

**“JUSTICE SHEER AND SIMPLE”: INSTITUTIONAL SLAVERY AT THE
ANTEBELLUM UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis endeavors to shed light on institutional slavery at the University of Alabama. Chapter one examines the historiographical threads which undergird the study of American slavery, particularly in the institutional context. Chapter two discusses slavery's role in the foundations of the University of Alabama and surveys the fragmentary evidence of slavery at the University of Alabama. Chapter three looks at the University of Alabama as a case study of institutional slavery in the old Southwest with a focus on two key concepts - the first, a clear relationship between land, slavery, and institution, and the second, invested relationships. The discussion of these two characteristics of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest finds meaningful purchase in the context of recent literature on institutional slavery and provides evidence for the assessment of institutional slavery via regional comparison. This thesis will then conclude by briefly examining memory and commemoration at University of Alabama, closing with a discussion of the institution's opportunities for intentional investment and restorative justice given the contemporary "Age of Apologies."

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTEXTUALIZING SLAVERY AND THE UNIVERSITY	1
“RELUCTANT CONSTRAINT”: THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA’S ENSLAVED LABOR, 1828-1860.....	24
“LET JUSTICE BE DONE”: INSTITUTIONAL SLAVERY AT UA, PROPERTY INTEREST, AND THE APOLOGY QUESTION	58
BIBLIOGRAPHY	82

Chapter One

Contextualizing Slavery and the University

Scholarship which informs the study of slavery and post-secondary education emerges from studies of nineteenth century higher education, Old South intellectual thought, slavery's relationship to nineteenth century market capitalism, and slavery's role in Southern public and private institutions. Recent scholarship from historians like Craig Steven Wilder, Al Brophy, and Jennifer Oast has significantly expanded this diverse body of scholarship with carefully researched works explicitly addressing slavery on collegiate campuses.¹

A rapidly expanding body of slavery-focused campus studies support these recent monographs. Often taking the form of the university task force report, these studies spring from interdisciplinary collaboration across academic stakeholders and generally function as works of public history. Institutions associated with the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium have focused specifically on identifiable archival, archeological, and material remnants of slavery. These publicly informed scholarly inquiries into the sources, spaces, actors, and experiences associated with slavery in the university context

1. Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014); Jennifer Oast, *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680-1860* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Alfred L. Brophy, *University, Court, and Slave: Pro-Slavery Thought in Southern Colleges and Courts, and the Coming of Civil War* (Oxford, UK ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016)

reveal dynamics and patterns that inform what can be a limited number of primary sources.²

This study of slavery at the antebellum University of Alabama reflects these historiographical trends. Chapter one will begin with a brief examination of the historiographical threads which undergird the study of American slavery, tying each thread to the study of slavery and Southern institutions like the University of Alabama. Chapter two will examine slavery’s role in the foundations of the University of Alabama, discuss the influence and ideologies of the University of Alabama’s most influential early leader, Basil Manly Sr., before surveying the fragmentary evidence of slavery at the University of Alabama with particular focus on how this body of evidence reveals the lives and choices of those enslaved by university stakeholders and the institution itself. Chapter three will examine the University of Alabama as a case study of institutional slavery, drawing points of contention and agreement with recent scholarship on institutional slavery and relating key concepts – the connections between land, slavery, and the university, and the presence of invested relationships – which call for a regional approach to the study of institutional slavery. This thesis will then close by interrogating the University of Alabama during the “Age of Apology,” using rhetorical comparison and recent developments to explore the university’s decisions and opportunities considering contemporary calls for institutional restorative justice.³

2. “Universities Studying Slavery,” The University of Virginia, <http://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>

3. Mark Gibney, ed. *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

Literature on antebellum Old South education focuses notably on Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Scholars have turned to rich archival sources to explore the correspondence and ideas shared between young white men educated in Southern institutions. At South Carolina College, today known as the University of South Carolina, scholars have highlighted the institutional mission: training young members of the master class to respect and defend Southern identity and lifeways. Scholars have emphasized how no other Southern institution managed to churn out more ideological defenders of the South's plantation society. Michael Sugrue's 1992 dissertation and recent chapter in Mark Geiger's edited volume *The American College in the 19th Century*, notes specifically how "ministers, doctors, lawyers, editors," and other influential actors at SCC "contributed to the development of a new political elite" in the burgeoning plantation states of the Cotton Frontier, notably Alabama and Mississippi.⁴ The training these figures embraced at South Carolina piedmont institutions directly impacted the development of society and institutions in the Old Southwest, including the University of Alabama.

Peter Carmichael's 2005 work addresses the "last generation" of young antebellum Virginians at the University of Virginia. His generational study examines how antebellum youth distanced themselves from the Old Dominion's "cavalier" ideal and describes how the intellectual and social atmosphere of the University of Virginia shaped

4. Michael Sugrue, "South Carolina College: The Education of an Antebellum Southern Elite" (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1992); Michael Sugrue, "South Carolina College, the Defense of Slavery, and the Development of Secessionist Politics," In Roger L. Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, 1st ed, Vanderbilt Issues in Higher Education (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000).

the outlook and identities of his young Virginians in the decades approaching the Civil War. College, Carmichael shows, bound these men together into an ambitious union that remained full-throated in defense of slavery and Southern life but increasingly frustrated with their elders and what they perceived to be diminishing prospects for the Commonwealth. Carmichael's use of University of Virginia primary sources – yearbooks and documents relating to the university's societies, for example – and his use of correspondence between university students and parents illuminates the university's antebellum impacts.⁵

Timothy J. Williams' study of campus life and manhood at the University of North Carolina also examines the Southern university's impact on individual and collective class identity. While Carmichael's work includes university life as one phase in a larger work on a generation's lifespans, Williams' deep dives into the related topics of masculinity, selfhood, and antebellum higher education structure his work into a three-part examination of the formal and informal aspects of collegiate learning. Williams shies away from an invested discussion of race on this antebellum campus. He argues convincingly, via a large university source base, that students at the University of North Carolina charted a course through their education which equipped them to act as thoughtful, reasoned decision makers, not Southern ideologues. This argument complicates Carmichael and Sugrue's conclusions regarding antebellum Southern ideological education to an extent; however, the students at Williams' university still

5. Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

grew into Southern sectionalists, privileged by white supremacy, masters within a slave culture, who defended slavery alongside more ideologically rigid counterparts.⁶

Al Brophy's work on the intellectual environment of antebellum William and Mary, with special focus on the role of Thomas R. Dew, arrives at similar conclusions regarding the climate of antebellum Southern academia. Brophy, however, moves beyond historical assessment and arrives at the apology question, centering Dew's thought in order to "begin a discussion of the virtues and pitfalls of apologies and to assess the value of talk of the connections to the past."⁷ Brophy focuses heavily on Dew's *Review of the Debate of the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832* as evidence of antebellum William and Mary's proslavery ideological atmosphere, but ultimately concludes with a broad assessment of legacy and slavery that invites consideration of how pro-slavery scholars both enriched the College of William and Mary's academic prestige and benefited from their institution's resources. Brophy argues in favor of institutional apologies, inviting stakeholders from the college's larger community to consider the apology question "with wisdom and efficacy."⁸ Brophy's focus on a notable pro-slavery figure and this leader's role in shaping William and Mary's antebellum legacies offers a useful template for examining the presidency of Basil Manly Sr. at the University of Alabama.

6. Timothy J Williams, *Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

7. Alfred L. Brophy, "Considering William and Mary's History with Slavery: The Case of President Thomas Roderick Dew," *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 16, no. 4 (April 2008), 1092.

8. Ibid, 1139.

Scholarship on antebellum Southern higher education illuminates the diversity of campus environments in the South. Many scholars on Southern campuses participated in and drove pro-slavery discourse in the decades leading to the Civil War, while others preached varying degrees of an imagined middle ground where slavery's worst excesses could be ameliorated. Students on most southern campuses imbibed the key tenets required of southern master-statesmen, while a limited range hotly debated key elements of Southern identity and pursued less ideologically rigid conclusions. In general, however, scholars agree that Southern universities, in the decades preceding the Civil War, coalesced around a Southern intellectual tradition which specialized in the production of educated young men who were trained to master and equipped with sectional rhetoric and pro-slavery ideology.⁹

The Old South intellectual biography is a well-worn historiographical path. These histories describe the impact of Old South intellectuals on their peers, professional spaces, social organizations, and affiliated institutions. Dumas Malone's work on Thomas Cooper traced Cooper's transformation from Manchester abolitionist to president of South Carolina College, establishing a model for the Old South intellectual biography by illuminating Cooper's influence on the Southern intellectuals who followed him. James Farmer followed this model in a biography of James H. Thornwell, a South Carolina Presbyterian clergyman, as did Drew Gilpin Faust, whose well known study *The Sacred*

9. Studies of antebellum military academies also reveal useful dynamics. See Jennifer R. Green, *Military Education and the Emerging Middle Class in the Old South* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); For work on the relationship between manhood and higher education, see Lorri Glover, *Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Circle illuminates the thought and lives of five prominent Old South intellectuals active between 1840-1860. Old South biographical scholarship offer focused studies of the lives, correspondence, archival record, and thought of individual contributors to the South's imagined community; they often suffer, however, from a distinct lack of engagement (and in some cases, near-complete or complete silence) with the realities of the slavery-enabled landscape occupied by the Old South intellectual, or the stories of the people these Old South intellectuals enslaved.¹⁰

Examining the historiography of the Old South beyond the biographical format illuminates the Southern places, spaces, actors, and themes that inform the burgeoning scholarly inquiry into the links between slavery and the American university. One can divide this scholarly record into three categories, effectively articulated in recent scholarship on slavery and the university by the historian Al Brophy. Old South historiography, he wrote, centers on “literature on the relationship between capitalism and slavery,” “literature on the pre-Civil War Southern academy,” and “literature on the intellectual history of the Old South.”¹¹

10. Dumas Malone, *The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 1783-1839*, 1st AMS ed (New York: AMS Press, 1979); James Oscar Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values*; the Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize Essay of the American Society of Church History (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999); Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); For work assessing slavery and silence see Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). For an effective examination demonstrating how silence operates in the Southern intellectual biography, see William Cohen, “Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery,” *The Journal of American History* Vol. 56, No. 3 (December 1969): 503-526. For a notable exception to the lack of engagement with slavery in Old South biographies, see A. James Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South*, Southern Biography Series (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

11. Al Brophy, *University, Court, and Slave: Pro-Slavery Thought in Southern Colleges and Courts and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Two landmark works on Southern intellectual history deserve mention: Michael O'Brien's *Conjectures of Order* (2004) and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese's *The Mind of the Master Class* (2005). O'Brien's magisterial, two-volume work divided Southern intellectual history into three distinct phases – Enlightenment, southern Romanticism, and early variants of Realism – and argued that Southern intellectuals were simultaneously “national, post-colonial, and imperial.”¹² O'Brien's work is encyclopedic in approach and a vital resource for scholars examining the “confused world” of the intellectual South during the antebellum period.¹³ Fox-Genovese and Genovese's *The Mind of the Master Class* followed closely behind O'Brien's scholarship and assesses Southern intellectual's ideological relationships through a wide-ranging, class-based analysis. Together, these early twenty-first century works reinvigorated the study of Southern intellectualism, informing all subsequent scholarship.¹⁴

Scholarship on the nuances of Southern honor and manhood also informs the study of the Southern intellectualism. Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor* (1982) effectively introduced this paradigmatic approach, subsequently followed by historians including Kenneth Greenberg, Robert Bonner, and Charity Carney, among others. Southern honor culture regulated and shaped notions of Southern manhood; this

12. Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2.

13. O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 7.

14. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

historiographical vein deeply informs examinations of antebellum Southern universities, which served as ideological and physical proving grounds for young Southerners negotiating class, violence, and masterdom. The charged atmosphere of Southern campuses informs the fraught experiences of enslaved people within contests of manhood at the University of Alabama, exacerbated by the antebellum context of the Old Southwest's frontier culture.¹⁵

Despite Brophy's categorical analysis, it should be noted that the interwoven threads of Old South intellectual historiography remain too tightly connected to pry apart into distinct categories of assessment. The life and work of James Henry Hammond provides an illuminating example. Hammond, a South Carolina statesman educated at South Carolina College during James Thornwell's presidency, became a leading voice in favor of secession during the decades preceding the Civil War. Hammond's position – alumnus of the Southern academy, South Carolina politician who reaped economic benefits from slavery, and noted pro-slavery public intellectual – has led to significant appearances in Old South historiography, especially after Drew Gilipin Faust's 1985 biography. An effective assessment of Hammond, then, requires scholars to tie each

15. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "God and Honor in the Old South," *The Southern Review* 25 (1989); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Kenneth S Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood*, Cambridge Studies on the American South (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Charity R. Carney, *Ministers and Masters: Methodism, Manhood, and Honor in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011). See also Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

thread of Old South historiographical scholarship into an interconnected, thematically complex product.¹⁶

The relationship between slavery and Southern universities emerges indirectly from scholarship on Southern intellectual history. While the historical record is largely silent on individual relationships and connections in the shared lives of antebellum Southern intellectuals and enslaved people, evidence articulates how Southern faculty lived, worked, and governed over university campuses, regulating daily life in significant ways. Scholarship also illuminates networks of ideas shared by these figures. Notable slave-owning Southern intellectuals at the University of Alabama, particularly Basil Manly Sr. and Frederick A.P. Barnard, linked tightly with larger Southern intellectual networks, affecting their ideological frameworks and rendering scholarship on Southern intellectuals useful for the study of slavery at the University of Alabama.¹⁷ Turning to

16. Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010). See also Carol K. Rothrock Bleser, *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For an early treatment of Hammond, see Elizabeth Merritt, “James Henry Hammond, 1807-1864” (PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1923).

17. For scholarship on Basil Manly, see A. James Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South*, Southern Biography Series (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); Louise Manly, *The Manly Family: An Account of the Descendants of Captain Basil Manly of the Revolution and Related Families* (Greenville, SC: Keys, 1930); Thomas M. Owen, *Dr. Basil Manly: The Founder of the Alabama Historical Society* (Montgomery: Alabama Historical Society, 1904); James August Pate, “Basil Manly and His Administration at the University of Alabama, 1837-1855,” (master’s thesis, University of Alabama, 1955); Jonathan A. Lindsey, “Basil Manly: Nineteenth Century Protean Man,” *Baptist History and Heritage* Vol. 8 (1973); Harold Wilson, “Basil Manly, Apologist for Slavery,” *Alabama Review* Vol. 15 (January 1962). For more on the Manly family and Manly’s relationships, see James Mathew Manley, “The Southern Baptist Mind in Transition: A Life of Basil Manly Jr., 1825-1892,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1999). For scholarship on F.A.P. Barnard, see Tommy Song, “F.A.P. Barnard: 10th President of Columbia University,” *Columbia University and Slavery*, May 2018, <https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/content/fap-barnard-10th-president-columbia-university>; Hannah Eyob, “A History of Barnard College; Frederick A.P Barnard and the afterlives of Slavery,” *Columbia University and Slavery*, May 2018, <https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/content/history-barnard-college-frederick-ap-barnard-and-afterlives-slavery>.

scholarship on the economics of slavery and capitalism, early studies focused narrowly on plantation slavery's efficiency and macroeconomic impact. Ulrich B. Phillips, a noted historian of this topic, delivered insights into master class socioeconomic identity and portrayed chattel slavery as an inherently inefficient economic system. Phillips argued that slavery was grounded in a pre-modern regional economy that would have guaranteed its eventual decline. African American scholars of the early 20th century, including Carter G. Woodson and W.E.B. DuBois, questioned this narrative via interdisciplinary sociological and historical scholarship, but white scholars ignored their contributions and, for the most part, Phillips' conclusions regarding slavery's economic inefficiency remained at the fore until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁸

In the 1950s, two landmark works on American slavery – Kenneth Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution*, published in 1956, and Stanley Elkin's *Slavery*, published in 1957 – reinvigorated mainstream white scholars' study of the relationship between slavery and capitalism by reopening dialogue around the topic's most fundamental questions in the wake of the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision. Stampp's thesis contradicted Phillips' longstanding conclusions by arguing that slavery's profitability promoted the institution's potential long-term stability. Elkins also confronted Phillips' socio-cultural arguments by drawing a direct comparison between plantations and concentration camps and asserting

18. Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment, and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918); W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903); W. E. B Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935). See also the seminal work of John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), which was published in 1947 but also largely ignored.

that slaves were not beneficiaries of inefficient paternal benevolence at the hands of gentle masters. Together, Stampp and Elkins work revitalized the study of slavery among the white mainstream professoriate and laid down new paths followed by later New Social History scholarship.¹⁹

During the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, cliometrics – a new approach characterized by the use of quantitative data to investigate historical questions – led scholars like Richard Fogel and Stanley Engerman to compile massive bodies of quantitative material on the economics of slavery for rigorous historical analysis. Their effort, *Time on the Cross* (1974), garnered popular acclaim and enthusiasm but soon faced massive criticism for its blunt approach towards the realities of slavery, indefensible assumptions, and selective reading of complex and incomplete sources.²⁰ Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974) and Herbert Gutman's *Slavery and the Numbers Game* (1975), along with criticisms leveled by Richard Sutch, Gavin Wright, and other leading historians at a 1974 conference at the University of Rochester, largely compromised Fogel and Engerman's arguments.²¹ Debates sparked by this historical episode nevertheless deeply informed

19. Kenneth Milton Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution. Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, 9th print (New York: Knopf, 1972); Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, 3. ed., rev (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957).

20. Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

21. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Paul A. David, ed. *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

later qualitative explorations of slavery.²² This period also saw the rise of a wave of scholars who asked new questions relating to agency, domestic life, and communication networks within plantation slavery, adding topical depth and breadth to the study of American slavery.²³

Scholars of the modern era, particularly economic and social historians who use interdisciplinary approaches as they articulate a New History of Capitalism, continue to probe slavery's relationship to the development and operation of the American market economy. Recent work by Ed Baptist, Sven Beckert, Joshua Rothman, Adam Rothman, and Walter Johnson, among others, builds upon earlier studies to suggest how slavery undergirded industrialization and technological advancement in the United States. This wave of scholars also seeks to uncover how American chattel slavery linked US capital and materials with global trade, contributing to the development of American imperial identity. Each of these veins of socio-economic scholarship on slavery and capitalism helps to contextualize the University of Alabama's position within the regional economic

22. For useful review essays on the *Time on the Cross* debates, see Thomas L. Haskell, "The True and Tragical History of 'Time on the Cross,'" *New York Review* 22, no. 15 (October 2, 1975): 33–39; Harry N. Schneiber, "Black Is Computable," *American Scholar* 44, no. 4 (Autumn 1975): 656–69; Norman R. Yetman, "The Rise and Fall of Time on the Cross." *Reviews in American History* 4, no. 2 (June 1976): 195–202. On the legacies of *Time on the Cross*, see Thomas Weiss, "Time on the Cross: The Economics of Negro Slavery (Review)." *EH.Net*, Project 2001: Significant Works in Economic History, n.d., https://eh.net/book_reviews/time-on-the-cross-the-economics-of-american-negro-slavery/.

23. Martin Ruef, "Constructing Labor Markets: The Valuation of Black Labor in the U.S. South, 1831 to 1867," *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 6 (December 2012): 970–98; Thomas Bender et al., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). For earlier approaches to the economics of slavery by economic historians, see Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante Bellum South," *Journal of Political Economy* vol. 66, no. 2 (April 1958): 95–130.

frameworks of the Old Southwest.²⁴ New History of Capitalism approaches to slavery, like those of the past, have also begun to focus on issues of labor, agency, and the investigation of the daily lives of the enslaved within antebellum market capitalism, providing additional useful context.²⁵

The study of slavery and capitalism has shifted in recent decades from heavy focus on plantation systems and agricultural slavery, towards examinations of institutional slavery.²⁶ Specific focus on institutional slavery, recently defined by one historian as enslaved persons “owned by a group of people united in a common purpose – nonprofit educational and religious organizations, the public (state government), and for-profit companies,” has recently added a new wrinkle to the study of slavery in the Old

24. Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, Paperback edition (New York: Basic Books, 2016); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Joshua D. Rothman, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson*, Race in the Atlantic World, 1700-1900 (Athens ; London: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2013).

25. For discussion on the question of agency, see Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 113–24. See also Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Bernard Edward Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885*. (Fayetteville, AR: University Of Arkansas Press, 1994). For recent scholarship on antebellum interracial cooperation and agency, see Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South*, Cambridge Studies on the American South (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

26. For recent scholarship on enslaved rental markets, see Keith C. Barton, “‘Good Cooks and Washers’: Slave Hiring, Domestic Labor, and the Market in Bourbon County, Kentucky,” *The Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (September 1997): 436–60; Stephanie Cole, “Servants and Slaves in Louisville: Race, Ethnicity, and Household Labor in an Antebellum Border City,” *Ohio Valley History* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 3–25; Michael T. Gavin, “From Bands of Iron to Promise Land: The African-American Contribution to Middle Tennessee’s Antebellum Iron Industry,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 24–42; Thomas W. Hulse, “Slave Rentals and the Early Development of the Military Slave System at Mobile Point, 1812–1834,” *The Alabama Review* 65, no. 2 (April 2012): 83–99.

Southwest.²⁷ Earlier scholarly treatments examined institutional slavery in court and church records, in studies of enslaved craftspeople and artisans, and, to a limited degree, in industrial and domestic spaces. Additionally, preservationists and historians who interpret history for the public acknowledge sites and stories of institutional slavery – former mines or historic churches, for example – as historic resources which describe and memorialize slavery. The rising tide of specific, academic studies of slavery’s role in building and buttressing Southern institutions, however, remains a distinct development of the contemporary moment, reflecting shifting institutional and scholarly priorities.

A groundbreaking work that galvanized the study of institutional slavery was Craig Steven Wilder’s *Ebony and Ivy*. Published in 2013, *Ebony and Ivy* traced the tightly-bound relationship between “Ivy League” universities – notably Harvard, Brown, and Yale – and human bondage. Wilder’s well-received work joined a chorus of scholarship on slavery’s relationship to American higher education which, when combined with student activism at institutions which owned or benefited from slavery, sparked public interest. A growing body of publications now focus specifically on the issue of institutional slavery, particularly in connection to American colleges and universities. Jennifer Oast’s *Institutional Slavery* (2016) takes a regional approach by centering on slavery’s presence and impact on Virginia’s churches, schools, and industries. Al Brophy’s *University, Court, and Slave* (2016) examines institutional slavery at antebellum colleges and in antebellum courtrooms across the South. Leslie Harris’ edited collection of essays on institutional slavery, *Slavery and the University*

27. Jennifer Oast, *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680-1860* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 3.

(2019), contains a wide-ranging collection of scholarship that dives into the nuances of institutional slavery while also offering new directions for scholarship on this topic. Together, these recent works offer direction and clarity for studies of institutional slavery and American higher education.²⁸

The academic study of slavery in Alabama can be traced back to the pioneering work of George Petrie. Petrie, a Johns Hopkins-trained historian who taught at what is now Auburn University, conducted an in-depth survey of former enslaved people between 1907 and 1913 and taught a seminar survey of slavery as early as 1895. Petrie is remembered historically as Auburn’s first football coach and, more recently, as the “father of Alabama historians” because of his state-of-the-art historiographical method and focus on recovering the voices and stories of enslaved Alabamians. Petrie’s planned monograph on slavery in Alabama never came to fruition, and his publications were relatively scarce; despite these factors, he laid down a solid body of groundwork on Alabama’s history of slavery.²⁹

James B. Sellers published the first monograph treatment of slavery in Alabama in the mid-1950s. Narrowed to specific topics in Alabama history, Sellers’ histories of Alabama – *Slavery in Alabama* (1950) and *The History of the University of Alabama*

28. Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities*. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014); Jennifer Oast, *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680-1860* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Alfred L. Brophy, *University, Court, and Slave: Pro-Slavery Thought in Southern Colleges and Courts, and the Coming of Civil War* (Oxford, UK ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016); Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy, eds., *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies* (Athens: Universtiy of Georgia Press, 2019).

29. Anthony Donaldson, “The Father of Alabama Historians: Professor George Petrie and His Survey of Slavery,” *Alabama Review* 62, no. 1 (2009): 37–58.

(1953) – as well as several contributions to the *Alabama Review* cemented his importance to the study of antebellum Alabama and the state’s slavery histories. While problematic in his ideological stances, particularly in regard to his embrace of mythmaking regarding southern plantation life, his careful, measured surveys of antebellum Alabama simply cannot be overlooked by scholars seeking to study slavery at the University of Alabama.³⁰

In addition to these academic examinations of slavery and race in Alabama, African American grassroots historians of the early 20th century articulated perspectives on African American life and community. Ministers, such as Charles Octavius Boothe and Winfield H. Mixon, produced histories of African American church communities in Alabama. This grassroots tradition continued into the twentieth century through the Civil Rights Era, as activists and community members collaborated in the production of institutional histories that melded oral history and “participatory culture” into durable works of historical scholarship.³¹

30. James Benson Sellers, “Student Life at the University of Alabama Before 1860,” *The Alabama Review* 2 (1949); James Benson Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1950); James Benson Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama. Vol. 1: 1818 - 1902* (Tuscaloosa, Ala: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1953). For scholarship on southern mythmaking, see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, A History of the South, v. 9 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

31. Charles Octavius Boothe, *Cyclopedia of Colored Baptists in Alabama* (Birmingham: Alabama Publishing Company, 1895); Winfield H. Mixon, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Alabama* (1902). For discussion of antebellum African American religious community, see Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*, A Galaxy Book 594 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). For an excellent and recent historiographical review on this topic, see Justin A. Rudder, “Grassroots Historians and African American Historiography in Alabama,” *The Alabama Review* 72, no. 4 (October 2019): 259–300.

More contemporary academic treatments of race and slavery in Alabama have reckoned both with Sellers' focused yet flawed studies and incorporated a diverse range of voices to produce powerful and durable studies. Miles Thornton's *Politics and Power in a Slave Society* (1981) and Daniel DuPre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier* (1997) are representative of recent monographs, accompanied by interdisciplinary work, memory studies, and community-focused research. Much more remains to be said, however, about antebellum race and slavery in Alabama, particularly given new scholarship and questions that have arisen in the twenty-first century.³²

Report-writing by university committees, filled with historians, administrators, and publicly engaged scholars and often acting in response to public pressure from students and communities, constitutes a key interpretive shift within scholarship on the relationship between slavery and the American university in recent years, beginning around 2001. One of the earliest examples of this type of institutional reporting was released by Brown University in 2006. The Brown report presented the findings of the University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice's three-year inquiry into Brown's relationship with the Atlantic slave trade. Brown's committee included contributions from a Brown University dean, history graduate students, and scholars in fields as varied

32. J. Mills Thornton III, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society Alabama, 1800-1860*, New paperback edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014); Daniel S. Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997). For examples and discussion of community-engaged memory scholarship pertaining to Alabama, see Clarke and Fine, "A' for Apology: Slavery and the Collegiate Discourses of Remembrance—the Cases of Brown University and the University of Alabama," *History and Memory* 22, no. 1 (2010); Ellen Griffith Spears and James C. Hall, "Engaging the Racial Landscape at the University of Alabama," in Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy, eds., *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies* (Athens: Universtiyy of Georgia Press, 2019); *Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Trail*, brochure, ed. John Giggie (Tuscaloosa: Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Trail, 2019).

as English, public policy, international relations, urban studies, political science, Africana studies, and American studies. Brown University's institutional report utilized interdisciplinary methodology and assessed a wide body of evidence in both local and national context to explicitly detail the university's ties with the slave trade.³³ This approach became a template for subsequent university reports on the relationship between universities and slavery in the following decades.³⁴

An additional medium for current trends and interpretive shifts in the study of the relationship between American universities and slavery is the expansion of digital projects and digital exhibits. Both university-funded and individual projects illuminate the effectiveness and promise of this trend. One of the first digital projects to address university complicity in slavery was "Call My Name: African Americans in Early Clemson University History." This project began in 2007 under the direction of Dr. Rhondda R. Thomas, a Clemson professor of nineteenth century African American literature who assesses six generations of African Americans between 1825-1973 to

33. Similar research into slavery at the University of Alabama, which culminated in a 2004 Faculty Senate apology, occurred around the same time. For sources on this process, see Clarke and Fine, "'A' for Apology: Slavery and the Collegiate Discourses of Remembrance—the Cases of Brown University and the University of Alabama," *History and Memory* 22, no. 1 (2010); Alyson Klein, "Professor Says U. of Alabama Should Apologize for Owning Slaves and Consider Paying Reparations," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 17, 2004; "University of Alabama Apologizes for Its Slave Past," *NBC News; Associated Press*, April 20, 2004; Gilbert Cruz, "UA Apologizes for History of Slavery," *Tuscaloosa News*, April 21, 2004.

34. Brenda Allen et al., "Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice" (Brown University, 2006). Sven Beckert and Katherine Stevens, "Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History," Harvard University, 2011. Charles K. Ross, et. al., "UM Slavery and the University Working Group: 2-Year Report and Proposal for Future Projects," University of Mississippi, 2015. John J. DeGoia, et. al., "Report of the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation to the President of Georgetown University," Georgetown University, 2016. Marcus L. Martin, et. al., "President's Commission on Slavery and the University," University of Virginia, 2018. See also Princeton University: <https://slavery.princeton.edu/about/resources>.

illuminate the longstanding relationships and inequality that have sprung from the university's involvement in the domestic slave trade.³⁵ In 2011, a graduate seminar at the University of South Carolina designed a similar online exhibit, titled "Slavery at South Carolina College, 1801-1865: The Foundations of the University of South Carolina."³⁶ Digital history projects and exhibits reveal relationships between slavery and American universities in a publicly accessible format which can be utilized by community groups, scholars, genealogists, and other interested parties, a distinct, positive trend within the field.³⁷

The largest body of primary source evidence in a digital exhibit that examines the links between slavery and American universities is found within Princeton University's 2013 "Princeton and Slavery" project. This digital exhibit includes a repository of 400 primary source documents readily accessible and open for public use. The exhibit's

35. Rhonda R. Thomas, et. al., "Call My Name: African Americans in Early Clemson University History," Clemson University, 2007, <https://spark.adobe.com/page/wQoPG/>.

36. "Slavery at South Carolina College, 1801-1865: The Foundations of the University of South Carolina," University of South Carolina, 2011, <http://slaveryatusc.weebly.com/acknowledgments.html>. Ballinger, Susan, et. al. "Slavery and the Making of the University." University of North Carolina, Undated. <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/introduction>. Rainville, Lynn. "African American Heritage at Sweet Briar." Sweet Briar College, 2014. <http://tusculum.sbc.edu/africanamericans/default.shtml>.

37. Digital projects illuminating institutional slavery intersect with the goals of database projects like the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (<https://www.slavevoyages.org/>). For recent discussion on how large-scale database research aids slavery research, see David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). For additional digital projects which illuminate aspects of slavery in the US, see "Treasury of Weary Souls" (<http://www.treasuryofwearysouls.com/#intro>); "Documenting the American South" (<https://docsouth.unc.edu/browse/collections.html>); Jorge Felipe, "Digital Resources for the Study of Global Slavery and the Slave Trade," list, *H-Net.Org*, n.d., <https://networks.h-net.org/node/11465/pages/143424/digital-resources-study-global-slavery-and-slave-trade>. For a useful review of digital history's development, see Orville V. Burton, "American Digital History," *Social Science Computer Review* 23, no. 2 (May 2005): 206–20.

primary source repository stands out from the larger digital history trends in the study of slavery and American universities for two reasons. First, this repository unveils documentation of the sort utilized by Craig Steven Wilder's *Ebony and Ivy*, demonstrating the ways in which his groundbreaking scholarship helped shift sources into public view that reveal institutional history. The "Princeton and Slavery" project also reveals a significant commitment to commemoration and reconciliation on the part of the university. Rather than putting together a committee of academics and administrators to assess Princeton's history of enslavement, the university has made resources publicly available for students, scholars, and the public. While the voices and lives of the enslaved remain largely absent from the primary source record, Princeton's 2013 "Princeton and Slavery" project demonstrates a radical shift towards democratization in the recent history of university and slavery scholarship.³⁸

How does this wide-ranging historiographical framework prepare the scholar to examine slavery and the Southern university, specifically the University of Alabama? Scholarship shows us that Southern campuses were intellectual and social proving grounds for young Southern white men. We know that life on these Southern campuses was characterized by honor culture and the constraints of public masculinity. The intellectual traditions and educational environment of these campuses offered the nineteenth century student a pathway to positions as masters and social elites via courses of study that prioritized classical education, debate, and pro-slavery thought.

38. "Princeton and Slavery," Princeton University, 2013, <https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources>. "The Hallowed Grounds Project: Race, Slavery and Memory at the University of Alabama" (<https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/hallowed-grounds-project.html>), spearheaded by Dr. Hillary N. Green, is a similar digital project currently underway at the University of Alabama.

In assessing slavery's impact on the formation of the American university, historians can utilize examinations of Old South intellectuals who operated in and around Southern university spaces during the antebellum era. "Old South intellectuals" is a broad term, and the record represented by such a category is vast. James Farmer's definition of an Old South intellectual helps to narrow the category : Old South intellectuals were the region's "writers, scientists, clergymen, professional men, and thoughtful amateurs" who contributed to the theoretical architecture of what Farmer terms the "Metaphysical Confederacy."³⁹ Even after winnowing down the parameters of what constitutes an Old South intellectual via Farmer's definition, however, the record is daunting. In light of a historical inquiry into the relationships between American universities and slavery, this linkage is a strength that has recently allowed scholars of the twenty first century to explore the vast networks that cemented universities – alongside courts, ecclesiastical sites, economic institutions and plantations – as ideological anchors for the Old South's master class.

Shaped and molded by relationships to market capitalism and human capital, scholarship reveals landscapes of nineteenth century Southern colleges and universities. Enslaved workers, carrying within themselves fiduciary and capital values, shared campus buildings and living spaces with professors, built campus buildings, worked on projects that enhanced university's grounds and holdings, and suffered abuse at the hands of students and faculty. Highly skilled enslaved craftsmen and less-skilled laborers alike were components of complex webs of capital that bound universities to local landholders

39. James O. Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 16.

and their brokers. All of these elements appear in related scholarship on slavery at the university, and as chapter two will reveal, similar processes characterized the University of Alabama's antebellum campus.

The University of Alabama should also be contextualized within scholarship that illuminates southern institutional slavery. In the processes of leasing enslaved labor, in the paternal management of human capital, and in the invested relationships between University stakeholders and enslaved workers, clear patterns emerge that clarify the parameters of institutional slavery at the University of Alabama.

Chapter Two

“Reluctant Constraint”: The University of Alabama’s Enslaved Labor, 1828-1860

Slavery and the University of Alabama’s Early Years

The University of Alabama (UA) emerged from a U.S. Congressional appropriation, made on April 18, 1820, which set aside a township in Alabama for a collegiate “Seminary of Learning.”¹ The fledgling institution’s Board of Trustees took the helm in 1821. These men held near total control of the university’s early development, reporting annual financial figures and notable developments to the state legislature, but largely operating as an independent unit. UA Trustees, who served average terms of a little over five years, promoted the financial interests of the institution by receiving “land, tenements, hereditaments, personal property, and sums of money,” serving as “custodians of the University’s land and other assets,” “prescribing courses of study,” and “planning, building, and administering” the university in its infancy.²

James Sellers’ *History of the University of Alabama, Vol. I* examined the nineteenth century history of what he terms the “Pioneer University” in detail. His study, published by the University of Alabama Press in 1953, is a 700-page behemoth that

1. James Benson Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama. Vol. I: 1818 - 1902* (Tuscaloosa, Ala: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1953), 7.

2. Ibid., 11.

articulates several key themes which locate the University of Alabama as a specific geographic and cultural place. However, Sellers fails to adequately situate the institution within the Old Southwest's landscape of slavery. The University of Alabama's campus was built only a few day's ride from the jagged edge of the old Southwest's cotton frontier, in a field outside of a town barely old enough to claim a history of its own, in a state "only a dozen years old."³ Pioneer Alabama during what a later historian termed "the flush times" was an unstable place, dominated by opportunistic and ambitious planters.⁴ Those early Trustees of the university, opportunistic and ambitious in their own right, poured time, energy, and enslaved human capital into the creation of a university that they envisioned would rise to national prominence out of the contested Alabama landscape.



Figure 1 - "Old Southwest" map detail, from M.M. Peabody's *Map of the United States* (Uttica, 1831). Accessed via the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3700.ct003557>.

3. Ibid, 118.

4. See Joshua D. Rothman, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson, Race in the Atlantic World, 1700-1900* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

To finance and carve a garden of learning out of dark soil of central Alabama, the State and its Trustees turned to land – the currency that fueled the flush times throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia. Endowed by the state with nearly 50,000 acres of rich soil, the Trustees appointed agents in the early 1820s to manage, appraise, and sell this property, first at a flat rate, and then at \$17.00, \$12.00, and \$8.00 per acre depending on the land's appraisal.⁵ The Trustees raised \$67,343.49 by 1825, enough to begin construction. In 1828 they chose Marr's Field, outside of the town of Tuscaloosa, from a list of 13 locations for the campus.⁶ The ever-practical Trustees also purchased 1,250 acres adjacent to Marr's Field because of site's rich clay and timber resources, and that same year purchased the University's first recorded enslaved man, Ben.⁷

Ben worked for William Nichols, the English architect who designed the original University of Alabama campus layout; he planted trees and maintained fences as the campus rose between 1828 and 1831.⁸ Little is known about Ben beyond his tasks and the duration of his presence on campus, but he was boarded in Tuscaloosa for at least one twelve-week period.⁹ Sellers describes how Marr's Field bustled during construction: “Workmen building the University in the years between 1828 and 1831 found close at

5. At first, this land was sold at a flat rate regardless of potential value. Later, the land was evaluated and then sold at tiered pricing. As the 1830s progressed and land values fell, however, acreage was sold again at a flat rate of \$3.50/acre, weakening the University of Alabama's financial situation. See Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 15-17.

6. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 26, 30.

7. Ibid., 30.

8. Ibid., 38. For more on William Nichols, see G. Ward Hubbs, “‘Dissipating the Clouds of Ignorance’: The First University of Alabama Library, 1831-1865,” *Libraries & Culture* 27, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 21-23.

9. Sellers, *History of University of Alabama*, 39.

hand much of the material they needed...sandstone [was] quarried near the Warrior River; bricks were burned and made on the spot; lumber from the University's own lumber tract was cut and shaped by hand.”¹⁰ Many of those hands came from an untold number of enslaved laborers, who worked for the contractors hired to build the University of Alabama and who toiled alongside free stonemasons and craftsmen. Sellers’ passive recounting erased that truth.

As Marr’s Field became the physical campus of the University of Alabama, its Trustees assembled a faculty. The Trustees chose two southerners, John Fielding Wallace of Maryland and the 24-year-old Henry Tutweiler of Virginia, and two northerners, Gordon Saltonstall of New York and the Reverend Alva Woods of Vermont. Two instructors joined the faculty members and together, the six taught chemistry, mathematics, literature, languages, and standard antebellum classical education courses such as natural and moral philosophy.¹¹ Alongside these scholars the Trustees hired a Proctor, a Steward, college officers, and, after some deliberation, a librarian and natural history curator named William McMillian.¹² With faculty assembled, staff hired, and a gleaming, well-supplied campus – consisting of dormitories, a Steward’s Hall, the

10. Ibid., 31.

11. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 49-51.

12. The inclusion of a librarian-curator in the first faculty was unusual, perhaps unprecedented, for a Southern institution like the University of Alabama. McMillan, described as a self-professed naturalist, collected books, materials, and specimens for a natural history cabinet on a volunteer basis before the University opened. Throughout 1830 he persistently lobbied the Board of Trustees to establish an official librarian-curator role. After initially declining, the Trustee’s approved McMillan’s proposal in 1831. McMillan resigned his position after only a short time, but his collection remained under the University’s care. See Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, Vol. 1, 52; Hubbs, “Dissipating the Clouds of Ignorance”: The First University of Alabama Library, 1831-1865,” 25-26; John C. Hall, “Alabama Museum of Natural History,” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, November 7, 2008, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1831>.

Rotunda, manicured grounds, and lecture spaces – completed, the University of Alabama officially opened its doors in April of 1831.

Despite the University of Alabama's strong start, the institution's forward momentum faltered only a few years after opening. Faculty considered student behavior at the new university atrocious, forcing President Woods and the beleaguered faculty to attempt to control the unruly student body. Much of the disciplinary divide was cultural; President Wood, born in Vermont and educated “in the shadow of New England Puritans,” approached discipline with an expectation of restraint and decorum that found no purchase in the hearts and minds of the privileged planter’s sons attending the University of Alabama.¹³ Indeed, as the literature on antebellum Southern academies has demonstrated, the southern elite at emerging institutions like the University of Alabama were steeped in attitudes – paternalism and a rigid honor culture – which encouraged them to use campus as a proving grounds for their manhood and as spaces where classical education could reinforce their pre-existing roles as masters.¹⁴

A key battleground for clashes between students and faculty in the University of Alabama’s first decade, and indeed, throughout its antebellum history, was over control of the University’s enslaved workers, termed “college servants” in most University of Alabama records dating back to 1831. The University’s enslaved laborers actively

13. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, Vol. 1, 55-56.

14. For studies which further illuminate this dynamic, see Timothy J. Williams, *Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Jennifer R. Green, *Military Education and the Emerging Middle Class in the Old South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Lorri Glover, *Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

worked on the grounds and throughout campus' buildings. They boarded in the Steward's Hall as early as 1830, so students shared spaces with enslaved workers since the very origins of the University.¹⁵ The nature of the enslaved laborer's work, which entailed close, daily proximity to students in dormitories, public study rooms, lecture and recitation rooms, and in the Steward's Hall, and the entitled racism of the students, who were in many cases young elites eager to demonstrate their mastery, meant that violence and mistreatment of the enslaved workers was common.

One notable arena for these violent contests involving enslaved workers was the Steward's Hall, a dining and provisioning space where students and faculty took meals daily. Enslaved workers at the University of Alabama were often boarded in the Steward's Hall and furnished "services in the Hall," likely laboring as waiters or cooks during mealtimes.¹⁶ Between 1834 and 1836, the university's Steward's Hall became a "constant battleground" for confrontation, both playful and antagonistic, between students, who, in turn, targeted enslaved workers with cruelty and ridicule as they served meals.¹⁷ While faculty members took turns braving the Hall to attempt to maintain order, the years of chaos in the Steward's Hall demonstrate the inability of the University of Alabama's early faculty to quell the combative tendencies of their Southern charges, and

15. "Receipt for payment from W. P. Ashe, The University of Alabama, to Martha Thudwick, March 16, 1830," reference number u0006_0000001_0000022_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

16. "Boarding of Servants in the Hall," December 18, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

17. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, Vol. 1, 62. A published description of student life at the antebellum University of Alabama also sheds light on combative chaos on campus. See William R. Smith, *Reminiscences Of A Long Life* (Washington; W.R. Smith, Sr., 1889).

by extension, their inability to protect the enslaved workers from harm. As these valuable vessels of human capital were often hired to the campus from University stakeholders, mistreatment of these economic assets was unacceptable, yet despite their pleas, President Wood and his faculty seem to have been unable to curb violence in any meaningful way.

The clashes between these young masters and the University of Alabama's educators culminated in an 1836 incident involving students attending a circus performance. A furious President Woods suspended one-third of students, and only one student managed to graduate in 1837.¹⁸ This incident and its fallout, involving an urgent student petition and protests from families, citizens of Tuscaloosa, and the press, ultimately led to the dissolution of the first faculty and the resignation of President Woods in 1837. Combined with worsened economic conditions in Tuscaloosa and throughout the old Southwest during the months leading to the Panic of 1837, as the "flush times" speculative excess faded, the University of Alabama faced a significant leadership vacuum that the Board of Trustees were eager to fill. Basil Manly Sr., alongside a new crop of talented scholars, stepped into the institutional breach to try to bring the University back under control.

18. Circus attendance, along with other forms of visits to Tuscaloosa, was banned in November of 1835; see entry dated November 23, 1835, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1835-1837), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama. In the Spring of 1836, a large body of students attended the circus, and a small handful were suspended. Forty of the remaining students signed a confession of attendance and were then also suspended. Uproar followed as parents and community members protested the suspension of a third of the student body. Resentment of this incident contributed to further chaos in 1837, as students resisted Faculty efforts to regain control of the campus; see Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, Vol. 1, 63-65.

Basil Manly Sr.

At 39 years old, Basil Manly had already helped found two Southern educational institutions: Furman University, in South Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Louisville, Kentucky, before arriving in Tuscaloosa to correct the course of the University of Alabama. Educated at South Carolina College, Manly joined a stream of young, accomplished graduates of that institution – ministers, statesmen, lawyers, doctors, and editors – who assumed leadership roles in the old Southwest during the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁹ South Carolina College, memorably termed by one historian of higher education as an institution founded as a “Noah’s Ark of anachronistic political philosophy,” served a distinct ideological role in the creation of members of this Southern elite.²⁰ Alumni of South Carolina College like Manly emerged with a high-quality, while dated, liberal education that wove classical training with pro-slavery apologetics and political theory to produce “men fitted to be a master rather than a slave.”²¹

After graduating as a valedictorian from South Carolina College in 1821, Manly returned to his chosen vocation as a Baptist minister. He led a notable revival in South

19. Michael Sugrue, “South Carolina College, the Defense of Slavery, and the Development of Secessionist Politics,” in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, 1st Edition, ed. Roger L. Geiger, Vanderbilt Issues in Higher Education (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 114.

20. Sugrue, “South Carolina College,” 92.

21. Ibid., 94.

Carolina's Edgefield District in 1822, and became pastor at several churches in the state, most notably the First Baptist Church of Charleston, which he led from 1826 to 1837.²²



REV. BASIL MANLY, SR., D. D.

Figure 2 - Basil Manly Sr., from The Manly family; an account of the descendants of Captain Basil Manly of the revolution, and related families, compiled by Louise Manly (1930).

22. James Fuller, "Basil Manly," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, June 11, 2007, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1182>.

As Manly grew into a nationally recognized Baptist leader, his carefully calibrated defenses of the South and the Southern institution of slavery blossomed into a full-fledged articulation of Southern identity built upon the foundations of patriarchal leadership and biblical morality. As the University of Alabama sank into disarray during the mid-1830s, its Trustees placed their hopes upon his capacities, both as an administrator and as a staunch Southern ideologue.²³

Manly received news of his appointment as President of the University of Alabama on August 22, 1837, accepted the appointment the following week, and moved his family – along with several enslaved workers – to Tuscaloosa in November, after resigning his ministry in Charleston.²⁴ He quickly set to his work of revitalizing the university, hiring a promising new crop of scholars to teach and mentor the University's students. This group included Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard, a multi-talented science educator and rising star out of Yale. Barnard, along with geologist Michael Tuomey, assisted Manly in bringing the campus back under control, though discipline continued to be an issue through the university's entire antebellum period.²⁵

23. For an authoritative source on Basil Manly, see A. James Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

24. Basil Manly, August 22, 1837, Diary II (1834-1846), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Basil Manly, August 30, 1837, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid*; Basil Manly, November 2, 1837, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid*.

25. F.A.P. Barnard's role as an on-campus foil to President Manly deserves further discussion. While Barnard and Manly were able to maintain a working relationship, the two men clashed at times in matters both personal and professional. The ambitious and talented Barnard went on to hold leadership roles at the University of Mississippi and Columbia University after his stint in Tuscaloosa ended, and Barnard College is named in his honor. For more on Barnard's relationship with Basil Manly, see Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama. Vol. 1*, 69-74; Hubbs, "'Dissipating the Clouds of Ignorance': The First University of Alabama Library, 1831-1865," 27. See also Tommy Song, "F.A.P. Barnard: 10th President of Columbia University," *Columbia University and Slavery*, May 2018, <https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/content/fap-barnard-10th-president-columbia-university>.

To improve discipline, Manly and his faculty installed an updated set of University laws and guidelines between 1838-1839 that helped chart the next several decades of the University. As reflected in the meeting minutes, several of these new standards were adopted to reflect the faculty's increased control over the movements of students and interactions between students and enslaved workers. In July of 1838, new provisions against enslaved women appearing on and about campus were adopted, strengthening the prohibitions outlined in the original university laws of 1831.²⁶ The month of December brought the passage of a faculty prohibition banning students from sending enslaved workers on errands to Tuscaloosa or any surrounding area.²⁷ In January of 1839, President Manly and his faculty instituted their most aggressive management tactic, one that was assuredly unpalatable to the young masters of the University of Alabama. The faculty prohibited students from inflicting "corporeal chastisement upon any servant employed by the University, for any neglect of duty, or other actual or alleged offense." The directive ordered students to instead refer these instances of "impropriety" to the President or faculty for resolution.²⁸

This faculty decision likely reflects several developments, the first being that student abuse of enslaved workers remained continued to be a significant problem. While only one instance of a student beating an enslaved worker was entered into minutes of the

26. October 3-4, 1831, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; July 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

27. December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

28. January 3, 1839, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

Faculty meetings before 1839 – the student in question was “admonished” for his conduct but faced no significant repercussions after making an apology – it remains highly likely that mistreatment and varying levels of violence occurred often enough that faculty regulated it only with difficulty, as was the case in the earlier Steward’s Hall abuse.²⁹ Secondly, this regulation could reflect the growing on-campus presence of enslaved workers by 1839. More enslaved workers, especially more leased labor, would mean greater fiduciary responsibilities towards this human capital, and more regulations governing risk – like the constant risk of reactive student violence in response to perceived slights – would have been a proactive step towards fulfilling those responsibilities.

A final interpretation of this new faculty directive, which effectively overruled the University of Alabama students’ masterly prerogatives, was that it was instituted in response to the arrival of an enslaved man on the university campus who the faculty wished to, at some level, protect. Sam, an enslaved man sent to the University of Alabama in 1839, shows up time and time again in Basil Manly’s personal records and in the records of the university.³⁰ Often disciplined by President Manly for refusing to submit to students, Sam gained a troublemaker’s reputation, but also proved to be a man

29. March 1837, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1835-1837), *ibid.*

30. For a recent study that focuses on Sam’s position at the University of Alabama, see James Fuller, “I Whipped Him a Second Time, Very Severely”: Basil Manly, Honor, and Slavery at the University of Alabama,” in *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies*, eds. Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 114-130.

of many talents.³¹ He assisted Professor Barnard in his chemistry laboratory on several occasions, and in 1850, he “fit up” an on-campus barber shop for students.³² The Governor ordered Sam to the University of Alabama in 1839 to be “tried” as an enslaved laborer on campus.³³ Sam seems to have maintained some level of individual identity throughout his years on campus, potentially because of some level of paternal identification with Alabama’s governor, Arthur P. Bagby.³⁴ Manly would have respected such bonds of paternalism, as reflected in his own personal relationships with those enslaved by his family, and while this did not stop him from personally disciplining Sam, it could be reflected in his consistent identification of Sam as an individual, a person with a name, throughout University records. While the prohibition was likely poorly enforced, it remains possible that Sam’s arrival, or the presence of unnamed enslaved workers protected by far-reaching forms of paternalism, influenced the faculty’s 1839 adoption of a prohibition on abuse.

Basil Manly’s beliefs on the question of slavery and slavery’s relationship to Southern identity are unmistakable and contextualize his decisions as President of the University of Alabama. As a leading slaveholder-of-faith in Tuscaloosa, noted Southern ideologue, and alumnus of South Carolina College, his views fell into clear, sweeping

31. Basil Manly, March 4, 1846, Diary III (1843-1848), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama. See also Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, Vol. 1, 40.

32. Ibid, pp. 41.

33. Basil Manly, March 11, 1839, Diary II (1834-1846), Ibid.

34. Basil Manly, March 11, 1839, Diary II (1834-1846), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama. For more information on Bagby, see “Arthur Pendleton Bagby,” Alabama Governors, *Alabama Department of Archives and History*, February 6, 2014, https://archives.alabama.gov/govs_list/g_bagbya.html.

patterns of paternalism and mastery that can be glimpsed in his correspondence, his public addresses, and in his private life. A careful and prolific chronicler, Manly documented his life, ideas, correspondence, and interactions in daily diaries throughout his life, beginning in the 1820s and running through the 1860s. This written record offers a perspective on Manly's thought and contributions to Southern intellectual history, particularly in the context of the last two decades of his life, when Manly became a leading secessionist and an influential spiritual advisor to the Confederacy.³⁵

Basil Manly's defining ideologies can also be accessed in his public addresses, particularly in his words from the pulpit. His sermon "Duties of Masters and Servants," the eighth in a larger cycle of his seminal "Sermons on Duty" preached in the spring months of 1837, offers an excellent glimpse into Manly's ideological relationship to those he enslaved. "God has made you their masters," Manly stated, "...their guardians, the conservators of their lives and happiness...not a connection founded in mutual love...but in mere conscience." Manly then specifies, explicitly, that "it is the duty of masters to give [the enslaved] suitable food, raiment, and lodging," as well as "attendance

35. Basil Manly's role in Southern intellectual and religious history has been well documented. The most recent study, and the study which most effectively utilizes Manly's personal writings, is Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy*. For works informing Fuller's study, see Louise Manly, *The Manly Family: An Account of the Descendants of Captain Basil Manly of the Revolution and Related Families* (Greenville, SC: Keys, 1930); Thomas M. Owen, *Dr. Basil Manly: The Founder of the Alabama Historical Society* (Montgomery: Alabama Historical Society, 1904); James August Pate, "Basil Manly and His Administration at the University of Alabama, 1837-1855," (master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1955); Jonathan A. Lindsey, "Basil Manly: Nineteenth Century Protean Man," *Baptist History and Heritage* Vol. 8 (1973); Harold Wilson, "Basil Manly, Apologist for Slavery," *Alabama Review* Vol. 15 (January 1962). For information on the origins of the moniker "Chaplain of the Confederacy," see Wayne Flint, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists and the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998).

and care in sickness,” an unambiguous charge which Manly draws from the biblical example of the slaveholding centurion found in Luke 8 and Matthew 22-23.³⁶

Manly’s actions towards enslaved workers and enslaved people he owned personally bear out the charges he issued in his public addresses. At several times throughout his diaries, Manly notes positive interactions with those he enslaved, celebrating births and marriages while also mourning deaths.³⁷ Manly was also quick to facilitate medical care for the enslaved. Moses, an enslaved worker owned by the University of Alabama, needed medical care in April of 1851. Rufus Haywood, a local physician, cared for Moses and received payment for his services from President Manly.³⁸ Six months later, Manly again compensated another Tuscaloosa physician for additional medical care for Moses.³⁹ In this case, Manly’s involvement with the enslaved at the University of Alabama certainly fulfilled the institution’s fiduciary obligations; seen through the lens of his private and family life, however, Manly’s actions wedded the need to protect university investments with the fundamental doctrines of a paternalism rooted in what Manly perceived to be a just, responsible, and moral Christian sensibility.

36. Basil Manly, “Duties of Masters and Servants,” April 1837, Sermons on Duty, Basil Manly Sr. Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

37. Basil Manly, February 4, 1835, Diary II (1834-1846), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Basil Manly, August 7, 1837, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, February 25, 1840, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, November 23, 1836, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, January 21, 1839, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*

38. “Receipt for payment from The University of Alabama to R. Haywood, April 9, 1851,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000121_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

39. “Receipt for payment from The University of Alabama to Reuben Searcy, October 7, 1851,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000120_0001, *ibid.*

Alongside these calls encouraging gentle, paternal care over laborers, however, Manly implicated masters in the need to maintain boundaries and dominance over those they enslaved, by force if need be. Manly instructed masters to avoid “unsuitable and improper indulgence” in their interactions with the enslaved men and women in their lives, and warned against a master who might “forget his condition” in showing lenience to enslaved workers, a state of affairs which, Manly asserted, would prove “injurious” to all parties involved.⁴⁰ Manly used the service of a Charleston slave-breaker to obtain compliance from a man he enslaved named Claiborne, and recorded instances throughout his personal writings which detail instances when he himself beat enslaved workers.⁴¹

Manly, like most slaveowners, decided with some regularity between the use of physical violence and the emotional violence of the slave sale, using both tools to reinforce what he viewed as the proper relationships between master and slave. Assuring the dominance of the master was the rationale behind the sale of Claiborne. After numerous attempts at managing the relationship on his own terms, Manly wrote in March of 1836 that he was “not disposed to behave himself in such a manner that I can keep him” and that Claiborne’s actions left him “reluctantly constrained to part with him.”⁴² This concept of “reluctant constraint,” of Manly as a member of a master class subject to

40. Basil Manly, “Duties of Masters and Servants,” April 1837, Sermons on Duty, Basil Manly Sr. Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

41. Basil Manly, July 1833, Diary I (1825-1833), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Basil Manly, March 4, 1846, Diary III (1843-1848), *ibid.*

42. Basil Manly, March 1, 1836, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.* James Fuller writes in some detail about the relationship between Basil Manly and Claiborne; see Harris et. al., *Slavery and the University*, 121-123.

an inescapable, immutable creed dictating how white slaveowners must manage their relationships and seek what they viewed as regretful remedies to disobedience, is a subtle yet far-reaching idea that speaks volumes about how Manly positioned himself in relation to the enslaved men and women around him. Basil Manly's leadership from both the pulpit and the President's office at the University of Alabama sprang from the same sets of ideas regarding order and mastery that characterized his interactions with the enslaved.

Slavery in the University of Alabama's Records

Having sketched the origins of slavery at the University of Alabama and examined slavery's role in the life and ideas of its most impactful early leader, Basil Manly Sr., this chapter will now turn to tracing the remnants of slavery itself at the University of Alabama. Evidence of human bondage in the records is, in a word, fragmentary, yet copious amounts of fragments remain. To define slavery's footprints at the University of Alabama, remaining records can be divided into five thematic categories: resolutions, relationships, tasks, economics, and records characterized by interactions with Tuscaloosa.

The easiest category to identify and delineate are resolutions governing slavery's scope and reach at the University of Alabama, as foundational resolutions on enslaved workers' movements, work scopes, and roles in relation to University affiliates – faculty, students, and staff – received approval and revision in the 1830s and remained generally static throughout the rest of the university's antebellum years.

Relationships, which this chapter will loosely define through records that describe medical care, violence, disruption, conversation, appraisal of character, negotiation, and

other forms of interaction existing alongside the realm of labor and labor relations, appear frequently. Reading between the lines of these relationships offers some of the most challenging and complicated evidence of enslaved people's lives and decisions as they articulated space for themselves at the University of Alabama.

Tasks, like relationships, are numerous and described in varying amounts of detail across early University of Alabama sources, revealing daily rhythms of both labor and interaction on university grounds. Economic evidence of slavery at the University of Alabama can also be gleaned from records, including both Faculty meeting minutes and receipts from enslaved labor. Finally, records from this period of the University of Alabama's history reveal how slavery bound the university and the town of Tuscaloosa together, fostering interaction and commerce while also, at times, creating tension and conflict.

Together, these five categories of analysis reveal historical data which fleshes out prevailing assumptions that slavery – its reach, its principles, and its products – undergirded and enabled the development of the antebellum University of Alabama. By adding analytical weight to these assumptions, this chapter will attempt to articulate a sense of slavery's scope and scale at the University of Alabama. Articulating how the institution itself benefited from slavery is only part of the equation, as complicity was commonplace; this chapter rather provides a case study of institutional slavery as seen in the final decades of the old American Southwest.

In October of 1831, the faculty and Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama determined several key resolutions which came to govern the lives of the

enslaved and their interactions with university actors. The first university resolution regulating slavery, which banned students from keeping enslaved people on campus, was wrapped up in a blanket prohibition on alcohol, firearms, gunpowder, and tobacco in any “public college room.”⁴³ This decision differed from the systems in place at flagship southern institutions like the University of Virginia and the University of South Carolina, but undoubtedly some part of this decision was made with consideration of the fledgling university’s limited resources. In December of 1831 the faculty agreed upon session (semester) rates for 1832 that included a flat-rate fee for fuel, damages, access to the university library, use of public study rooms, and the “hire” of enslaved workers in domestic service, which mitigated the need for student’s personal enslaved workers.⁴⁴ Despite this, some students still brought slaves to campus and eventually handled their lodging and service via Tuscaloosa’s hiring market.⁴⁵ Also passed in 1831 was a resolution banning enslaved women from entering university buildings.⁴⁶ In at least one

43. October 3-4, 1831, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

44. December 26, 1831, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), ibid. “Hire” referred to a leasing agreement between a slaveowner and the University of Alabama, wherein an enslaved person’s labor at the University of Alabama generated revenue for the enslaver. These leasing agreements often followed patterns, but generally, the specifics of these arrangements were agreed upon via unique contracts on a case-by-case or annual basis. For more on leased enslaved labor, see Martin Ruef, “Constructing Labor Markets: The Valuation of Black Labor in the U.S. South, 1831 to 1867,” *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 6 (December 2012): 970–98; Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, (New York: Basic Books, 2016); Stephanie Cole, “Servants and Slaves in Louisville: Race, Ethnicity, and Household Labor in an Antebellum Border City,” *Ohio Valley History* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 3–25. For the origins of Alabama slave hiring markets, see Thomas W. Hulse, “Slave Rentals and the Early Development of the Military Slave System at Mobile Point, 1812–1834,” *The Alabama Review* 65, no. 2 (April 2012): 83–99.

45. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1., p. 119-120.

46. Enslaved women across the Old Southwest lived with the constant threat of coercion and sexual violence, and it is possible that this threat was heightened for those who lived and worked in proximity to the University of Alabama. For an excellent study of enslaved women on campus, see Hilary Green, “Enslaved Women at the University of Alabama,” Select Primary Source Documents and Transcriptions,

1835 instance, a rumor regarding the presence of enslaved women at the University of Alabama became a near-fatal flashpoint between Tuscaloosa citizens and the student body, so this resolution likely attempted to manage both student behavior and the university's liabilities.⁴⁷

In addition to dictating who could bring enslaved workers to campus and who could not, early faculty codified the expected daily tasks of owned or hired laborers. Regular duties included "ringing the bell and sweeping daily the recitation rooms...make fires, sweep the private rooms, make beds, carry out water and furnish the students with clean water, and...brush their [students] shoes."⁴⁸ An interesting addition to this list is the operation of the bell located in the laboratory, which governed the daily schedules of faculty and students alike. Enslaved workers managed this crucial job at the university until 1837.⁴⁹ Codification of daily tasks for enslaved workers likely allowed the university Proctor, described as a "personnel man and...purchasing agent" who "[managed] the improvements on the buildings and grounds and...[directed] the

Hallowed Grounds Project, University of Alabama, <https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/enslaved-women-at-ua.html>. Green's essay builds from Deborah Gray White's seminal work *Ar'n't I A Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985).

47. In the Spring of 1835, a crisis erupted between students and a prominent citizen of Tuscaloosa when the citizen accused students of either harboring or confining an escaped female slave in University of Alabama dormitories. The citizen asked individual members of the faculty to search the dormitories in question. When faculty came up empty-handed, he obtained a search warrant, gathered a posse, and stormed the campus to search for himself. Students objected to his search, attacked the posse with stones, brick-bats, and warning shots, and eventually chased them off campus before the faculty could regain control. A student later suffered a gunshot wound in an exchange outside of the citizen's house. The affair ended by April, but not before the campus' disciplinary environment and the University's relationship with the town of Tuscaloosa both suffered; April 6, 1835, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

48. October 31, 1831, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), *ibid*.

49. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 130-131.

University servants,” to institute some version of a task system which, ideally, would help the university best capitalize on its labor force.⁵⁰

Two issues became significant roadblocks in the 1830s to maintaining consistent daily work schedules for the enslaved. Student discipline problems involving interactions with enslaved workers undoubtedly compromised efficiency; apparent difficulties in regulating enslaved worker’s movements compounded the situation. In 1838, the faculty passed a formal prohibition against students sending enslaved workers on errands to Tuscaloosa or the surrounding areas. If this practice was common during the Woods administration at the University of Alabama, as the ban’s passage early in Manly’s career in Tuscaloosa suggests, it would have been a constant drain on the enslaved workforce’s labor capabilities, as these laborers would have felt compelled to follow student instructions or risk retaliation. Enslaved workers who followed student instructions and traveled around Tuscaloosa could have had opportunities to seize small moments of agency outside of the Proctor’s sight and perhaps control. The law changes of 1838-1839 also included the ban on “corporeal chastisement” of enslaved workers discussed previously.⁵¹

As historians have noted, interracial relationships in the antebellum South – whether as sexual violence perpetuated by white males, part of a master/slave dynamic, partnerships, illicit interactions, or in other forms – were fraught spaces negotiated carefully by enslaved men and women. Without legal rights or agency, enslaved people’s

50. Ibid, p. 41-42.

51. January 3, 1839, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

ability to create space for their own humanity in the environments where they lived, worked, and endured often depended on their ability to navigate relationships and interactions with white operators. This same dynamic, of seizing agency and creating space through negotiated interactions, characterized the lives of enslaved workers at the University of Alabama during the antebellum era, and elements of these relationships can be parsed from existing records.

“Dutiful” service – to borrow Basil Manly’s parlance from the pulpit – when rendered over years, became a key ingredient in creating relationships between enslaved workers and the antebellum University of Alabama. Moses, a long-suffering enslaved laborer at the University of Alabama, offers a good example of how service over time affected daily life and institutional relationships. The University of Alabama purchased Moses as a “sound and healthy” twenty-eight-year-old in 1845.⁵² He worked on campus through the Civil War and could have potentially been hired out to the University via the Tuscaloosa labor market earlier in his life.

Two years after the university purchased him, Moses began to be given five dollars per month to “board himself.”⁵³ Most enslaved laborers owned or hired by the University of Alabama were assigned boarding locations in Tuscaloosa or on campus at the Steward’s Hall, but Moses, presumably because of his two years of satisfactory labor, was trusted with the ability to seek out his own lodging in Tuscaloosa for an unspecified

52. “Bill of Sale (Moses), 1845,” Select Primary Source Documents and Transcriptions, *Hallowed Grounds Project*, The University of Alabama, <https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/bill-of-sale-moses.html>.

53. October 11, 1847, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

duration. Receipts issued by the University of Alabama in 1850 show that boarding enslaved workers in Tuscaloosa could cost as little as three dollars a month, so Moses could likely meet his needs.⁵⁴ Though of course not a wage, one can imagine that the arrangement, and the relationship it fostered, was mutually beneficial; the faculty dealt with the issue of enslaved worker housing, and Moses presumably took hold of the agency the housing decision offered him. Moses' trustworthiness matters less when the question of agency is centered in assessing this relationship.

Moses surfaces with less regularity in the faculty minutes than other enslaved laborers, but he later appears in 1851, after taking a beating from students who accused him of informing on them to the faculty. According to the faculty minutes, Moses implicated several culprits, who were quickly recommended for expulsion to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees expelled two of the three.⁵⁵ The faculty's swift, responsive action and willingness to listen to Moses' testimony over the testimony of the perpetrators is telling. This response to the "outrage" committed by students against Moses suggests some level of relationship beyond that of protecting human capital, as Moses' life and safety were immediately prioritized above the livelihoods and educations of three young masters.⁵⁶ One is led to wonder if Basil Manly's lifelong interest in the concept of

54. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 39.

55. December 12-19, 1851, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

56. December 19, 1851, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid*.

biblical justice, a focus his biographer highlights, influenced his decisive actions in this case.⁵⁷

Because of the financial value Moses represented, and his apparent trustworthiness and work ethic, he was given the right to seek out his own housing in Tuscaloosa. When his life and health were threatened by a particularly violent student attack, the faculty responded swiftly and forcefully in his defense. President Manly himself paid for Moses's medical care. Moses was known by a nickname, "Preach," and featured in an 1859 Mobile *Tribune* article which highlighted his longstanding role at the university.⁵⁸ As an enslaved man, Moses was of course subject to all of slavery's depredations, yet unmistakable in the historical record remains traces of how he negotiated space for his humanity at the University of Alabama via compliance in his relationships with the institution.

Sam, another enslaved worker who labored at the University of Alabama and boarded in Tuscaloosa, took a different track in his negotiated relationships with university actors. Enslaved by the University from 1839 until 1851, Sam carved a path of resistance through the pages of both Basil Manly's diary and the faculty minutes. A capable worker, Sam assisted Professor Brumby, professor of chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and physiology, through the early 1840's before being reassigned to work as a F.A.P. Barnard's lab assistant in agricultural chemistry.⁵⁹ Skilled, intelligent, and well-

57. Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy*, 95-96, 316-317.

58. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 40-41.

59. Ibid., 70.

positioned, Sam's training "pushed at the social, and perhaps the legal, limits on educating slaves in antebellum Alabama."⁶⁰ Though clearly capable of navigating the treacherous territory that characterized his University of Alabama relationships, he endured physical violence several times. In one 1845 incident, he refused to scald the bedstead of a student who resided in a different dormitory than the one he worked. The student, describing Sam's refusal as "indolent," dealt him "a severe blow or two about the head and arms"; when the faculty heard the case, the student was suspended from the university indefinitely and banned from residing in Tuscaloosa.⁶¹ A year later, Sam refused to receive a coal delivery to the university and was charged with insolence. President Manly whipped him for this charge in front of the faculty, and when Sam remained unbowed, he "whipped him a second time, very severely."⁶² Sam's removal from the university, in 1851, also resulted from an act of resistance, in this case acts of insubordination against faculty.⁶³

Sam's skill and capabilities meant he played an unusual and valuable role for the University of Alabama. His determination to maintain control over his own person and actions, however, led to regular friction with university actors and eventually ended up compromising his ability to claim agency through resistance. Sam and Moses choose to

60. Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy*, 178.

61. June 4, 1845, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

62. Basil Manly, March 4, 1846, Diary III (1843-1848), Manly Family Papers, *ibid.*

63. February 11, 1850, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), University of Alabama Faculty Records, *ibid.*; February 18, 1850, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid.*; February 17, 1851, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid.*

navigate routes through relationships with University of Alabama actors that were diametrically opposed; William, an enslaved carpenter hired out to work at the university, presents a third route through university relationships.

Enslaved by the Pratt family, William began to be hired out to the University as early as the 1838. A year earlier, Horace Pratt was hired at the university as a professor of literature. He offered William's woodworking expertise to the university on at least two occasions.⁶⁴ He died unexpectedly in 1840, however, and his widow, Isabel R. Pratt, hired out William and potentially other enslaved workers to the university for the next two decades.⁶⁵ William was a skilled carpenter, and Isabel garnered upwards of two dollars per day for the labor he provided the university.⁶⁶

Accounts suggest that William was “trusted with building desks and bookcases” in addition to regular maintenance projects.⁶⁷ In at least one 1838 instance, William scoped the budget and necessary materials to complete repairs to a garden fence, and it is likely that this arrangement occurred more frequently, as William’s project management capacities would only have increased as he gained experience over the next several years.

64. December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*; March 1, 1839, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

65. “1857 Will of Isabel A Pratt,” Select Primary Source Documents and Transcriptions, *Hallowed Grounds Project*, University of Alabama, <https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/1857-pratt-will.html>; “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to Isabel R. Pratt, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000170_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*

66. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 40. Additional analysis of a receipt issued to Isabel Pratt for William’s labor in 1860 yields an estimated daily value of \$1.63, based on a six-day work week, confirming Sellers’ estimates. For secondary scholarship which supports estimating daily labor value based on a six-day work week, see Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 126-130 and Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 314-315.

67. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 40.

William also likely worked daily on domestic tasks alongside Sam and Moses, pausing to complete carpentry work as it arose, but evidence of his daily life, aside from the prodigious skill of his hands, remains incomplete.⁶⁸

Evidence of other enslaved craftsmen at the University of Alabama, such as the blacksmith Armisted, exists in receipt fragments, but William's life and work reveals the most concrete evidence of how enslaved workers at the university navigated relationships outside of the compliance/resistance framework represented by Moses and Sam.⁶⁹ Skilled enslaved craftsmen, as some scholars have shown, created space for themselves via reputation, wage-earning side labor, and individualized style; while no concrete evidence has yet been uncovered detailing William's work outside of his hiring contract, nor remaining evidence of his woodworking style, his reputation as a skilled carpenter preceded him at the University of Alabama, rendering him both a valuable asset and a known quantity.

William's ability to plan and make recommendations on projects would have offered him some level of agency regarding his daily life. His work also invites speculation about one well-documented way that enslaved workers exercised agency: slowdowns. Some concrete evidence of work slowdowns in hiring agreements at the University of Alabama exists; during the sweltering July days of 1860, Erasmus, enslaved

68. December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), and January 17, 1842, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid.*

69. "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to A. P. Owen, June 23, 1860," reference number u0006_0000001_0000157_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*; "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to A. P. Owen, June 1860," Reference number u0006_0000001_0000177_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*

by John L.S. Foster and likely managed via an intermediary broker, became the subject of an agreed work arrangement for four days of unspecified labor on campus for four dollars. Foster was only paid three dollars and fifty cents, however, and the receipt bears a cursory explanation: “off for coming late, 3 ½,” meaning that Erasmus avoided at least a few hours of labor. William’s skill and ability to plan projects would have offered him opportunities for this sort of targeted slowdown.⁷⁰

Tasks, projects, and daily assignments offer patterns of action that reveal portions of how enslaved workers operated at the University of Alabama, how those who enslaved them viewed their labor, and how the university’s campus profited over time from their work. Codified in the bylaws of the University of Alabama, enslaved laborers carried out daily tasks such as disposing of student waste, making fires, ringing the university bell, sweeping dormitory rooms, making beds, carrying water, cleaning public university rooms, sweeping dormitory entryways, and various forms of grounds maintenance. Weekly and seasonal labor interspersed these tasks. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, enslaved workers brushed and cleaned the students’ shoes.⁷¹ Water-carrying schedules changed seasonally, and enslaved laborers brought more water to student spaces in warmer months and, presumably, more fuel in colder months. In April and again towards the end of the summer, enslaved workers scoured floors across campus, deep-cleaning surfaces that must have been filthy.⁷² Living locations also dictated daily

70. “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John L. S. Foster, July 7, 1860,” reference number u0006_000001_0000162_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*

71. October 31, 1831, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1831-1835), *ibid.*

72. December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

labor patterns. Enslaved workers who boarded in the Stewards Hall prepared and served student meals, and it is possible that those who were boarded in private homes in Tuscaloosa were also accountable for outside responsibilities due to specific hiring agreements.⁷³

In addition to monotonous daily labor, enslaved workers at the University often joined enslaved men assigned to the University on short-term labor agreements to complete projects. Project tasks included brick-making, cutting and hauling wood, and “garden” work, which could refer to actual cultivated spaces or perhaps to the rich natural acreage adjacent to campus.⁷⁴ Enslaved workers also maintained the University of Alabama’s campus grounds by repairing fences or plowing in preparation for grass planting.⁷⁵

Daily tasks were generally unsupervised beyond the Proctor’s general overview, but project tasks were conducted under the watchful eye of faculty. In January of 1841, Basil Manly watched as enslaved laborers planted sycamore trees at the entrance to the University of Alabama’s campus and on the road leading towards Tuscaloosa.⁷⁶ Faculty

73. December 18, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

74. “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, March 31, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000164_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*; “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, April 13, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000166_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*; “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, March 17, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000165_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.* See also Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*. Vol. 1, 30.

75. May 14, 1842, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), December 1836, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1835-1837), and December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

76. January 15, 1841, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

also supervised specific projects, as was the case in several instances where Professor Pratt personally oversaw the work of William the carpenter in repairing window sashes, blinds, and door hinges in the University's recitation rooms.⁷⁷ In one somewhat mysterious 1839 instance, Professor Barnard requested the direction of an enslaved laborer "on some private business," compensating the faculty out of his own pocket for the services of the worker.⁷⁸

Examining remaining evidence of enslaved institutional laborer's task schedules offers evidence of interaction and communication within African American communities at the University of Alabama and in the area of Tuscaloosa. Brokers like John Boyle, who managed the human capital of nearby plantation owners and citizens of Tuscaloosa, liaised with the university's Proctor and brought enslaved workers to campus on short-term hire agreements, often for several days at a time.⁷⁹ Enslaved laborers who resided at the university permanently or via long-term arrangements joined these workers, and together these groups completed tasks like cutting and hauling wood, work that would have taken them out into isolated areas of campus where conversation and the pace of work could have been less closely regulated. Combining these opportunities, the daily travel of enslaved workers between boarding residences and UA's campus, and the

77. March 1, 1839, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

78. April 12, 1839, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), *ibid.*

79. "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, March 17, 1860," reference number u0006_0000001_0000165_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid*; "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, April 28, 1860," reference number u0006_0000001_0000182_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid*.

movement of enslaved craftsmen to and from UA, communication and interaction between enslaved communities because of travel necessitated by forced labor was possible, even plausible.⁸⁰

Surviving University of Alabama financial records illuminate the lives of enslaved people at the University of Alabama. From before the university opened its doors to students until the 1860s, countless enslaved workers labored on campus. Their work was inherently transactional; governed by market forces and the constraints of human capital, each “hand” or other distinguishing unit of labor generated its own record, and in many cases, its own paper trail.⁸¹ Receipts and contractual agreements reveal evidence of enslaved worker’s lives.

Human capital yielded higher dividends for the University when leased out on quarterly or monthly basis, as was the case for Arthur, hired out to the University between January and July of 1859. L.M. Minor, a wealthy Tuscaloosa planter, University of Alabama graduate, and son of a prominent deceased university booster, garnered \$86.66 in exchange for Arthur’s six months of daily labor, a sum which suggests a

80. Sellers notes that, on at least one occasion, enslaved “runaways” sheltered secretly at the University of Alabama. He recounts an 1853 instance where an unspecified number of runaways were discovered in room 18 of UA’s Franklin Hall dormitory. According to Sellers, they were returned without incident by UA Faculty to a nearby resident, Mr. Baird. Basil Manly Sr. noted the incident in his diary, but upon consultation with Arthur, one of UA’s enslaved laborers, concluded that they were short-term laborers rather than runaways and that the affair was simply a “mistake.” Baird had been warned in an October 1852 faculty letter to keep his enslaved laborers away from UA property, but that situation’s relationship to the 1853 “runaway” incident is unclear. Whether those found were runaways or laborers, the incident demonstrates further evidence of connections between Tuscaloosa and the university bound up in slavery’s systems. See Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 40; Basil Manly, March 14, 1853, Diary IV (1848-1855), Manly Family Papers, *ibid*; October 25, 1852, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid*. For more on runaways, see John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

81. For more on “hands,” see Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 100-105.

precise agreement regarding board, clothes allocation, and tasks.⁸² Arthur's daily labor was valued at \$0.56, lower than other workers valuations, which suggests differences in the expected value of labor output reminiscent of the plantation task system, a system utilized by nearby Alabama plantations at this time. This discrepancy could also arise from statistical discrimination, labor expectations based on "differentiation of ascriptive characteristics [i.e. race, sex, or age]."⁸³

Short-term agreements, typically negotiated in days or weeks of hired labor, offer an insightful contrast to the dynamics of long-term agreements at the University of Alabama. On April 13, 1860, John Boyle was paid \$51.62 for the labor of five enslaved workers. Boyle appears in the 1860 census as "merchant," but his limited financial means suggest his role was more opportunistic broker.⁸⁴ One of the men for whom Boyle was compensated, Major, was enslaved by John L.S. Foster, a prominent Tuscaloosa manufacturer.⁸⁵ Boyle was also paid \$4.00 two weeks later, on April 28, for four days of work by a "negro man belonging to W. Harris," so it is possible that he managed capital

82. "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to L. M. Minor, July 5, 1859," reference number u0006_0000001_0000089_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*

83. For useful assessment of statistical discrimination in relation to enslaved labor, see Ruef, "Constructing Labor Markets: The Valuation of Black Labor in the U.S. South, 1831 to 1867," 974-975. Stephanie Cole observes that, in the Louisville hiring market, "getting the best prices relied on maintaining connections with those who had slaves to hire out." See Cole, "Servants and Slaves in Louisville: Race, Ethnicity, and Household Labor in an Antebellum Border City," 16-17.

84. "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, April 13, 1860," reference number u0006_0000001_0000166_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*; 1860 United States Census, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, "John P. Boyle," accessed via *Ancestry.com*.

85. "Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John L. S. Foster, July 7, 1860," reference number u0006_0000001_0000162_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, *ibid.*

for multiple Tuscaloosa slaveowners.⁸⁶ The labor carried out on April 13 by the five “hands” reveals a compensatory rate of \$0.50 per cord of wood. A March 31st receipt to Boyle, which also lists Major, specifies that laborers were employed in “making brick,” providing evidence that the cutting, hauling, and brick-making process was unified within a task system.⁸⁷

Short-term hired labor agreements at the upper ranges of compensation, above \$1.00 per day, describe the work of skilled enslaved craftsmen. Receipts for William show that he toiled at the University of Alabama for around 160 days during 6-month periods.⁸⁸ Doubtless William spent significant portions of these assignments constructing, repairing, or otherwise enriching the university’s physical plant, but concrete evidence of his “work at the University” remains frustratingly vague. Surviving financial records detailing enslaved labor at the University of Alabama between 1858 and 1860 reveal a landscape of labor that bound university faculty, enslaved workers, and Tuscaloosa citizens together within churning, dehumanizing market capitalism.

During the antebellum period, the University of Alabama regularly utilized the labor and skills of enslaved workers. Their labor facilitated day-to-day academic life at the University of Alabama and undergirded a complex set of economic and social relationships between faculty, citizens of the greater Tuscaloosa area, and enslaved

86. “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, April 28, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000182_0001, *ibid*.

87. “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to John P. Boyle, March 31, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000164_0001, *ibid*.

88. “Receipt for payment from George Benagh, The University of Alabama, to Isabel R. Pratt, 1860,” reference number u0006_0000001_0000170_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

African American communities. Diverse free/unfree relationships at the antebellum University of Alabama in turn supported a shifting landscape of labor characterized by exploitation and opportunity.

Chapter Three

“Let Justice Be Done”: Institutional Slavery at UA, Property Interest, and the Apology Question

Chapter two demonstrated the centrality of enslaved people in the founding of the University of Alabama, in its daily operations, in the ideology of Basil Manly, and in the institution’s growth and development. Grounded in the fragmentary archival evidence that articulates slavery’s role at the antebellum University of Alabama, this chapter will turn towards an examination of the University of Alabama as a case study of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest, focusing on three questions.

First, how does the university’s record of institutional slavery confirm or complicate the conclusions of recent scholarship on this subject? I will argue that the documentary record on slavery available in the University of Alabama’s context – the triangulation between administrative records, faculty records, and the personal recollections of a knowledgeable, prolific chronicler, Basil Manly – offers scholars a wide base of evidence on which to construct a nuanced, complex case study of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest. Second, what does this documentary record at the University of Alabama reveal about the dynamics of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest? I will argue that institutional slavery at the University of Alabama developed in dialogue with (and near) the cotton frontier, linked in no small part by the actions and attitudes of university stakeholders. This proximity shaped the dynamics of institutional

slavery into specific patterns, providing further evidence of the value of adopting a regional lens to assess institutional slavery in higher education.

The third question addresses the issue of commemoration and memory at the University of Alabama. How has slavery's role in University of Alabama history been remembered, how has this crucial element of the university's antebellum past been forgotten, and what does the contemporary revival of interest in the histories of enslavement and American higher education tell us about how slavery at the University of Alabama should be remembered? Contemporary scholarship and events at the University of Alabama have revealed structures of remembering and forgetting that have played out on the campus landscape. I argue that a research-based mnemonic process has powered commemorative practices in fits and starts at this southern university.

Institutional Slavery and the “Property Interest” Thesis

Jennifer Oast's 2016 study *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680-1860* attempted “to illuminate the lives of institutional slaves” and “to place the phenomenon of institutional slavery within the larger history of southern slavery.”¹ Oast defines an institutional slave as “a slave who was owned by a group of people united in a common purpose – nonprofit educational and religious organizations, the public (state government), and for-profit companies,” and she includes enslaved labor hire situations and enslaved people held as part of an endowment

1. Jennifer Oast, *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680-1860* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3.

in her analysis.² Oast focuses heavily on the unique and unexpected arrangements which characterize institutional slavery. Oast articulates that institutional slavery often “widened the circle of beneficiaries of slavery” and improved the prospects of non-slaveholding whites affiliated with institutions who owned human capital.³ Oast’s central argument, however, states that the “lack of the paternalism and ‘property interest’ of a single master was to institutional slaves’ “decisive detriment,” centering on the concept that institutional slavery led to suffering and worse outcomes for enslaved people.⁴

Oast’s picture of institutional slavery focuses on Virginia institutions specifically while generalizing about institutional slavery across the South based on her analysis of the Commonwealth. Tuscaloosa in the 1830’s, however, existed worlds apart from Williamsburg during the same decade. Comparing the positionality of slavery in the rough, frontier landscape of the Old Southwest to the settled and established systems of the Tidewater states would fall outside the scope of this thesis; to explore these differences in light of the broader conversation regarding institutional slavery and higher education, however, a comparison of slavery at the University of Alabama to Oast’s depiction of slavery at Virginia’s College of William and Mary will yield points of contention and agreement with her “property interest” thesis.⁵

2. Oast, *Institutional Slavery*, 3.

3. Oast, *Institutional Slavery*, 9.

4. Ibid., 4-6.

5. Virginia’s engagement with slavery predates the American republic and has accumulated its own vast historiography. For notable entries to this catalog, see T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, “*Myne Owne Grounde*: Race and Freedom on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, 1640–1676 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990); Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two*

In most respects, Oast's characterization of slavery at the College of William and Mary resonates with the archival record's depiction of slavery at the University of Alabama. Oast describes enslaved life at William and Mary as different from the experiences of those non-institutionally enslaved because of their proximity to "a large number of elite young men who were testing the limits of their manhood" and that "fear of physical violence...must have been pervasive" among these enslaved laborers.⁶ Enslaved laborers at the College of William and Mary, like those at the University of Alabama, carried out domestic tasks, received medical care, labored under a distinct mixture of leased labor agreements governed by stakeholders in the regional market, and negotiated the precarious terrain of daily life in similar ways to those enslaved by the University of Alabama.⁷ The College of William and Mary also enslaved skilled carpenters and others with specialized training, using their skills in similar ways to the arrangements used by the University of Alabama.⁸ Oast concludes with the ambiguities of institutional slavery, describing how enslaved people at the College of William and Mary were sometimes "treated with a measure of human dignity" while at other times "marginalized, overworked, and abused."⁹ At no point were those enslaved in

Centuries of Slavery in North America (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998); Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Martha W. McCartney, et. al., *A Study of the Africans and African Americans on Jamestown Island and at Green Spring, 1619–1803* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and National Park Service, 2003). See also Martha McCartney, "Virginia's First Africans," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, October 8, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/virginia_s_first_africans.

6. Oast, *Institutional Slavery*, 127.

7. Ibid., 133-136, 152-154, 156.

8. Ibid., 135-136.

9. Ibid., 157-158.

institutional contexts in either the Old Southwest or the Commonwealth released from the crushing inhumanities of the national system of chattel slavery; rather, the rarity of these institutional ambiguities underscore the system's hegemonic brutalities. Combining the evidence of institutional slavery during the nineteenth century at these geographically and developmentally distinct Southern institutions strengthens the arguments that institutional slavery, as Oast describes, was "far more complex" than the traditional plantation story, and that more research into this vein of study is necessary to fully interrogate these complexities.¹⁰

Key differences, however, separate institutional slavery at the Commonwealth's oldest institution of higher learning from slavery at Alabama's "pioneer university."¹¹ First and foremost is the geographical positions of the two institutions. Scholarly descriptions of the University of Alabama's foundational years describe a campus "practically on the frontier," supplied with little to no infrastructure, scratched out of an unforgiving landscape.¹² The earliest enrollees to the University of Alabama were, accordingly, "the sons of the pioneers" who were "restless under the wide restrictions of college government."¹³ The College of William and Mary, on the other hand, benefited from Williamsburg's established infrastructure and urbanity. Class stratification also separated these frontier pupils from students at the antebellum College of William and

10. Oast, *Institutional Slavery*, 4-5.

11. James B. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama, Vol. 1* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1953), 6.

12. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 118.

13. Willis G. Clark, *History of Education in Alabama, 1702-1889* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1889), 43, quoted in Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 57.

Mary; while students at these two institutions would have found ideological commonality in a shared mentality of masterdom, geographically and socially-distinct mindsets and value systems would have molded them.¹⁴

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, these institutions were also tangibly separated by their proximity to the national conversation on slavery. Thomas Roderick Dew published his *Review of the Debates in the Legislature of 1831 and 1832*, an influential and widely read pro-slavery treatise that benefited from several reprintings, while serving as a professor at the College of William and Mary. He later guided the institution as president until 1846, and during this sustained period of influence, pro-slavery ideas in circulation at the College of William and Mary contributed to the spread of sectionalist rhetoric across the South. While Dew and his institution shaped national debate, President Woods and the founding faculty at the newly minted University of Alabama struggled to shape student character and institutional identity, failing after five chaotic years. Wood's successor, Basil Manly, garnered a strong personal reputation during his formative years in South Carolina, but his rise to national prominence as an outspoken pro-slavery faith leader occurred towards the end of his tenure at the University of Alabama.¹⁵ The University of Alabama and its stakeholders, then, operated

14. For a credible critique of Oast's arguments, see Douglas Ambrose, "Institutions and Ideology in the Slave South," *Reviews in American History*, Volume 45, Number 4, December 2017, 588-594 (review). Ambrose identifies the "prevalence—not universality—of day-to-day relations between masters and slaves," and this prevalence's relationship to paternal thought and structure, as a key weakness in Oast's arguments. However, Ambrose's review fails to accurately describe a middle ground, and even if such a middle ground is articulated, Oast's thesis remains viable.

15. Brophy's chapter "The University and the Slaves: Apology and Its Meaning," in Mark Gibney's edited collection *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, offers a brief and thorough overview of the antebellum University of Alabama's intellectual climate. Like many southern universities, early 19th century forays into "radical views" in Tuscaloosa, led by UA Trustee James G. Birney, were silenced during the tense 1830s, replaced by proslavery homogeneity and ideological leaders like Basil Manly.

on the intellectual periphery of the pro-slavery debate, shaped by the core ideological engines of institutions such as South Carolina College and the College of William and Mary.

The differences separating the antebellum landscapes and identities of the University of Alabama from the College of William and Mary do not significantly detract from Oast's arguments; the fragmentary evidence which remains of slavery at the University of Alabama indeed supports Oast's concept of institutional slavery's nuances and its capacity to benefit non-slaveholding whites. The differences do, however, illustrate the need for further research into the institutional terrain of the Old Southwest, terrain which is easily obscured by scholarship which depicts the slaveholding South as a homogenous region defined in this case by Virginia's parameters. Institutions and stakeholders may share broad-stroke ideologies, as is the case for pro-slavery institutions of higher learning across the antebellum South, but local contexts, the investments and decisions made by local historical actors, and regional distinctions fundamentally shaped them. Recent scholarship on slavery at the University of Alabama has also called for "place-based studies that engage with sites of slavery and racism" on the campus. This method may be applied in other institutional contexts across the Old Southwest.¹⁶

Brophy emphasizes Manly's ubiquity, but somewhat overstates the reach of his influence in the 1830s and early 1840s, when Dew's influence and scholarship reached a true hegemony. For a discussion on Manly's rise to national prominence during the secession of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, see James A. Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2000), 223-227.

16. Ellen Griffith Spears and James C. Hall, "Engaging the Racial Landscape at the University of Alabama," in Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy, eds. *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 298-301.

University of Alabama as Institutional Case Study: Slavery, Land, and Investment

Turning then to this chapter's second question, the University of Alabama's documentary record illustrates two key concepts which, together, provide direction and structure for further study of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest and in other Southern regions: the role of land, and the role of institutional slavery's invested relationships.

The University of Alabama's rise out of the frontier conditions of the Old Southwest rested upon its foundational asset, its state-appropriated territorial endowment. The university's birth and infancy were byproducts of the Old Southwest's speculative land trade, evidenced by the Board of Trustee's original role, as "custodians" of the university's land endowment, and the demonstrative intensity with which they took to the task.¹⁷ The University of Alabama's foundational endowment in land, and its use of this resource as a fundraising currency with relative liquidity, irrevocably tied the institution to the settlement patterns and plantation systems of the Old Southwest's cotton frontier.

The University of Alabama's early records bear out this relationship. As discussed in chapter two, the initial purchase of Marr's Field for the institution's campus – financed by the sale of land to speculators and what one commenter described as "the most prosperous of the slave-owning element" moving west – included the purchase of an

17. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 11.

adjacent 1,250 acres rich in natural resources.¹⁸ These combined purchases paved the way for the University of Alabama's first investments in enslaved labor, Ben, who began to build and maintain the university's initial physical plant.¹⁹ The University of Alabama's process of purchasing the labor of enslaved workers – through direct ownership, leasing, and the investments of university stakeholders – unfolded as a direct consequence of the institution's fundamental relationship to the “Flush Times” of the Old Southwest.

The second key component of institutional slavery illuminated by the University of Alabama's archival record are the fraught relationships navigated by the institutionally enslaved. Negotiated relationships within slavery have been a focus and theme of scholarly attention since Stampp's and Elkins' work of the mid-twentieth century, and the literature on this topic has grown immensely in recent decades.²⁰ Negotiated relationships which emerged within the foregrounding structure of institutional slavery were not unique; they were characteristic, however, of higher-education-based slavery's complex network of priorities and factors, including paternalism, fiduciary responsibility, the tenets of faith-based masterdom, manhood and dominance, and loyalty. University stakeholders in this paradigm approached interactions and relationships with those enslaved by their institution with detached indifference – as Oast's arguments predict –

18. James A. Anderson, “Epic of Tuscaloosa,” June 2, 1934, James Austin Anderson Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Ibid., 30.

19. Ibid., 38.

20. Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution. Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Knopf, 1972); Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

while also engaging in ways which indicate both personal and economic investment, evidence which complicates Oast's conclusions.

The University of Alabama faculty's swift action against the "outrage" students committed against Moses in 1851, President Manly's financing of medical care for enslaved workers and emotional responses to birth, marriage, and death among the enslaved, Sam's role in assisting Professor Barnard's lab, and the system of project assignments for skilled and unskilled workers via faculty direction are all examples of institutional stakeholders interacting with enslaved individuals in ways indicating relationships defined by investment.²¹ Investment in the vast majority of these cases, as in most examples of the non-institutional master/enslaved dynamic, was in no way indicative of compassion or humanity; rather, it was centered around stakeholder's fiduciary responsibilities to both the University of Alabama as an institution and, in enslaved labor leasing cases, to slaveowners of the region. Regardless, these examples demonstrate how institutional investment in those enslaved by the institution and its stakeholders complicates Oast's "property interest" conclusions. More case studies of the relationship investments in institutional slavery beyond the antebellum University of

21. December 19, 1851, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), University of Alabama Faculty Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; "Receipt for payment from The University of Alabama to R. Haywood, April 9, 1851," reference number u0006_0000001_0000121_0001, Early University of Alabama Administrative Records, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Basil Manly, February 4, 1835, Diary II (1834-1846), Manly Family Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama; Basil Manly, August 7, 1837, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, February 25, 1840, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, November 23, 1836, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Basil Manly, January 21, 1839, Diary II (1834-1846), *ibid.*; Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 70; December 31, 1838, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1838-1841), and January 17, 1842, Faculty Meeting Minutes (1842-1854), *ibid.*

Alabama are needed, however, before any reexamination of “property interest” as a motivating factor should be undertaken.

Commemoration, Memory, and Apology at the University of Alabama

The University of Alabama’s antebellum memorial landscape has undergone significant changes in the years since the Civil War ended. Early retrospectives on the history of campus often focused on a single antebellum event: federal troops burning the University of Alabama in April of 1865. Two accounts of this event, the first in Clark’s 1889 *History of Education in Alabama*, the second in a 1904 edition of the *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society* by a resident of Tuscaloosa, Thomas Clinton, have shaped public memory of antebellum University of Alabama during the Civil War years.²² The narrative which emerged from these accounts contained all the elements of the Lost Cause tradition, including heroic resistors who faced long odds against Federal attackers, honor in defeat, and the senseless destruction of a southern symbol, in this case the Rotunda, an elegant building that housed the University of Alabama’s library.

In April of 1865, Federal troops under the command of General John T. Croxton entered Tuscaloosa, captured hidden artillery and supplies, and fought a brief skirmish with University of Alabama students and faculty led by university President L.C. Garland and Colonel J.T. Murphree. Defeated, Garland’s company abandoned campus in an orderly retreat across the Warrior River. Croxton’s troops then entered the University of Alabama’s campus and began destroying buildings. Despite pleas from the acting

22. Clark, *History of Education in Alabama*, 93; Thomas P. Clinton, “The Military Operations of General John T. Croxton in West Alabama, 1865,” *Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society*, 1904, James Austin Anderson Papers, *Ibid.*

librarian, the troops burned the Rotunda, along with a saltpeter munitions factory owned by William S. Foster.²³ Federal troops then returned to Tuscaloosa and destroyed a cotton factory, a tanning yard, a foundry, cotton warehouses, and Foster's hat factory.²⁴ Thomas Clinton was a young boy in 1865 who lived near the campus, and his account emphasizes the effect that the destruction made on him: "it was a dry day, and I watched the buildings as they gave way to the angry flames...it made an impression on my youthful mind."²⁵

Memory of the destruction visited upon the University of Alabama by the Union persisted through the intervening decades in scholarship, public memorialization, and on the campus' physical landscape. Newspapers across Alabama lamented the campus's treatment in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. An 1875 *Montgomery Advertiser* article, reprinted in the *Tuscaloosa Gazette* recalled the stirring of "deep and mingled emotions" at the sight of "undisturbed rubbish piles of stone and brick and mortar" dotted across campus, "fire-scarred ruins" that stood as "Monuments of A Nation's Folly."²⁶

Other writers turned to questions of justice and recompense. In an impassioned article titled "Let Justice Be Done," a *Greenville Advocate* writer encouraged Federal support for the University of Alabama, in the form of land grants, as "justice sheer and simple" for the Union's "annihilation of an institution of learning."²⁷ Claiming that the

23. Clinton, "The Military Operations of General John T. Croxton in West Alabama, 1865," 15, Ibid.

24. Ibid, 15.

25. Clinton, "The Military Operations of General John T. Croxton in West Alabama, 1865," 14, Ibid.

26. "Tuscaloosa: Its State, Interests, and Associations," *Tuscaloosa Gazette* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), April 29, 1875.

27. "Let Justice Be Done," *Greenville Advocate* (Greenville, Alabama), February 23, 1882.

fog of sectionalism had lifted, the author argues that “substantial atonement” would be both “a graceful thing for the United States to do” and proof that “the South and the North are indeed one people.”²⁸ An 1883 article in the *Tuscaloosa Weekly Times* called for the federal government to reconstruct the Rotunda as a “proper monument.”²⁹ No reconstructive aid arrived however, and in 1887, the remaining ruins were piled into mounds; the largest, on the former site of Franklin Hall, became a monument to absence rather than reunification.³⁰

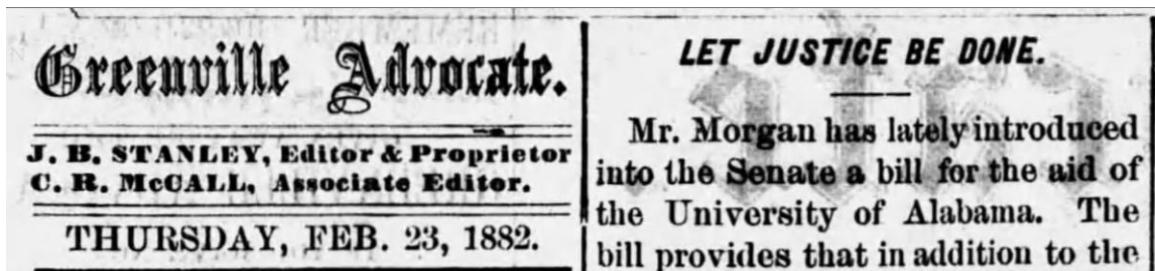


Figure 3 - Detail from the *Greenville Advocate* (Greenville, Alabama). Accessed via Newspapers.com.

Historical memory of the University of Alabama’s Rotunda also includes a rare memorialization of the University of Alabama’s “college servants,” in the form of a 1935 piece written by James A. Anderson.³¹ The short work details the events of April 4, 1865, culminating in the burning of the saltpeter factory described in Thomas Clinton’s

28. Ibid.

29. “A Leaflet of the Olden Times,” *Tuscaloosa Weekly Times* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), April 18, 1883.

30. Jared Downing, “UA’s historic mound steeped in symbolism,” *Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), December 7, 2011, <https://cw.ua.edu/9149/news/uas-historic-mound-steeped-in-symbolism/>.

31. Anderson was a University of Alabama employee and amateur historian. For more information on Anderson, see “Biographical/Historical Note,” finding aid, James Austen Anderson Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

account. Anderson included a character named “Silas Pratt,” described only as a “colored slave,” who is present amid the campus destruction.³²

Though the dialect Anderson ascribes to Pratt is problematic and his actions questionable, his inclusion provides clear evidence that the existence of institutional slavery at the University of Alabama had not been forgotten in the nearly seventy years since the Rotunda burned. The early decades of the twentieth century were boom times for the study of American slavery in the deep South: George Petrie conducted a groundbreaking study of former enslavers and the enslaved across Alabama between 1907-1913, Phillips’ *American Negro Slavery* (1918) and Bancroft’s *Slave-Trading in the Old South* (1931) redefined the parameters of historical inquiry into slavery’s reach and roles, and the Federal Writer’s Project of the Works Progress Administration collected a massive dataset of first-hand accounts of slavery between 1936-1938.³³ Anderson’s work, while fictionalized, thus emerged during a period where the mnemonic role of the institutional “college servant” was a visible topic of some interest to both historians and the public.

Memory work regarding the University of Alabama’s antebellum years fell silent after Anderson’s play in 1935, reviving in the late 1940s with the scholarship of James A.

32. James A. Anderson, “The Destruction of the University of Alabama Library: An Episode of the Civil War,” 1935, James Austin Anderson Papers, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

33. For more on George Petrie’s survey, see Anthony Donaldson, “The Father of Alabama Historians: Professor George Petrie and His Survey of Slavery,” *Alabama Review* 62, no. 1 (2009): 37–58. See also Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment, and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918); Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1996); “United States Work Projects Administration records, 1524-1975,” Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C., <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009053>.

Sellers. Sellers' published "Student Life at the University of Alabama before 1860" in the second volume of the *Alabama Review* in 1949, which began his meticulous chronicling of the history of the University of Alabama.³⁴ Sellers focused on the University's founding and growth, student life, discipline, and faculty roles while also downplaying or trivializing the role of the institution's "college servants," a shift from Anderson's fictionalized depiction of "Silas" as a recognizable presence on campus.³⁵ Sellers' scholarship capped over a century of piecemeal historical research into the antebellum University of Alabama with a tome that centered the University's pioneer identity, raucous students, and talented faculty while also decoupling the institution almost entirely from the landscape of slavery it occupied, significantly diminishing slavery's role in the University's story.

The Civil Rights movement forcibly brought the issue of race and federal government to the university, beginning in the 1950s. In 1952, two African American women, Pollie Anne Myers and Autherine Juanita Lucy, began attempting to enroll at the University of Alabama to pursue graduate degrees. Embroiled in resistance from the university, their efforts stalled until 1954, when the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision upended the legal arguments against African American admission. Autherine Lucy successfully enrolled in February of 1955. She endured the full force of the segregationist South's campaign of "massive resistance," eventually being unfairly expelled after surviving mob violence at the hands of University students and outside

34. James B. Sellers, "Student Life at the University of Alabama Before 1860," *Alabama Review*, vol. 2 (1949), 269-293.

35. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, 31.

agitators.³⁶ Several years later, James Hood and Vivian Malone enrolled at the University of Alabama, a process which prompted Governor George Wallace's theatrical "stand in the schoolhouse door" at Foster Auditorium. Wallace eventually yielded to federal pressure, allowing Hood and Malone to integrate the University of Alabama in 1963. The courageous efforts of Lucy, Hood, and Malone made national news and were intimately connected to both local and national Civil Rights Movement developments.³⁷

Foster Auditorium remained in use through 2006, when it was declared structurally unstable because of decades of neglect.³⁸ No memorialization of the university's 1963 integration appeared at Foster Auditorium until 2005, when a small plaque was placed on the building after its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.³⁹ Foster Auditorium's twentieth century history, however, is indicative of the University of Alabama's mnemonic approach to the Civil Rights Movement, and to commemorative efforts outside of the established narratives related to the Civil War – neglect and relegation to the margins of both the university story and its campus.⁴⁰

Contemporary interest in antebellum universities, race, and slavery has reignited scholarship into the legacies and realities of these relationships in the twenty-first

36. "Foster Auditorium, The University of Alabama," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2005), 20-22.

37. "Foster Auditorium," 23-30.

38. Sarah Melton, "A Sleight of History: University of Alabama's Foster Auditorium," *Southern Spaces*, October 15, 2009, <https://southernspaces.org/2009/sleight-history-university-alabamas-foster-auditorium/>.

39. Melton, "A Sleight of History."

40. Ibid.

century. The University of Alabama became a focus of this “Age of Apologies” revisionist scholarship in the early 2000s, directed by the efforts and research of law professor Al Brophy.⁴¹ Brophy’s work “emphasized a side of the university’s history that was contentious and painful,” tied antebellum slavery at the University of Alabama to the university’s history of segregation into the Civil Rights Era, and focused around a campaign of public outreach on the university’s history with the goal of achieving public apology from university stakeholders.⁴² Public memory became a contentious battleground across Alabama. Critics derided Brophy’s motives since he was a Harvard-trained intellectual historian, dismissing him as an outside agitator and recent transplant who was “alien to southern culture” and “looking to build a career in the South.”⁴³

Brophy’s research and outreach culminated in the University of Alabama’s faculty senate offering a public apology on April 20, 2004. The apology itself focuses on three key elements of the institution’s relationship to slavery: the first that, from 1831 to 1865, “slaves made a significant contribution to the University of Alabama,” the second that university faculty owned, supervised, and disciplined slaves, and the third that “the current Faculty Senate represents a link to the body of University faculty past, present,

41. For more on the concept of the “Age of Apology,” see Mark Gibney, *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Nicolaus Mills, “The New Culture of Apology,” *Dissent* 48, issue 4 (Fall 2001), 113-116. For a recent synthesis of slavery, higher education, and institutional apology, see Leslie M. Harris, “Higher Education’s Reckoning with Slavery,” *Academe* (Winter 2020), <https://www.aaup.org/article/higher-education%20%99s-reckoning-slavery#.XtXKTjpKg2x>.

42. Max Clarke and Gary A. Fine, “‘A’ for Apology: Slavery and the Collegiate Discourses of Remembrance—the Cases of Brown University and the University of Alabama,” *History and Memory* 22, no. 1 (2010), 81-112.

43. Clark and Fine, “A for Apology,” 96-97, 99.

and future.”⁴⁴ After laying out these facts, the resolution “recognizes and regrets” the institution’s practice of enslaving labor, apologizes to the enslaved laborers’ descendants, and calls for the placement of a cemetery historical marker where enslaved laborers are buried as well as for the University to “take actions to atone for that history” and commemorate enslaved laborers “in some prominent fashion.”⁴⁵

The University of Alabama moved quickly to erect memorialization of institutional slavery following the Faculty Senate’s apology. In September of 2004, university officials, faculty, and community members dedicated a historical marker at the cemetery site mentioned in the apology, which contains the remains of two enslaved laborers owned by the university and President Manly, Jack Rudolph and William “Boysey” Brown.⁴⁶ Archeological investigation into the physical remains of slavery, as well as larger contextual research into race and integration at the University of Alabama in the twentieth century, continued into the 2010s when the institution placed additional historical markers honoring participants in the Civil Rights movement.⁴⁷

44. “Resolution Acknowledging and Apologizing for the History of Slavery at the University of Alabama,” Faculty Senate, April 20, 2004, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

45. “Resolution,” Ibid.

46. Zenobia Harris, “Ceremony Planned to Dedicate Markers for Slave Graves on UA Campus,” *UA News Center*, September 23, 2004, <https://www.ua.edu/news/2004/09/ceremony-planned-to-dedicate-markers-for-slave-graves-on-ua-campus/>; Hilary Green, “Hallowed Grounds: Race, Slavery, and the University, 2016, University of Alabama, https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/uploads/6/3/7/7/63777429/hallowed_grounds_reviseddec2016.pdf.

47. “UA Museum Expedition to Excavate Apparent Site of Former Slave Quarters at Tannehill,” *UA News Center*, June 17, 2013, <https://www.ua.edu/news/2013/06/ua-museum-expedition-to-excavate-apparent-site-of-former-slave-quarters-at-tannehill-2/>; “Malone-Hood Plaza, Autherine Lucy Clock Tower at UA’s Foster Auditorium to be Dedicated Nov. 3,” *UA News Center*, October 25, 2010, <https://www.ua.edu/news/2010/10/malone-hood-plaza-autherine-lucy-clock-tower-at-uas-foster-auditorium-to-be-dedicated-nov-3/>; E. Culpepper Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door: Segregations Last Stand at the University of Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007); “Historic Marker Honors

In recent years, Dr. Hilary Green, a history professor and public historian at the University of Alabama, created a walking tour of the history of slavery at the University of Alabama titled “Hallowed Grounds: Race, Slavery, and the University,” as well as an accompanying digital project which showcases maps and diagrams of slavery’s positionality on campus, primary source accounts, and contextual essays about the university’s role.⁴⁸ The University of Alabama’s Summersell Center for the Study of the South has also recently collaborated with students and local researchers to create the “Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Trail,” a multifaceted project that ties the history of slavery in central Alabama to the long African American freedom movement.⁴⁹ Despite these steps, however, the University has evidenced what Dr. Green described as an attitude that “reconciliation is...seen as a one-time event rather than a sustained effort,” and that while the University of Alabama has made several “bold attempts,” their efforts “haven’t been sustained” substantively.⁵⁰

The debate over the faculty senate’s apology was fierce, and much more could be said regarding the “culture war” element of this debate, the relative validity of the

Civil Rights Hero,” *UA News Center*, September 15, 2017, <https://www.ua.edu/news/2017/09/historic-marker-honors-civil-rights-hero/>.

48. Green, “Hallowed Grounds,” *Ibid*. See also Hilary Green, “The Hallowed Grounds Project: Race, Slavery and Memory at the University of Alabama,” <https://hgreen.people.ua.edu/hallowed-grounds-project.html>.

49. Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Taskforce, Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Trail, brochure, ed. John Giggie (Tuscaloosa: Tuscaloosa Civil Rights History Trail, 2019), https://civilrightstuscaloosa.org/docs/Tusc_Civil_Rights_History_Trail_Brochure-txt.pdf.

50. Desi Gillespie, “Campus Monuments, Memorials tell a One-Sided Story,” *Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), December 5, 2019, <https://cw.ua.edu/57071/top-stories/campus-monuments-memorials-tell-a-one-sided-story/>.

apology offered by the faculty senate, and the effectiveness of the steps the University of Alabama has taken to fulfill the faculty's stipulations.⁵¹ A fascinating, and understudied, comparison stands to be made, however, between the Reconstruction-era calls for federal restitution after the Union army's destruction of campus and modern debates over the University of Alabama's culpability and responsibilities in light of slavery's legacies.

Calls from Alabama stakeholders following the Reconstruction Era focused narrowly on the issue of "justice" and institutional accountability. Senator John T. Morgan's proposed restitution legislation, which passed into law on April 23, 1884, specifically articulates that the financial gains from an increase in the University of Alabama's endowment would fund the repair of the university's physical plant, destroyed during the Civil War, as a deliberatively restorative act.⁵² Editorials and reporting in Tuscaloosa newspapers responded favorably to the proposal and also emphasized the concept of restoration. "It is not an act of benevolence asked of the Government," stated one writer, "it is an act of justice – justice sheer and simple."⁵³ This justice, in the words of nineteenth century stakeholders, was merely the repayment of a debt due to the

51. For more on the "culture war" question, see Brophy, "The University and the Slaves," 113-118; Lena Felton and Taylor Hosking, "The Legacy of Confederate Symbols," *The Atlantic*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/charlottesville-confederate-monuments/537177/>. For more on the question of apology's effectiveness, see Clark and Fine, "A for Apology," 8.

52. "An Act to increase the endowment of the University of Alabama from the public lands in said State," Chapter 27, 48th Congress, Session I, April 23, 1884, Washington D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/48th-congress/Session%201/c48s1ch27.pdf>.

53. "Let Justice Be Done," *Ibid.*

university's imagined community, a simple rebalancing of Federal resources which had already been "acceded to other states."⁵⁴

So then, what separates the calls of nineteenth century University of Alabama supporters for restorative justice, carried out by a responsible (and responsive) institution, from contemporary calls for restorative justice – through reparations, memorials, and institutional investment – demanded by contemporary University of Alabama faculty, students, and community members? The question of reparations, as scholars and commenters across the political spectrum would point out, is economically convoluted and emotionally fraught, but setting aside the endless arguments over specifics, at the argument's critical core rests the unshakable truth of the debt owed to those enslaved by the University of Alabama, and indeed to all descendants of American chattel slavery.⁵⁵

This institutional debt owed by the University of Alabama depends not on complicity, or even a neat, calculable economic figure. As Al Brophy has pointed out, many – perhaps even most – university enslavement records have been lost and determining a full accounting of the value created by enslaved labor at the university between 1828 and 1865 is thus fundamentally indeterminable.⁵⁶ Remaining records demonstrate the fullness of the university's institutional debt, however, which hinges on what Ta-Nahasi Coates termed the need for "a revolution in American consciousness," a

54. *Tuscaloosa Gazette*, February 16, 1882, 3.

55. For a historiographical resource on reparations, see the University of Minnesota Library's "Reparations Syllabus" is also an excellent resource for reparations research: <https://editions.lib.umn.edu/reparations/>. See also Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.

56. Brophy, "The University and the Slaves," 109.

reckoning which leads to renewal.⁵⁷ In the institutional sense, this reimagining must begin with a decision like the 2004 Faculty Senate apology, prompted by dogged and meticulous research; action, however, cannot end with an apology. Reinterpreting contested landscapes and sites and, ultimately, some form of financial recompense, what even racist nineteenth century University of Alabama stakeholders would recognize as “justice, sheer and simple,” would substantively invest the university in an effort to mitigate the damages of institutional slavery.

Institutional investment and recompense have recent precedent: in 2019, Georgetown University students appropriated \$400,000 dollars towards institutional reparations, and religious institutions across the country preceded Georgetown in this investment.⁵⁸ This “incremental reckoning” is an actionable solution available to the University of Alabama and all other institutions which face this question.⁵⁹ On an even more localized basis, organizations can invest in research and events which reveal institutional slavery’s impacts. Sixty-three institutions of higher education have joined the University of Virginia’s Universities Studying Slavery initiative as of 2020, and most of these institutions have completed detailed, interdisciplinary studies of localized institutional slavery and offered these studies to the public.⁶⁰ Many of these universities

57. Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” Ibid.

58. Thai Jones, “Slavery reparations may seem impossible, but in many places they’re already happening,” *Washington Post*, January 31, 2020, Gale Academic OneFile, https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/apps/doc/A612833302/AONE?u=tel_middletown&sid=AONE&xid=a38d4316.

59. Jones, “Slavery reparations,” Ibid.

60. “Universities Studying Slavery,” *University of Virginia*, 2013, <https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>. Brown University’s institutional report on historic ties to slavery was one of the first reports of this type, and an example to institutions which came after. See Brenda Allen, et. al., “Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee

have also intentionally invested in public-historical outreach through digital projects, lectures, conferences, and symposia, investments which have yielded significant dividends – both in scholarly research and in the court of public opinion.⁶¹ The University of Alabama can strengthen its efforts to address its history of institutional slavery through further investment in these arenas.

This thesis has endeavored to shed light on institutional slavery at the University of Alabama. The university's early history and archival record contains a wealth of sources, resolutions, tasks, economic data, evidence of invested relationships, and ties with Tuscaloosa, material which articulates a useful case study of institutional slavery in the Old Southwest. This case study finds meaningful purchase in the context of recent literature on institutional slavery and reveals the importance of regional factors in the study of institutional slavery in higher education. Moving forward, the University of Alabama must continue to address the apology question through intentional investment and a commitment to restorative justice. In the words of the nineteenth century *Greenville*

on Slavery and Justice.” Brown University, 2006. The Brown Report helped contribute to Craig Steven Wilder’s foundational monograph on the connections between slavery and American higher education; see Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014).

61. Rhonda R. Thomas, et. al., “Call My Name: African Americans in Early Clemson University History,” Clemson University, 2007, <https://spark.adobe.com/page/wQoPG/>; “Slavery at South Carolina College, 1801-1865: The Foundations of the University of South Carolina,” University of South Carolina, 2011, <http://slaveryatusc.weebly.com/acknowledgments.html>; Susan Ballinger, et. al., “Slavery and the Making of the University.” University of North Carolina, Undated. <https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/introduction>. Lynn Rainville, “African American Heritage at Sweet Briar.” Sweet Briar College, 2014. <http://tusculum.sbc.edu/africanamericans/default.shtml>.

Advocate, the University of Alabama must address its history of institutional slavery and “let justice be done.”⁶²

62. “Let Justice Be Done,” *Ibid.*

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