote this for us.

I am endlessly indebted to my advisor, Dr. Michelle Gordon, for all of her support, encouragement, and faith in me throughout my undergraduate career. I would like to thank Dr. Dianne Stewart and Dr. Kiela Crabtree for being on my Honors Committee and pouring into me as an African American Studies scholar. Lastly, I am more than grateful for Dr. Carol Anderson's encouragement to consider writing an honors thesis.

Table of Contents

Images

Figures

Introduction

This thesis proposes a counternarrative to the reductionist story of Emory's involvement in slavery as a Methodist institution by centering the university in the story of the denomination's 19th and 20th century fragmentation. The canonical history of Emory's legacies of "slavery and dispossession" revolves around the story of Bishop James Osgood Andrew, the President of Board of Trustees whose slave-owning status caused the Methodist Episcopal Church to split into Northern/Southern factions in 1844.[1] Since John Wesley founded the Methodist denomination in the mid-18th century, he proclaimed that slavery was the utmost sin and that no Methodist should buy, sell, or own enslaved property. In 1841, Methodist leaders found fault with Bishop Andrew for owning an enslaved woman named Catherine Boyd, and his determination not to manumit her led other clergy affiliated with Emory to create a pro-slavery sub-denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Alongside this scandal of national importance, Emory University openly acknowledges two other institutional connections to slavery. Firstly, the college's namesake Bishop John Emory was also a Methodist slaveholder in the 1830s.[2] Secondly, the university stresses that they "never owned slaves", but they admit to

[1] Kelundra Smith. "In the Wake of Slavery and Dispossession: Emory, Racism and the Journey Towards Restorative Justice," Emory Unpacks History of Slavery and Dispossession. Emory University, September 28, 2021. https://news.emory.edu/features/2021/09/emory-unpacks-history-of-slavery-and-dispossession/index.html.

[2] Ron Sauder, "Emory declares its regret for historic involvement with slavery," Emory Report. Emory University, January 17, 2011. https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2011/01/campus_regret_for_historic_involvement_with_slavery.html.

hiring out enslaved people named Sim, Charles, and Sib (as well as her children) for a total of $375 in 1836-1837.[3][4]

Emory began to explore and dissect their racial history in 2005 as Associate Professor of History and African American Studies Leslie Harris co-founded and served as director for the Transforming Community Project (TCP). Harris led faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community members in a five-year project conducting oral history workshops and archival research to develop diversity training and "recover Emory's complicated history with race" from an interdisciplinary and inclusive perspective.[5] Her leadership with this initiative sparked national interest in studying slavery within American universities as she headed a highly publicized conference entitled "Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies" in February 2011. This conference brought together minds like President Ruth Simmons of Brown University, William Darity Jr. of Duke University, James Campbell of Stanford University, and many others.[6]

As a part of the year-long preparation for this conference, the Emory Board of Trustees released a statement of regret on January 17, 2011, pertaining to the college's historical involvement with slavery. It reads:

Emory acknowledges its entwinement with the institution of slavery throughout the

---

[3] Kelundra Smith, "In the Wake of Slavery and Dispossession: Emory, Racism and the Journey Towards Restorative Justice," Emory Unpacks History of Slavery and Dispossession. Emory University, September 28, 2021. https://news.emory.edu/features/2021/09/emory-unpacks-history-of-slavery-and-dispossession/index.html.

[4] Minutes, 1837-1901 [microfilm--includes contents of Folders 1-2 and BV 1-3], Box: MF1. Emory College Board of Trustees records, Series No. 46. Emory University Archives, accessed January 27, 2025. https://archives.libraries.emory.edu/repositories/3/archival_objects/494560.

[5] Margie Fishman, "Transforming Community Project creates agents of change," Emory Report, Emory University, last modified February 8, 2010. https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2010/02/08/transforming_community_project.

[6] Transforming Community Project. "Schedule." Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies. Emory University. Last modified February 6, 2011. https://web.archive.org/web/20140101013532/http://transform.emory.edu/conference/index.html#expand.

> College's early history. Emory regrets both this undeniable wrong and the University's decades of delay in acknowledging slavery's harmful legacy. As Emory University looks forward, it seeks the wisdom always to discern what is right and the courage to abide by its mission of using knowledge to serve humanity.[7]

This statement does not contain a direct apology to descendant communities, nor does it define exactly how Emory was "entwined" with the institution of slavery. However, thanks to Harris's work leading the TCP, colleges throughout the nation began to follow Emory's lead in reckoning with legacies of slavery on their campuses.[8]

I have lived most of my life in the shadow of this institution as I was born at Emory Crawford Long Hospital (now renamed as Emory University Hospital Midtown) in 2003. Also, my mother Dawnya Ward graduated from Emory's Goizueta Business School in 1989, so I came into this university as a legacy student. I intend for this thesis to be an elegy for my ancestors as well as a resounding call to action for all descendants of the enslaved persons affiliated with Emory University to seek for their family histories no matter how daunting the task may seem. Even though writing this thesis and claiming my space within Emory is the last thing I expected to do when I enrolled as a freshman, I feel all the more accomplished and prouder of myself for facing this behemoth topic head-on. In Fall 2021, I learned that I was descended from someone enslaved at Oxford College while sitting in a Twin Memorials Focus Group and hearing my cousin and fellow Emory alumna Rev. Dr. Avis E. Williams (78Ox, 98C, 08T, 18T) describe

---

[7] Ron Sauder, "Emory declares its regret," https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2011/01/campus_regret_for_historic_involvement_with_slavery.html.

[8] Emory was not the first university in the nation to recognize and examine their history of slavery and dispossession although they were very early in this wave. Ruth Simmons, Brown University President (2001-2012) orchestrated research for Brown's 2006 *Slavery and Justice Report* in preceding years, likely before Emory's efforts in 2005. https://digitalpublications.brown.edu/projects/first-readings_slavery-and-justice.

what enslavement looked like at Emory. I did not know the name, occupation, and birth date of my ancestor or the name of the faculty member who enslaved him until two months ago.

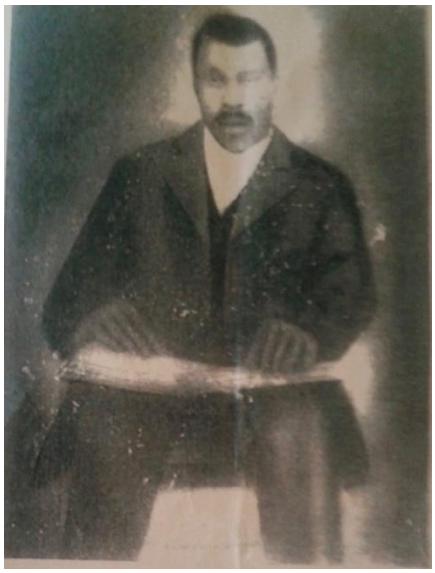

Figure 1. Rev. Tony Baker (1837-1908). Date Unknown. Reproduced with permission of the owner, Avis Williams.

My great-great-great-great grandfather, Rev. Tony Baker (1837-1908), was enslaved by George Washington Whitfield Stone, Sr. (1818-1889), an Emory alumni and professor of mathematics, Latin, and natural science. Rev. Tony Baker was a minister at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Covington, Georgia, and the church is located less than two miles south of Oxford College. Community members described Rev. Baker as "one of the state's oldest and certainly busiest Baptist ministers. He preached for 36 years in Covington, 15 in Rock Creek, some in Shady Grove, and 7 years in Lithonia."[9] Currently, Avis is a minister at this same church and a leader within Covington and Oxford's descendant communities. In embarking upon this thesis, I followed Avis's lead to sit with the gravity of our ancestry and use it to better and maximize my academic experience at Emory.

[9] This information comes from the original caption for the image. Avis Williams, Rev. Tony Baker (1837-1908).

My research contributes to and expands the scholarship about legacies of enslavement at American universities by unpacking what Emory has hidden from the public narrative of their entwinement with slavery. Stories about faculty like George W. W. Stone, Sr., Alexander Means, and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet owning enslaved people largely are overshadowed by Bishop Andrew, so this thesis will examine and illuminate the deeper truths of slavery and its legacies at Emory University. Due to recently learning the names and occupations of my enslaved ancestor and his enslaver and later employer, this thesis does not focus principally on the details of Stone and Baker's stories. However, this work does investigate the ways in which slavery was foundational to the development of religious and secular knowledge production at Oxford College through the stories of other faculty and administrators.

Literature Review and Scholarly Engagements

This project draws on my interdisciplinary training in African American studies and a range of scholarship including education history, slavery studies, religious history, and memory studies, which I put into conversation with Emory's institutional history, archival materials, Oxford oral histories, meetings with artist Charmaine Minniefield, family history, and autobiographical reflection.

This thesis utilizes and is in conversation with a body of relatively recent scholarship on slavery and American universities that has helped document more clearly the roles slavery played in developing American higher education and vice versa. Craig Steven Wilder's 2013 book *Ebony and Ivy* dives into the ways the academy is a culpable force in centering American life around slavery. Many of the nation's most prestigious universities have exposed their past involvement with and reliance on slavery to light through various publications. This book

explores how these schools have long histories of embracing and mandating slavery during their construction as well as requiring enslaved people to maintain their campuses. As various Christian denominations were involved in founding schools, there were regional divides upon questions of morality and personhood concerning enslaved and free Black people. Wilder recounts the story of chattel slavery's role in American higher education from the era of European imperialism through the Second Great Awakening until before the Civil War.

Alfred Brophy's 2016 book *University, Court, and Slave* compiles the institutional histories of various post-secondary schools around the country to make a more defined connection between the Old South and the evolution of politics and legal study. Brophy draws on university administrators, professors, clergy, local politicians, and students' writings and speeches to paint a bigger picture of the prevalent beliefs among Southern intellectuals. This book focuses so closely on the South (largely the Deep South) as an expansion of other literature on slavery in universities. He makes a point to name the Yale and Brown reports on slavery as well as Craig Wilder's *Ebony and Ivy* as other works covering the topic, yet he insinuates that they have left more gaps to fill. Following this line of thinking, Brophy's work will be used to explore the ways in which study of Northern universities and slavery does not encapsulate the entirety of slavery's long history within Southern universities.

This project also builds on the work of former Emory faculty and students, whose scholarship has helped create national conversation about slavery's entwinement with universities and also has begun to document more fully Emory's institutional and personnel ties to slavery and its aftermaths. Their scholarship works together to help tell the fuller story of Emory University's founding and the integral role slavery played throughout the first few decades of the school's existence. My project engages and seeks to be in conversation with Leslie Harris, former faculty member and co-founder of the Transforming Communities Project

at Emory, in building scholarly conversations and recovering Emory's past entwinements with slavery.[10] *Slavery and the University* is a 2019 anthology devoted to teasing out details of slavery's legacies in academia, past and present. This collection is edited by Harris, along with Alfred Brophy and James Campbell. The book's fifth chapter focuses on extending the academic precedent set by Mark Auslander in his acclaimed deep dive into Emory's history of slavery, *The Accidental Slaveowner*. Auslander, a former professor at Emory (Atlanta and Oxford), was inspired by his experience living in Oxford to uncover as many details as possible about Bishop James O. Andrew, Catherine Boyd, and the national consequences of their story. The city of Oxford founded the Oxford Historical Society (OHS) in 1974 to work on preserving the original buildings from the city's founding, and in 2001, then-Oxford College professor Mark Auslander partnered with the organization to host an exhibit entitled: "A Dream Deferred: African Americans at Emory and Oxford Colleges, 1836-1865." He interviewed numerous Black residents of Oxford to gain more context on how they understand and work to correct the white-authored story of Catherine's life. His research combines oral histories with archival materials from the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library.

Auslander's book *The Accidental Slaveowner* is a foundational resource on the histories of Emory University and its Oxford campus as well as the 1844 split of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In a similar vein, Dr. Monet Lewis-Timmons, an Emory alumna, was inspired during her undergraduate experience to unearth more details about the enslaved woman, Catherine Boyd, who stood at the crux of all of these events. Her 2022 essay, "Beyond Kitty's Cottage," examines cultural memory by looking at the visage of how Catherine "Kitty" Boyd's memory and living space (built by her master Bishop James Andrew) has been co-opted by white

[10] Leslie M. Harris & Jody Usher, From Disenchantment to Dialogue and Action: The "Transforming Community" Project at Emory University, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, (2008) 40:2, 18-23.

supremacists. Both Auslander and Lewis-Timmons argue that Emory needs to join the ranks of elite universities and colleges that openly reckon with their connections to slavery and produce long-lasting and visible markers of that reflective work.

Another area of slavery studies and education history used to investigate Emory's past entanglements with slavery and its legacies focuses on the presence and character of ethical practices in 19th century American higher education, and historian Daina Berry and epidemiologist Tanya Telfair Sharpe (LeBlanc) have shone light on the darkest aspects of medical education in this country. Both Berry's 2017 work *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* and Sharpe's essay "Grandison Harris" in the 1997 edited volume *Bones in the Basement* collected stories of medical racism, a lack of respect for bodily autonomy, and shirking the law on the part of professors and doctors. In 2022, a group of Emory students expanded a course's research project to create a more explicitly detailed account of Emory's history of involvement with slavery, racial violence, and medical racism called "Skeletons in the Closet: Emory University's Position in the Illicit Cadaver Trade and the Birth of Dooley, The Skeleton from 1840-1930." This thesis calls attention to and advances this collection of research that examines Emory's questionable relationship with the illegal cadaver trade explored by Berry, Sharpe, and others by reframing these acts within a broader institutional context that highlights how enslavement fit into and supported multiple areas of Emory's curriculum and campus life.[11]

This thesis also reads religious history and Methodist doctrine to map out Methodism's shifting and sometimes differing position on slavery and to understand the role that race and

[11] The Skeletons in the Closet webpage has two sections related to the origin of Emory's unofficial mascot, Dooley, who has been a figure of mischief and disruption since his 1899 creation using a skeleton from the campus's biology lab. Most of the cadavers and skeletons in this lab were Black bodies, yet the race of the person whose skeleton became Dooley is unknown. "Emory and Dooley: The History of a Mascot Influenced by Racist Ideation," Skeletons in the Closet, last modified August 24, 2022, https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-and-dooley-this-history-of-a-mascot-influenced-by-racist-ideation/.

slavery played in shaping and expanding Southern Methodism and creating the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. In his canonical 1774 text *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, John Wesley argues that the institution of slavery is one of the worst sins within all of Christianity and especially in the Methodist denomination. From its inception, the violent ownership and dehumanization of people by their brethren is a grand offense to the godly values of justice, compassion, and mercy. He makes this argument by addressing wealthy white men and enslavers in Africa, the colonies, and the Old World from a rhetoric of pathos and logos. Wesley's writing led to questions about how the Methodist Church tried to balance this position with a growing number of enslaved and slave-owning members. Donald Mathews's 1965 book *Slavery and Methodism* focuses on the founding, spread, and teachings of Methodism as it concerns the issue of slavery. He extends the discordance and conflict within the Methodist Episcopal Church by taking a wider look at how it influenced and changed American society from the late 18th century until the mid-19th century. In his 1985 book *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, religious scholar C. C. Goen uses the mid 19th-century denominational fractures in the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches to argue for an expansion of the story behind the Civil War. He uses the social, economic, and political divide between the North and South to expand upon the history of how these churches all split over slavery. With a number of the leading Protestant denominations cleaved in two throughout the 1840s-1850s, Goen makes the case that the Civil War was largely a culmination of the nation's spiritual discord rather than anything else.

Part of this thesis considers the evolution of the relationship between the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church and attempts to develop insight into the religious and spiritual lives of Southern Black Methodists, especially but not only in Oxford, Georgia. I place Black religious studies scholarship in conversation with records compiled by the Oxford Historical Society. Dr. Charles Henry

Philips's 1925 book *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America* shows how the structure of the CMEC was built from the perspective of an insider. This book is a record of the founding and evolution of the CMEC as it branched out of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Phillips was not only an acclaimed leader and deacon in the CMEC, but he was also a theologian that studied worldwide. He provides a critical yet expository view on the successes, failures, and misgivings of the Methodist Episcopal Church South's approach to serving its enslaved and newly emancipated parishioners. As will be explored in chapter one, Philips's writing raises critical questions about the dynamics that influenced the CMEC leadership's public relationship with the MECS.

Foundational texts about the origin and multifaceted nature of Black religious traditions and Black Christianity ground chapter three as it chronicles and investigates the way Christianity has sustained and empowered Black people in and outside of the church. Carter G. Woodson's 1921 book *History of the Negro Church* is a pivotal work in the study of the cultural, spiritual, and political legacy of Black Christianity in America. Woodson was one of the pioneering scholars of Black history with the founding of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History accompanying the publishing of such a vital work. Another all-encompassing body of research crucial to the examination of Black religion is historian Albert Raboteau's 1978 book *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South.* Slave Religion provides a microlevel understanding of how enslaved Black people came to form their own religious practices and traditions. Namely, Raboteau contextualizes religious gatherings on plantations in sites hidden away from the overseer or master's view where enslaved people were free to lift their voices and sing unto God in community with one another. Sylivia Frey and Betty Wood's 1998 book *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* has a narrower focus that reinforces my discussion of enslaved

religious practices in Oxford during the 1840s-1860s. Their discussion of Black Protestantism as a conduit for cultural identity formation shows how Black Methodists in Oxford resisted white control within chapters two and three.

This thesis is about understanding the ways that histories of slavery and its legacies can be shaped, (mis)understood, diluted, challenged, changed, or recovered at institutional and individual levels. Historian Celia E. Naylor's *Unsilencing Slavery* is a deep examination and reimagining of master narratives about plantation life, namely Rose Hall Plantation in Jamaica. Naylor uses her experience growing up with the shadow of this stately plantation looming over Black communities that are likely descended from those enslaved at Rose Hall to challenge the production of common knowledge about this place. As the first scholar to animate their names, life stories, and family histories, she unveils the hidden truth about life at Rose Hall for the enslaved. Naylor's work demonstrates how to unpack histories of white supremacy and use resources deemed important to white society (for example, slave schedules) to piece together the lives and personalities of the oppressed. Important for this project, *Unsilencing Slavery* also brings contemporary popular narratives about Rose Hall into conversation with the historical records that shine light on a very different story than the one staged for plantation tourists in Jamaica. She also uses Toni Morrison's idea of "rememory" to consider modes of historical recovery beyond the literary, which can include multimedia art works like Charmaine Minniefield's Praise House Project, explored in chapter 3.[12]

Although I use different kinds of records in a different geographic setting than Naylor, this project similarly considers Emory's institutional recognition and rendition of its historical ties to slavery and Jim Crow in relation to what else the historical records reveal or complicate

[12] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995): 83-102.

about that history, and how enslaved, freed Black people, and their descendants tied to Emory and Oxford have experienced or reckoned with that past. This thesis works to access and amplify more Black voices from both Oxford and Atlanta as these communities unpack and analyze the way race has shaped and complicated Emory's legacy in this state, region, and nation. I use a combination of oral histories from family members and Oxford residents, personal engagement with Atlanta-based artist Charmaine Minniefield, and Emory's archival records to move the understanding of slavery at Emory through and beyond the story of Bishop Andrew and Catherine Boyd to bring Emory into closer proximity to its history of medical racism, "resurrection," and the theft of Black bodies.

Chapter Overview

The three chapters I laid out within this thesis have built a new version of Emory's history that includes previously overlooked facets of its story, no matter how unappealing it may seem to the Emory Report. Chapter One starts with the college cracking its own religious foundation by oxymoronically endorsing slavery in a Methodist church whose laws did not hold space for slavery. The chapter positions Emory's founding and development at the center of American Methodism's shift in its stance on slavery and considers the work of its leaders to defend slavery as a just and Christian institution. Emory's founders embedded slavery into every slab of marble and every brick by which the dorms, cafeterias, classrooms, and all original campus buildings in Oxford, and by extension, Atlanta, are framed. Oxford and Oxford College undeniably were ground zero for the rift in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the college's ardent defenders of slavery (Bishop Andrew, Augustus Longstreet, and others) played central

roles in creating a nearly century-long ripple effect throughout the country by inducing the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

As I transition to Chapter Two, I explain how these long-lasting physical and spiritual vestiges of slavery translated into the lessons taught to Emory undergraduates and later in the 19th century, students attaining medical education at the Medical College of Georgia (MCG), Atlanta Medical College (AMC), and later, Emory's School of Medicine. I center student research and broader scholarship on the business of "resurrection" in Georgia by relaying the story of Grandison Harris, a porter at the Medical College of Georgia who was purchased (and later hired) by the college's dean and faculty to steal, help dissect, store, ship, and dispose of cadavers of enslaved and poor Black residents of Augusta, Georgia. I implicate Dr. Alexander Means, Emory president and faculty member across Emory, MCG and (reportedly) AMC, as a hidden figure who was a progenitor of Emory's connection to medical racism through his ownership, employment, and funding of Harris as a "resurrectionist."

In Chapter Three, I re-insert myself and my family history into the conversation around correcting and broadening institutional narratives about the lives of those enslaved at Oxford with the help of artist-activist Charmaine Minniefield's Praise House Project and Indigo Prayers collection as well as oral histories from Oxford's Black community. I draw on Toni Morrison's concept of "rememory" to craft my own story and help humanize the people whose names we do know who were enslaved at Emory, in Oxford, and surrounding areas.[13] My great-great-great-great grandfather Rev. Tony Baker was one of those names, free floating in the recollections of the Stone family of Oxford. In tribute to Rev. Baker, the work of this thesis aims to recognize the

[13] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995): 83-102.

humanity from which Professor Stone, Longstreet, and other Emory figures tried so hard to strip the people they enslaved.

Chapter 1

Methodist Ideas of Morals in the Slaveholding South

This chapter will explore the history of slavery as it affects the establishment, splintering, and spread of Methodism throughout the American South and the nation at large. Anti-slavery arguments are written into the core beliefs and rules of Methodism, yet deep-seated issues like Bishop James Andrew's slaveholding status reveal the differing interpretations of John Wesley's canonical theology. Faculty members and clergymen such as Atticus Haygood, Rev. John Talley, and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet warped Wesley's General Rules into a pro-slavery ideology and leveraged their religious justification of slavery to create a Southern Methodist sub-denomination that upheld their beliefs, practices, and financial interests.

Slavery and Early Methodism in America

In his foundational and widely distributed 1774 text, *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, dictates the denomination's abolitionist stance as the "Golden Rule" that counteracts popular moral arguments for slavery. He writes that many in his day incorrectly think the homelands of enslaved Africans are "so remarkably horrid, dreary, and barren that slavery is a kindness to deliver these people out of them".[14] He debunks these belittling myths by detailing the wealth of natural resources, unparalleled agricultural skills, and diplomatic prowess along the Slave and Gold Coasts. Wesley declares that European audiences will better themselves by learning from nations with a history of benevolence, sensibility, and order like Benin, Angola, and Congo. He also names Africans as "people" which is in drastic opposition to the European rhetoric that views Africans as less than human. If the Methodist

[14] John Wesley, *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, (London: R. Hawes, 1774), 3.

church was founded on similar beliefs that Africans are self-sustaining, the normalization of slavery within mid-19th century Southern Methodism is a grave offense to its central dogma.

Nearly two centuries later, historian Donald Mathews uses his 1965 book *Slavery and Methodism* to examine how slavery is central to the expansion, growth, and fracturing of Methodism in America. He interprets the discordance and conflict within the Methodist Episcopal Church as a mirror of the formation of American society from the late 18th century to the mid-19th century. Methodists first journeyed to America in the mid-to-late 18th century with ministers such as John Wesley and Francis Asbury starting the first Methodist churches. In 1743, Wesley penned and distributed a set of beliefs called the "General Rules" for every New World Methodist to follow. Wesleyan beliefs include the tenet of spreading scriptural holiness through changing one's character from one of disobedience and hate into one of obedience and love. Good acts include feeding the hungry and showing benevolence to those in need. Evil acts that are reviled throughout the denomination include owning, buying, and selling slaves, buying smuggled goods, and fighting.[15] With a strong foundation in Wesley's General Rules, Minister Francis Asbury journeyed to America in 1771, to help this new denomination gain a foothold apart from England. Upon his arrival, Francis Asbury was a staunch abolitionist who tried to model his preaching after the Quakers who had a longer history of success in using religion to argue against slavery and lobby for the freedom of Black people.[16]

American Methodists first "formally denounced" the institution of slavery in the New World around 1780.[17] However, this date is 14 years after the first enslaved person of African

[15] Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780-1845*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965,), 5.
[16] Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism,* 7.
[17] Mathews, 3.

descent was converted to Methodism in New York City in 1766.[18] John Wesley, Francis Asbury, and other ministers created the Methodist Episcopal Church (or MEC) in 1784 as a final severance from the Anglican Church and other institutional ties to Great Britain. The Northern congregations in which integration had first begun were largely biracial, and these groups were the leaders in holding their Southern peers accountable when shirking the moral responsibilities set by the denomination. For example, there were multiple "instances of suspension and expulsion of Methodists from their societies for selling and whipping Negroes" in the slaveholding stronghold of early 19th-century Virginia.[19] These unflinching social, economic, and spiritual repercussions solidified the denomination's political and social stance on slavery among church leadership in this early period of the century.

As the 1800s progressed, the tide of American society changed in favor of a slave economy as both Southern and Northern businesses and churches reaped the benefits of enslaved labor. The power behind the decrees of the headstrong religious abolitionists of the 1790s through the early 1800s was waning and met with backlash from Southerners. Some Methodist clergy manumitted their enslaved property as they were permitted by law, but bigger slaveholding states such as Virginia lashed out at MEC leadership in an attempt to avoid conforming to the Golden Rule. Developments such as the invention of the cotton gin, the Industrial Revolution, the 1808 Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves fueling a Domestic slave trade, and Westward Expansion revamped the denomination's status quo into a state of acquiescence to slavery.[20]

---

[18] Dennis C. Dickerson, "The African American Wing of the Wesleyan Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ed. Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, 282. Cambridge Companions to Religion. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.) https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521886536.017.

[19] Mathews, 33.

[20] Mathews, 38.

Francis Asbury's late 18th-century cohort of impassioned anti-slavery ministry phased out into the 1830s and 1840s as Northern pro-emancipation preachers became more passive after being ostracized by their Southern counterparts. This change in attitudes accompanied lessened consequences for breaking the denominational Golden Rule, as slaveholding Methodists openly disregarded and contested their forefathers' moral arguments against slavery. The critiques of Methodist clergyman and Emory president Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (1840-1848) demonstrated the disdain expressed by some pro-slavery Southerners towards Northern MEC members who questioned slavery's rightness with the Golden Rule. For example, in Letter 9 from *A Voice from the South*, Longstreet wrote that Northerners are well-acquainted with wrongdoing as their plans to "deprive me [Georgia] of the little that I have are moving Heaven and earth, covering yourself with infamy, and openly laying the train which is to blow up the Union".[21] Longstreet's remarks unabashedly show how much disdain, ire, and fury he had towards Northerners that argued for the regulation and/or end of chattel slavery (and the slave economy). He equated their legislative attempts to curb the expansion of slavery into the Western territories to full-scale warfare against the Union. This is the type of vitriolic backlash that pressured Northerners to withdraw and curtail their anti-slavery ministry in the South.

Scholar and historian Clarence C. Goen's 1985 book *Broken Churches, Broken Nation* argues that the Civil War began as a result of such deep-seated spiritual and political discord concerning slavery in mid 19th-century Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.[22] Goen explains that the Methodist Episcopal Church's wary disposition on directly addressing slavery

---

[21] Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *A Voice from the South: Comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts, and to the Southern States*, (Baltimore: Western Continent Press, 1847,) 49.

[22] The Baptist Church split over the issue of slavery in 1845, and slave states chose to form the Southern Baptist Convention which still exists to this day. The Presbyterian Church had a schism in 1837 between their Old School faction (members in PA, NJ, and throughout the South resistant to change in polity and doctrine) and the New School (coincidentally abolitionists in states such as NY and OH that often broke the mold of the church's beliefs and actions).

through the 1840s came from an overdependence upon uniformity. The slavery issue threatened the connectional system of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Thus, after decades of attempts to bury the issue, the church sought to quiet their differences in order to keep the church from falling apart.[23] Connectionalism is the foundational structure of Methodism that allowed for the creation of conferences throughout the denomination at-large.[24] It is an expansive interlocking network between different parts of the larger Methodist church. For example, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CMEC), founded in 1870, is connected to the United Methodist Church as well as other Black denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal (AMEZ) Churches. As will be explored later, connectionalism allowed Black Methodists throughout the country to establish avenues of communication and unity within the larger church.

Due to this emphasis on connection, the MEC leadership ordered its members to uphold the unity written into Methodism.[25] Leadership urged interpersonal or regional issues, such as questions about Bishop Andrew's slaveholding status, to be relegated to their local conference(s). The undercurrent of connection came into conflict with the "peculiar institution" of the South and jeopardized the stability of the MEC for more than a century. As the debate over slavery and Methodism grew in the early part of the 19th century, Northern and Southern clergy resorted to cherry-picking scriptures to support their respectively abolitionist and pro-slavery religious doctrine. This hermeneutical polemic only further entrenched the growing divide within the church as each side reacted to a distorted mental image of the other.[26] Goen frames the separatist zeal of pro-slavery Methodists as a predecessor to calls for future secession

---

[23] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War,* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), 78.
[24] Dr. David W. Scott, "The many meanings of connectionalism", The United Methodist Church, Last modified March 14, 2023. https://www.umnews.org/en/news/the-many-meanings-of-connectionalism.
[25] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation,* 79.
[26] Goen, 124.

by asking, "If the churches could solve their problems by peaceable secession, why not the whole South?"[27] This question reflects just how deeply the country was cleaved in two across regional, economic, political, social, and spiritual lines for more than a century.

Goen's evidence that the Civil War was rooted in religious disagreement is expansive as he includes three major Protestant denominations in his analysis. Yet, he does not make any room to discuss race or legal status within these groups nor how they were impacted by the war. Dennis Dickerson diversifies the story of identity formation within Methodism through a focus on African American Methodism in his chapter titled "The African American Wing of the Wesleyan Tradition." As Dickerson builds off of Goen and Mathews's foundational works, he creates a clearer image of what Black MEC members faced as they tried to change their social, political, and religious experience post-Emancipation.

In Dickerson's account, race and slavery are central to American Methodist religious history, partly because Methodism was first adopted by Americans upon the conversion of an enslaved woman named Betty in New York City in 1766. Her conversion was the prelude to the foundation of the African Wesleyan MEC, a biracial church in New York City that was eventually reformed into an AME church.[28] The AME Church was founded in 1816 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the complementary AMEZ Church was founded in 1821, in New York City. Whether or not Black parishioners of Methodist Episcopal churches in the North joined white-led and biracial congregations or distinctively African American organizations, the core tenets of the denomination at large remain the same (harkening back to Wesley's General Rules). Dickerson notes that many AME and AMEZ churches carry immense pride that their founding and ministry capitalize on the pro-emancipation and liberation-focused doctrine central

[27] Goen, 121.
[28] Dickerson, 282.

to Methodism.[29] In 1796, Bishop Francis Asbury expressed support for the creation of all (or mostly) Black denominations when saying, "I have thought if we had entered here [the United States] to preach only to the Africans, we [Wesleyans] should probably have done better."[30]

However, Asbury's phrasing of this statement exhibits the deep contradiction, willful ignorance, and disconnection from enslaved people's reality that Asbury and his peers expressed as they challenged America's burgeoning slave society while spreading Methodism in the late 18th century. "if we had" is peculiar language to use, because in 1796, American Methodism was merely ~36 years old at the time using 1760 as its founding date in the British colony.[31] Why did Asbury, one of the main progenitors of pro-emancipation Methodism, write as if he and his peers did not have the opportunity, time, and power to change the denomination's mission in the New World? As Asbury continues, "to preach only to the Africans" implies that Black people at large were a secondary or tertiary focus in the first place. His insistence to retrospectively center Black audiences for Methodist teachings is confusing when the history of Methodist conversions on American soil proves his "only to the Africans" lament true. Was Bishop Asbury not cognizant of the fact that an enslaved woman named Betty was the first person to convert to Methodism 30 years before his statement? How and why would the group of people from which one of his first members was converted *not* attract the interest and attention of American Methodists?

Asbury's specific mention of Wesleyans is a calculated move that almost establishes or reveals yet another denominational rift. If John Wesley was one of the first Methodists to travel to America as a missionary, would not all following converts studying under his wing be Wesleyans? Asbury confirms that the MEC at large has left many gaps in its ministry to the

[29] Dickerson, 282.
[30] Dickerson, 286.
[31] "Roots (1736–1816)," United Methodist Church, last modified 2016. https://www.umc.org/en/content/roots.

enslaved, and this supports the idea that Black members would only truly be accommodated in their own spaces.

Post-Bellum Black Methodist Autonomy

The 1865 fall of the Confederacy and beginning of Reconstruction sent such strong shockwaves through the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS) that the religious landscape of the state was altered irreparably for all members. In its 1866 Annual Conference, the Georgia delegation of the MECS orchestrated two major changes that revitalized numerous communities across the state for decades. Their first act was splitting into North Georgia and South Georgia Conferences.[32] The creation of these two factions allowed for great membership growth in MECS churches throughout both North and South Georgia. With this narrower regional focus, ministers in each conference could more precisely address the needs of either region.

Conference leaders also used this meeting to lament the departure of over 122,000 formerly enslaved parishioners to the respectively Philadelphia and New York-based denominations of the AME and AMEZ Churches. As a result, the Georgia Conferences prepared to establish a Black sub-denomination, later named the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, or CMEC, for the remaining 78,000 Black members of the MECS. The CMEC was created to provide religious education specifically for formerly enslaved children, yet this curriculum also was used to educate white communities throughout the state.[33] Through these two initiatives, the

[32] Emory University Pitts Theology Library, "Researching North Georgia Conference church histories at Pitts," Pitts Theology Library. Candler School of Theology, last modified February 1, 2023, Accessed January 4, 2025. https://pitts.emory.edu/2023/02/01/researching-north-georgia-conference-church-histories-at-pitts/

[33] Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Minutes of the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. (self-pub., Internet Archive, 1866), 24.

MECS chose to invest in the quality of life for white and Black Georgians of any socioeconomic status as "the interests of the white and colored people are materially dependent upon the intelligence and virtue of this [Black] race."[34]

As visually outstanding exhibitions of Black people claiming power hallmarked Reconstruction throughout the South, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church grew into a global organization with reach beyond the region and the United States. One of the CMEC's most renowned ministers, orators, and writers, Dr. Charles Henry Philips, documents the structure and accomplishments of the church in his 1925 book, *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America*. The first chapter provides background about the MECS's institutional outlook on its enslaved members. At the beginning of the Civil War, the MECS sent up to 60 white missionaries to teach enslaved people in various regions of Georgia. These pastors ensured that the enslaved had places to worship and were following the religious doctrine of their masters' church. Phillips summarizes these efforts by saying that MECS leaders such as Bishop J. O. Andrew and others "labored assiduously for the Christian civilization of our race."[35] Bishop Andrew's commitment to slavery was central to the MEC's split, so the quality of his and his peers' labor in uplifting the Black race should be called into question.

While Philips praises the efforts of the white ministers in teaching enslaved people, his use of the phrase "Christian civilization" works in multiple ways and has little to do with humanizing the Black members of the MECS. The word "civilize" often implies movement away from supposed savagery or an exotic nature, and in this specific circumstance, the word signifies movement away from non-traditional and folk religious practices associated with Africa and people of African descent. The use of "Christian" here reveals the moral agenda of the Methodist

[34] Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Minutes of the Georgia Annual Conference, 24.
[35] Charles Henry Phillips, *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (Jackson: Publishing House C. M. E. Church, 1925), 25.

clergymen as they considered how to best address their Black property. Historically, Christian missionaries have approached ideas about "civilization" from a paternalistic standpoint; they have used religious conversion and claims of this civilizing cause to control the mentality and education of supposedly "uncivilized" or "irresponsible" people who are seen as unfit to make informed decisions for themselves.

Even as he acknowledged the seemingly positive support from antebellum white ministers, Philips does not cloak or minimize the desire for an autonomous denomination. His stance echoes Bishop Asbury's when claiming that the successful founding of the CMEC in 1870 is proof that white ministers did not have the capacity to minister holistically to Black worshippers.[36] The fact that the CMEC's newfound independence was acknowledged and respected by white leaders of the church shows the shifting tide of American society at the time. White ministers allowing Black ministers and worshippers to direct their own services and build separate churches represented the nation's forming status quo of racial segregation that replaced the completely interconnected (in terms of interaction in living and work-related spaces) system of enslavement. Within the first three years following Emancipation, freed Black people in Georgia were given autonomy over the way they worshipped. The CMEC elected its own Bishops, held its own General Conferences, and even sent delegates to the larger North and South Georgia Conferences of the MECS when CMEC leaders wanted to report their successes to their white counterparts.

In "Contested Autonomy: Black Denominational Debates in the Early Jim Crow Era," religious scholar Matthew Harper dives into the "heated" history of conflict between independent Black Methodist churches and "white-controlled" Black Methodist churches.[37] When discussing

---

[36] Charles Henry Phillips, *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America,* (Jackson: Publishing House C. M. E. Church, 1925), 26.

[37] Matthew Harper, "Contested Autonomy: Black Denominational Debates in the Early Jim Crow Era," *Religion and American Culture* 33, no. 2 (2023), 252.

the existence of the CMEC during General Conferences, both AME and AMEZ churches accused the church and its members of "succumbing to white paternalism and control."[38] These northern denominations used their establishment apart from the Methodist Episcopal Church as a point of pride and racial independence. In 1895, Bishop James Hood of the AMEZ church "likened the emancipation-era separation as an escape from slavery itself," and this spiritual and physical escape remained something that Black Southerners still involved in MECS had not entirely freed themselves from their oppressors.[39] His focus on "escaping" is very biased against those who have not physically distanced themselves from the site(s) of slavery. Southern Black Methodists began to escape mentally, physically, and emotionally by separating themselves from MECS churches and building their own spaces to gather and worship. Even if formerly enslaved people could not place hundreds of miles between them and their former enslavers, being in different buildings and worshipping independently is a form of escape as well.

In 1892, AMEZ Minister Joseph Price anticipated Hood's narrow judgment of the CMEC by creating a strict definition of an independent Black church as a "religious body not owned, controlled, or connected with white organizations."[40] This minister excludes the CMEC, AME, and AMEZ churches within this definition as they are all descended from the MEC, and this highlights a contradiction vital to the discussion of race in Methodism. This definition highlights the nuance that race adds to discussions of Methodist expansion during Reconstruction because Northern Black members only validated geopolitical separation as progress and independence for the race at large. In some non-Southern Black Methodists' eyes, the close proximity of Black MECS churches to their white counterparts negated a sense of "true freedom" from oppression. This increases the amount of doubt levied at the CMEC with both their oppressors and peers

[38] Harper, "Contested Autonomy," 252.
[39] Harper, 254.
[40] Harper, 254.

consistently questioning and belittling them as if they are incapable of handling the large responsibility of being free spiritually or otherwise.

Price's definition of an "independent" Black church implies that the congregation would have to create their church completely divorced from the structure, culture, and iconography of its white predecessor. Where would the structure and concept of a Christian and decidedly Protestant church in America come from if not from its white progenitors? Black Methodist denominations took the Wesleyan foundation of connectionalism and the values of pro-emancipation ministers and blended them with Black spirituality. If the free-thinking AME and AMEZ founders, bishops, and leaders wanted to prove that they were educated enough to be a "separate, distinct, and self-reliant people," they should have adopted Ethiopian Christianity seeing that it fits Price's definition better.[41] After seeing how prevalent respectability politics was in the formation of Black Methodist denominations, the true question at the heart of this social disagreement is: Does the vast increase in the number of AME and AMEZ churches in the nation hold more weight and credibility than the relief felt by Southern Black Methodists after establishing their own spaces separate from the MECS? Northern Black Methodists were not truly free from white control post-Reconstruction since they routinely ministered in England with hopes of being accepted and dignified by domestic and international white audiences. Within this context, Southern Black Methodists should have been commended and uplifted by their Northern brethren for planting themselves and their spiritual homes in the lands of their dehumanized and enslaved ancestors. It is more than respectable to hold one's own in the CMEC alongside the

[41] Harper, 253. Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia through trading networks with Rome in the fourth century and has prevailed to this day with a majority of Ethiopians still identifying as Christian. This form of Christianity is uniquely central to the nation's cultural, economic, and political identity. This independent Black church is not owned, controlled, or attached to any white Christian organization and has never been (outside of initial contact with Romans). Dates sourced here: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/church-unearthed-ethiopia-rewrites-history-christianity-africa-180973740/.

same white ministers who weaponized the religion in which one sought a sense of belonging. This tension and judgment that the AME and AMEZ churches projected onto the CMEC was both misplaced and short-sighted. Their judgment was short-sighted because although newly freed Black people fled the South en masse and broke away from the MECS, they did not complete or establish whole and true separation by their own definition.

In response to Northern criticism of the CMEC, historian Charles Henry Phillips fervently defended the MECS and praised them for providing scaffolding from which enslaved members could build a religious foundation. As he detailed the impact of the Civil War's end on the church, he stated:

> It was not unnatural that the Southern Methodist Church should, after the war, have shown a disposition to do what was best for her colored contingent. Gradually this contingent was either going into the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church or into the Methodist Episcopal Church. Such were the persecution, misrepresentation, ridicule, and stratagems brought to bear against the Church, South, and especially its colored communicants that many were toled away.[42]

Here, Philips accused the AME, AMEZ, and MEC,N churches of using fear-mongering language to defame the MECS and intimidate Black MECS members into leaving the sub-denomination and South as a whole. He alleged that these efforts were the main cause of hundreds of thousands of Black MECS members fleeing the church immediately following the war.

For Black Methodists who chose to stay in the South, the end of the Civil War marked the beginning of claiming religious independence from their white ministers and masters. For example, the shift in leadership within Oxford, Georgia's "slave chapel" from two white slaveholding ministers to an enslaved Black minister empowered Black residents to form their own church post-Emancipation. The Old Oxford Church, established in 1841, served as the meeting place for white ministers and their congregation in the antebellum period. Bishop

[42] Phillips, 25.

Atticus Haygood, an acclaimed writer, Emory alumnus, and eventual college president, and local clergyman Rev. John. W. Talley led an antebellum Black congregation that used the church building on Sunday afternoons following white services.[43] Around 1866, William Talley, a preacher enslaved by Rev. Talley, was allowed to command this Black congregation in a one-room "day church" settled in what is now the all-white southeastern section of the Oxford Historical Cemetery.[44]

As Emancipation altered the spatial atmosphere of Oxford, formerly enslaved residents began to develop their own side of the town by building homes, churches, schools, stores, and other structures relevant to daily life. In 1867, prominent community members including Thomas Anderson, Israel Godfrey Sr., Robert Hammond, George Washington Sims, Nicholas (Nick) Graves, and four others founded Rust Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church (pictured below).[45]

Figure 2. Photo of Rust Chapel United Methodist Church as of Nov. 16, 2024, taken by the author.

[43] During the Civil War, Oxford's white congregation used the one-room slave chapel to continue their services as the Old Oxford Church was being used as a Confederate hospital. Stone Jr., George Washington Whitfield, "Civil War Days in Oxford," accessed November 13, 2024, http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/civil-war-days-in-oxford.html.

[44] Rev. William Talley is not included in any part of the history of Rust Chapel's founding, and the reason behind that is unknown. The specific date of his taking command of the slave chapel is unknown. Some sources on the OHS website note that Rev. William Talley had been leading this chapel alongside Haygood and Talley since the early 1840s.

[45] Thomas Anderson's enslaver is not known. Israel Godfrey Sr. was enslaved by Dr. Jeptha M. Cody, a Private in the Confederate Army. Robert Hammond's enslaver is not known. George Washington Sims was enslaved by Rev. Walter R. Brantham, a local clergyman. Nicholas (Nick) Graves was enslaved by Iverson Graves, an Emory Trustee.

The Emory Board of Trustees donated the former "slave chapel" to the Black Oxford community in the late 1840s, and after being forced to move upon the late 1860s expansion of the cemetery, the building went to the Rust congregation, which sits directly across from the Oxford Historical Cemetery.[46] The original church building and school were established using funds from a Freedmen's Aid Society connected to the MEC,N. The hope that Reconstruction would be a destructive blow to the institution of slavery led many Northerners to invoke their religious affiliations in raising funds for Black education. The Methodist Episcopal Church was one of the last protestant denominations to start a freedmen's aid society in 1866.[47] Federal support of the Freedmen's Bureau around the beginning of Reconstruction pushed smaller groups like the MEC's aid society to unify and coalesce into larger non-denominational bodies such as the American Missionary Association. Rust Chapel's founding preceded the creation of the CMEC, and the two have never been affiliated with one another. Rust Chapel is still active and is currently a part of the United Methodist Church.

In the example of Rust Chapel MEC in Oxford, formerly enslaved communities used these communal religious spaces to debate, brainstorm, and illustrate what benefits they hoped to get out of being free in the South. Southern Black Methodists broke away from the MECS to return to a more authentic Wesleyan dogma that allowed for them to exist as "people" before "Negroes."[48] This charge to establish themselves through religious autonomy was supported by the 1866 passing and 1868 ratification of the 14th Amendment that provided birthright citizenship

---

[46] Mark Auslander, *The Accidental Slaveowner: Revisiting a Myth of Race and Finding an American Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 119.
[47] Richard B. Drake, "Freedmen's Aid Societies and Sectional Compromise," *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 2 (1963): 175–86, https://doi.org/10.2307/2205039.
[48] Dickerson, 288.

to descendants of enslaved people in the United States.[49] The amendment reads: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." This landmark piece of legislation legally distanced people of African descent from the status of material commodity. The word "citizen" is defined as "a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it," according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.[50] Based on this definition, access to citizenship begets personhood and freedom, which therefore makes humanity achievable for the first time since Wesley declared Africans as human in 1774.

These records of religious discordance, expansion, and conflict in Oxford directly center Emory University in discussion of slavery's divisive legacy in the history of one of America's most popular Protestant denominations. Wesley's Golden Rule established this denomination in anti-slavery theology focused on humanizing people across skin color and condition of bondage. In the following centuries, his dogma was rejected violently by numerous bishops, ministers, and other clergymen who invested in the lucrative institution of slavery and cleaved his church in two as a result of it. Emory University's history reflects the long and contested arc of race relations within Methodism.

---

[49] United States Congress. "Constitution of the United States: Fourteenth Amendment." Constitution Annotated. Library of Congress, accessed March 18, 2025, https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-14/.
[50] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. "Citizen." Merriam-Webster Incorporated, accessed March 18, 2025, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/citizen.

Chapter 2

Slavery as Sustenance in Nutrient-Deficient American Universities

Through the efforts and instruction of 19th-century orators, historians, and legislators, the history and legacy of Emory University fell in step with an emerging tradition of equating Southern culture with the law. With this basis of culture as law, the tension between slavery as a simultaneous moral scourge on the university's religious front and a financial boon to economic stability was unavoidable.[51] The religious contradiction at the heart of Emory (Oxford) College is a microcosm of the nation's polarization along a pro-slavery versus anti-slavery binary. There was a concerted effort to center slavery in the design, execution, and expansion of American education. Emory's place in that effort is crucial to understanding the ways in which the antebellum pro-slavery argument calls for secession and eventually the Civil War. This chapter explores Emory's reliance on slavery to establish itself as a rigorous, forward-thinking, and leading educational institution in the production of medical, scientific, and philosophical knowledge. Religious views fuel the scholarship produced at and by those associated with Emory. The religious and secular rhetoric are inseparable as the school is at the center of building and expanding pro-slavery arguments within both sectors of knowledge production.

Craig Steven Wilder's *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* dives into the ways the academy was a culpable force in centering American life around slavery. Wilder lists networking with slaveowners to buy, sell, or hire labor and acquire land, placing advertisements for enslaved labor, and fielding gifts of enslaved

---

[51] Saguy, Abigail C. and Forrest Stuart. "Culture and Law: Beyond a Paradigm of Cause and Effect." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 619, (09, 2008): 149-164. doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716208320458. https://login.proxy.library.emory.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/culture-law-beyond-paradigm-cause-effect/docview/61756546/se-2.

property between college administrators as ways American higher education advertised and supported chattel slavery. Many colleges were built by enslaved people, and Wilder names schools such as Washington and Lee, Yale, Princeton, and others as part of this legacy. The nation's most prestigious universities noticeably have changed and rewritten their stances on slavery between their founding to the present day. These schools have long histories of embracing and mandating slavery during their construction as well as requiring enslaved labor to maintain their campuses. As various religious ideologies and denominations were involved in founding religious and secular universities, there also were regional variations upon questions of morality and personhood concerning enslaved and free people.

While Wilder does not include Emory significantly in his study, he emphasizes that details of involvement with slavery, no matter the size, are poignant in twenty-first-century reimagining of academic history in this nation. Emory's selectively recognized historical involvement with slavery through the short-term hiring of enslaved people indicates culpability far beyond what the university officially has recognized. This chapter builds upon Wilder's work to break open what lies beneath Emory's detached, generalized, and regretful acknowledgement of harm through enslavement.

Slavery and Colonial American Universities

Instead of deferring to Britain, colonial schools such as Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, and Princeton (then New Jersey) drew greater attention to America as an emerging bastion of educational prestige. Profitable planters and Southern elites replaced the Crown as financial sponsors and patrons for Northern colleges, churches, schools, libraries, and missions. They gave scholarships to poor white people seeking higher education as well. Wilder summarizes the financial landscape at the beginning of the nation's higher education when writing that "access to

the enslaved could make or break colonial schools."[52] Enslaved people were visible on campuses doing manual labor on individual, group, and institutional levels for faculty, students, and staff. Access to enslaved labor within schools and on school property (including farms) provided irreplaceable financial backing for these institutions. Even though "violence undergirded bondage," the presence of enslaved people did not stir many faculty, students, nor staff to an outcry of moral wrongdoing.[53] Faculty and staff would admit to witnessing the unethical acts of slaveowners on campus but often refrained from speaking out "sympathetically" or challenging the injustices enslaved property faced.[54]

In early 1757, Samuel Davies, the fourth president of Princeton University, delivered a sermon entitled "The Duty of Christians to Propagate Their Religion among Heathens, Earnestly Recommended to the Masters of Negroe Slaves in Virginia" after discovering that the surrounding community was not providing religious education to their enslaved peoples. Davies argued that the truest, most rewarding, and most righteous path to truly living as Christians was for so-called masters to train their enslaved property in the Christian doctrine. He saw religious education as a direct path to unity and equality across men of all demographics, and this was therefore a universal benefit to all Christians both on Earth and in Heaven.

As the sermon continued, Davies used scripture to draw parallels between a master and slave and a parent and child. He referenced Proverbs 22:6 as a call to action for all slaveowners: "train up a child in the way in which he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."[55] From a heavily biased pro-slavery perspective, Davies confidently used this popular Bible verse to set a religious baseline on how to view enslaved people. Referring to the enslaved as

---

[52] Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 125.
[53] Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy*, 123.
[54] Wilder, 124.
[55] Prov. 22:6, *King James Bible*.

children speaks to how many educational and religious leaders belittled any capacity for intelligence amongst those of African descent. The phrase “the way” overpowers and relegates enslaved people’s trajectory in life to a one-directional path. This “way” does not allow for any flexibility as these individuals age and mature as people and as expendable pawns in a white supremacist society. As an extension of this, the pronoun “he” underscores the centrality of patriarchy in Davies’s worldview regarding enslaved people by keeping a narrow and male-dominant focus on their lives.

Davies used the second part of the Proverbs verse to further this pro-slavery argument because the emphasis on “when he is old” totally erased adolescence, young adulthood, and middle-age, which was when enslaved people’s acts of resistance, including running away and slave revolts, commonly happened. Examples such as the slave rebellions and revolts planned by Denmark Vesey (age 54), Nathaniel Turner (age 31), Queen Nanny of the Maroons (age 34), Sengbe Pieh of *La Amistad* (age 25), and Gabriel of Gabriel’s Rebellion (age 24) speak to the power and courage found in youth and middle age. Concurrently, acts of self-emancipation and escape from the clutches of slavery also often were taken by people in this age group, including Sojourner Truth (age 29), Robert Smalls (age 23), and Harriet Tubman (age 27). The ending of this verse speaks to both the master and the enslaved property as they both are committed to following through with their role in this paternalistic complex. In a literal sense, the verse binds the enslaved and the so-called master together with the promise of never “departing” from one another.

Davies implied that the enslaved property could live out their lives in constant and godly servitude, and their masters would have done their duty in looking after and saving the souls of their enslaved property. By serving their enslaved property, masters would be more faithful, virtuous, and pious Christians who are rewarded after death. With this context as scaffolding,

Davies made a distinctive claim about the spiritual destiny of the enslaved. He stated, "they [enslaved property] are candidates for the same eternal state with us."[56] He equalized enslaved property and their owners on a spiritual plane, which vastly differed from many other teachings by his peers.[57] In his eyes, both classes of people were able to succeed in finding salvation once they were elevated above worldly conditions such as race, class, and status of servitude.

With this rhetoric at the helm of colonial education in America, the belief spread that prospective students as well as faculty, staff, and surrounding communities must take up the charge of being good Christians to their personal or institutional enslaved property and servants. What does it mean for equality to only be guaranteed in theology? For the "heathen slaves," their master's instruction would supposedly benefit their souls. The condition of bondage was still considered as a dehumanizing constant in their lives, but their souls supposedly could exist abstracted from the dichotomy of property and owner. Davies reinforced the often paternalistic idea that the enslaved were to be treated as children who do not know better when they form opinions and beliefs. For him, their minds, hearts, and spirits were malleable blank slates in the hands of their masters who knew better and could provide a more righteous and upstanding example or role model. His description of the plight of "heathen Negroes" cemented his dominating tone and approach. He began this sermon by calling uneducated enslaved people "neglected" and repeating "the poor Negroes."[58] These two examples draw on pathos as appeals to slaveowners to pity these unfortunate and wayward beings, who, in Davies's framing, were unfortunate because of their lack of religious instruction rather than because of their enslaved

---

[56] Samuel Davies, *The Duty of Christians to Propagate Their Religion among Heathens, Earnestly Recommended to the Masters of Negroe Slaves in Virginia. A Sermon Preached in Hanover, January 8, 1757*, (London: J. Oliver, 1757), 8.

[57] Gerbner, Katharine. "Protestant Supremacy." In *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*, 31–48. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv16t6j9v.6.

[58] Davies, *The Duty of Christians*, 8.

status and treatment. Davies's stance on spiritually empowering the enslaved followed in the tradition of the Great Awakening and helped lay the foundation for the kinds of slaveholding Christianity and enslaved religious instruction fostered during the Second Great Awakening (c. 1790-1840).

Slavery in Emory College Curriculum and Campus Life

After the transition from the 18th century to the 19th century, colleges like Emory turned their focus onto the development of the sciences in order to further evolve slavery. Schools were no longer instruments for civilizing "savages" and "heathens." They instead took a two-fold academic stance on dehumanizing and abusing people of African descent; scholars defended slavery through theology and history, and scientists used biology and experimental science to cement differences between the races. Therefore, these humanistic and scientific efforts worked in tandem to set in stone the rules of who was and was not to be perceived as human.

The Second Great Awakening allowed both pro-slavery and anti-slavery Christians to make conversations about slavery and its impact on morality commonplace in their daily lives. Weighted conversations about became commonplace. According to *Ebony and Ivy*, "the language of race was the vernacular of the campus" as scholars continually debated questions of who qualified as a citizen or a human in general.[59] Nat Turner's 1831 slave rebellion was a lightning rod that caused ripples in elite communities across the country. As a result of this social unrest, many administrators and faculty in Northern institutions were pressured to manumit their enslaved property because of this loud and highly visible backlash from clergy and community members alike. Some schools attempted to sugarcoat their connections to and reliance upon the slave economy around the mid-nineteenth century. Conversations around the slavery question

[59] Wilder, 219.

often relied upon "regional specificity of knowledge."[60] This phrasing illuminates the conversation around how to deal with Bishop Andrew's slaveholding status in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The northern members of the Methodist Church weaponized their knowledge to appear as upstanding moral Christians since they were more closely following the doctrine of Wesley. Their exchanges with scholars and institutions in England also supported this regional divide of knowledge as they described Southern ministers and schools as corrupting theology "through social sins ranging from color prejudice to human bondage."[61] The "unjust means" by which they spread their version of Methodism seemed to nullify any of their logic in Northern opinions.[62]

Following the end of the colonial period, new colleges and universities were being chartered to serve wealthy white families in the American South. In 1834, the Methodist Episcopal Church proposed the founding of an institution in the newly formed town of Oxford, Georgia. This Methodist institution would be named Emory College, after Methodist bishop, slaveowner, and educator John Emory, and it would provide a religious liberal arts education to the state of Georgia. Emory College (now University) was chartered on December 19, 1836, and opened its doors to its first class of students in 1838.

Renowned minister, politician, and author Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's 1848 work *A Voice From the South* speaks to his personal values and how they applied to his professional life. Longstreet was a leader of the secessionist argument from the beginning of his political career as a representative in the Georgia General Assembly in 1827. He was a known slaveowner and former legislator who amassed great fame through his "local color" sketches as well as his proslavery talks, writings, and speeches. Longstreet's tenure at Emory began in 1839, when he

[60] Wilder, 209.
[61] Wilder, 211.
[62] Wilder, 211.

accepted the position of president, and the University recalls his accomplishments today by saying his "intellectual leadership of the Southern church helped to make Oxford and Emory the center of Southern Methodism for the next 30 years."[63] The description acknowledges that the MEC "split into Northern and Southern factions in 1844 over the issue of slavery," but while it recognizes Longstreet's "intellectual leadership," it says nothing of Longstreet's active role in creating that rift and defending slavery.[64]

In *A Voice From the South,* Longstreet personifies the state of Georgia and narrates "her" perspective on her Northern sister Massachusetts's attacks on her slave-holding way of life. His first of nine letters attempted to flip the rhetorical ethos that many abolitionists relied on to combat slavery with this line: "my children, in purchasing slaves from [the North], delivered them from the most cruel bondage that man ever groaned under."[65] Taking a standard approach of pro-slavery defenders, he argues that the Northern states and Britain were the true originators of abuse, violence, and mistreatment against enslaved people, reversing the common moral arguments painting Southern slaveowners as evil manipulators of Christian doctrine. He expresses outrage at the rampant neglect enslaved people faced during the Middle Passage from their country of origin to the United States. He makes a defiant claim that Massachusetts did not have "half the sympathy for the slave that I have," which further shores up his pro-slavery weaponization of Christian righteousness.[66] His insistence upon expressing sympathy and guidance to the enslaved of Georgia is a refrain of the paternal standpoint Samuel Davies laid out in *The Duty of Christians*. Longstreet's insistence on benevolence towards enslaved people raises

---

[63] Emory University Office of the President, "Past Presidents." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/past-presidents/index.html.
[64] Emory University Office of the President, "Past Presidents." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/past-presidents/index.html.
[65] Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *A Voice from the South: Comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts, and to the Southern States,* (Baltimore: Western Continent Press, 1847), 10.
[66] Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *A Voice from the South,* (Baltimore: Western Continent Press, 1847), 12.

two questions: Does he seem to care for the physical condition of the enslaved for purely financial gain in investing in healthy and strong enslaved people? Or is he trying to prove that the South takes the higher road and/or is worthy of the label "virtuous" due to their considerate atmosphere?

Contemporary scholars such as Alfred Brophy and Leslie Harris have helped recover what ideas and instruction were available to Emory students, faculty, and staff in the school's early years, and their respective works highlight some significant ways that slavery fit into Emory's early education. Emory students elected to discuss the day's most pertinent moral and political questions in the college's two literary societies, the Few and Phi Gamma Literary Societies. These student groups debated the morality of slavery from the 1840s well into the 1850s with the input of various well-known social and political leaders such as U.S. Senator Robert Toombs.[67] In 1853, Toombs, a slave owner, politician, and future Confederate general, visited Emory's campus to lecture to the Few and Phi Gamma Literary Societies.[68] Toombs's visit is important because the ideas that he modeled for these students formed the "master narrative" of pro-slavery defense, and his speech makes clear that training students to preserve and protect slavery was part of the early Emory student education. Toombs painted anti-slavery thinkers as moral failures and furthermore planted seeds of the Myth of the Lost Cause that would rise in the decade following.

Toombs set the stage for his lecture in ways that echoed Longstreet's *A Voice from the South*: "The eye rests upon not a single spot where all classes of society are so well content with

[67] Mark Swails, "Literary Societies as Institutions of Honor at Evangelical Colleges in Georgia" (MA thesis, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., 2007).
[68] Robert Toombs, *An Oration, Delivered before the Few and Phi Gamma Societies of Emory College* (Augusta: Steam Power Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1853), 8. https://archive.org/details/orationdelivered00toom/mode/2up.

their social system…than the slaveholding states of the American Union."[69] He calls attention to the existence of slavery across the globe in societies such as ancient Rome, ancient Greece, ancient Egypt, and colonial England to support his argument. Even though colonial England is comparable to nineteenth-century America in governmental style (a democracy) and customs, Toombs argues that slavery was doomed to fail in England, because the colonies did not have the relaxed social atmosphere that made Southern slavery so prosperous. He curates a master narrative for these students by saying that the South had such an untroubled society that neither the presence of soldiers nor other forms of fearmongering were needed to instill Southern values of racial order and states' rights in anyone.[70]

Toombs's broad generalizations support the pro-slavery argument by erasing the violence, diminishing the unethical systems that undergirded slavery, and denying any discontentment of enslaved people. For example, he states that "the desire for organic change [challenging racial hierarchy] nowhere manifests itself."[71] In this statement, he suppresses examples of real-life disagreement with or resistance to the institution of slavery by deeming them unnatural (inorganic) at their core. His only mention of abolitionists scapegoats anti-slavery thinkers for the splitting of Protestant denominations (especially Methodists) across geographical lines. He declares that Northern abolitionists' efforts to empower the enslaved and their sympathetic white peers to rebel against slavery "have deeply shaken the national government and bursted the bonds of Christian unity in our land."[72] With these remarks, Toombs remains general and side steps counter arguments Southerners usually fielded about slavery's justification through Christianity. He takes a clinical approach to this subject unlike such peers as Longstreet,

---

[69] Robert Toombs, *An Oration, Delivered before the Few and Phi Gamma Societies of Emory College* (Augusta: Steam Power Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1853), 8. https://archive.org/details/orationdelivered00toom/mode/2up.
[70] Toombs, 8.
[71] Toombs, 8.
[72] Toombs, 8.

who centered moral or spiritual reasoning in their defense of slavery. He only focuses on the racial hierarchy that slavery enforces, which suggests that Toombs prioritized upholding white supremacy over religious and moral justifications of slavery.

His closing argument is that slavery uniquely benefits all parties involved by "exhibiting the individual man (bond or free) to the highest development and society to the happiest civilization."[73] The word "exhibiting" in this quote sounds like a performance is happening. An exhibition is a public display or showcase of something. In this case, who is the audience for the exhibition of respectable free men as opposed to their counterparts in bondage? Toombs used this speech to paint the South as a glorious and prosperous place that outshined the North on all fronts. If this final sentence was meant to drive his arguments home, was he saying that both free men and men in bondage aim for the same goal of being the highest quality Southerner possible, or did they live up to different standards based on their circumstances? The phrase "individual man" further complicates this question. How could he talk about the "individual man" when non-Anglo Saxon European immigrants and non-Black people of color were either not seen as fully human or were inhuman by default? If there is a set standard of civility regardless of freedom or bondage, this would completely upend the centuries of dehumanization and denigration targeted at non-white people, especially people of African descent.

With this lecture, Toombs taught Emory's elite scholars to live, breathe, and defend slavery in all aspects of their lives. Few Society records show that some students similarly tried to wrestle with the moral questions and potential contradictions of slavery prior to the 1850s, at least to some extent. For example, Few Society minutes from November 1839 note that an upcoming debate would address the question, "Is slavery a greater national evil than

[73] Toombs, 26.

intemperance?"[74] The Few Society's Book of Minutes lists this debate question in 1845: "Is slavery recognized by the law of God, and should it be tolerated by the laws of man?"[75] Students yet again debated this controversial topic in 1856, three years after Toombs's lecture, focusing on the question: "Is slavery morally wrong?"[76] The book of minutes does not contain any records of what stances were taken during these debates, which is an early example of Emory University managing their public image to seem progressive (taking part in discussions about real-life topics in literary societies), yet not sharing any fine-grain details or results. If the staunchly pro-slavery positions of Toombs are acclaimed and propped up within the university's top debate and literary societies, students and faculty outside of these circles would not be encouraged to acknowledge and explore the moral contradictions of slavery at a Methodist institution.

As well as inviting guest speakers to lecture to and debate alongside students, Emory professors and administrators provided their students direct guidance on how to treat, regard, and use enslaved property for their personal and academic needs. The account of George Wren, a 22-year-old Emory student in 1858 provides a first-person example of how pro-slavery thought was taught at the college. Wren transcribed an evening lecture given by Emory professor William Sasnett "on the morality of slavery" in March 1858.[77] Professor Sasnett began by proclaiming that "slavery is right to the slaves themselves…and is right for the good it does the white race."[78] Throughout his entire lecture, he mirrored the position of Samuel Davies in repeating that slavery "was not simply a necessary evil…but rather an inherently righteous practice that

---

[74] Few Society minutes, 2 November 1839, Box: BV2. Emory College student organization records, Emory University Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[75] "Student Debates: The Few Society," Exploring Emory's African American History, accessed December 12, 2024. https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/emoryafamhistory/atticus-haygood/.
[76] "Student Debates: The Few Society," https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/emoryafamhistory/atticus-haygood/.
[77] Brophy, Campbell, & Harris, 194.
[78] Brophy, Campbell, & Harris, 194.

benefited both masters and slaves."[79] Pro-slavery opinions were also present in courses about moral philosophy and political economy.[80] A moral philosophy course was based on foundational texts with Brown University president Francis Wayland's *The Elements of Moral Science* (1835) and William Paley's 1785 text *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* as the main sources.[81] Professors supported and encouraged their students to discuss new and different ways to defend slavery and white supremacy to make them commanding public speakers who would go on to become the state's next great orators, clergymen, and educators.

These pro-slavery ideas continued to persist in Oxford, even as Union soldiers stormed the city in 1864 and the Civil War raged on, and at least some Emory leaders and their families relied on enslaved labor to survive through the Civil War.[82] James R. Thomas was the president of Emory (Oxford) College from 1855 until 1867, directly following the leadership of Dr. Alexander Means. President Thomas was known to own at least 8 enslaved people.[83] Emory Board of Trustees records indicate that, due to the war, Emory (Oxford) College was closed from late 1861 until January 1866.[84] In the 1862-1863 school year, President Thomas wrote a letter to the Board of Trustees expressing that Emory (like other colleges) was embarrassed by the state of the country's division over slavery that led to the Civil War. He continued that the school's endowment was running out and that the tuition they received that year was not enough to cover faculty's full salaries. He appealed to the Board for help in stabilizing the school's

---

[79] Brophy, Campbell, & Harris, 195.
[80] Brophy, Campbell, & Harris, 201.
[81] Brophy, Campbell, & Harris, 202.
[82] Oxford Historical Society, "A Civil War Adventure: by Louise Eady", http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/a-civil-war-adventure.html.
[83] Two of these people's names are known: a woman named Charity, and a man named Dave. Oxford Historical Society, "Enslaved Persons Living in Oxford between 1836 – 1865," Accessed November 13, 2024, http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/1836---1865.html.
[84] Emory University Office of the President. "Past Presidents." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/past-presidents/index.html.

finances.[85]Around this same time, James's son, Lewis Thomas was working as a surgeon in the Oxford Old Church building which had been converted into a Confederate hospital. James had given his enslaved property, Dave, to his son Lewis. Recounting his young adulthood during wartime in an 1895 letter, Lewis wrote that he and his father tasked Dave with handling communications with the Union soldiers in town. This included Dave telling the soldiers that his masters and their family had left the state. In actuality, President Thomas, his family, and Professor Gustavus Orr were hiding out in a cave on Lewis's property. Dave also was made to deliver food and carry messages to and from the cave.[86] This story is not included in Emory's institutional accounts of its history, including when describing how Emory and its faculty made it through the Civil War.

Emory Faculty Connections to Slavery and "Resurrection" Work in Medicine and Science

Scholars like historian Daina Berry and epidemiologist Tanya Telfair Sharpe have helped shine light on some of the darkest aspects of medical education in Georgia and the country. Their work documents a lack of respect for bodily autonomy and violating the law on the part of professors and doctors, including those associated with the Medical College of Georgia (MCG). Further research by Emory faculty and students has recognized that it has been difficult to determine the institution's relationship to this aspect of the state's history of medical education, because while dissection was illegal, "Emory College did not have a medical school and though it offered a scientific curriculum for a degree… courses of traditional studies and biblical literature were better favored… Moreover, anatomy was not formally offered until the 1867-

[85] Reports to the Board of Trustees, 1862-1863, Box: 1, Folder: 5. Emory College Board of Trustees records, Series No. 46. Emory University Archives.
[86] Emory University Office of the President. "Past Presidents." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/past-presidents/index.html.

1868 school year, and there is not any mention of dissection in the catalogs."[87] Still, as these researchers note, Emory University is not entirely distanced from this evil, because doctor, professor, clergyman, and former president of Emory College Alexander Means routinely ordered or authorized one of his enslaved persons to pilfer Black gravesites throughout the state to retrieve cadavers for the MCG.[88] There also are unconfirmed rumors about Emory University faculty hosting dissection of these stolen cadavers while Means was a chemistry professor and the chair of the Natural Sciences department from 1852-1883 (non-consecutively).[89]

Means served as university president from 1853-1855, and he was a joint chemistry professor at Emory and the Medical College of Georgia (located at Augusta University) from the beginning of his presidency to 1857.[90] He first arrived in Oxford, Georgia in 1830, after his wife joined the MEC in nearby Covington. Means joined the MEC himself in 1825 in a nearby town called Madison, Georgia, and he was ordained as a minister in 1828.[91] Between 1828 and 1830, he was a preacher in Walton County, which is between Gwinnett, Rockdale, Newton (Covington and Oxford), and Morgan counties.[92] Based on information from the Oxford Historical Society, Means was known to own 13 enslaved people.[93] His family's papers are housed in Emory's Rose

---

[87] "Emory University, Dissection and the Exploitation of Black Bodies." Skeletons in the Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-university-dissection-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/.

[88] Sharpe, *Bones in the Basement*, 213.

[89] "Emory University, Dissection and the Exploitation of Black Bodies." Skeletons in the Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-university-dissection-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/.

[90] Means is also said to have taught chemistry and pharmacy at Atlanta Medical College throughout this joint chemistry and anatomy professorship with Emory and MCG, according to Oxford Historical Society's biography page for Dr. Means. Means's professorship at the Medical College of Georgia is further documented in the 1848, 1850, 1852, 1855, and 1857 issues of the MCG's *Southern Medical and Surgical Journal.*

[91] Means family Bible, Alexander Means papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[92] Means family Bible, Alexander Means papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[93] Oxford Historical Society, "Our African American Heritage, Oxford Historical Society, accessed November 3, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/our-african-american-heritage.html.

Library, and this collection includes the Means family Bible, which recorded all births, marriages, and deaths within their family, as well as the names, births, deaths and ages of some of their enslaved property. Based on the names recorded in the "Negro" and "Colored" sections on the Bible's genealogy page, Means and his family owned at least 25 enslaved people apart from Grandison Harris, whose name does not appear there. This could make the Means family the largest slave-owning family within the Emory and Oxford community, replacing Bishop James Andrews's acknowledged record of owning 24 enslaved persons. [94] This is significant, in part, because Andrew's slaveholding and controversy over Catherine Boyd continues to be the main story about slavery recognized in Emory's institutional history.

Means and his colleagues at the MCG initially used six "resurrection slaves" to locate, transport, maintain, and dispose of cadavers for the college.[95] In 1852, seven MCG faculty jointly purchased a man named Grandison Harris (1816-1911) who became the most skilled and reliable "resurrection man/slave" for medical schools throughout the region, for Means personally, and for the Medical College of Georgia immediately following his purchase.[96] Means used Grandison's services to obtain bodies and body parts for his medical students to use between the years of 1852-1883.[97] *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* states that Harris appeared in 25% of the MCG faculty account records and received $412 for procuring 41 subjects between 1853-1857.[98] These account records also list payments made to Harris in 1856 of $4 for a

---

[94] United States Census Bureau. Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Georgia. Accessed February 4, 2025. https://archive.org/details/7thcensus0094unit/page/n25/mode/1up.
[95] Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: the Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017), 170-72.
[96] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 170-72.; Sharpe, Tanya Telfair. "Grandison Harris: The Medical College of Georgia's Resurrection Man," in *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training*, edited by Robert L. Blakely and. Judith M. Harrington. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997., 213.
[97] Berry, 170-172.
[98] Berry, 171.

wheelbarrow and $66.67 for whiskey to preserve body parts.[99] In 1858, the MCG dean returned to Charleston, South Carolina to purchase Harris's wife and son for $1,250 in order to save the college money on his routine $12 train rides to and from Augusta.[100] The MCG officially used Harris as a "porter," yet as his familiarity with cadavers grew, he became an unofficial laboratory assistant for MCG's anatomy department.[101] Both faculty members and students relied on his expertise as he continued to work for the Medical College of Georgia following the death of Alexander Means in 1883. As Harris aged and became too feeble to continue his work, the MCG faculty paid him a monthly $10 pension from his 1905 retirement until his death in 1911.[102]

Dissection of human cadavers was illegal in the state of Georgia until the passing of the so-called "Anatomical Act" in 1887.[103] As early as 1855, the Atlanta Medical College (AMC) publicized their abundance of subjects for dissection to encourage prospective students to attend and get hands-on experience with the most advanced medical curriculum.[104] The Anatomical Act allowed for Georgia medical colleges to receive dissection subjects who were unclaimed in "prisons, morgues, public hospitals, chain gangs" and more.[105] This means that the Medical College of Georgia and Atlanta Medical College were breaking the law for decades as they continued to buy, sell, dissect, and dispose of human cadavers stolen from Augusta's Cedar Grove Cemetery for poor Black people.[106] Legal consequences threatened the efficacy of this

---

[99] Berry, 171.
[100] Berry, 171.
[101] Sharpe, 213.
[102] Berry, 172.
[103] Sharpe, 178.
[104] "Emory University, Dissection and the Exploitation of Black Bodies." Skeletons in the Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-university-dissection-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/.
[105] Curtis-Richardson, Mike M.F., "Corpses as Commodities: The Ethnography of Covert Medical Practices in Georgia, Circa 1835-1997 in *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training,* 355.
[106] Sharpe, 217; Berry, 171; "Chicane in Cadavers", *Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 15, 1881.

underground business upon Grandison Harris's arrest for shipping cadavers from Augusta to Atlanta in December 1881.

Alexander Means's former personal and professional property, Grandison Harris, was famed within his owners' and employers' circles yet simultaneously was shunned, reviled, and feared by Black communities in which he stole remains. Harris's December 14, 1881 arrest hints at the depth and intensity of contempt non-medical audiences felt towards him and the "resurrection" practice. The *Ledger-Enquirer*, a white newspaper based in Columbus, Georgia, wrote that Harris had been routinely shipping many parcels to "an Atlanta Medical college" and "an Atlanta drug store" by express which raised suspicions among the post office workers. Upon investigation of his package, workers found "the dead body of a colored woman who was buried here last Saturday."[107] The detail of when the woman was buried uses pathos to evoke sympathy from the reader. Whether or not this columnist would have respected this woman when she was alive, they still honored and humanized her as someone who deserved to be laid to rest undisturbed.

The article calls bodysnatching "wholesale thieving", and this phrase calls attention to the financial system that undergirds this practice.[108] Resurrection men like Harris helped reinforce the growing fame of the state's most rigorous medical schools as more and more students flocked to MCG and the Atlanta Medical College due to the somewhat exclusive access they had to cadavers and dissection classes.[109] The columnist continued to stress that the "institutions that employ such agents" should be severely punished for this "dirty work."[110] The article directly

---

[107] "Chicane in Cadavers", *Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 15, 1881.
[108] "Chicane in Cadavers", *Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 15, 1881.
[109] "Emory University, Dissection and the Exploitation of Black Bodies." Skeletons in the Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-university-dissection-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/. I use "somewhat exclusive" here to acknowledge that some medical colleges in other Southern states also accessed cadavers through theft.
[110] "Chicane in Cadavers", *Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 15, 1881.

shamed white leaders in Georgia's medical education, keeping the onus of shame and disgust on these men. Grandison was not spared any guilt for his involvement in this trade, either.

The MCG faculty's engagement in illegal activity was extremely risky. The MCG and Atlanta Medical College's faculty walked away from implication in Harris's first arrest with less than a slap on the wrist. Harris asserted that he was indispensable to these colleges by threatening to use the leverage he had over their public image following his September 1882 arrest. The second arrest spelled more trouble and danger for these two colleges as Harris "threatened to tell a good many secrets about his profession and to 'squeal' on his accomplices."[111] Seeing that MCG relied solely on Grandison following his purchase in 1852, the "accomplices" that Harris threatens to reveal would likely be his employers, including Dr. Alexander Means.[112]

Figure 3. Medical College of Georgia Class of 1875, Augusta University Health Sciences Campus Archives.

[111] *Savannah Morning News* (Savannah, GA), Sep. 15, 1882.
[112] Berry, 170.

Figure 4. Medical College of Georgia Class of 1877, in “Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College,” Smithsonian magazine.

Figure 5. Medical College of Georgia Class of 1880, in “Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College,” Smithsonian magazine.

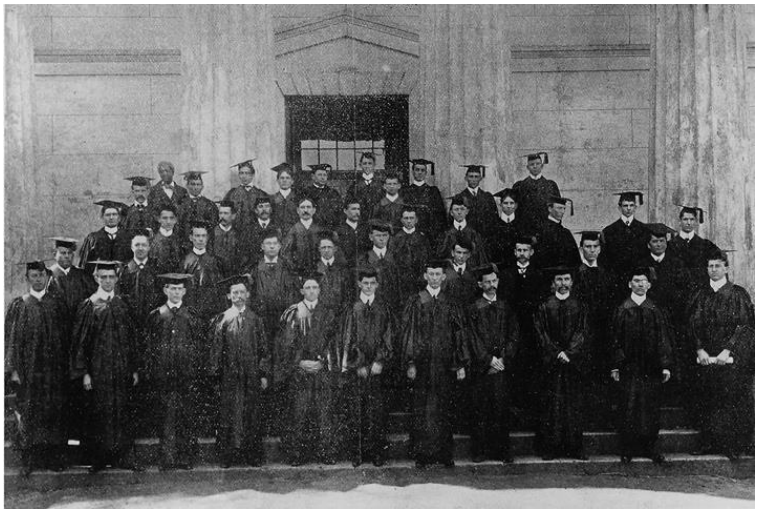

Figure 6. Medical College of Georgia Class of 1902, in "Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College," Smithsonian magazine.

Harris appears in Figure 3 with the 1875 graduating class of the MCG, and he stands in the center of the group behind the students holding up a document.[113] He is dressed similarly to the students in a suit jacket and tie which could be an indicator of his wealth and high status within Augusta's Black and white communities. Dr. Alexander Means does not appear to be in this photograph but Means and Harris do appear together in two pictures taken with the 1877 and 1880 graduating classes of the MCG. In Figure 4, the school's seven faculty members sit in front of the students with Dr. Alexander Means seated in the center of the group with his hands on his hat. Five rows behind him, Grandison Harris stands in the doorway and is also in the center of the group. He wears a suit jacket and a small tie in opposition to Means's bigger tie, double breasted coat, and polished shows. Also due to his distance from the camera, Harris's facial features are always blurred, yet we can see Means's defined facial features since he is seated directly in front of the camera.[114] In Figure 5, Means is wearing a similar outfit to his 1877, yet Harris does not wear a tie in this photograph. He stands farther away from everyone with more

[113] Sharpe, 214.

[114] In Figure 3, Harris was 59 years old and Means was 74. In Figure 4, Harris was 61 and Means was 76. In Figure 5, Harris was 64 and Means was 79. In Figure 6, Harris was 86.

space between him and the students to his front and right. In Figure 6, only Grandison Harris and the graduating class of 1902 are captured. Harris is again behind and to the right of the students, and he appears to be much older than he did in previous images due to his seemingly gray hair. Figure 3, 4 and 5 show the ways MCG faculty and students alienated Harris by forcing him to stand further away from the group. This arrangement may have been a form of retaliation by MCG faculty and students as they taunted Harris for returning to South Carolina and becoming a Reconstruction-era judge soon after emancipation.

Harris's work shockingly was uncovered in 1989, as renovations in the basement of one of the MCG's original buildings was halted upon the discovery of nearly 10,000 skeletal and corporal remains. Many of the barrels and crates of whiskey that Harris had stored remains in were still sealed with remains still intact and preserved. This exposé of this underground economy of theft and desecration is evidence of the flawed morals embedded within antebellum Southern education. The late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century academic conversations about Harris emphasize the fallacy of Emory's public admissions to being involved in slavery. In the present day, Emory University carefully has crafted and revised its master narrative about the presence, role, and significance of slavery in its past. As stated in the introduction, Emory University prides itself on never having owned any slaves as an institution. This phrasing distracts from the college's role in helping to fund longtime faculty and onetime President Dr. Alexander Means's financial investment in the "resurrection" business that supplied MCG and AMC, the latter of which became incorporated into the Emory School of Medicine, with untold numbers of stolen Black subjects for dissection.

Despite its efforts to downplay the university's ties to slavery, even while Emory has attempted to acknowledge those ties more publicly, evidence suggests that Emory's "entwinement with slavery" was more extensive than is recognized. Emory's admired faculty

member and president Augustus Baldwin Longstreet drilled religious justification of slavery into the minds of his peers, his students, and community members while also stoking the flames of secessionist rhetoric leading up to the Civil War. The college's most erudite students debated with politicians such as Robert Toombs to reinforce pro-slavery discourse and defenses, and professors like William Sasnett engaged this discourse in everyday courses. Dr. Alexander Means led the MCG and the AMC (and by extension, the Emory School of Medicine) to new heights by ordering Grandison Harris to supply subjects for dissection to these schools. This practice cemented all three institutions as leaders in the field of medical education and the production of scientific knowledge. On a personal level, the institution sustained Emory's President during the Civil War, James Thomas, through covert deliveries of food and information from his enslaved property Dave. These often-untold stories paint a more vivid picture of slavery as sustenance for Emory (Oxford) College.

Chapter 3

Collective Memory through Movement in the Praise House Project

As I enter the third and final chapter of my honors thesis, I would like to confront and address this university personally about the ways in which their master narratives around slavery's impact on this institution have impacted my life. In Fall 2023, I chose to pen a letter to Emory University detailing the ways in which a sense of belonging has enhanced and complicated my position as an Atlanta native and a Black legacy student that is descended from those enslaved at Emory's Oxford campus. This letter served as my final paper for Black Love, one of my favorite courses in all of my college career, and it was also the genesis of this honors thesis, although I did not know it at the time. Throughout this chapter, I have incorporated pieces of this letter to reflect critically on the emotions behind this research project as well as the horrid truths I have unearthed within it. I am centering my final chapter around the Praise House Project because I believe it has the potential to affect the collective and long-term understanding of the study of race, societal change, and knowledge production at Emory University and many other institutions weighted with histories of enslavement, dispossession, oppression, and injustice. I believe Charmaine Minniefield's work is on par with Dr. Leslie Harris's heading of the 2005 Transforming Community Project as well as the 2011 Slavery and the University conference she organized, although I was not around to experience the latter.

> Dear Emory University,
>
> I would like to begin illustrating my connection to you by telling the story of someone we are both quite close with. Your memory may fail you if I start too far back into your history, so let's go back to three years ago. It is a balmy morning on May 7th, 2022, and

there is a lively buzz surrounding a picturesque campus in Oxford, Georgia. Commencement is what's sending static and fragments of lively conversations up into the air on this Saturday morning. Yes, the hallowed day has arrived where students graduate from their close-knit realities into the bustling buildings of Druid Hills, Georgia. There's someone outfitted in the black and red robes of Emory's distinguished guests who is standing on the commencement stage, and if I look closely enough, I'm seeing a familiar countenance. Don't you want me to tell you who it is?

That familiar face is none other than my cousin, Rev. Dr. Avis Williams (78Ox, 98C, 08T, 18T), and she's on stage as the keynote speaker for Oxford College's 177th Commencement. With as many Emory degrees as she has, there's no way that you've forgotten her amongst the sea of alumni that leave through your Hopkins-Haygood gate year after year after year. Now, I'm sure you were privy to her status as keynote speaker way before I was (the week of). I bring this up to hint at the ground-shaking speech she gave about her personal connections to Emory and the communities that it's rooted in. She walked attendees through our family history and the generations of Williamses that have lived in the Covington and Oxford area. She is an oral historian, so that should tell us all we need to know about her storytelling capabilities. I would hope that many in that audience were shocked and troubled to hear that the very keynote speaker of this momentous occasion is a direct descendant of those enslaved laborers owned and exploited by Emory's founding faculty and staff. This shock has definitely sent me and many people in my own circles down a deep and winding path of contemplation about this institution we are all made to hold dear.

Do you understand now why I am writing to you, dear old Emory? I'd like to think that the enrollment of my cousin Avis, my mother Dawnya Ward 89B, and I has

> (unknowingly) pumped lifeblood through the veins of an institution so old that it's lost any genuine personality. If I didn't write to you now, believe you me that I would've lashed you verbally in one way or another down the line of my education, my career, and my life.

This chapter is a slight outpouring of my anger and resentment that has simmered as I've spent months poring over the heinous actions of your slaveholding faculty, board members, presidents, and clergy. No matter how much gratification I may glean from airing out your dirty laundry, this sense of vindication is not and will never be a distraction from the deep cavern of pain that you have slashed into the hearts of named and nameless African Americans and their descendants.

> I'm always holding space for that gash in the inter-woven and living fabric of my family, whether you recognize it or not. Putting these feelings on paper is one step in my healing journey for every half-step you take in your journey of racial reckoning. I first realized that I needed to order the steps I take as a steward of your school when Avis asked for my input in something called the Twin Memorials Project. Due to my close connection, I showed up to just about every listening session for the Twin Memorials that I could over the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. Usually, I was either the main undergraduate student or one of a few in attendance pitching in anecdotes about daily life at Emory and the origin stories we're often spoon-fed. With this in mind, I'm now hearing my peers in 2023-2024 school year making disgruntled comments about the lack of progress on this project. I feel conflicted because I know the background details and timeline, but then I remember that it's not my job to try and cover your behind as the site of so much violence.[115]

[115] Dawnya Green, "Black Love Letter" (Emory University, 2023).

Back then, I felt conflicted about agreeing with any criticism leveled towards the Twin Memorials project due to my background knowledge of the logistical hiccups behind contracting various companies to work on the monuments, if I'm being honest. I felt obligated to defend the lively and hard-working individuals behind the project's development, until I eventually remembered that the institution, as the site of harm, is the one at fault for deprioritizing this pivotal work.

Family History and "Rememory"

Before I introduce Charmaine Minniefield and the ways in which her work engages in ancestral veneration through spiritual practices, I would like to provide my family's own religious history to explain how faith has pushed us to persist, love, grow, and stay strong in the face of the horrors slavery and white supremacy have subjected us to.

My maternal great-grandmother Jessie Mae Williams Ward, great-grandfather Johnny Frank Ward Sr., and their seven children were sharecroppers in a rural Georgia town named Eatonton throughout the 1940s-1960s. Eatonton is the seat of Putnam County, which is about 40 miles east of Oxford and Covington (the seat of Newton County). My great aunt Shirley Ward recently told me stories from her experiences in church as a young girl.[116] In the 1950s, my extended family and other Black families in Eatonton would meet up yearly in a wooded area named Freedman's Grove for what they called "August Meetin'".[117] Everyone at the gathering would be dressed in their Sunday best to hear a medley of preachers (called Elders) from neighboring towns, dance, and eat with one another.

[116] Shirley Ward in discussion with the author, October 2024.

[117] Freedman's Grove is also the site of my family's cemetery, and I've always heard that the white owners of my enslaved ancestors gave them permission to bury their dead on that land. My family does not own our cemetery to this day, so we still have to clear any burials or changes to the land with this white family.

Throughout my own childhood in the 2000s and early 2010s, I remember going to Eatonton every year on the first Sunday in May to commemorate the founding of one of Eatonton's first Black churches, which was Primitive Baptist. Whenever I visited my extended family's churches, I honestly got the feeling that I was in something like a praise house. Primitive Baptist churches are very traditional without much technology or modern fixtures (besides lights, wooden pews, and plumbing). The echoes of everyone's claps, shouts, stomping, and humming animated the space to a truly spiritual level of connection. The parishioners are the music, and they bring the worship service to the space. We would drive down to hear a full day's worth of sermons and show respect to those founding members who were still living. A representative of our family had to introduce ourselves to the congregation and state who our kin were, and this included listing my great-grandparents, their parents, and grandparents. The number of founding members in this church has dwindled to only one over the past decade, yet we all keep the memories of those who came before us alive when we commune outside of this specific place.

Every time I have read Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, I feel like the image of Baby Suggs's sermon in the Clearing is more and more real to the world my family continues to live in. This story of mine shows how formerly enslaved communities used the space available to them as a vessel for the motion of their spirits. Newly freed Black communities had sole ownership of the act of gathering and the lifelong bonds it creates, and those connections could never be taken away from them even if the physical location was damaged or removed. Morrison coins the concept of "rememory" in *Beloved*, and it represents "emotional memory – what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared."[118] Rememory acknowledges that descendants of the enslaved may not have conscious memory of the hardship their ancestors went through, but

[118] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory." In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 99.

Morrison promotes a combination of one's imagination, somatic memory, and self-awareness to establish a spiritual and emotional connection with one's ancestors. Whether I am describing my process of learning family religious history or Charmaine Minniefield's work in revealing the power of descendant communities around Atlanta, rememory is a conduit for us to concentrate our energy as we pour into projects that uplift our predecessors.

The Praise House Project and "Rememory"

Learning about and experiencing the work of Charmaine Minniefield made me realize the how significant my unique background is within the academic world because I never considered introducing my experiences and family history into the ivory tower that is Emory. I didn't know that you could engage with academia from a subjective point of view until January 2025 as I planned the end of my research. My high school education taught me to be objective when I performed any kind of analysis, so I didn't expect to have the chance to center myself and my family history in any project I took on. As I heard Charmaine Minniefield speak during a guest lecture in 2023, I was starstruck that she used her family's oral histories to fulfill her dreams, hopes, and emotions in her art exhibitions. She mentioned visiting Oxford and Covington to acclimate herself with the geography of the towns as well as their residents whose stories would be the source of her work. If a celebrated artist wanted to learn and engage with the stories of my relatives and ancestors to develop a robust catalogue of work, I decided that I should explore my one-of-a-kind heritage and do the same in my undergraduate research projects. I don't know if I've ever met someone as deeply passionate as Minniefield before who is so dedicated to reshaping the way she sees the world around her. She is an interdisciplinary Atlanta and Gambia-

based "artist-activist that preserves Black narratives as a radical act of social justice."[119] Both her 2022 exhibit "Indigo Prayers: A Creation Story" and her ongoing Praise House Project have reminded me that there is love and joy propelling the steps I take as a manifestation of my ancestors' dreams.

In her Praise House Project, Charmaine Minniefield focuses on how to preserve and reproduce the ring shout, a "traditional African American movement practice… reborn in the Western hemisphere as resistance to laws intended to dismantle African identity and community."[120] Praise houses were small buildings originally created on and around plantations that the enslaved worshipped and congregated in. At Emory University, Minniefield's Praise House was on the lawn of Glenn Memorial UMC, a Methodist church organized in 1920, to "return to the places of ancestral memory and to recall [Emory's] history of slavery and dispossession."[121] Minniefield was an artist-in-residence at the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, so she conducted a lot of archival research within Emory's vast and varied historical collections to ground this project.

The design of Charmaine Minniefield's Praise House as a white one-room house directly reflects the spirit of belonging, safety, and comfort that enslaved people hoped and dreamed of. Communities largely hand-built their praise houses, so the simplistic one-room designs were functional in terms of procuring building materials and promoting interaction between people. The smooth wooden floor and curved walls inside of the Praise House create dynamic acoustics as well. The shouts, claps, and stomps of worshippers build off of each other in this space and

---

[119] Charmaine Minniefield, "About," Charmaine Minniefield.com, accessed November 15, 2024, https://www.charmaineminniefield.com/bio-charmaine-minnifield.

[120] Charmaine Minniefield, "The Praise House Project: Standing on Hallowed Ground," Charmaine Minniefield.com, accessed November 15, 2024, https://www.charmaineminniefield.com/work-of-charmaine-minniefield/praise-house-project.

[121] Charmaine Minniefield. "The Praise House Project," The Praise House Project, accessed February 25th, 2025, https://www.praisehouseproject.org/thepraisehouse.

therefore refute the idea that the enslaved quietly accepted their subservient status. The resounding evidence of worshippers' presence is an exercise in agency, and the Praise House project continues in this tradition of marking one's existence by taking up space visually and aurally. . The Praise House expands the public history/memory of slavery by embodying how enslaved people took refuge in Black religious traditions as they struggled towards freedom.

Since its debut at Oakland Cemetery in 2021, the Praise House has moved to three other locations tied to Atlanta's Black history: Emory University, Downtown Decatur, and South-View Cemetery. Within Oakland Cemetery, the Praise House was constructed in the historical African American section of the grounds in order to return a sense of identity to those who have been made unidentifiable. The Oakland Praise House venerated the hundreds of Black people whose remains were exhumed, burial plots were sold to white residents, and who currently lie in a mass burial ground at the edge of the cemetery's northern side. At Emory University, the Praise House was on the lawn of Glenn Memorial UMC, a Methodist church organized in 1920, to "return to the places of ancestral memory and to recall the history of slavery and dispossession".[122] Unique to this location, a visual collage of images sourced from descendant communities of those enslaved at Emory was projected inside of the building along with an original gospel composition playing inside. In Downtown Decatur, the Praise House was located in the Beacon Hill neighborhood that was once a Freedmen's town, and it is sponsored by local Black churches of varying Protestant denominations. The final location for this project is South-View Cemetery, which is the burial site for many Black victims of the 1906 Atlanta Race Massacre.[123]

---

[122] Charmaine Minniefield. "The Praise House Project," The Praise House Project, Accessed February 25th, 2025, https://www.praisehouseproject.org/thepraisehouse.

[123] To learn more about the history and legacy of the 1906 Atlanta Race Massacre, see the 2025 Atlanta Race Massacre Commemoration website: https://1906atlantaracemassacre.org/history-legacy/ or this webpage from the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

When I first visited Minniefield's Praise House in Fall 2023 as a part of my Black Love course, I was very excited to apply the work and reading we'd been doing to our lives outside of class. We had recently studied the work of Margaret Washington Creel and her understanding of Gullah Geechee spiritual traditions, Gayraud Wilmore's idea of the Black Church as the primary institutional expression of Black religion, and Johann Buis looking specifically at the history and application of the ring shout across Black communities in Georgia.[124] It almost felt fated that we would be able to see an artistic representation of Black spiritual and spatial autonomy just as we got to the topic. Spiritual autonomy was my favorite unit in the class because it allowed me to apply my spiritual and religious background and experiences to my life in the academic world. I remember feeling invigorated after hearing the captivating guest lecture that Minniefield gave to us about her own journey, the role spirituality has played in her life, her work, and her mindset within this project.

[124] Johann Buis, ""Kneebone in the Wilderness:" The History of the Shout in America," in *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998) 17-52.; Margaret Washington Creel, "Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters," in *"A Peculiar People:" Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998) 277-302.; Gayraud Wilmore, "Black Religion and Black Nationalism," in *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 125-162.

Figure 7. Praise House at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church, 2023. Reproduced with permission from the owner, Michelle Gordon.

When we arrived at the Praise House (pictured in Figure 7), I didn't think much about the ground it was sitting on. I knew that Glenn Memorial was a Methodist church that had been present on Emory's grounds for a while. Throughout my freshman orientation, I was led to believe that Emory as an institution was completely divorced from its religious founding. I understood that decision as a move to further legitimize the school as a science-led and research focused place rather than a school focused on one's morals or beliefs. We stood outside of the Praise House and learned about the technical aspects of the project, mainly the use of visual and audio technology to set the atmosphere of the piece. I was one of the first groups to enter the space, and once the door was closed, my peers and I were in awe of how the space was filled

with the visual projections and images of praise houses and pictures of old Oxford. The songs that played were in the style of old Black gospel music, and they were written and composed just for this project. As I stood in the Praise House with my classmates, I almost felt like I was transported into the past. The audio of the singing playing was very comforting to me and its lyrics imbued a sense of power and encouragement in me. I didn't have many words to describe the experience at the time due to how much I was in awe.

The Praise House Project and "Rememory" in Beacon Hill

I sought the shelter of the Praise House in a more organic way in December 2024. Knowing how central the structure and what it represented was to my personhood, let alone my thesis and academic journey at Emory, my second visit felt like a homecoming. Entering the Praise House this time moved me to tears. I don't think there's any other way for my people to show what it's like to experience love other than dancing, stomping, and shouting on top of the luscious earth that we will forever be tied to. Every step I took around the room awoke within me an unshakeable communal love and sense of belonging.

This time, the structure had moved deeper into the heart of Decatur. I had no idea that Beacon Hill existed let alone was one of the first Freedman's towns in the Decatur area. I never spent much time in Dekalb County when I was growing up, and I only started branching out into it between the latter half of high school and my time in college. Once I got familiar with the space though, I was always wondering where and how Black history was present in that region. The location of this project was my introduction into this history. As I moved to learn more about the city's Black history, I found that one of the earliest markers of Beacon Hill and the

presence of newly freed Black people in the city was Antioch AME Church founded in 1868.[125] This church was a refuge for many inhabitants of the Bottom (another name for Beacon Hill) as families pooled resources to house, feed, and support one another during early Reconstruction. Antioch AME's current location has moved outside of the city of Decatur, due to pressure from gentrification in the early 1990s, to two locations in the Stone Mountain and Conyers areas respectively. Their first church in 1874 was "a one room building constructed on Marshall Street" which directly resembled a praise house.[126] The return of this religious structure to a whiter and deracialized 21st century Decatur represents Black people's commitment to claiming personhood through citizenship and freedom while living in a world that never intended to humanize them.

I met with Minniefield at the Praise House in December 2024, after corresponding with her for about a week or so beforehand. Once we met, I explained that my honors thesis was going to be a counternarrative to the reductionist story of Emory's involvement in slavery as a Methodist institution. She was elated to hear about my research and personal connection with the work. She then shared her own familial connection to the Praise House saying that her ancestors survived the 1906 Atlanta Race Massacre and were eventually laid to rest at Southview Cemetery. We both remarked on how small Atlanta can feel when it comes to the history of the Black community in the city. You could be walking on land similarly trod by your ancestors and never know it, as she did with the cemetery and I on Emory's campus.[127]

---

[125] Beacon Hill Black Alliance for Human Rights, "Decatur People's History," (Decatur, GA, 2023), 19, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1erc6X4ieLHwo-3WHRq7mO7ImfMhWDrD5HMYRAz4BaRE/edit?usp=sharing.

[126] Antioch African Methodist Episcopal Church. https://www.antioch-ame.org/about-us.

[127] Charmaine Minniefield knew she had ancestors in Atlanta but didn't know where they were buried. My cousin Avis learned she was a descendant of those enslaved at Oxford when Mark Auslander contacted her while doing research for *The Accidental Slaveowner* in the 1990s. My mother Dawnya Ward and I did not learn about being descendants until the Twin Memorials project started in 2021.

Prior to our meeting, Minniefield had just met with board members from City Schools of Decatur to ask that they extend the amount of time before the Praise House would be moved. She told me that the school system had plans for the land in the upcoming calendar year, so they gave her a December 28th cutoff date for moving the structure. At the time of our conversation, the Praise House Project did not have the funding to move to Southview. Minniefield only had enough to dismantle the structure, which would cost $10,000, and this option seemed likely to happen since neither grants nor donations were coming from partner organizations such as the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs or the City of Decatur. I told her that I had seen an article discussing her funding sources for the move to Beacon Hill and that it listed a $30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and a $10,000 grant from Emory University. I was very confused as to how and why the grant amounts were so low from these big and wealthy organizations.[128]

As we continued discussing the logistics of the project, I wanted to know what sort of team helped her navigate all of these complex restrictions and decisions as she maintains this art exhibition. She told me that largely "I am the team", she was doing all of the work herself.[129] I asked her how she was continuing the visual and aural projections that were (in my mind) crucial to the Praise House experience, and she answered that she has not been able to access or use those resources since the move to Beacon Hill. All of the projectors and speakers still remain inside the structure, so I thought that the only other requirements to bring the space to life would be a power source and a computer able to hold those files. She told me that, "work study students at Georgia Tech and Emory did the code and computer programming to cast the video and play

[128] Mitali Singh, "How Charmaine Minniefield's 'Praise House' Was Nearly Demolished (but Survived)," ArtsATL, July 3, 2024, accessed October 24, 2024, https://www.artsatl.org/how-charmaine-minniefields-praise-house-was-nearly-demolished-but-survived/.
[129] Charmaine Minniefield (artist-activist) in discussion with the author, December 18, 2024.

the songs inside the Praise House."[130] Without those extra hands and their expertise, she could only bring the space to life (as advertised) during big events where community partners (including Emory) would provide her the necessary materials. She told me that in the absence of technology, "we [the Beacon Hill community] have transformed the space into a home for communal gathering, and we're planning to hold a Kwanzaa event in the upcoming week."[131]

After I heard all of this, my jaw nearly dropped as a wave of shock and bewilderment came over me. How could Emory leave her and this project high and dry like this? As I sat and wrote my thoughts immediately after speaking with her, I almost laughed to myself realizing that this situation is yet another example of Emory's fickle behavior in atoning for their moral sins. A renowned Research 1 university with an endowment of $11 billion dollars in the 2024 fiscal year won't fully fund an art exhibit that does more than acknowledge their entwinement with slavery?[132] It feels like Emory is being manipulative by dangling this vital, next-level technical and financial support in front of Minniefield like a carrot on a stick. The moment she stepped outside of the agreed-upon boundaries of this glorious institution with all of its critical acclaim and state-of-the-art resources, she was cut off. Yet again, this school reinforces the paternalistic disposition of many of its founding slaveowners. For Bishop Andrew, he told Catherine Boyd that "you are as free as I am" but kept her physically tethered to him and his family in the cottage he built for and in death as she is buried next to her mistress, Andrew's wife.[133] Means and the MCG faculty kept Grandison Harris tethered to them by purchasing his family in 1858 to save money rather than continue to fund Harris's routine $12 train rides between Augusta and

---

[130] Charmaine Minniefield (artist-activist) in discussion with the author, December 18, 2024.
[131] Charmaine Minniefield (artist-activist) in discussion with the author, December 18, 2024.
[132] Inside Higher Ed, "Endowment Returns Grow Amid Fiscal Uncertainty", last modified February 12, 2025. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/business/financial-health/2025/02/12/endowment-returns-climb-amid-fiscal-uncertainty.
[133] Auslander, *The Accidental Slaveowner*, 20.

Charleston, SC.[134] President Thomas kept Dave in his family by passing along his enslaved property to his son Lewis. These financial connections were established in a time where the Black people implicated in these agreements had no other way to procure a living wage or the cost of their freedom.

Luckily, today's financial landscape is vastly different as Minniefield and other Black artists are active participants in the financial processes behind their work. She has been hard at work for months writing and applying for grants to sustain and expand her project. Two local nonprofits donated a total of $50,000 to secure the Praise House's move to South-View in the week following our meeting. Currently, Minniefield is working to source student interns from her alma mater Agnes Scott College in preparation for the Praise House's reopening on Juneteenth 2025.

Black Ancestral Veneration and Remembering in Oxford

Now that I have provided a window into what ancestral veneration through the Praise House Project and family history looks like from a creative standpoint, I want to bring in the stories of two Black Oxfordians and how they are remembered and "honored" by Emory into the foreground. The MEC called for the establishment of the town of Oxford as well as Oxford College in 1836, and the church as both symbol and physical landmark was omnipresent in the lives of Black people enslaved at the college. In the town charter, the founders intended to create "a village that was as close to paradise on earth as possible" with "no public sins that could be guarded against."[135] By the founders' own admission, Oxford was a city that upheld some of John Wesley's moral code as they forbid dancing, drinking, and gambling. There are no records

[134] Berry, 171.
[135] "Oxford, Georgia: A Place Set Apart." Oxford Historical Society, accessed October 20, 2024, http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/.

of any overt violence towards enslaved people of African descent in Oxford, so the town's slaveowners partially abided by Wesley's decree to refrain from harming enslaved people. Oxford is a microcosm of Methodism and the ways southern Christian university development bent and broke the rules of this theology.

The lives and reputations of Black Oxford residents Robert "Bob" Hammond and Henry "Billy" Mitchell represent the fantastical racial utopia that the town and college's founders aimed to realize as well as the racial and class realities of Oxford. Robert Hammond (1858-1923) and Henry "Billy" Mitchell (1886-1958) both served as chief custodians of Oxford College for a total of ~95-96 years. Robert Hammond was born to a day laborer named Charles.[136] As he grew up within Covington and Oxford post-Emancipation, he began his career as a teacher in public schools for Black children. He started to work at Oxford College around 1881 and was beloved by all of the white faculty, students, staff, and other community members. Billy Mitchell's maternal grandmother was a Black woman named Ellen Robinson that was the maid of Dr. Alexander Means's wife. His maternal grandfather was reportedly an Indigenous man named Cornelius Robinson that was Dr. Alexander Means's personal valet. The Mitchell family built an independent household on the Means estate that still exists. Billy Mitchell's paternal grandfather Thomas Mitchell was enslaved by Bishop James O. Andrew. Billy served as Oxford College's chief custodian for ~53-54 years which included duties such as being an electrician, plumber, builder, and brick mason upon other things.[137] He was known to be consistently available to address any issue that came up at Oxford. For example, Oxford College was planning to install an underground water system for the campus due to there being limited plumbing at the

[136] Oxford Historical Society, "Robert ("Bob") Hammond," accessed October 30, 2024, http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/robert-bob-hammond.html.
[137] Oxford Historical Society. "Henry ("Uncle Billy") Mitchell." accessed November 1, 2024, http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/henry-uncle-billy-mitchell.html.

college.[138] Billy was instrumental in completing this work. When the piping needed to be replaced 40 years later and no one could find the blueprints, Billy remembered every detail of the original piping.[139]

White Oxfordians continue to platform Mitchell and Hammond as dual icons of the loyal, reliable, ever-present, respected, caring, friendly, and contentious Black caretakers about whom the town's founders fantasized. Hammond's good reputation with the Oxford community spurred Emory alumni to bury him in the Black section of the Oxford Historical Cemetery with a big, engraved headstone upon his passing in 1923. It reads: "Head Janitor Emory College, 42 years, Faithful – Efficient, A Token of Respect from Emory Men".[140] He was also memorialized with an obituary published in the *Atlanta Journal* that expressed how dearly the Emory community would miss him and the dedication he showed to the college.[141] Upon Billy Mitchell's passing in 1958, an obituary and a short article were published in the Atlanta Constitution with tributes from his family and Emory staff including the anecdote about the plumbing. [142] Mitchell and Hammond are both buried in the Black section of Oxford Historical Cemetery, but they are on the northwest side as opposed to the northeast section that houses the unmarked graves of enslaved people.[143] These two men have been enshrined as cornerstones of the upkeep and

---

[138] "'Billy' Mitchell, Grounds Keeper Since 1904 at Emory-Oxford, Dies," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 31, 1958.

[139] "'Billy' Mitchell, Grounds Keeper Since 1904 at Emory-Oxford, Dies," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 31, 1958.

[140] Oxford Historical Society, "Robert ("Bob") Hammond," http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/robert-bob-hammond.html.

[141] "'Uncle Bob' Hammond, Emory Academy Janitor, Passes on to His Reward", *Atlanta Journal* (Atlanta, GA), Sep. 09, 1923.

[142] "Mitchell", *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 31, 1958.; "'Billy' Mitchell, Grounds Keeper Since 1904 at Emory-Oxford, Dies," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Oct. 31, 1958.

[143] This document (likely created by the Oxford Historical Society) is a legend of the notable gravesites in Oxford Historical Cemetery. All of the people listed here are either buried in the Southeast section or the Northwest section, following the status quo of racial hierarchy from Oxford's founding. The Northeast section has been largely neglected since ground was first broken to bury Oxford's enslaved. A spattering of broken, eroded, and missing

expansion of Emory at Oxford in the minds of white alumni, faculty, staff, and community members for multiple decades. In 1966 the Class of 1913 planted a tree in honor of Hammond and Mitchell near Prince Hall at Oxford College and erected a plaque next to the tree that reads:

> The members of the class of 1913 in loving appreciation
> Dedicate this tree to the memory of
> Bob Hammond 1858 to 1923 and Billy Mitchell 1886 to 1958
> Who together contributed 95 years
> Of faithful and efficient service to "Old Emory"
> Dedicated June 12, 1966

Long after Hammond and Mitchell's passing, alumni who used these men for their efficacy and skill memorialized them on a rusting plaque but did not have the courtesy to dignify these men by using their given names Robert and Henry. One of Auslander's frequently quoted interviewees in the book is Emogene Williams, my late maternal great-great aunt and Avis's mother. When asked about how this plaque represents Emory's nostalgia about Billy Mitchell, she gave this statement:

> How they loved Billy, their "best friend," they called him. But 1966, you know, that was *two years* before they even admitted the first black student to study on this campus. They'd happily plant a tree dedicated to us. They just wouldn't let us in the front door.[144]

The legends and stories that paint Oxford College as paradise for white residents are laughable, upsetting, and disappointing to Black residents and families that have worked for decades to properly honor and respect their ancestors. Another often-quoted resident, John Pliny (J.P.) Godfrey, an Oxford City Councilman and the grandson of Israel Godfrey, swore that Black Oxfordians must "tell [the town's school-age children] the truth about Catherine Boyd's life as the enslaved property of Bishop Andrew" after hearing white residents paint Boyd and Andrew's

---

headstones litters this section of the cemetery, and Mark Auslander began his oral history research by enlisting community members and his Oxford College students to restore these graves. Catherine Boyd is the exception to this segregationist rule as she is the only Black person to be buried in the Southeast section. She is interred very close to the grave of Bishop James Andrew.

[144] Auslander, *The Accidental Slaveowner*, 109.

relationship as repeat pro-slavery ideas.[145] Aunt Emogene implored researchers like Auslander and anyone else who aimed to study legacies of slavery at Emory to "learn how to look, learn to see what they [formerly enslaved Black people in Oxford] left behind, learn to hear what they are still telling you, after all these years."[146] Charmaine Minniefield's work is humanizing and uplifting as she publicizes the names, stories, and personalities of those descended from enslaved property in Oxford, Georgia. Emory's master narrative of its regretful yet indirect involvement with slavery from chapter two matters here because Minniefield gives her audiences motivation, evidence, and an outlet to challenge and refute it.

[145] Auslander, 19.
[146] Auslander, 107.

Conclusion

The three chapters I laid out within this thesis have built a new version of Emory's history that includes every facet of their story, no matter how unappealing it may seem to the school's communication department. Chapter One began with the college cracking its own religious foundation by oxymoronically endorsing slavery in a Methodist church whose laws did not hold space for slavery. Emory's founders embedded slavery into every slab of marble and every brick by which the dorms, cafeterias, classrooms, and all original campus buildings in Oxford and Atlanta are framed. I argue that Oxford College undeniably was ground zero for the rift in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the school's ardent defenders of slavery (Bishop Andrew, Augustus Longstreet, and others) together created a nearly century-long ripple effect throughout the country by inducing the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

As I transition to Chapter Two, I explain how these long-lasting physical and spiritual vestiges of slavery translated into the lessons taught to Emory undergraduates and later in the 19th century, their graduate peers attaining a medical education across the MCG, AMC, and Emory's not-yet-completed School of Medicine. I center student research and broader scholarship on the business of "resurrection" in Georgia by relaying the story of Grandison Harris, a porter at the Medical College of Georgia that was purchased (and later hired) by the college's dean and faculty to steal, help dissect, store, ship, and dispose of cadavers of poor Black residents of Augusta, Georgia. I implicate Emory President and faculty member across Emory, MCG and (reportedly) AMC, Dr. Alexander Means, as a hidden figure that was a harbinger of Emory's century-long history of medical racism through his ownership, employment, and funding of Harris as a "resurrectionist."

In Chapter Three, I re-inserted myself and my family history into the conversation around correcting and broadening of institutional narratives about the lives of those enslaved at Oxford with the help of artist-activist Charmaine Minniefield's Praise House Project and Indigo Prayers collection as well as oral histories from Oxford's Black community. I drew on Toni Morrison's concept of "rememory" to craft my own story and argue for the complete humanization of the people whose names we do know that were enslaved at Emory in Oxford and Atlanta.[147] My great-great-great-great grandfather Rev. Tony Baker was one of those names, free floating in the recollections of the Stone family of Oxford. In this thesis, I fully recognize his personhood outside of his being tethered to Professor George W. W. Stone, Sr.

As an extension of the work I began in this honors thesis, I would like to investigate a few other questions in the future such as:

1. How was medical racism sustained and amplified once Emory acquired the Atlanta Medical College and founded Emory School of Medicine in 1915?
2. Does the Georgia Anatomical Board's human cadaver ledger circa 1887-1928 (housed at Emory's Woodruff Health Sciences Library) mention Grandison Harris or other resurrectionists as sources for its specimens?
3. What sources could I use to learn about my ancestor Rev. Tony Baker, his legacy in Covington and Oxford, and his life in the G. W. W. Stone, Sr. household?
4. Is there any remaining physical evidence of President James Thomas and Professor Gustavus Orr's hide-out or cave in Oxford? How far is its location from the Oxford College campus?

[147] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995): 83-102.

In my appendices, I have included a list of the known named enslaved individuals that worked around Oxford College as well as a list of slaveowners affiliated with the university. These lists would also fuel further research to pin down exactly how many people were enslaved at Emory and who they were outside of their condition of bondage.

As I conclude my honors thesis, I will return to Emory's acknowledgments of their history of slavery and give my own feedback on the efficacy and impact of these statements and actions. In 2011, Emory President James W. Wagner and the Board of Trustees released a statement that said the institution "acknowledges its entwinement with the institution of slavery" and "regrets both this undeniable wrong and the University's decades of delay in acknowledging slavery's harmful legacy."[148] This official acknowledgement (not an apology) does not mention the fact that Emory never owned slaves itself which surprised me seeing as their statements (written and verbal) since 2021 often lead with that fact. Even as I read about the lead-up to the 2011 Slavery and the University Conference, I felt that there were not many long-term actions of accountability listed as the school announced its commitment to atoning for their grievous offenses. Out of what was listed on the webpage with the acknowledgment, a weekend-long conference, a grant that provided strictly five years' worth of research, and a list of "key questions" compiled by interested faculty, students, and staff is all we got.

To bring back my points about the fickle nature of institutional narratives from Chapters One and Two, Emory and its agents prefer to bury the fact that its namesake is a contradictory Methodist Bishop who owned slaves, let alone that enslaved people ever existed at the college (which means that they had to be owned by faculty and students if no one else). What does it

[148] Ron Sauder, https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2011/01/campus_regret_for_historic_involvement_with_slavery.html.

mean that scholars like Mark Auslander and Leslie Harris had to pull teeth for decades to get a five-to-six-year institutional focus on slavery on the books? Honestly, I think it says a lot that Emory is quick to drag its feet in the face of criticism as it relates to race relations at the school once the cameras are put away and no external source is praising the administration for confronting Emory's history of injustice.

However, it seems that what is colloquially referred to as the "racial reckoning of 2020" once again lit a fire under the administration to rebuff their efforts in claiming and condemning their violently racist past. As a response to the political protests and outcry related to the police murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, current Emory President Gregory L. Fenves released a statement in October 2020 declaring that he would reinvest in the university's 2019 initiative "Task Force on Untold Stories and Disenfranchised Populations" that had lost steam. Fenves continued his message by unveiling the University's Descendant Endowment that would award "two undergraduate student scholarships each year for descendants of enslaved persons with ties to Emory."[149] He also stated that the Task Force would discuss scholarships for "student descendants of the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) nations on whose land Emory was built."[150]

The present-day fulfillment of Fenves's promises pales in comparison to their source material. In 2021, a comprehensive website was created addressing the school's history of "slavery and dispossession", and these stories trace the school's violent oppression back to the forced removal of Muscogee and other Indigenous populations from the land surrounding Oxford (and later, Atlanta).[151] Since 2021, many placards reading the university's land acknowledgement and history of dispossession from Indigenous/Mvskoke peoples and the

---

[149] Emory University Office of the President, "Update on actions Emory is taking for racial justice," accessed January 4, 2025, https://president.emory.edu/communications/2020/10/racial-justice-update.html.
[150] Emory University Office of the President, "Update on actions," https://president.emory.edu/communications/2020/10/racial-justice-update.html.
[151] Kelundra Smith, https://news.emory.edu/features/2021/09/emory-unpacks-history-of-slavery-and-dispossesson/index.html.

history of slavery have gone up within humanities buildings on the Atlanta campus. The Task Force and the Office of the President initiated the Twin Memorials Project in 2021 to erect dual memorials across the Atlanta and Oxford campuses to honor and respect the enslaved individuals who were so crucial to the institution's founding, growth, and maintenance.[152]

In terms of the Descendant Endowment or any other monetary recognition and reparation for either descendants of the enslaved or the dispossessed, the institution has not made any widely publicized population-focused advances. Fenves noted in his 2020 communication that recommendations for the scholarships would be finalized by April 2021 with an initial rollout/awarding of funds starting Fall 2022.[153] As of February 20th, 2025, a search for "descendant" in the Emory Scholarship Portal for internal and external scholarships displays no results.[154] The Financial Aid office's website also bears no trace of this financial venture undertaken by the president. In a June 2021 letter from the Office of the President, Fenves notes that alongside removing the names of former slaveowners from dorms and other buildings across both campuses, the college had also established "remembrance scholarships for descendants of enslaved persons at Emory" that would be awarded to "qualified students" in Fall 2022.[155] A footnote in a 2023 article about the Twin Memorials project reads that two Emory College students were deemed Emory's first inaugural Remembrance Scholars and awarded merit scholarships covering the full cost of attendance for all four years of their undergraduate education.[156] As of April 2025, Emory has not published any other press releases about

---

[152] "Twin Memorials: Honoring the Enslaved," Emory University, last modified March 8, 2024, https://twinmemorials.emory.edu/.

[153] Emory University Office of the President, "Update on actions," https://president.emory.edu/communications/2020/10/racial-justice-update.html.

[154] Accessed February 20, 2025. https://emory.academicworks.com/opportunities/external?utf8=%E2%9C%93&term=descendant.

[155] Emory University Office of the President, "Continuing to Examine the Emory Story," last modified June 28. 2021, https://president.emory.edu/communications/2021/06/naming-honors-and-task-force.html.

[156] Susan M. Carini, "Work on Emory's Twin Memorials enters a new phase," last modified February 1, 2023, https://news.emory.edu/stories/2023/02/er_twin_memorials_1-02-2023/story.html.

subsequent years of Remembrance Scholars.[157] The Twin Memorials project also has become stagnant due to many changes in the external contractors for blueprinting and building these structures. On the other hand, the university has taken up various other construction projects in the meantime that seem to be of higher priority.

After I began compiling Emory's actions and statements made with the purpose of supporting descendant communities, these two questions came to the forefront of my mind:

1. How do these heavily publicized yet empty promises, expressions of regret, and neglected and underfunded initiatives do anything to truly reckon with the grave moral and social ill that is funding, defending, and justifying slavery?
2. Do descendant communities have to wait another nine years and sponsor a grand conference at the foot of the ivory tower for the next "progressive" leader to dust off the fleeting chance at justice that we deserve to see on behalf of our ancestors?

Personally, I got tired of waiting the moment I learned I was a descendant in 2021, and that's probably why I'm doing all I can to use my honors thesis to research and help develop this story. I hope that the Remembrance Scholars feel supported beyond signing off on their financial aid checks every year. I want the scholarship I've pulled together and conversed with to live on beyond these pages for audiences inside and outside the academy, and hopefully along the way, I can start to rewrite this institution's history of slavery in fuller detail and truth.

[157] In a conversation with Avis last week (04/01/2025), I asked her if she knew any details about Descendants Endowment/Remembrance Scholarship. She told me that she asked the Task Force on Untold Stories and Disenfranchised Populations while planning stages in 2021 to include me in their awards, but they deflected and gave a non-committal answer about me not being eligible because I started at Emory a year before the program was planned to roll out. I do not believe any other scholarships have been awarded.

Appendix A

Named Enslaved Persons at Emory

Bishop James Andrew: 15 named, total 24

- Addison
- Edward
- Elleck
- George
- Jacob
- James
- Jefferson
- Kitty
- Laura
- Lillah
- Thomas Mitchell
- Nick
- Orlando
- Peter
- Susan

Reverend Walter Branham: 13

- Aggie
- Arthur
- George Washington

Trustee Iverson Graves: 4

- Charley
- Lawrence
- Leniah
- Nick

Dr. Alexander Means: ~14 named, 25 total

- Albert
- Dolphus
- Fanny
- Harriet
- Iveson
- Henry Robinson
- Cornelius/Neil Robinson
- Ellen Robinson
- Millie Robinson
- Mildred Robinson Pelham

- Thomas Robinson
- Troup Robinson
- Thaddius
- Anna Tinsely

Professor Gustavus Orr: 9

- Charles
- Hannah
- George W.
- Henry
- Lizzie
- Octavia Hunter
- Peter
- Phil
- Walter

Professor George W. W. Stone, Sr.: 23

- Abner
- Anna
- Caesar
- Clinton
- Darcus
- Duncan
- Frank
- Hunter
- Isaac Stone
- Jake
- Lucinda
- Mary
- Louisa Means
- Samuel Means
- Nancy
- Phillip
- Ruth
- Sallie
- Silas
- Sterling
- Tempy
- Tony
- Victoria [Carter]

President John R. Thomas: 7

- Charity

Lewis Thomas: 1

- Dave

Reverend John W. Talley: 8

- William Talley

The information in this list is sourced from:

Oxford Historical Society. "Enslaved Persons Living in Oxford between 1836 – 1865." Accessed November 13, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/1836---1865.html.

Appendix B

Known Slaveowners Affiliated with Emory

- Rev. Walter R. Branham (Methodist clergy, owned 13)
- Rev. John W. Talley (Methodist clergy, owned 8)
- Rev. A. M. Cureton (Methodist clergy, owned 3)
- Bishop James Osgood Andrew (President of Board of Trustees, owned 24)
- Iverson Graves (Trustee, owned 4)
- Dr. Alexander Means (President/Professor, owned 25)
- Gustavus John Orr (Professor, owned 9)
- William J. Parks (Trustee, owned 33, names unknown)
- George Pierce (President, owned 10, names unknown)
- George W. W. Stone, Sr. (Professor, owned 23)
- John R. Thomas (President, owned 8)
- Lewis Thomas (a surgeon and the son of James Thomas, owned 1)

Total number of enslaved persons: ~161 people

Bibliography

Green, Dawnya. “Black Love Letter.” (Emory University, 2023).

Archival Materials

Means family Bible, Alexander Means papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Minutes, 1837-1901 [microfilm--includes contents of Folders 1-2 and BV 1-3], Box: MF1. Emory College Board of Trustees records, Emory University Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Reports to the Board of Trustees, 1862-1863, Box: 1, Folder: 5. Emory College Board of Trustees records, Emory University Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Few Society minutes, 2 November 1839, Box: BV2. Emory College student organization records, Emory University Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Images

Gordon, Michelle. Praise House at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church, 2023.

Green, Dawnya. Rust Chapel United Methodist Church, 2024.

Medical College of Georgia. Graduating Class of 1875, 1875. In *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training,* edited by Robert L. Blakely and. Judith M. Harrington, 214. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

Medical College of Georgia. Graduating Class of 1877, 1877. In “Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College.” Smithsonian magazine. Smithsonian. Last modified May 6, 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/meet-grandison-harris-grave-robber-enslaved-and-then-employed-georgia-college-medicine-180951344/

Medical College of Georgia. Graduating Class of 1880, 1880. In “Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College.” Smithsonian magazine. Smithsonian. Last modified May 6, 2014.

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/meet-grandison-harris-grave-robber-enslaved-and-then-employed-georgia-college-medicine-180951344/.

Medical College of Georgia. Graduating Class of 1902, 1902. In "Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College." Smithsonian magazine. Smithsonian. Last modified May 6, 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/meet-grandison-harris-grave-robber-enslaved-and-then-employed-georgia-college-medicine-180951344/

Williams, Avis. Rev. Tony Baker (1837-1908). Date Unknown.

Interviews/Personal Communication

Charmaine Minniefield in discussion with the author, December 18, 2024.

Shirley Ward in discussion with the author, October 2024.

Avis Williams in discussion with the author, September 2021 – April 2025.

Published Primary Sources

"Chicane in Cadavers," *Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 15, 1881: 1.

Davies, Samuel. *The Duty of Christians to Propagate Their Religion among Heathens, Earnestly Recommended to the Masters of Negroe Slaves in Virginia. A Sermon Preached in Hanover, January 8, 1757.* London: J. Oliver, 1757.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South. *Minutes of the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.* Self-published, 1866. https://archive.org/details/28054834.1866.emory.edu/page/n29/mode/1up?view=theater

Longstreet, Augustus Baldwin. *A Voice from the South: Comprising Letters from Georgia to Massachusetts, and to the Southern States.* Baltimore: Western Continent Press, 1847.

News item, *Savannah Morning News* (Savannah, GA), Sep. 15, 1882: 1.

Sauder, Ron. "Emory declares its regret for historic involvement with slavery." Emory Report. Emory University. Last modified January 17, 2011. https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2011/01/campus_regret_for_historic_involvement_with_slavery.html.

Toombs, Robert. *An Oration, Delivered before the Few and Phi Gamma Societies of Emory College.* Augusta: Steam Power Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1853. https://archive.org/details/orationdelivered00toom/mode/2up.

United States Census Bureau. "Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States,

1850, Georgia." Accessed February 4, 2025. https://archive.org/details/7thcensus0094unit/page/n25/mode/1up.

Wesley, John. "The General Rules of the Methodist Church." The United Methodist Church. Last modified 2016. https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-general-rules-of-the-methodist-church.

Wesley, John. *Thoughts Upon Slavery.* London: R. Hawes, 1774.

Secondary Sources

Antioch African Methodist Episcopal Church. "About Us." Accessed February 15, 2025. https://www.antioch-ame.org/about-us

Auslander, Mark. *The Accidental Slaveowner: Revisiting a Myth of Race and Finding an American Family*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

Berry, Daina Ramey. *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: the Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2017.

Buis, Johann. "'Kneebone in the Wilderness.'" In *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia*, 17-52. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998.

Creel, Maragaret Washington. "Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters." In *"A Peculiar People:" Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs*, 277-302. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Curtis-Richardson, Mike M.F., "Corpses as Commodities: The Ethnography of Covert Medical Practices in Georgia, Circa 1835-1997" in *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training*, ed. Robert L. Blakely and. Judith M. Harrington Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

Dickerson, Dennis C. "The African American Wing of the Wesleyan Tradition." In *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley,* edited by Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, 282–97. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521886536.017

Drake, Richard B. "Freedmen's Aid Societies and Sectional Compromise." *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 2 (1963): 175–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/2205039.

Eady, Louise. "A Civil War Adventure." Oxford Historical Society. Accessed December 13, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/a-civil-war-adventure.html.

"Emory and Dooley: The History of a Mascot Influenced by Racist Ideation." Skeletons in the

Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-and-dooley-this-history-of-a-mascot-influenced-by-racist-ideation/

"Emory University, Dissection and the Exploitation of Black Bodies." Skeletons in the Closet. Last modified August 24, 2022. https://skeletonsinthecloset.blog/link-page/emory-university-dissection-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/.

Emory University Office of the President. "Past Presidents." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/past-presidents/index.html

Emory University Office of the President. "Update on actions Emory is taking for racial justice." Accessed January 4, 2025. https://president.emory.edu/communications/2020/10/racial-justice-update.html

Emory University Pitts Theology Library. "Oxford Old Church." Pitts Digital Archives. Candler School of Theology. Accessed January 4, 2025. https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/pittsarchives/mss028/pdf/OxfordOldChurch.pdf.

Emory University Pitts Theology Library. "Researching North Georgia Conference church histories at Pitts." Pitts Theology Library. Candler School of Theology. Last modified February 1, 2023. Accessed January 4, 2025. https://pitts.emory.edu/2023/02/01/researching-north-georgia-conference-church-histories-at-pitts/.

Fishman, Margie. "Transforming Community Project creates agents of change." Emory Report. Emory University. Last modified February 8, 2010. https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/stories/2010/02/08/transforming_community_project.

Frey, Sylvia & Wood, Betty. *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Garrett, Nick. "Known but to God: The story of the Resurrection Man." Jagwire. Augusta University. Last modified June 6, 2016. https://jagwire.augusta.edu/known-but-to-god-the-story-of-the-resurrection-man/

Goen, C. C. *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War.* Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985.

Harper, Matthew. "Contested Autonomy: Black Denominational Debates in the Early Jim Crow Era." *Religion and American Culture* 33, no. 2 (2023): 248–81. https://doi.org/10.1017/rac.2023.15

Harris, Leslie. *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies.* Edited by James T. Campbell, Brophy, Alfred L. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019.

Hildebrand, Reginald F. *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the*

Crisis of Emancipation. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

Horwitz, Tony. *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War.* 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Inside Higher Ed. "Endowment Returns Grow Amid Fiscal Uncertainty". Inside Higher Ed. Last modified February 12, 2025. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/business/financial-health/2025/02/12/endowment-returns-climb-amid-fiscal-uncertainty.

Lawrence, Rev. William B. "Slavery and the founders of Methodism." The United Methodist Church. Last modified August 13, 2020. https://www.umnews.org/en/news/slavery-and-the-founders-of-methodism

Lewis-Timmons, Monet. "Beyond Kitty's Cottage: The Double-Containment of Catherine "Miss Kitty" Boyd and Black Commemoration Practices in Oxford, Georgia." In *Rhetoric, Public Memory, and Campus History,* 71-96. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022.

Lovejoy, Bess. "Meet Grandison Harris, the Grave Robber Enslaved (and then Employed) By the Georgia Medical College." Smithsonian magazine. Smithsonian. Last modified May 6, 2014. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/meet-grandison-harris-grave-robber-enslaved-and-then-employed-georgia-college-medicine-180951344/

Mathews, Donald G. *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780-1845*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Merriam-Webster Incorporated. "Citizen." In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary.* Accessed March 18, 2025. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/citizen.

Mohr, Clarence L. "Slaves and White Churches in Confederate Georgia." In *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord*, edited by John B. Boles, 153-172. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988.

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, edited by William Zinsser, 2nd ed., 83-102. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Nelson, Rev. Angela Ford. "The Message of the Hush Harbor: History and Theology of African Descent Traditions." South Carolina United Methodist Advocate. South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Last modified March 1, 2019. https://advocatesc.org/articles/the-message-of-the-hush-harbor-history-and-theology-of-african-descent-traditions.

Oxford Historical Society. "Dr. Alexander Means." Accessed November 2, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/alexander-means.html.

Oxford Historical Society. "Enslaved Persons Living in Oxford between 1836 – 1865." Accessed November 13, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/1836---1865.html.

Oxford Historical Society. "Henry ("Uncle Billy") Mitchell." Accessed November 1, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/henry-uncle-billy-mitchell.html.

Oxford Historical Society. "Robert ("Bob") Hammond." Accessed October 30, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/robert-bob-hammond.html.

Oxford Historical Society. "Our African American Heritage." Oxford Historical Society. Accessed November 3, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/our-african-american-heritage.html.

Oxford Historical Society. "Oxford, Georgia: A Place Set Apart." Oxford Historical Society. Accessed October 20, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/.

Phillips, Charles Henry. *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America.* Jackson: Publishing House C. M. E. Church, 1925.

Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

"Roots (1736–1816)." United Methodist Church. Last modified 2016. https://www.umc.org/en/content/roots.

Scott, Dr. David W. "The many meanings of connectionalism." The United Methodist Church. Last modified March 14, 2023. https://www.umnews.org/en/news/the-many-meanings-of-connectionalism.

Sharpe, Tanya Telfair. "Grandison Harris: The Medical College of Georgia's Resurrection Man." In *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training,* edited by Robert L. Blakely and. Judith M. Harrington, 206-226. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

Simpson, John A. "The Cult of the 'Lost Cause.'" *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1975): 350–61. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42623867.

Singh, Mitali. "How Charmaine Minniefield's 'Praise House' Was Nearly Demolished (but Survived)." ArtsATL, Last modified July 3, 2024. Accessed October 24, 2024. https://www.artsatl.org/how-charmaine-minniefields-praise-house-was-nearly-demolished-but-survived/.

Smith, Kelundra. "In the Wake of Slavery and Dispossession: Emory, Racism and the Journey Towards Restorative Justice." Emory Unpacks History of Slavery and Dispossession. Emory University, September 28, 2021. https://news.emory.edu/features/2021/09/emory-unpacks-history-of-slavery-and-dispossession/index.html.

Stone Jr., George Washington Whitfield. "Civil War Days in Oxford." Oxford Historical Society. Accessed November 13, 2024. http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/civil-war-days-in-oxford.html.

"Student Debates: The Few Society." Exploring Emory's African American History. Accessed December 12, 2024. https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/emoryafamhistory/atticus-haygood/.

Transforming Community Project. "Schedule." Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies. Emory University. Last modified February 6, 2011. https://web.archive.org/web/20140101013532/http://transform.emory.edu/conference/index.html#expand.

"Twin Memorials: Honoring the Enslaved." Emory University. Last modified March 8, 2024. https://twinmemorials.emory.edu/.

United Methodist Church. "Timeline: Methodism in Black and White." The United Methodist Church. Last modified 2009. https://www.umc.org/en/content/timeline-methodism-in-black-and-white.

United States Congress. "Constitution of the United States: Fourteenth Amendment." Constitution Annotated. Library of Congress. Accessed March 18, 2025. https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-14/.

Vanishing Georgia. "Rust Chapel United Methodist Church, 1908, Oxford." Accessed October 30, 2024. https://vanishinggeorgia.com/2024/04/17/rust-chapel-united-methodist-church-1908-oxford/.

Wilder, Craig Steven. *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities.* New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013.

Wilmore, Gayraud. "Black Religion and Black Nationalism." In *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans,* 125-162. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

Woodson, Carter G. *History of the Negro Church*. Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1921.