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Tiera Ndlovu April 11, 2021

An Image of Society: Exploring Race and Power in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection

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Abstract

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If photography historian Alan Trachtenberg rightly proclaims that "historical knowledge declares its true value by its photographability," the history of Emory College in the early twentieth century may be bolstered by the collection of twenty-six silver gelatin prints in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection housed at the Oxford College Archives in the Oxford College Library. Beginning as a visual analysis, "An Image of Society: Exploring Race and Power in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection" expands to an interdisciplinary historical analysis on the relationship between race, power, and two Southern social institutions: Emory College and the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity that highlights a harrowing lacuna within Emory's history.

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First and foremost, I give praise and thanks to the Lord, for His blessings and guidance throughout my research journey.

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Ellionora Holmes. I hope that my work exhibits her strength, bravery, and desire to make the world a better place for us all.

I thank the village that has supported me over the last two years: my mom, my dad, Aunty Lisa, Uncle Alex, Trent, Candace, Vanessa, and Sophie. Thank you all for listening to my endless rambles on Emory's racist past and the history of nineteenth-century photography - at all hours of the day, without ever complaining. I hold you all near and dear to my heart.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Photography historian Alan Trachtenberg proclaims, "historical knowledge declares its true value by its photographability."[1] Trachtenberg's argument postulates that the primary function of photographs is to bolster the accuracy of oral and written histories by supplying a visual verification of historical moments. Furthermore, Trachtenberg's statement positions images as a necessary add-on when discussing these histories, rather than independent historical representations. Similarly, Roland Barthes states "the same century invented History and Photography," profoundly suggesting that the two share roots in both time and theory – as they remain intertwined throughout forms of modern historical documentation. Photography is often called upon to illustrate moments of history and vice versa.[2] While both scholars capture the intimate relationship between photography and history that I will further explore in "An Image of Society: Exploring Race and Power in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection," their initial scholarly discussions which I engage with overlook an integral aspect of constructing historical knowledge and historical images: power.

As historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot rightly assesses, "history is a story about power, a story about those who won."[3] Unchecked, people in power can manipulate histories at four crucial moments: "fact creation, fact assembly, fact retrieval, and the

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[1] Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs," *Representations*, no. 9 (1985): 1-32. Accessed November 28th, 2020. doi:10.2307/3043765. Similar discussions on the valence of history with photographs occur in Krista Thompson's "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies", *Representations,* no. 113 (2011).
[2] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* Hill and Wang (New York), 1981, 93. Shawn Michelle Smith also comments on Barthes' statement in relation to the development of history and photography in *Photographic Returns: racial justice and the time of photography* and *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture.*
[3] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press (Boston), 2015, 5.

moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance)."[4] Individuals or groups in power exploit each of the four moments of history making to construct a skewed historical narrative, one that highlights the stories of the people in power and often omits the stories of others. Returning to Trachtenberg's argument of history's photographability, one must consider how photography might be skewed in the same way to bring value to the version of history that the people in power constructed. Thus, what I argue foremost in this thesis is that the manipulation of the four moments of history making is not exclusive of photography. Rather, photography, in part due to its intertwinement with written history, should be included in the discourse of power and history making.

Similar studies of photography have been undertaken by art historians, including Dr. Shawn Michelle Smith, Dr. Krista Thompson, and Dr. John Peffer, who have explored how images perpetuate prejudices in the United States, the Caribbean, and South Africa, respectively. One may naively believe that photography is supposed to capture reality, yet images often reveal as much as they conceal. Photographs can easily hide aspects of reality because, as a medium, photography is easily manipulated to, as suggested by Smith, Thompson, and Peffer alike, allow individuals in power to control the visual narrative of not only themselves but others.

The previous works of Smith, Thompson, and Peffer, provide a basis for my research as the histories of the American South, the Caribbean, and South Africa are all tainted by a history of colonization. While the impact of colonial ideals varies across time and space, slavery in the American South and the Caribbean was not disconnected

[4] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 26.

from the drive for power that fueled British imperialism throughout the African continent. Historian Gerald Horne insists that any explanatory histories of the British and American reigns of global power from the eighteenth century to present day must include slavery and colonialism "along with their handmaiden – white supremacy."[5] Across the British Empire and the United States, there is a legacy of colonial ideals – that originated from those in power – which permeates their respective visual cultures, in the late nineteenth-and early-twentieth century photography.[6]

The photographs that Smith, Thompson, and Peffer examine, such as portraits of Frederick Douglass (fig. 1), *Cane Cutters, Jamaica* (fig. 2), *Túma (with shooting bow and arrows)* (fig. 3), and *Photographic visiting card* (fig. 4), highlighting the varying expressions of colonial imagery and by extension, power within portraiture. At times, power takes the form of a direct perversion of colonial stereotypes, as seen in Frederick Douglass' portraiture. Douglass, among other influential African Americans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, took advantage of photography as an emerging technology to produce a new identity, and visually capture a self of their own making. Through 160 portraits in his lifetime, Douglass mimicked studio poses and miens popularly used by members of the white elite. With each new image, Douglass fought to contradict the prevailing racist imagery of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[7]

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[5] Gerald Horne, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean*, (New York: NYU Press), 2018, 7.
[6] Krista A. Thompson, *Bahamian Visions: Photographs 1870-1920* (Nassau: National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, 2003), 17.
[7] Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: gender, race, and class in visual culture,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 135.

Images of racial stereotypes, such as *Cane Cutters* and *Túma*, taken in Jamaica and South Africa, respectively, were commonplace within nineteenth century visual culture as a tool to maintain societal hierarchies.[8] As Peffer writes about *Túma*, indigenous populations and their environments were most commonly photographed for commercial uses, such as postcards and travel guides. Under the guise of ethnography, indigenous communities had little to no control over how they were photographed—instead, they were presented through the colonial gaze as close to the stereotypical "native" of the region. These subtle, yet intentional distinctions in photographs of white colonizers and indigenous peoples greatly impacted the development of visual cues in portraiture that remained well into the twentieth century as a method of maintaining "visible order."[9]

Drawing on studies of photographs from disparate times and places, I recognize that scholars must critically evaluate photography as a tool of power and prejudice. In this thesis, I apply the aforementioned scholars' lens to photography to the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection, which includes a total of twenty-six mounted silver gelatin photographs dating from 1902 to 1907, housed at the Oxford College Archives. There are notable differences between the Culbreath collection and the photographs at the center of previous scholarly research. First, there are personal notes on the backsides of the photo mountings that suggest that the photographs were not initially intended to be viewed by a public audience. Instead, the images are pieces of a private collection of the Culbreath brothers, that is now public because of its donation to the archives. Photographs distributed within private networks

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[8] Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader,* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.
[9] John Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis), 2009, 246.

offer greater intimacy over documentary photos that capture news or public figures. Second, the images do not feature overt symbols or messages of prejudice, such as racial slurs, stereotypes, or gestures. Rather, from a strictly visual standpoint, they are simply formal portraits of Emory College students. Yet, as demonstrated earlier, a purely visual analysis fails to encapsulate the complex relationship between photography, history, and the exploitation of power.

Similar to the portraiture of the white colonial elite in South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, I argue that the students' visual presentations are connected to their association with Emory College and the Kappa Alpha Order (Kappa Alpha) fraternity: institutions whose founders were outspoken with their prejudice, racist, and white supremacist ideals. To further explore how student's portraits engage with these ideals, I conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of the Ervin Yarborough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection. I begin first with a visual analysis then I historicize the images within Emory College and Kappa Alpha Order's written histories. In doing so, I will examine the intimate relationship between photography and history outlined by Trachtenberg and Barthes.

Ultimately, the Culbreath photographs connect to a larger collection of Emory College portraits referenced in the written histories of Emory's first fifty years. In challenging the student's miens, I engage in a now growing conversation about the college's complicated intertwinement with white supremacy in the early-twentieth century, an intertwinement that silenced the roles of enslaved laborers and indigenous populations in the college's historical narrative. As historian Darren Newbury states,

"photographers do not merely record, but rather construct an image of society."[10] I will carefully explore what images of society the Culbreath photographs work to construct, or rather what ideological images of society they uphold.

[10] Darren Newbury, *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa*, (Unisa Press: Pretoria), 2009, 7.

Introduction Images:

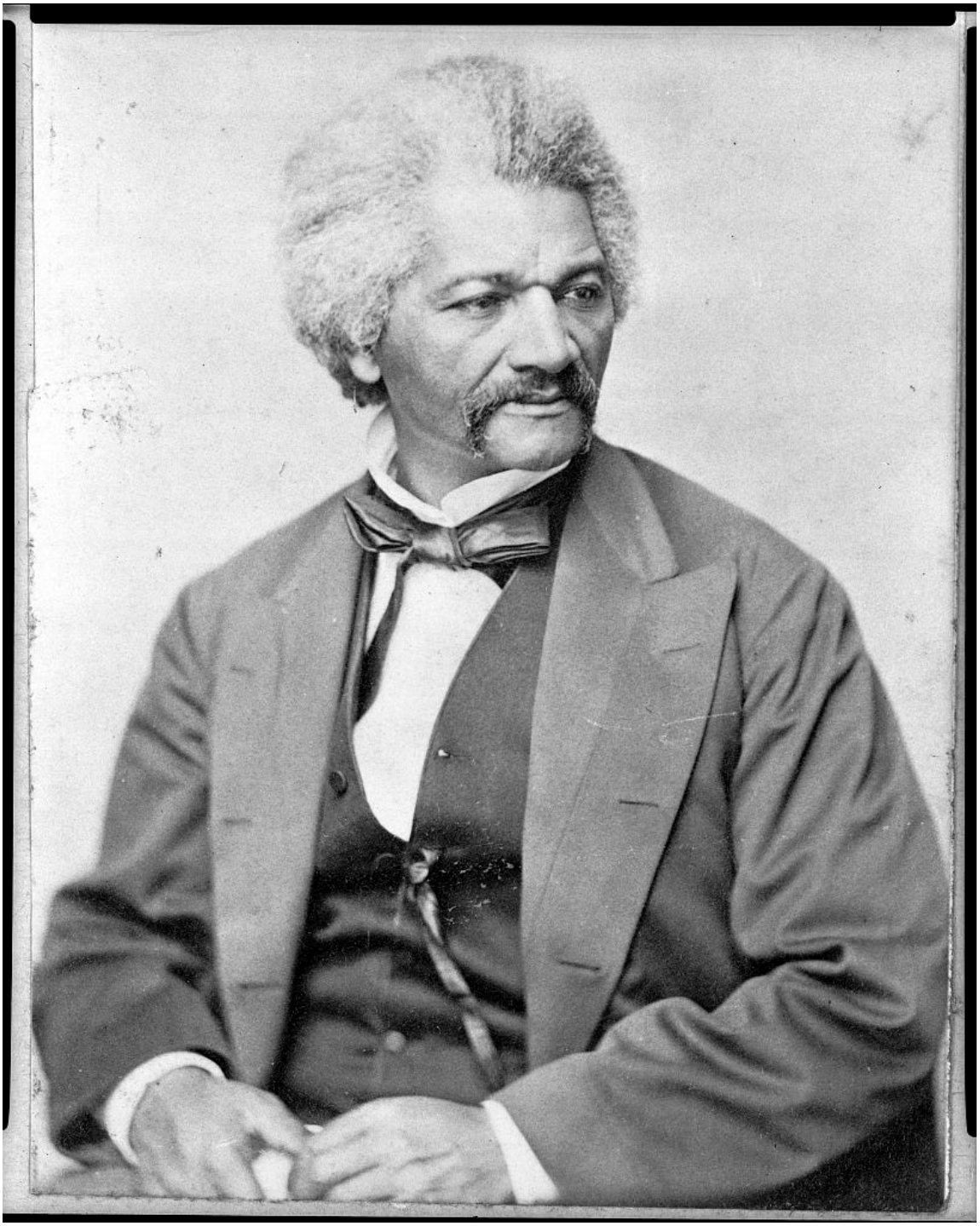

Fig. 1. George Francis Schreiber (1803-1892), *[Frederick Douglass, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing right]*. 26 April 1870. Albumen print. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (2004671911).

Fig. 2. Unknown photographer. *Cane Cutters in Jamaica*. ca, 1800. Album print. 220 x 175 mm. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Michael Graham-Stewart Slavery Collection. Acquired with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund. (ZBA2613)

Fig.3. *Túma (with shooting bow and arrows),* ca. 1870-1880. Unknown medium. Unknown size. National Library of South Africa (INIL 17236).

Fig.4. *Photographic visiting card (sitter now anonymous),* F. Heldzinger studio, Cape Town, after 1861. Unknown medium. 11.5 x 6.5 cm. Courtesy of the National Library of South Africa.

Chapter I: Literature Review

Previous scholarly approaches to the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath photograph exist as yearlong undergraduate research projects undertaken by the 2018 and 2019 Oxford Research Scholar (ORS) cohorts, working under art historian, Dr. Tasha Dobbin-Bennett for her "Visual Narratives of Early Emory" project.[11] Three students from the 2018 ORS cohort digitized the Culbreath collection, amongst others in the Oxford College archives, and conducted preliminary research on the social life of the Emory students photographed in the collection. The 2018 cohort's findings provided me with a starting point to analyze the Culbreath collection. As a member of the 2019 ORS cohort, Dr. Dobbin-Bennett assigned the Culbreath collection to me as an independent project.

During that iteration of this research, I first followed the approach of the 2018 cohort, who primarily focused on how the Culbreath photographs highlighted social life of Emory College students in the early-twentieth century. Like the previous cohort, I recognized that the inscriptions on the backsides of the photo mountings pointed to intimate friendships between students. As I worked through the 2018 cohort's findings, alongside my visual analyses, I concluded within the Kappa Alpha Order (Kappa Alpha) fraternity network in the early-twentieth century.[12] Due to the limited scope and time of the ORS program, after I completed this initial investigation, I still longed to further examine the photographs and the history and significance of the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity that was frequently referenced in the messages on the backside of the images.

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[11] The author was a member of the 2019 Oxford Research Scholar cohort.
[12] Tiera Ndlovu, *Fraternally Yours: Examining Early Emory Social Life Through the Culbreath Collection*, unpublished (2019).

Since I initially concluded that the Culbreath photographs reflected social relationships within the fraternity, I sought to unpack the shared goals, interests, and ideas of Kappa Alpha that made joining the fraternity an attractive option for students. My desire to investigate more led me to examine the fraternity's major publications from the early-twentieth century: the 1915 and 1922 directories. These directories include member rolls for each chapter and also provide the history of the organization. The histories of Kappa Alpha are littered with racist and white supremacist ideologies and there are disturbing ties to the Ku Klux Klan present in both directories. Most explicitly, the 1922 directory declares commonality with the KKK's values, stating:

> "At the time in 1866 when we were organizing, in the academic sphere, for the defense of Southern culture, another organization, the Ku Klux Klan, was forming in the political and economic spheres, to overthrow the carpet-bag governments that were bankrupting the Southern states. The Klan soon achieved its object [sic] and disbanded in 1869. Its mission was ended. Not so ours. Ours is a subtler task. The maintenance of the spirit of Southern youth on a high plane of principle and conduct is a perpetual interest and duty."[13]

During the Oxford Research Scholar program, I concluded that the Culbreath photographs were reflections of social relationships at Emory College. Building from this understanding of photographs as reflections of society, I shift my focus in this thesis to analyze the visual components that reflect the racist ideologies of the Kappa Alpha fraternity. Using an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical and visual analysis, my investigations will address the twenty-six early-twentieth century photographs of the Culbreath collection in relation to three key themes: race, gender, and power.

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[13] Kappa Alpha Order, and William Bloxham Crawford, *Directory of the Kappa Alpha Order, 1865-1922*. https://archive.org/details/directoryofkappa01kapp, 14.

Colonial Gazes and Photographic Presentations

My study begins, then, with investigations into how, across different times and different spaces, photography acts as what art historians Shawn Michelle Smith, Krista Thompson, and John Peffer describe as a racially inflected act. Particularly, Peffer argues that at the same time that photography gained popularity, the European bourgeois class began to solidify a "characteristic materialism" rooted in the visual presentation of a "singular, 'civilized, and modern character."[14]

Cultural historian Linda Haverty-Rugg describes photography as both an effective way to document news and "facts" while also allowing individuals to "*forge* a photographic self-image through a canny manipulation of photographers and the economic and cultural institutions present (emphasis added)."[15] From the advent of photography in the mid-nineteenth century, the camera exists within the paradox that Haverty-Rugg highlights. A photography captures a singular moment in time and space, which at best may be evidence of a real-time event and at worst, a forged reality that exploits the process of history-making that Michel Rolph-Truillot details in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

The most common forged self-image was achieved when middle-class individuals transformed into the visual imagery associated with bourgeois status, seen in part through formalwear, like the attire worn by students in the Culbreath photographs. The portability and reproduction capabilities of photographs furthered the potential for individuals to share their new self-image. However, the control over one's portraits was often only afforded to white Western communities and assisted in the maintenance of

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[14] John Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid*, University of Minnesota Press (Minneapolis), 2009, 244.
[15] Linda Haverty-Rugg, *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago), 2007, 14.

racialized hierarchies. This aspect of maintaining superiority remains crucial to my investigations, as Kappa Alpha similarly sought to subtly maintain "the spirit of Southern youth."

In the mid-nineteenth century, American portraits varied from the global colonial-based trends. As art historian Shawn Michelle Smith discusses, individuals in antebellum portraits developed their own modes of visually signaling privilege. Before the Civil War, being photographed in private and gendered domestic spheres represented a form of American cultural privilege. However, as the nation rebuilt after Emancipation and Reconstruction, Smith highlights an increasing racialization of portraits of white elite and middle-class communities. Rather than depending on gendered spaces in their portraits, as they once did, formal wear and stoic facial expressions rooted in eugenics gained popularity towards the turn-of-the-century.[16] Post-Civil War era photography emerged with a renewed sense of racial distinction seen in British colonial images. Furthermore, by engaging with these visual signals of identity to claim racial privilege, American whiteness secured "its cultural power by seeming to be nothing at all, by being invisible."[17]

Gendered and Racialized Spaces

Though the photographs in the Culbreath collection were taken after the transition from gendered spaces as visual symbols of cultural privilege, the images remain starkly gendered as no photos show women, even in the outdoor shots around the city of Oxford. While the college was not co-educational in the early-twentieth

[16] Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture, (*Princeton University Press: Princeton), 1999, 64.
[17] Shawn Michelle Smith, "Baby's Picture is Always Treasured" in *The Nineteenth-century Visual Culture Reader* edited by Vanessa R. Schwartz, Jeannene M. Przyblyski, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 369.

century, women helped maintain student dormitory houses, from 1859 when the Board of Trustees closed all campus dormitories because they had become "facilities for mischief."[18] It is telling, then, that the Culbreath images do not show any aspects of this outside network. Rather, the majority of the photos and inscriptions focus inward on the Kappa Alpha fraternity.

In *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities*, Nicholas Syrett suggests that fraternity prospects and members across the nation in the late nineteenth-century were "keenly aware of the tangible benefits" afforded to members of a national fraternal organization. [19] Amongst a growing network of alumni at the turn of the century, fraternities often founded their own halls, complete with guest rooms and restaurants for active and dues-paying alumni. These halls served first as gathering places and second as ways to provide spaces that ensured the "preservation of male power" through a gendered "male sanctuary."[20] In this thesis, I will investigate this notion of sameness during my visual analysis, as I compare and contrast formal compositions in each image, the student's attire, and the inscriptions on the backsides of the images. The Culbreath collection depicts the gendered space of their fraternity.

Former Oxford College of Emory University professor Mark Auslander explores a parallel field to Syrett's: the intentional construction of white, male spaces within universities across the United States in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In *The Accidental Slaveowner*, Auslander focuses specifically on Emory College's presence in the city of Oxford, and he highlights the connections between the

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[18] Gary Hauk, *A Legacy of Heart and Mind: Emory Since 1836* (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 1999), 16.
[19] Nicholas L. Syrett. *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 82.
[20] Syrett, *The Company He Keeps, 79*.

lives of enslaved laborers, Emory College, and the surrounding city of Oxford from the 1800s to present day. In particular, Auslander describes the construction of memory from the Civil War and Reconstruction Eras and brings attention to the inherent disparities in memory that arise from various social stratifications such as gender and race. "How did the emergence of the college impact the suppression of the city's Antebellum past?" Auslander asks.[21] And further, Auslander questions if the split of the Methodist Church relates to the college's presence or influence interaction with the local community, which I address through an analysis of Emory's history as a Methodist institution.

By the turn of the 20th century, "nearly all" African Americans in the Oxford community worked for Emory College. Once enslaved to the foundational leaders at Emory, the Black community of Oxford held part-time and full-time positions as groundskeepers, cooks, janitors, masons, or in "off-campus" housing as servants from Emancipation until 1914. As Auslander writes, "African Americans were vital participants in the College, contributing with pride and dignity to the education of students and the mission of Emory in innumerable ways."[22] Yet the documentation of the "vital" African American presence, through photographs and written history, is scarce. In contrast, photographs and written memoirs of white students, faculty, and community members are abundant. As I engaged with the twenty-six photographs in the Culbreath collection, I wondered about how Auslander's discussions on the absence of

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[21] Mark Auslander, *The Accidental Slaveowner: Revisiting a Myth of Race and finding an American Family,* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 16.
[22] Mark Auslander, "'Dreams deferred': African Americans in the history of old Emory" in *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory University,* edited by Gary Hauk and Sally Wolff King (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 2010), 16.

African Americans in Emory's written histories and how the Culbreath Collection aids in the erasure of African Americans from Emory's pictorial history.

Chapter II: Visual Analysis

One peculiarity of the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath photograph collection is that images of the namesakes of the collection, Ervin Yarbrough Culbreath and Claude Culbreath, do not appear, or at least have not been identified through inscriptions, in any images. Instead, the collection is attributed to the Culbreath brothers because the photos were donated to the Oxford College Archives of the Oxford College Library in 1980 by Claude's daughter, Ms. Virginia Dixon Culbreath Barron.[23] Inscriptions on the reverse of the photographs include personal notes addressed to one brother or the other. The messages suggest that the Culbreath brothers were socially connected with many of their peers, perhaps through their fraternity, Kappa Alpha Order, as the collection's photographs include upper- and lower-classmen enrolled in Emory College from 1901-1907.

Knowledge of the Culbreath brothers' time at Emory comes from a cross-analysis of photographs and written historical documents. The cross-analysis indicates the Culbreath brothers presented themselves as and were regarded as high-achieving and well-connected students. Ervin Yarbrough Culbreath enrolled in Emory College in 1901. His younger brother, Claude Culbreath, entered the college in 1906. Though their time at Emory never overlapped, both brothers earned admission into honor societies at the college and joined the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity.[24]

Both Ervin and Claude were active on campus outside of the classroom: Ervin served as a creative writer for the student publication, *The Emory Phoenix*. Sports

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[23] Kerry Bowden, "Culbreath Collection Acquisition," email, 2019.
[24] Clayton McGahee, *Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath photograph collection* [finding aid], (Oxford: Oxford College Library). Retrieved https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/OX-MSS036/?keywords=Culbreath.

writers for *The Phoenix* also repeatedly recognize Claude as a successful track athlete. Despite their purported academic successes while at Emory, neither brother matriculated. Ervin's studies ended during his junior year, and Claude's terminated following his sophomore year.[25] What might have prompted each brother's early departure from the college? Furthermore, when and why did the brothers receive formal photographs of their classmates?

The Ervin Yarborough and Claude Culbreath photograph collection features twenty-six mounted silver gelatin prints: twenty individual studio portraits and six group images.[26] I have structured my visual analysis to follow these two groupings: individual portraits and group portraits. Nineteen of the individual portraits show Emory College students, and the remaining one presents that image of an Emory College professor. Thirteen of the individual portraits bear inscriptions addressed to "Ervin" or simply "Culbreath" on the reverse. The notes to Ervin detail social experiences on campus, from interactions with his peers in shared dormitories to his connection with fraternity brothers through the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity.

Individual Portraits

The most notable commonalties across the portraits are their similar mountings: olive green rectangular frames with embossing in the bottom left-hand corner with Stephenson & Moore. Based on the embossments, Atlanta-based photographers, B. Frank Moore and William Stephenson, captured and printed the seated portraits at their

[25] Laura Cortina, Ellie Agler, and Annalys Hanson, "Visual Narratives of Early Emory Student Life at Oxford", Lecture, Oxford, GA, April 25, 2018.
[26] Following the classifications set by the Library of Congress, silver gelatin prints have visible ghost imaging, which is visible on the reverse of each image. Additionally, the Early Emory Class Photograph project, which digitized and classified over 1,100 class photographs state Stephenson & Co most commonly produced silver gelatin prints.

studio named Stephenson & Moore, also known as Moore & Stephenson and Stephenson & Co.[27] Inscriptions on the reverse of the mountings also make establishing additional subgroups easy. Of the images with inscriptions, only three do not reference membership in the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity. Therefore, I have designated two subgroups of portraits: Kappa Alpha Order members and those outside of the fraternal organization.

A photograph marked on the reverse with the name Martin D. Callahan shows a three-quarters view of man, from mid-chest upwards and slightly turned to the viewer's right (fig. 5a). The monotone background suggests the photographers captured the image of Callahan an indoor studio with a solid-colored backdrop. Callahan's facial expression is stoic and lacks any clear emotions. Callahan's hair is parted through the middle and slicked down on each side of his face. He is dressed in formal wear: a suit jacket, vest, and tie are all visible.

On the reverse of the picture (fig. 5b), a handwritten note in pencil reads:

> Dear Culbreath: Our associations together at the Stewart House have been very pleasant and I am pleased to think of you as a friend. May your efforts in your life works prove successful. Remember me as your sincere friend, Marvin D. Callahan. Emory 1904[28]

In the bottom left corner of the photograph's reverse, "Emory 1904" appears. This year marker has been used by archivists at Oxford College to identify the photo's date rather than a class year, since Callahan graduated in 1905. For my analysis, the

[27] Emory University Archives. *Emory Phoenix*. 1904.
[28] All transcriptions of cursive text are the author's own.

date solidifies that Callahan is addressing Ervin, rather than Claude, since Claude was not a student at Emory in 1904.[29] The inscriptions in pencil appear on thick, stiff board mounting. Callahan's affectionate message suggests that he and Ervin became close acquaintances through the Stewart House. In the early 20th century, Emory College did not have an extensive on-campus dormitory system in place to support all enrolled students. Instead, local families in Oxford, Georgia, rented out rooms to students. One of these external dormitories was the Stewart House.[30]

The seemingly personal and genuine message to Ervin Culbreath shares similarities with inscriptions found on the mountings of identical photo prints of Callahan in other Oxford College and Emory University photograph collections. For example, in the Hugh Sloan collection, which includes Emory College students' photographs from 1904, a duplicate print of Callahan's Culbreath collection image appears (fig. 6a).[31] Handwriting in pencil on the reverse reads (fig. 6b):

> Dear Sloan: May the highest success crown your efforts
> through all the coming years. Remember me as one who will
> always rejoice at your good fortune. Your friend & classmate,
> Marvin D. Callahan. West Point, GA. Emory 1904

The signature in the inscription looks to come from the same hand as the signature accompanying the note addressed to Culbreath, and "Emory 1904" also appears in the lower left corner of the mounting. Although the author of the inscription does not mention a shared dormitory, Callahan's message flows in the same manner as

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[29] Emory University Archives, *Catalogue of Emory College*, Oxford, Georgia. 1904.
[30] Wilbur Allen Carlton, *In Memory of Old Emory*. Printed by Emory University, 1962.
[31] Marvin D. Callahan, 1904, *Hugh Sloan Photograph Collection,* Oxford College Archives of the Oxford College Library.

the Culbreath note. Both statements include a parting wish for good luck in their futures, and both mention Callahan's pleasure to call each individual a friend. However, Callahan does address each peer differently: with Ervin Culbreath, he calls upon their shared experience in the off-campus dormitory, the Stewart House. Callahan's note to Sloan lacks a similar connection through campus life, but instead offers more encouraging language by using the verb "rejoice" in response to celebrating Sloan's future success and "good fortune." Callahan also include a city in his message to Sloan: perhaps, his hometown or future residence. Beyond these variances, Callahan's core sentiments remain the same.

As I sought out additional prints of Callahan's portrait, I noticed a pattern beginning to develop through Callahan's inscriptions to his peers. In Callahan's portrait in the Emory University Photography Collection, to an "Armstrong" (fig. 7)[32]:

> Dear Armstrong, our associations together have been very pleasant and I shall always remember you as a friend. May the highest success crown your efforts through all the coming years. Your friend & classmate, Marvin D. Callahan, West Point, GA, 1904.

In his message to Armstrong, Callahan pulls aspects of his notes to Ervin Culbreath and Hugh Sloan, to produce a characteristic writing style that I initially thought was unique to Callahan. However, different authors of messages on the reverse sides of portraits throughout the Culbreath collection follow Callahan's writing style, as seen on the portraits signed by Asa W. Candler (fig. 8a) and J.M. Middlebrooks (fig. 9a).

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[32] Marvin D. Callahan, 1904, *Emory University Photograph Collection*, Stuart A. Rose Archives.

Both images attributed to Candler and Middlebrooks were captured by Stephenson and Moore, in a studio, like Callahan's portrait. Candler is dressed in formal wear complete with a tie tack and jacket pin, facing slightly towards the viewer's left side, somewhat smirking. Candler's message is shorter than Callahan's, writing (fig. 8b):

> Dear "Puss," If ever at any time you need a true friend and a brother just call on yours devotedly, Asa W Candler May 25, 1904.

Candler's message appears more personal than Callahan's. The note signed with Candler's name addresses Ervin with an assumed nickname and distinguishes him as a "true friend and a brother." The "yours devotedly" before the signature hints at a personal friendship between the message's author and its recipient more intimate than the one between the author of "your friend & classmate" and its recipient. A beige mounting with oval viewing window frames the image of Candler whereas the other mountings in the collection have olive green frames and rectangle viewing windows.

J. M. Middlebrooks' photo more closely resembles Callahan's positioning, slightly facing towards the viewer's right, dressed in formal wear, with a stoic expression. On the reverse of J. M. Middlebrooks' portrait (fig. 9b), neatly written in black ink, it reads:

> Dear Ervin - As fraters our associations have been nothing but the most happiest and most pleasant to me. I shall ever remember your congenial and happy disposition. May your every undertaking be crowned with success and may happiness be yours - believe me to be your friend - Your loving brother in Kappa Alpha J. M. Middlebrooks Emory '04

Similar to Callahan, Middlebrooks writes "Emory '04" in the lower left-hand corner, on the reverse of the studio imprint. Middlebrooks goes into detail about Ervin, noting his "congenial" composure. In comparison to Callahan, Middlebrooks' message reads as a heartfelt farewell. In addition, he is the only student to address Ervin by his first name. His closing sentence truly embodies his friendship with Ervin, rooted in the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity.[33] Like Callahan, J. M. Middlebrooks' photograph also appears in the Sloan Collection as a duplicate and relevant comparison (fig. 10). However, unlike Callahan's repetitive note, J. M. Middlebrooks' message to Hugh Sloan starkly contrasts his message to Culbreath.

Written in ink on the reverse of the mounting, Middlebrooks says:

> Dear Sloan - I shall never forget the sweet associations we experienced together at college. May much success and happiness crown your every undertaking is the sincere wish of your friend and classmate. J. M. Middlebrooks Emory '04

First, it must be noted that unlike the neat message to Culbreath, Middlebrooks' handwriting here is sloppy. In its entirety, the message does not stay within the margins of the image window, whereas in the Culbreath photo, Middlebrooks pays close attention to these margins. There is a variation in the line density throughout the letter, suggesting that the message was rushed. In addition, the word "college" is significantly drawn out, further suggesting that Middlebrooks rushed the note and simply wanted to fill the remaining space. Furthermore, Middlebrooks uses the same terminology as

[33] Kappa Alpha Order, and William Bloxham Crawford. 1922. *Directory of the Kappa Alpha Order, 1865-1922*. https://archive.org/details/directoryofkappa01kapp.

Callahan in this message: both students utilize the verb "crown" when discussing their classmates' future efforts and success.

At best, this common writing style suggests that students were naturally collegial and polite with all of their peers and that these photographs were, despite repeated messages, genuinely personal keepsakes. With this, each individual's presentation in their best formal clothing signals them as dignified individuals of the college. At worst, this pattern within messages may be an example of a group attempt, whether it originates at the level of the class of 1904 or at the national level, to construct an environment where certain social characteristics were attributed to all students, even if the reality was far from that.

Verbiage is not the only aspect that repeats itself in the collection. Seen best in the portrait of Middlebrooks, Kappa Alpha members boast a combination of honor society pins and a thin "KA" pin. These pins may function as visual cues that these students are intelligent and well-connected socially. They serve as visual confirmations of characteristics of ideal Emory students: high-achieving, well-kept, always groomed, and congenial.[34] But these assumptions I have shared are all orchestrated realities, aided by what cultural historian Linda Haverty-Rugg describes as the "canny manipulation" of cultural institutions, like Emory College and Kappa Alpha.

As explored in the previous chapter, Nicholas Syrett discusses that an integral aspect to maintaining masculine dominance in American fraternities in the American South rested in the embrace of Lost Cause ideologies.[35] Of these ideologies, academic success lay at the core. The Stuart A. Rose Archives holds a booklet from the early 20th

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[34] Wilbur Allen Carlton, *In Memory of Old Emory*. (Atlanta: Emory University, 1962). 15.
[35] Nicholas L. Syrett. *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 82.

century entitled “Kappa Alpha Test Questions.” The booklet includes test questions for courses Emory offered to students, from first-years to seniors. The list of courses covered in the booklet includes but is not limited to Bible, rhetoric, geography, geology, physiology, logic, calculus, mythology, and history. While the booklet’s intended use is unknown, the questions are written verbatim from exams and span semesters from 1895-1905 and potentially used to help Kappa Alpha members cheat in their courses. The test questions support Syrett’s claim that prospects had knowledge of “tangible” benefits. Kappa Alpha members used blank pages in the booklet as sporadic signature pages: one in particular belongs to an E Y. Culbreath, presumably Ervin Yarbrough Culbreath, one of the collection’s namesakes (fig. 11). The signatures in test questions booklet further suggests that it was actively used by the Culbreath brothers as a resource. This challenges the validity of the honor societies and various academic achievements by the Culbreaths, as well as their counterparts in the larger group photograph. Like the common messages of congeniality, I began to wonder if the Culbreath’s academic success was earned or if it was manipulated to fit a particular profile of a successful Emory student and ideal Kappa Alpha Order member.

Group portraits

As I approached the second grouping of photographs, group images, I kept in mind my lingering questions about the visual construction of a particular type of student. There are six group images in the collection, five of which are situated outdoors. The other one is set in a studio. Of these group images, four are shots of students in sports gear or near a stream.

One group photo shows seventeen unidentified men, once again in formal wear (fig. 12). The men range in age and appear to faculty and students from the sub-

freshman class to the senior class. Beyond the lack of identification, my focus on this photo is how these men are presented. No one is smiling or showing any form of emotion at all. Rather, each individual is poised and positioned strategically. There are five men in the front row of the photo, who are seated, with their hands on their laps. The remaining men are positioned in two standing rows. Other than one individual resting his arm on a seated individual, there is no physical contact between these men. Their positioning and overall presentation exhibits power, while placing them in the upper class. Each student is also wearing lapel pins similar to the pins described in Middlebrooks' portrait.

A second group photo (fig. 13) shows an unidentified group of five males, dressed again in full formal wear and hats, posing near a waterfall. There is some visible silver mirroring present in the lower half of the photograph. The individuals are either sitting at the bank of the stream or standing on rocks within the stream. Their poses here differ from their seated portraits. Unlike the studio shots, the group uses the natural environment to position themselves, and notably, they are carrying smoking pipes. As historian Sean O'Connell writes, "tobacco was placed alongside a number of commodities, such as fine wine, tailored clothing, and mechanical gadgets, that could be appreciated only by tasteful and rational, bourgeois male."[36] If the students did smoke is unknown and irrelevant. What matters more is that the inclusion of the pipe as a prop demonstrates their intention to be associated with the bourgeois.

The mystery of this photograph also extends to its location. Considering that the stream is flowing, it is reasonable to assume that this photo was taken either at the

[36] Sean O'Connell, review of Matthew Hilton's *Smoking in British popular culture 1800-2000,* (London: Reviews in History, 2001), 2.

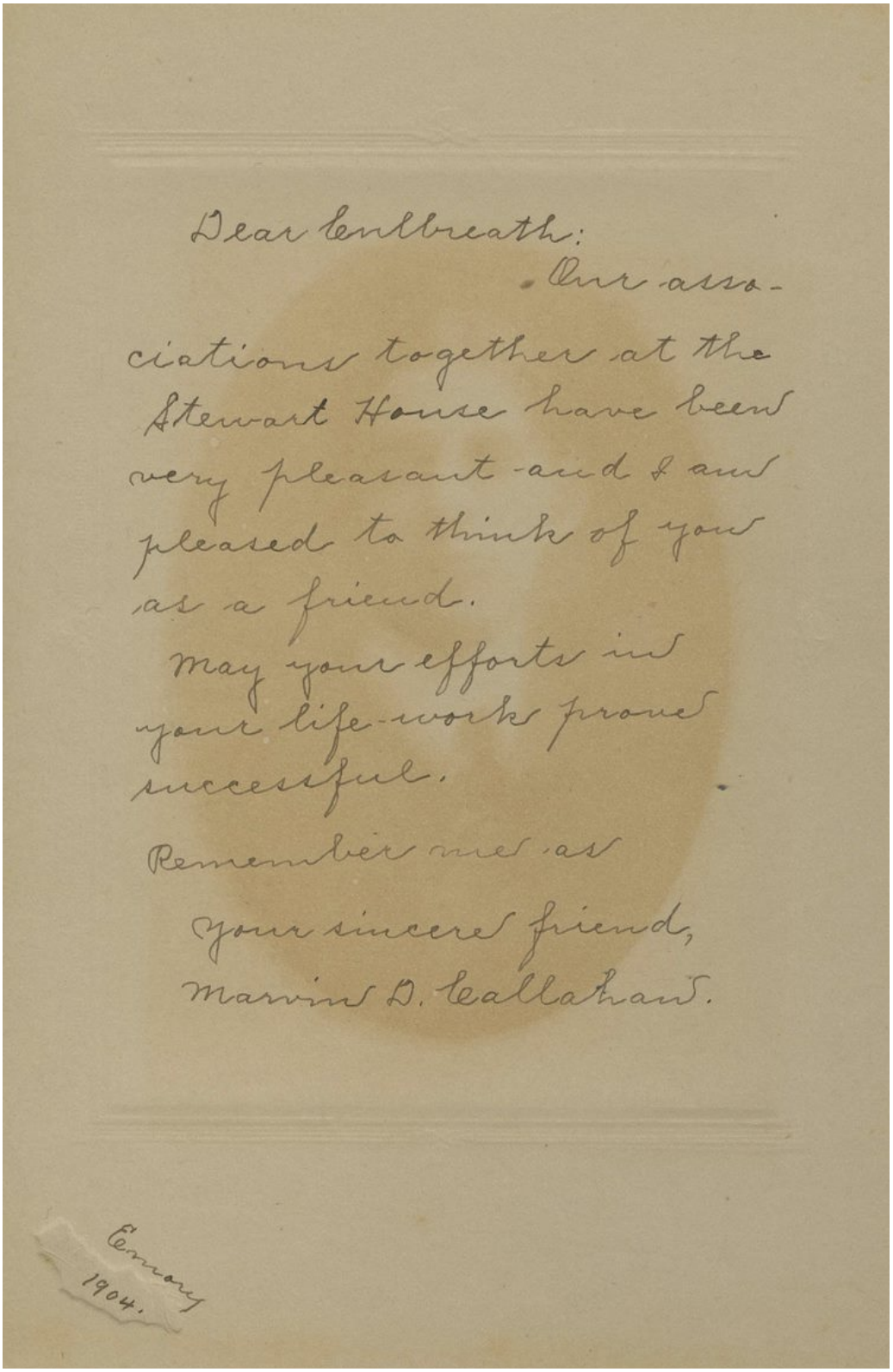
ending of the spring semester or the beginning of the fall semester. Since there are no streams that run through the campus in Oxford, I wondered about its location. As I sought to determine how far the students might have travelled to capture this view, I considered the distance since they are in full formal wear. I questioned the extent in which these students went to preserve their photographic self-image. Through connecting with Daniel Parson, an Oxford resident and the Oxford College farmer, I determined that this photo was taken off of Stagecoach Road, about a mile away from campus.[37] In the early 1900s, Emory students were not allowed to travel more than a mile away from campus without permission from the college's president.[38] The group of students, Kappa Alpha members, sought to get as far away as they could, without technically breaking the rules. The blatant exploitation of campus rules is also seen in the use of the test questions booklet.

An overview of the Emory University Photograph Collection uncovered similar outdoor photographs classified as "SAE" or Sigma Alpha Epsilon photos (figs. 14-15). The individuals in the SAE photograph are also dressed in formal wear, with hats and pipes: similar to those shown in the Culbreath image. What initially seemed to be an anomaly may in fact depict a commonality among early Emory's fraternal organizations. Therefore, these photos may demonstrate an expectation of behavior between fraternal brothers rather than a genuine form of connection.

[37] Daniel Parson (Oxford College farmer) in discussion with the author, April 2019.
[38] Kerry Bowden (Oxford College archivist) in discussion with the author, August 2018.

Chapter II Images:

Fig. 5a. Stephenson & Co, *Marvin D. Callahan*, 1904. Mounted silver gelatin print. Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.


Dear Lenlbreath:

Our associations together at the Stewart House have been very pleasant - and I am pleased to think of you as a friend.

May your efforts in your life-work prove successful.

Remember me as

Your sincere friend,

Marvin D. Callahan.

January 1904.

Fig. 5b. Reverse inscription from portrait of Marvin D. Callahan.

Fig. 6a. Stephenson & Co, *Marvin D. Callahan*, 1904. Silver gelatin print. Hugh Sloan Photograph Collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

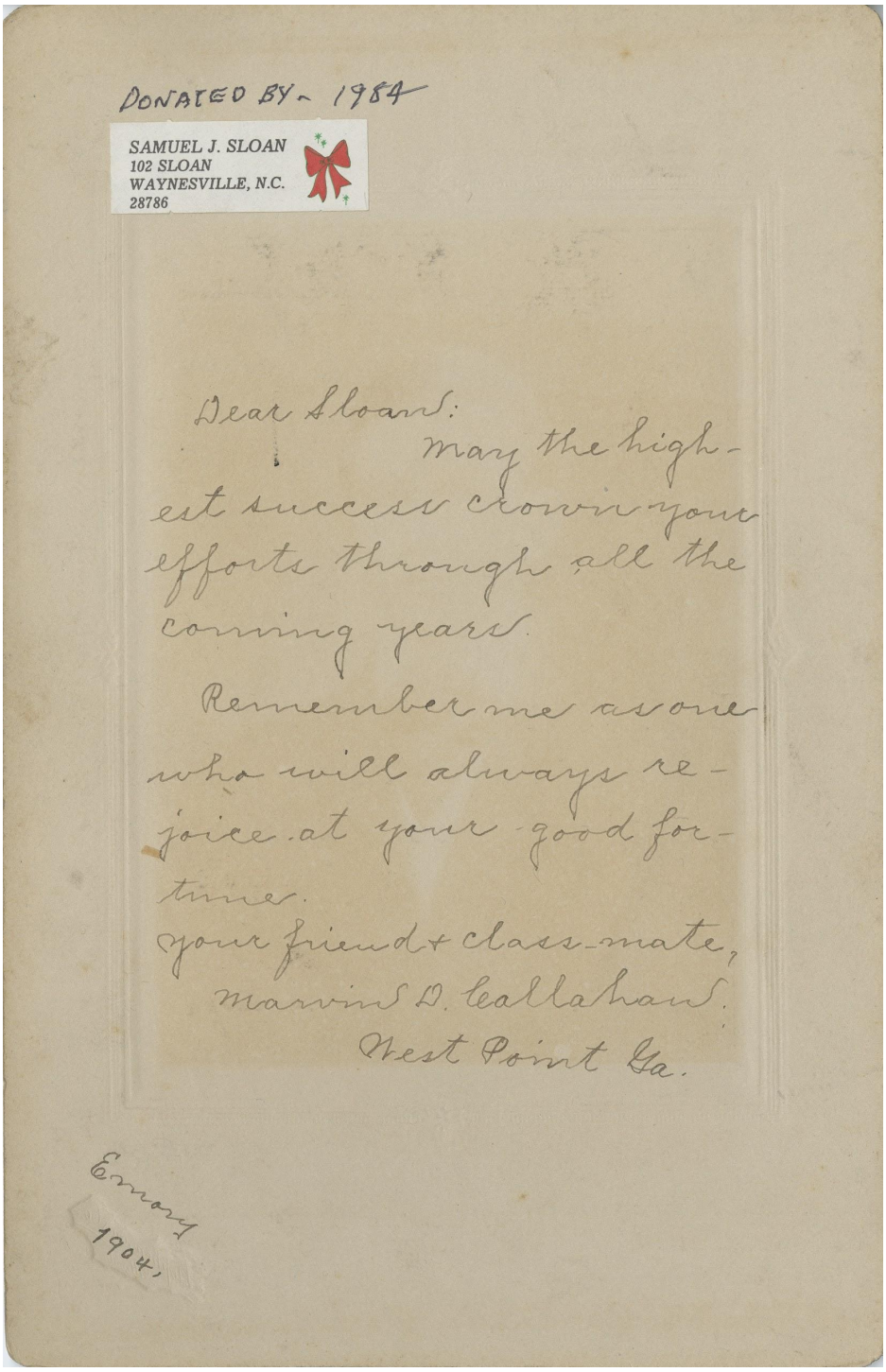


Fig 6b. Inscription from *Marvin D. Callahan* in the Hugh Sloan Photograph Collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

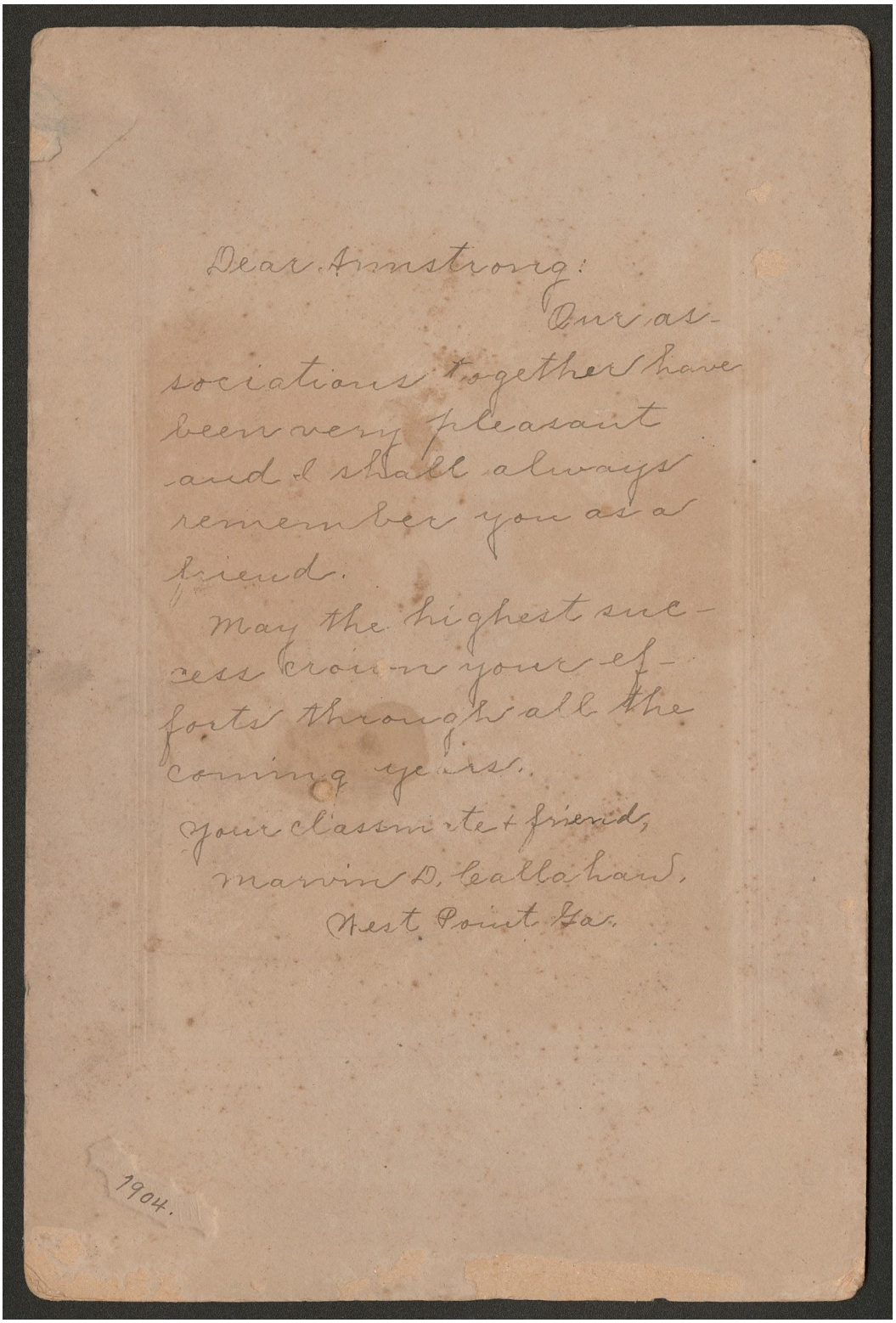


Fig. 7. Inscription from Marvin D. Callahan, Emory University Photograph Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Fig. 8a. Stephenson & Co, *Asa W. Candler,* 1904. Mounted silver gelatin print. Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

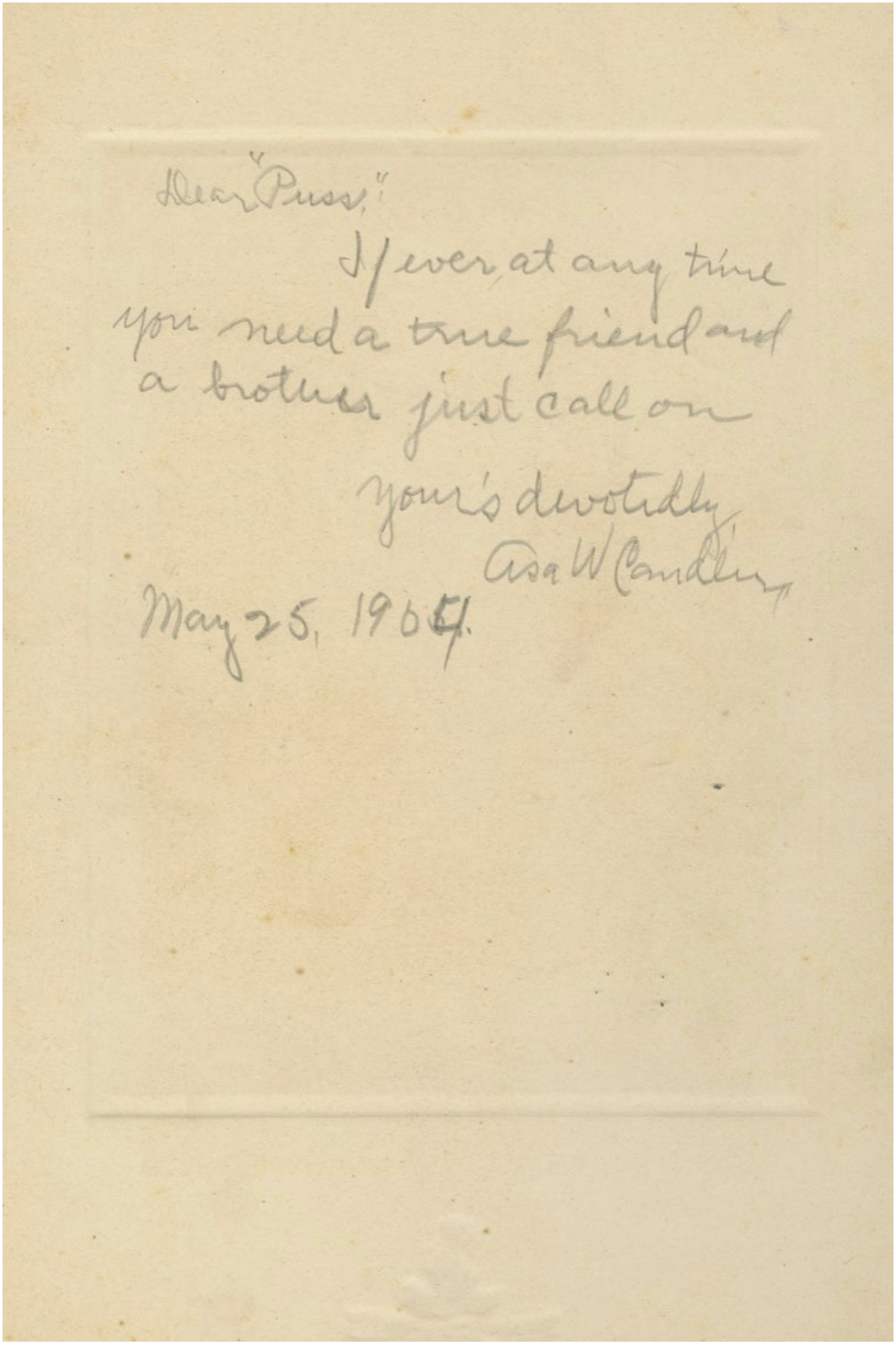


Fig. 8b. Reverse inscription from portrait of Asa W. Candler.

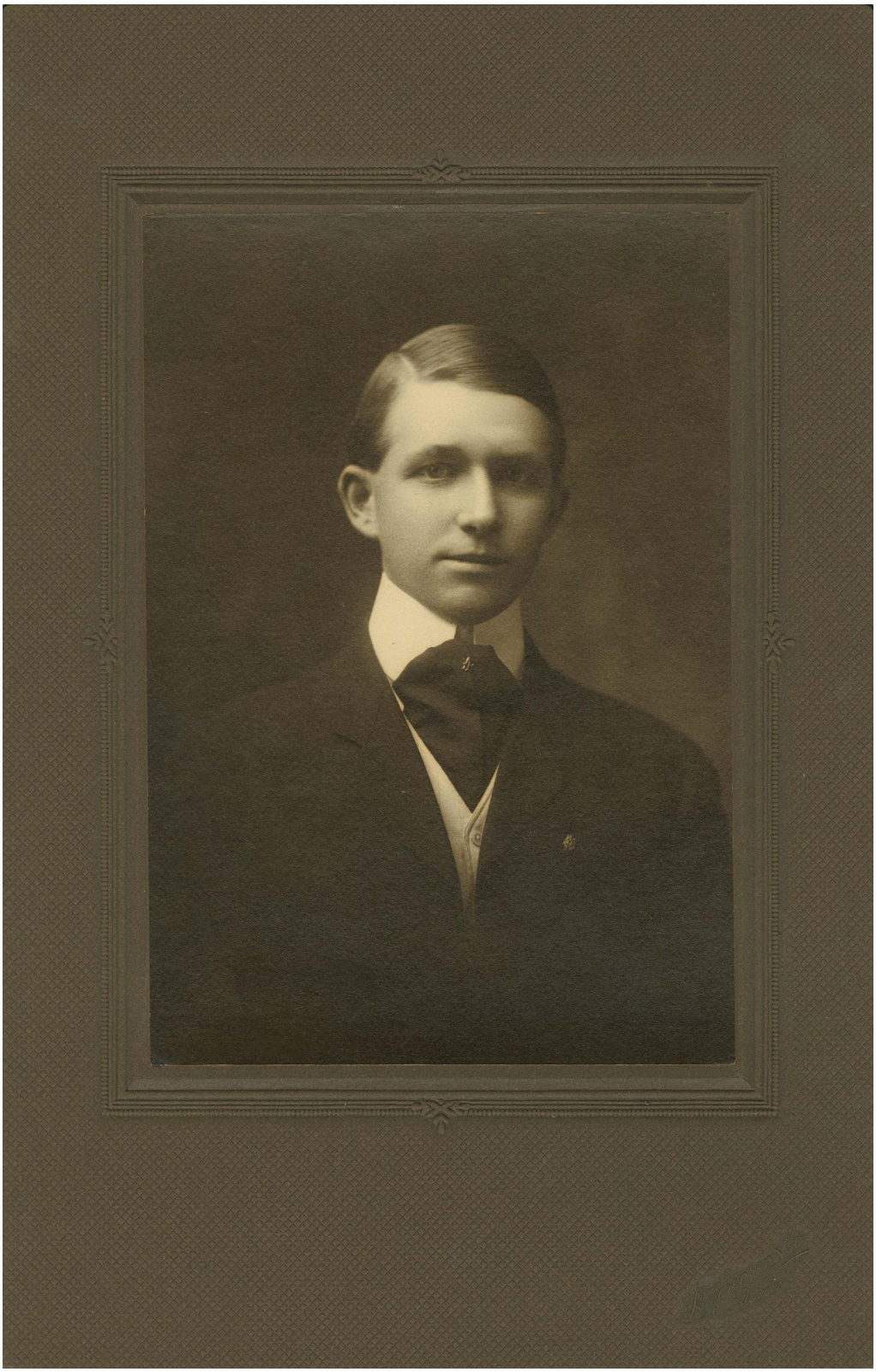


Fig. 9a. Stephenson & Co, *J. M. Middlebrooks,* 1904. Mounted silver gelatin print. Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

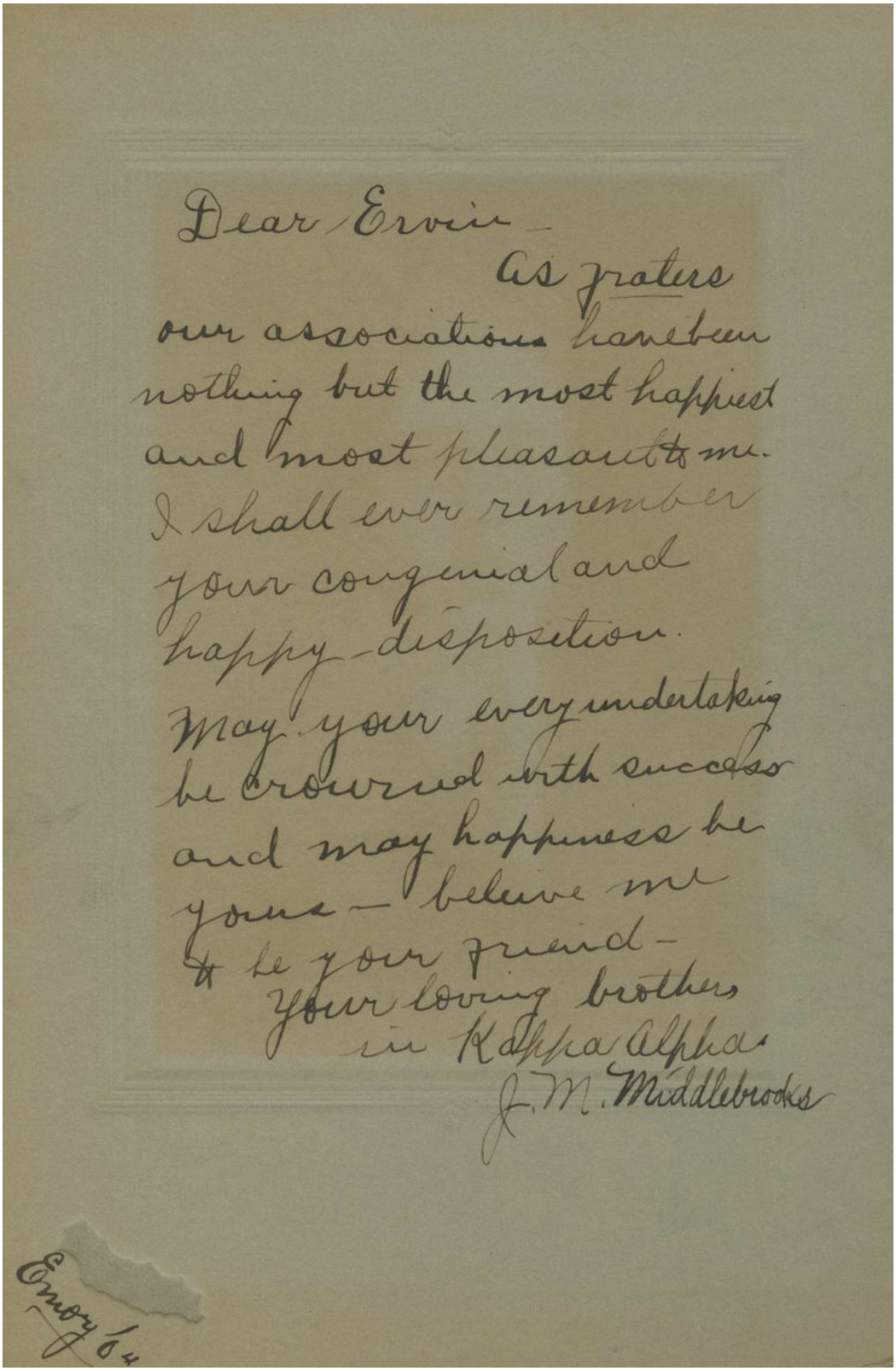


Fig. 9b. Reverse inscription from portrait of J. M. Middlebrooks.

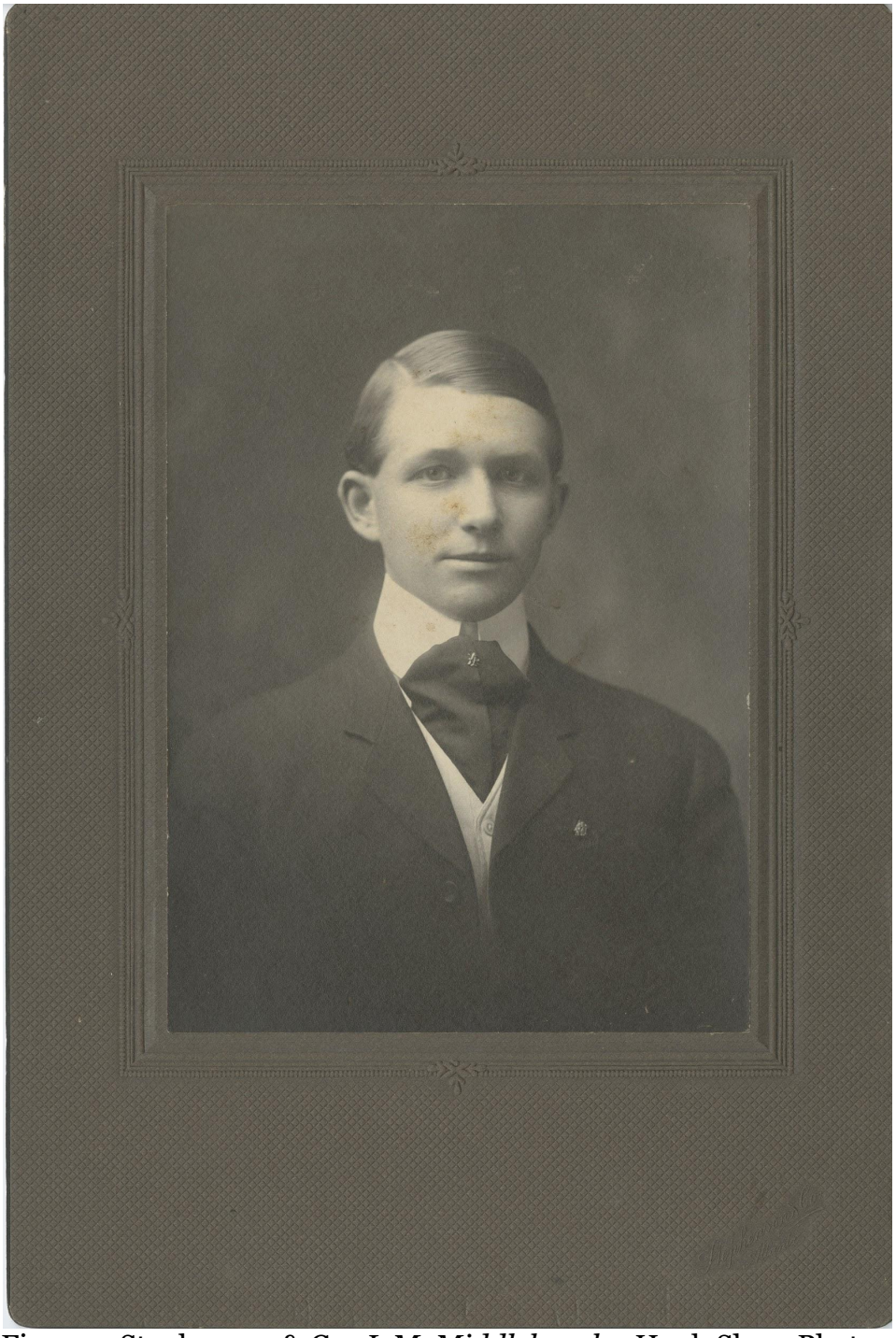


Fig. 10a. Stephenson & Co, *J. M. Middlebrooks*, Hugh Sloan Photograph Collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

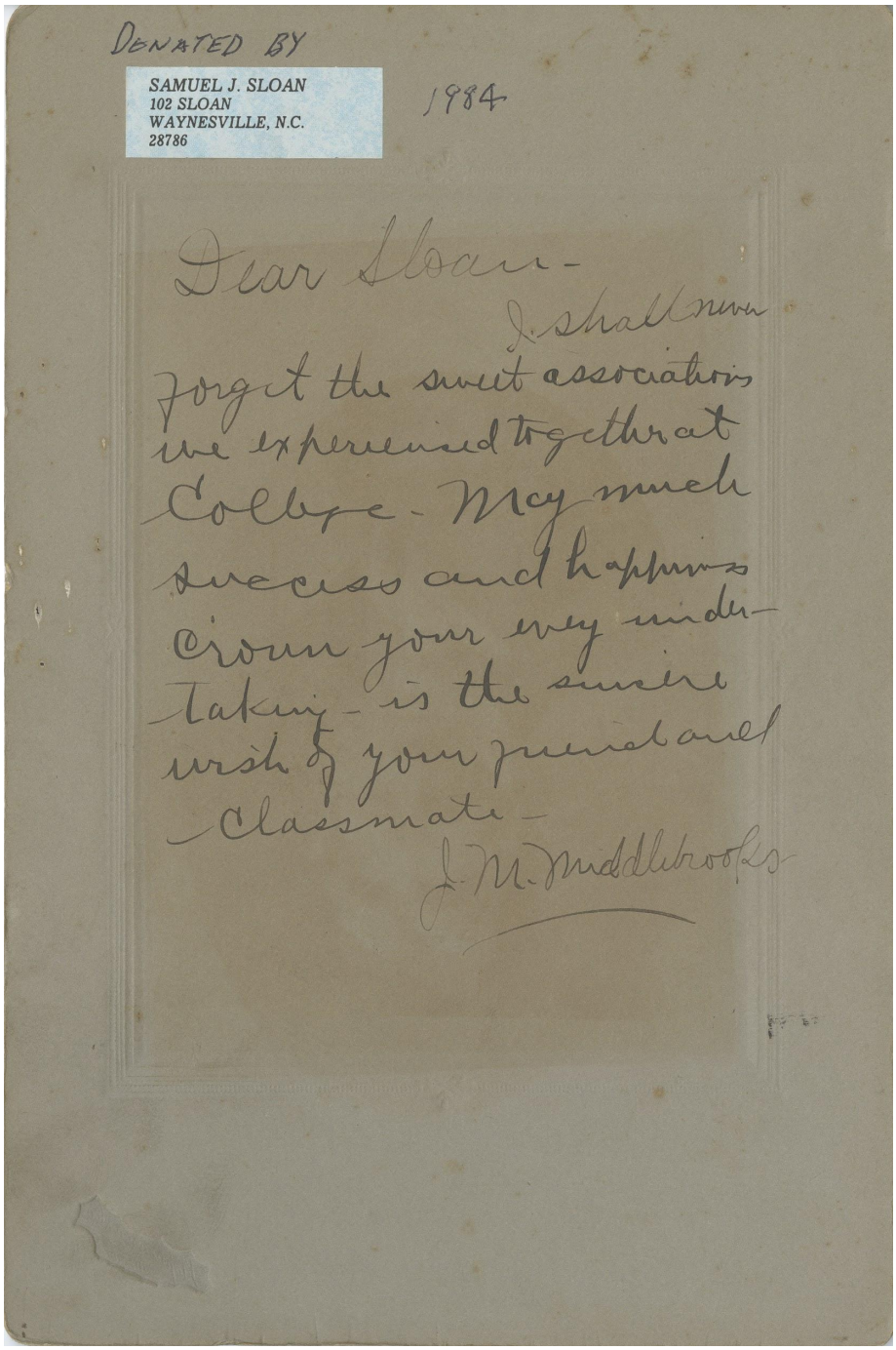


Fig. 10b. Reverse inscription from *J. M. Middlebrooks* in Hugh Sloan Photograph Collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

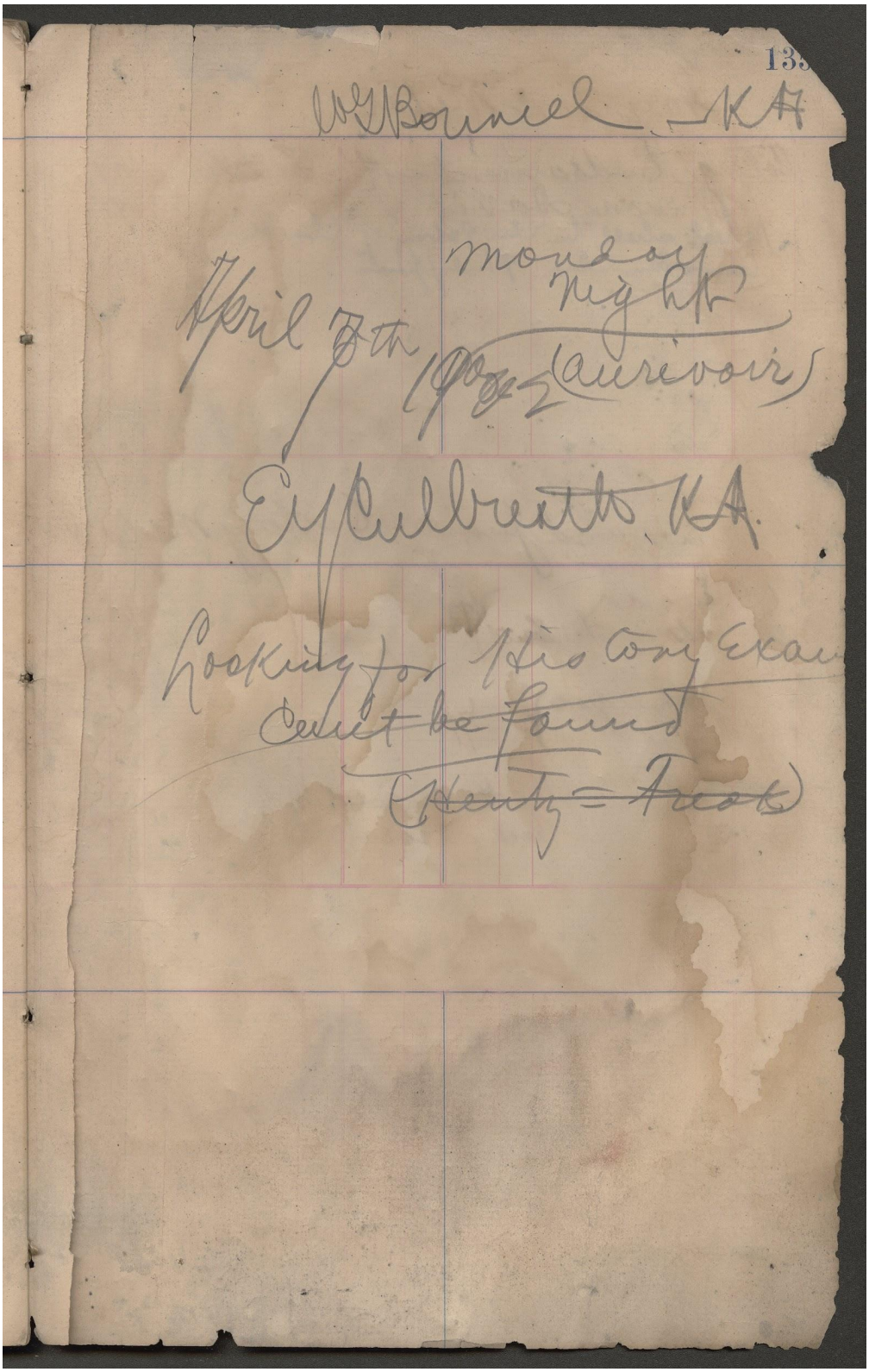


Fig 11. Scan of test booklet's signature page. *Kappa Alpha Test Questions*, Emory University Photograph Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Fig. 12. Stephenson & Co, *Unidentified group of students, posing for a formal photo*, undated. Silver gelatin print, Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

Fig. 13. Unknown photographer, *Unidentified group of students, posing near waterfall,* undated. Unknown medium. Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph collection, Oxford College Archives, Oxford College Library, Emory University.

Fig 14. Unknown photographer, *A group at waterfalls, SAE 1902-1904*, ca. 1902-1904, Emory University Photograph Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Fig. 15. Unknown photographer, *A group at waterfalls, SAE 1902-1904,* ca. 1902-1904, unknown medium. Emory University Photograph Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Chapter III: Historicizing the Photographs

While the Culbreath photos capture various singular moments in the early-twentieth century Georgia, the images are connected to both the social and political environments of Emory College and the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity. As I explored the underlying socio-political environments that influenced the founding of the college and the fraternity, my investigations became increasingly concerning as I uncovered troubling and deeply uncomfortable ties between Emory College, Kappa Alpha, and the Ku Klux Klan. Lost Cause ideologies fill the 1922 national Kappa Alpha directory. The directory also states that Kappa Alpha is organized with a mission parallel to the Ku Klux Klan, although the directory specifies Kappa Alpha engages in a "subtler task" within the academic sphere.

In this chapter, I trace the histories of the two social institutions connected to the collection: Emory College and the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity. Both institutions share complex intertwinement with racism in the American South. At Emory, the founders of the college were "without exception, slaveholders" that upheld racist ideologies throughout the nineteenth-century that fostered a social environment on campus that welcomed Kappa Alpha's outspoken racism.[39] Further, I argue that the racialized exclusion that lies at the foundation of Emory College and Kappa Alpha may exist in and throughout various social structures and mechanisms, like the Culbreath collection photographs.

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[39] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13. See also Mark Auslander, "Dreams Deferred: African Americans in the History of Old Emory," in *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory University,* edited by Gary Hauk and Sally Wolff King (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 2010), 14.

Rooted in Connection: Emory College & Methodism

My discussion begins then in outlining the historical intertwinement of racism, Georgia's Methodist Conference, and Emory College. Long before the first buildings were erected at Emory College, two men influenced the conception of a Methodist College in Georgia: John Wesley and Bishop John Emory. Wesley, the founder of Methodism in England, first visited Georgia on a missionary trip in 1735, almost a century before the College would be formally chartered.[40] Miserable from his unsuccessful attempts in spreading the Methodist faith in the American South, Wesley returned to England in 1777.[41] Despite Wesley's initial disappointment, over the next fifty years American Methodism, particularly in the American South, thrived. As the growth occurred, both British and American Methodists strived for a sense of connection, or "connectionalism" as written by Wesley in the *Book of Discipline*, between their congregations.[42] As Reverend John Tigert explained, "Mr. Wesley, in America no less than in England, was … the center of union. Connection with him was the living bond which held incipient American Methodism together." Theologian Russell Richey explains that in nineteenth and early twentieth century Methodism, connectionalism was "the essence of the system" and a key value of the religion.[43] The Methodist religious system consisted not only of a connection to the founder, John Wesley, but a connection in faith, in practice, and in education, with an emphasis on providing a Wesleyan education of which Emory was modeled after.

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[40] Gary Hauk, *A Legacy of Heart and Mind: Emory Since 1836* (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 1999), 1.
[41] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 1.
[42] Russell E. Richey, "Emory and Methodism," in *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory University,* edited by Gary Hauk and Sally Wolff King (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 2010), 352.
[43] Richey, *Emory and Methodism,* 352.

As a direct effort to remaining connected, the Methodist elders organized annual conferences to foster physical connection between the church also became commonplace. In 1820, Bishop John Emory traveled to one such meeting in England as a representative from the American Methodist Church. Bishop Emory continued to gain influence and respect among the congregation across the American East Coast, primarily through his vocal support of raising the standard of education of Methodists. Emory's accomplishments included the establishment of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.[44] Yet, what matters most in the story of Emory College is Bishop Emory's visit to Georgia for the Georgia Annual Methodist Conference in 1834. Little is known about the ideals Bishop Emory shared with Georgia Methodists, but it is inferred that he left a remarkable impression since just two years after Bishop Emory's visit, the state of Georgia granted a charter to the Methodist Episcopal Church for the development of a College that would be named in his honor, in December 1836.

The charter authorized the creation of Emory College on 1,400 acres north of Covington, Georgia, in a town established as Oxford.[45] The town's name once again called upon the legacy of connectionalism in Methodism as John Wesley's alma mater was the University of Oxford in Oxford, England. Ministers from the Methodist Georgia Conference, who served as town administrators, named all the roads in the town after Methodist bishops elected through 1816 in yet another notable gesture to connectionalism within the American Methodist Church.[46] Partly influenced by the campaigns of the college's first president, Ignatius Alphonso Few, town administrators decreed that the city of Oxford be devoid of commerce, industry, trade, or "other devil's

[44] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 8.
[45] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 7.
[46] Richey, *Emory and Methodism*, 356.

work," such as gambling or the sale of alcohol.[47] It is clear that Oxford's purpose, in addition to housing the College, was to provide an environment where Methodist men could be educated free from distractions or "sinful" activities. Letters addressed to the Board of Trustees show that President Few envisioned a college that would groom the next generation of reverent Methodist ministers.[48]

President Few's successor, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, believed in Few's vision, adding in his inaugural address that Emory would "raise up a race of men who shall be fitted for the pulpit or the plow … [who] shall combine all that is useful and brilliant on the other side of the water with all that is sacred and generous."[49] The body of water Longstreet references is unquestionably the Atlantic Ocean, and his remarks call upon, once again, that profoundly ingrained Methodist connection to England. During Longstreet's presidency, the college's enrollment grew to equal that of the University of Georgia, which was founded fifty years earlier.[50] Amidst this immense growth and success of the college, Longstreet's administration witnessed the first separation in the devotedly connected Methodist church.

The unprecedented division occurred during the 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. President Longstreet attended the conference in New York City with the then president of the Emory Board of Trustees, Bishop James O. Andrew. During the conference, the topic of slavery and abolition entered the delegates' conversations. Northern members clearly stated their disapproval of bishops owning slaves, with Bishop Andrew, who owned twenty slaves at the time. Northern delegates

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[47] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 8.
[48] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 8.
[49] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 12.
[50] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13.

based their objections in the American Abolitionist movement and also in the views of John Wesley, the central figure of the Methodist union. John Wesley strongly opposed the slave trade and slavery, so much so that the church's official *Book of Discipline* denounces slavery in "every way."[51] When prompted to vote on the matter of owning slaves, the Southern delegates declared that rather than requiring all bishops to free their slaves, they would form a separate church: the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.[52] Under the new church, the Southern delegates would continue to

When he returned to Emory College at the end of the conference, President Longstreet publicly supported the split and the institution of slavery in the South in publications and speeches made from the mid-1800s until the Civil War in 1861.[53] The president's support aligned with the values of institution's founders, since they were, according to Gary Hauk, the former Emory University historian, "without exception, slaveholders."[54] It is peculiar though that a church founded in connection would abruptly split in two. Such a split forces us to confront the influence, and significance, of slavery in Southern society in the mid-nineteenth century. In a monumental instance where slaveholders placed their racist beliefs before their religious and educational ones, one must further question, how vital was it to the Southern Methodist Church, and subsequently, the leaders of Emory College, to preserve slavery and the racial ideologies underpinning the practice?

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[51] Gary Hauk, *Emory as Place: Meaning in a University Landscape* (Athens: The University Georgia Press for the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University), 40. During this research, I was not able to consult the version of the *Book of Discipline* that Hauk cites, therefore my interaction with the text is through Hauk's *Emory as Place* and Daniel J Pratt Morris-Champan's *John Wesley and Methodist Responses to Slavery in America* (The Journal of Wesley House Cambridge, 5:1 (2019).
[52] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13.
[53] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13.
[54] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13.

As the nation entered the Civil War in 1861, both Emory College's student population and its physical campus once again participated in defense of the South. Although published histories of Emory do not provide exact numbers for student participation in the war, the histories do indicate that every student of the class of 1861 fought in the war.[55] Support for the Confederacy did not only come from student participation. Following the Battle of Atlanta and General Sherman's march to the sea, two buildings on campus, Phi Gamma and Few Hall, served as hospitals for wounded Confederates.[56] Soldiers who died in the temporary hospitals were buried adjacent to campus. When Emory College reopened in January 1866, only twenty students enrolled, marking a stark decline from pre-war enrollment. Upon reopening, the Board of Trustees faced a miniscule endowment. At the beginning of the war, then-President James R. Thomas had invested much of the endowment – which was approximately $35,000 – in Confederate bonds. With the Confederacy defeated, the value of the bonds depreciated significantly. [57]

Initially founded in the ideals of unity and connectionalism, Emory College now found itself on the opposing side of history, in no small part due to its support for the institution of slavery and the Confederacy. Following years of racially motivated division, in the Methodist church and the nation, Emory College began to grapple with its identity and a financial crisis. In the years following, administrators sought to revive the college: both in size and in spirit.

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[55] Based on records from President James R. Thomas, in 1860, 244 students were enrolled across the four years. If evenly distributed, that accounts for 61 Emory students.
[56] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 18.
[57] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind*, 18.

Ushering in a "New" Emory

Atticus G. Haygood, class of 1859, served as president from 1875 until 1884. President Haygood was a former Confederate army chaplain, but throughout his presidency at Emory College, he indicates that his personal morals shifted to be more anti-racist. However, Emory's earliest leaders, including Haygood and his successors, still held racist attitudes at different moments of the institution's history. The best evidence of this shift is seen in Haygood's 1880 Thanksgiving sermon addressed to the Methodist Georgia Conference and titled "The New South: Gratitude, Amendment, Hope." In the sermon, Haygood refers to slavery and Reconstruction, and he disputes ideas about the revival of the Old South. "I do now believe things that I did not believe twenty years ago," Haygood states. He continues, "Let us, of the South, frankly, recognize some of our faults and lacks, and try to reform and improve."[58] Haygood goes on to suggest that the Methodist Georgia Conference should address illiteracy among whites and blacks and that both communities should have access to education. Unfortunately, Emory College did not experience the reform that Haygood proposed in his sermon, as Haygood left the college in 1884 to lead the Slater Fund, a philanthropy project that supported the establishment of African American schools and colleges.

Four years after Haygood's departure from Emory College, Warren A. Candler, class of 1875, returned to campus to serve as the college's president. Infamous for his explicit prohibition of intercollegiate sports, Candler implemented policies that "returned the college to a strict liberal arts curriculum."[59] Candler's rigid demeanor was

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[58] Atticus G. Haygood, *The New South: Gratitude, Amendment, Hope. A Thanksgiving Sermon for November 25, 1880* (Oxford), 10.
[59] Joseph C. Moon, Jr, *From Estrangement to Reconciliation: A Biography of Oxford College of Emory University 1919-1976* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 2001), 13.

rooted in religious doctrine that forbade sins of excess and indulgence and "evils." Among the imagined "evils" he identified, Candler included the reunification of the Northern and Southern Methodist churches. He argued that the then recent adoption of women's suffrage and racial equality by the Northern church would lead to unwanted consequences, though his writing never details the nature or severity specific consequences. Candler also believed that the Southern church could not be equal in a conference with Black membership. Candler explains his disapproval of integration, using the derogatory term *negroes*, is in part because "among the negroes would be negro women as delegates, and they would be legislating for Southern Methodists."[60] To be clear, Candler found unimaginable African American authority within the church. Throughout Mark Bauman's 1975 biography of Warren Candler, the author does not shy away from framing Candler and his actions as racist.[61] Candler's beliefs were unabashed in their Old South roots and were particularly bold following the public denouncement of such ideals by his predecessor President Haygood in the Thanksgiving sermon of 1880.

Although Candler did not envision equality in the administration of the church, Candler was an influential supporter of Paine Institute, later known as Paine College, and founded by the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CMEC) after the war for the education of African Americans.[62] At best, Candler's support of the Paine Institute may reflect a developing anti-racist perspective. In contrast, his support may indicate that he wanted to uphold segregation. Candler participated in the formation of Paine Institute

[60] Mark Bauman, *Warren Akin Candler: Conservative Amidst Change* (Atlanta: Emory University Department of History, 1975), 353.
[61] Bauman, *Warren Akin Can*dler, 340.
[62] Bauman, *Warren Akin Can*dler, 333.

as one of the original members of its board of trustees, and he assisted in overthrowing a proposed Georgia legislature that would have stopped the integration of faculty at Paine. Though I have not uncovered why he supported integration within faculty but not within student bodies, I speculate that Candler supported the move to ensure white teachers taught black students at Paine, since Candler previously expressed his disapproval of black faculty teaching white students at Emory. There is also the possibility that Candler longed to control the teachings of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church as it experienced unprecedented growth. In response to the growth of the CMEC following Emancipation, Candler stated, "the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church is one which we set up, but which we assuredly did not mean to set off."[63] Candler's comments carried a subtle message: though he and other Methodist leaders set up the Colored Methodist Church, they were not in support of its success.

Candler, along with other early Emory leaders, acted with racist undertones, even in their public attempts, like the "Sledd Incident", to be anti-racist. In 1902, Candler came to the support of his son-in-law, Andrew Sledd, a Latin professor at Emory College, who was criticized for calling for the end of violent lynching in the South in his article *"*The Negro: Another View.*"* Sledd, who witnessed the lynching in 1899, described the act as unlawful, inhumane, and against Christian values. In the same article, however, Sledd makes it clear that he believes the "negro" race to be biologically inferior. Bauman describes both Candler and Sledd's perspective of African Americans to be "paternalistic."[64]

[63] Bauman, *Warren Akin Can*dler, 323.
[64] Bauman, *Warren Akin Can*dler, 315.

Building of the work of Southern historian, Guion Griffis Johnson, Bauman defines paternalistic thought as a theory that describes Southern male attitudes from 1875 to 1914. Johnson describes paternalistic thought as the assumed responsibility to teach an "inferior" race—African Americans in the view of Candler and Sledd—the "precious knowledge of citizenship and being," with the expectation that African Americans would then show "implicit obedience, deference, loyalty, and hard work" to the white race, like a son would honor his father.[65] It is intriguing, though not terribly shocking for present-day historians, that as the Reconstruction Era ended, this type of justification in subtly oppressing African Americans began to solidify in the South.

Immediately following Candler's ten-year tenure, Emory College appointed Charles E. Dowman, class of 1873, as president in 1898. During his administration, Dowman grew the college's endowment, which had been stripped to almost nothing by the Civil War just thirty years earlier, to $203,000.[66] In comparison to Candler, Dowman barely used his office to oversee or shape students' social or moral compasses. In 1902, Dowman resigned and was succeeded by James E. Dickey. Dickey graduated from the College merely a decade before, in 1891, and was the first President of Emory College who did not live through the Civil War. Under Dickey's presidency, there was hope for that "New South" that Haygood had presaged just twenty years before. Serving as College president until the institution's move to Atlanta, Dickey, similar to Dowman, furthered the College's financial stability. Yet it seems as though the social restrictions set in place by Candler were virtually suspended under Dowman and Dickey. At the beginning of the Dickey administration, enrollment in the College surpassed 300.

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[65] Bauman, *Warren Akin Can*dler, 315.
[66] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 55. According to measuringworth.com, $203,000 USD in 1899 is the equivalent to 6.2 million US dollars in 2019.

Financially, the College boasted great success and stability in comparison to its early years. Yet the student body had steered away from the totalitarian presence of Methodism established at the College, which Candler sought to revive. A major cause of this deviation may lie in the introduction of fraternities on campus in 1869.

As a secular alternative to the longstanding Methodist desire for connection, Greek life flourished on campus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, within a week of receiving a campus charter for Chi Phi in 1869, Kappa Alpha Order established a chapter at Emory, making it the second fraternity to establish a presence at Emory. Throughout the final years of the nineteenth century, even under the strict watch of President Candler, fraternities continued to grow. Even Candler himself was an active member and faculty mentor of a fraternity, namely Kappa Alpha Order (Kappa Alpha). Dowman and Dickey followed suit as members and mentors of Kappa Alpha Order and Chi Phi, respectively. To return to the questions posed earlier, regarding the re-establishment of the College, it is obvious now that the solutions reached at the time were complexities that encompassed postwar healing, religious and social freedom, and economic prosperity.

The Southern Connection: Kappa Alpha Order

When I began this investigation into the Culbreath Collection, one line of questioning remained constant: what was the Kappa Alpha Order, and what was the significance of being connected within the Kappa Alpha Order network? In the following section, I work to unravel the culture and values of Kappa Alpha to better recognize the histories embedded in the photographs.

Kappa Alpha Order was founded on December 21st, 1865, at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. Notably, its founding happened four years prior to the

establishment of the Emory College chapter charter. After the culmination of the Civil War, former Confederate Army General-in-Chief, Robert E. Lee was appointed to serve as Washington College's president. During his tenure at the institution, Lee introduced a liberal arts curriculum, engineering courses, a business school, and a law school. The changes helped to transform the college into a leading institution. Following Lee's death in 1870, the college adopted Lee as its namesake, becoming Washington and Lee College. The Confederate general's drive for academic achievement and progression certainly justifies the school's name change, but Lee's legacy had a much greater impact on the study body.

The founding members of KA named Robert E. Lee as their "spiritual founder," citing Lee as the "ideal Southern gentlemen." [67] Statements praising Lee's influence on the fraternity litter various Kappa Alpha Order directories. But is it Lee's experience as Confederate General or as Washington College President that molded him into the "perfect expression" of a Southern gentleman? Within the pages of the Kappa Alpha Directory, there is no direct answer. However, as discussed in my literature review, the Kappa Alpha Directory does highlight troubling ties with the Ku Klux Klan. In detailing the history of the organization, the directory reads:

> "At the time in 1866 when we were organizing, in the academic sphere, for the defense of Southern culture, another organization, the Ku Klux Klan, was forming in the political and economic spheres, to overthrow the carpet-bag governments that were bankrupting the Southern states. The Klan soon achieved its object [sic] and disbanded in 1869. Its mission was ended. Not so ours. Ours is a subtler task. The maintenance of the spirit of Southern youth on a high plane of principle and conduct is a perpetual interest and duty."

[67] Kappa Alpha Order, and William Bloxham Crawford, *Directory of the Kappa Alpha Order, 1865-1922*. https://archive.org/details/directoryofkappa01kapp, 14.

Kappa Alpha's assumed relation to the Ku Klux Klan is intriguing. According to their directory, they are outspoken parallels as the directory details that Kappa Alpha's rituals parallel the Klan's. However due to apparent chronological difficulties, it is difficult to determine if a Klan member introduced the ceremony to Kappa Alpha or vice versa. It is equally possible that the rituals were from the Confederate Army, as both Kappa Alpha and the Klan formed as groups of Confederate veterans. What is firmly accepted by Kappa Alpha is that the organizations were reactions against the same "obvious evil tendencies."[68] Then, I wondered what the Klan sought of its members, and how it related to the description KA provides.

The first official emergence of the Ku Klux Klan (the 1st Klan) was on December 24th, 1865. Modern historians categorize this iteration of the KKK as the "1st Klan," due to a later resurgence of the Klan in the 1920s. Documentation of the 1st Klan is scarce, but a prescript from 1868 states the following:

> "This is an institution of chivalry, humanity, mercy, and patriotism; embodying in its genius and its principles all that is chivalric in conduct, noble in sentiment, generous in manhood, and patriotic in purpose; its peculiar objects being: [...] protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal; to relieve the injured and oppressed; to succor the suffering and unfortunate, and especially the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers."[69]

Both texts mobilize the idea that the South was in "need" of chivalrous protectors, yet neither identify the threat that they would be protecting "the weak, the innocent" widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers, from. Instead, both the Klan and Kappa Alpha mask their intentions behind vague Lost Cause narratives. Yet, even if their

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[68] Kappa Alpha Order, and William Bloxham Crawford, *Directory of the Kappa Alpha Order, 1865-1922*. https://archive.org/details/directoryofkappa01kapp, 14.
[69] "Organization and Principles of the Ku Klux Klan, 1868" found on the Albany University History 316 webpage. https://www.albany.edu/faculty/gz580/his101/kkk.html

prejudice and racism was not explicitly stated, I wondered if perhaps the membership clauses of Kappa Alpha would provide insight as one can assume that the fraternity would not accept someone who they were against.

In 1915, the directory states: "Caucasian in its sympathies, [KA] excluded the African from membership. Not unnaturally, therefore, despite the absence of anything political or sectional in its laws, the Kappa Alpha Order has restricted its activity to the Southern States." In 1922, Kappa Alpha added to the clause, "Aryan in blood, we exclude the African from membership. Intent on exclusion of politics and sectionalism, the Kappa Alpha Order consistently restricts its activity to the South." In contrast, in the Klan's prescript, politics and sectionalism are at the forefront. However, this variance in subject matter does not to diminish the overlap present in the organization's goals. Rather, I want to emphasize KA's declaration that their task of supporting the Southern ideal, unlike the Klan, is a "subtler" one.[70] Therefore, it did not exist in the public manner that the Klan operated in. Rather, the subtle secrecy of Kappa Alpha undoubtedly makes the task of discovering their expressions of the Southern ideal an arduous task.

As I completed my investigations, I began to acknowledge that only circumstantial assumptions can be made about how Kappa Alpha subtly mobilized their racist virtues. However, the Culbreath photographs are not disconnected from the discursive histories of Emory and Kappa Alpha. Rather, the Culbreath collection provides a bridge into a web of social and cultural dynamics that, although we cannot see, impact the critical analysis of the images.

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[70] Kappa Alpha Order, and William Bloxham Crawford, *Directory of the Kappa Alpha Order, 1865-1922*. https://archive.org/details/directoryofkappa01kapp, 14.

Conclusion

"Racism does not solely exist in blatant acts of violence, so we cannot search for it as if it remains in plain sight." I first uttered these words into my phone's recorder during a 2019 summer fellowship program. At the time, I did not know how to ebb and weave my thoughts into a final thesis, though I knew that it would form the crux of my most common critique. Since the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Collection of photographs do not display written racial slurs or acts of racial violence, I am constantly faced with questions about how can I attest that the images are racist or, at minimum, biased? I know now that the answer lies in a concept that I struggled to name on my recording: systemic racism.

In *An Image of Society: Exploring Race and Power in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection*, I address systemic racism through a meticulous study of the Culbreath Collection images and the foundational histories of two social institutions associated with the collection: Emory College and the Kappa Alpha Order (Kappa Alpha) fraternity. My conclusions reflect three years of work with the collection, beginning with my time as an Oxford Research Scholar under art historian Dr. Tasha Dobbin-Bennett. As an Oxford Research Scholar, I sought out general information about the students photographed and their general social networks (such as their class year and extracurricular activities) to add to Dr. Dobbin-Bennett's "Visual Narratives of Early Emory" project. One of the goals of the Visual Narratives project is to allow Oxford students to "visibly contribute to Oxford College's history in a meaningful and scholarly manner."[71] Through my work with the Culbreath Collection

[71] "Oxford Research Scholars Present Works," May 3, 2019, https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/oxford/exhibits/oxford-research-scholars-present-works/.

between the fall 2018 and spring 2019 semesters, I contributed to Oxford's history by identifying students in previously unidentified images, confirming enrollment through a cross-analysis of Emory College catalogs and developing a brief history of Kappa Alpha on campus.

As I approached the end of my time at Oxford in May 2019, I pondered the significance of the Culbreath Collection beyond the basic visual analysis I completed. At this point in my research, I viewed the images as windows into social relationships of Emory College students between 1902 and 1907. Yet, as I expanded my thinking, I adopted historian Darren Newbury's statement on photography in Apartheid, "photographers do not merely record, but rather construct an image of society."[72] In the intersecting communities of Oxford, Georgia, Kappa Alpha, and Emory College, I wondered what images of society the Culbreath photographs work to construct, or rather, what images they perpetuate. As I worked to answer such questions, I uncovered uncomfortable ties between Kappa Alpha, General Robert E. Lee, and the Ku Klux Klan. Lost Cause ideologies fill the 1922 national Kappa Alpha directory, going as far as stating that Kappa Alpha organized with a mission parallel to the one of the Ku Klux Klan, although it specifies Kappa Alpha engages in a "subtler task" within the academic sphere. The directory also lists Confederate General, Robert E. Lee, as their spiritual founder and "the perfect expression of a Southern gentleman."

Emory College, too, holds a history of bigotry and racism at its core. The founders of Emory College were "without exception, slaveholders."[73] College leadership

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[72] Darren Newbury, *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa*, (Unisa Press: Pretoria), 2009, 7.
[73] Hauk, *Legacy of Heart and Mind,* 13. See also Mark Auslander, "Dreams Deferred: African Americans in the History of Old Emory," in *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory*

undoubtably supported the Confederacy, so much so that President Thomas invested almost the entirety of Emory College's endowment into Confederate War Bonds. Campus buildings were also used as Confederate hospitals, and a designated Confederate cemetery was erected just west of the College's gym.[74] The social environment on campus following the Civil War upheld racist ideologies enough that students and faculty members alike joined Kappa Alpha's rampant white supremacy and bigotry as the Epsilon Chapter in 1869. When considered within the historical context of Kappa Alpha and Emory College, the Culbreath Collection images are not only windows into social networks, but more so the images point me to analyze the systemic racism that is not openly spoken about in Emory's history.

During my time as an Emory undergraduate student, I learnt that the first Emory College buildings (at Oxford) were built by enslaved laborers, and that numerous academic buildings on the Oxford campus were used as Confederate hospitals in the Civil War. While attending Oxford, I frequently saw signs on campus that directed visitors to the Confederate cemetery, located just west of the Oxford College Gym, as well as historical tours of the city of Oxford that discussed the previous homes on enslaved laborers. However, I have not yet encountered a history of Emory that directly addresses the deeply rooted racism upheld by the university's founders and presidents from 1836 well into the twentieth century.

Instead, Emory's intertwinement with Confederate ideals and racism is presented in a toned-down manner. As the university's former, and only, historian Dr. Gary Hauk,

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University, edited by Gary Hauk and Sally Wolff King (Atlanta: Bookhouse Group, Inc. with Emory University, 2010), 14.

[74] Union soldiers who died near or in Oxford were buried in the main Oxford cemetery, about a mile away from campus near the town center.

writes, “At Emory, the question has been raised — what monument to the Confederacy do we have? The answer I believe is none.”[75] Dr. Hauk’s statements narrowly frames monuments and memorials to be either statues or sculptures. From this perspective, Dr. Hauk correctly assesses that we do not have any statues or sculptures to the Confederacy on campus. Yet, that does not eliminate the existence of Confederate ideologies throughout the College’s history. Rather, it wrongly affirms that Emory was not involved with the Confederacy and remained neutral in the wake of the Civil War. When we dismiss parts of Emory’s history, it is an example of what historian Michel-Rolph Truillot states about history being “a story of power — a story of those who won.”[76]

There is a harrowing lacuna within Emory’s history that can begin to be addressed through the Culbreath images. Beyond showing that only white males were allowed to be students at Emory in the early twentieth century, the Culbreath images confirm the presence and popularity of Kappa Alpha, a self-proclaimed parallel organization to the Ku Klux Klan on campus. Kappa Alpha’s presence is evidence that Emory fostered an environment that could sustain a racist social organization throughout the twentieth century and present-day. At the Atlanta campus, there are three buildings named in honor of Kappa Alpha members: the Robert Woodruff Library, the Ely Callaway building, and the Candler School of Theology. Since Woodruff, Callaway, and Candler were influential enough at Emory to be honored, we must look deeper to analyze how the racial bias and bigotry embodied through their fraternity impacted their work at Emory.

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[75] Gary Hauk, “Emory and the Confederacy,” Emory Historian's Blog, November 26, 2018, https://emoryhistorian.org/2018/11/26/emory-and-the-confederacy/
[76] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press (Boston), 2015, 5.

Ultimately, I do not argue that the Culbreath photographs, or the individuals captured in the images, are openly racist. Rather, I see the photographs, and the individuals photographed, as a tool to discuss systemic racism – racism that we do not see, there are no slurs, no gestures, no blatant acts of violence, but systemic racism impacts the opportunities given to black, Indigenous and people of color. Unfortunately, systemic racism expands beyond century-old histories: it is deeply connected to recent historical events. In the summer of 2020, the murders of George Floyd and countless other unarmed Black individuals triggered necessary discussions of systemic racism across the nation. Now, perhaps more than ever, the culture of the United States is being analyzed in relation to its white supremacist past that has sustained itself in different forms through present-day. Through *An Image of Society: Exploring Race and Power in the Ervin Yarbrough and Claude Culbreath Photograph Collection*, I join a number of students, faculty, and scholars alike who are challenging systemic racism in colleges and universities across the United States.

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