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## "To Milk the Yankee Tourists": Mid-20Th-Century Heritage Practice and the Social Construction of Whiteness in the American South

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“To Milk the Yankee Tourists”: Mid-20<sup>th</sup>-Century Heritage Practice and the Social  
Construction of Whiteness in the American South

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William & Mary in  
Candidacy for the Degree of  
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Department of Anthropology

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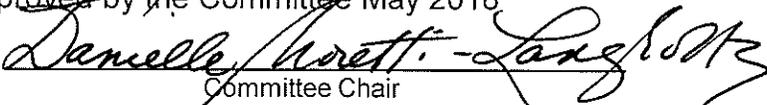
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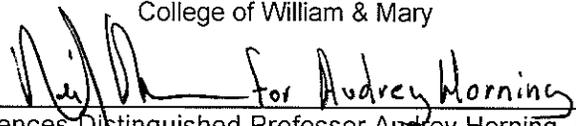
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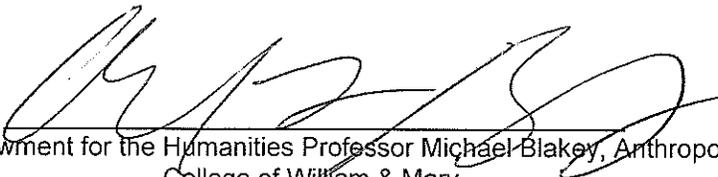
Master of Arts

  
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## ABSTRACT

This paper considers the appropriation of Indigenous heritage in northwest Georgia during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Through this case study of the first state-funded historic preservation project in the state at Etowah Indian Mounds, I apply a recent theorizing on the nature of whiteness, settler colonialism, and the role of heritage in cementing racialized structures of colonial rule. I outline the long history of Indigenous dispossession and settler appropriation in the American South to show how the origins of Indigenous heritage tourism built on an established settler colonial apparatus that deployed race to service commercial and economic development schemes. In this vein, my study highlights state-funded infrastructural development, newspaper reports, commercial interests, and community practice as key nodes in an integrated system facilitating appropriation and solidifying white control over space and place. To tackle this complex interdependence, I formulate a conception of heritage practice drawn from Hargrove's (2009) model of whiteness as habituated cultural practice, and tie this discussion into heritage studies emphasizing the transformation of historic landscapes into white public space. I then contextualize heritage building at Etowah within an evolving tourism economy and New South ideology that positioned white supremacy in relation to modernity, and demonstrate how GHC practitioners utilized archaeology and architecture to reinforce this ideological framework at Etowah Mounds. Tracking trends in the press coverage of ongoing preservation activities at Etowah Mounds, my study charts the gradual production of heritage values tied not to commercial interests but to the site's perceived historical and archaeological significance as Georgia's flagship preservation project. I argue that the repositioning of this site as national patrimony served to legitimate the appropriation and continued possession of Indigenous land, resources, and material culture by establishing ancestral connections between white communities and the region's pre-contact inhabitants.

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## **Introduction**

An intrinsic theoretical principle underlying recent heritage and tourism studies, heritage is conceived as contested, negotiated, and powerfully political (Meskell, 2012). In recognition of heritage as deeply embedded in nationalistic, colonial, and identity-building processes, scholars have moved away from a totalizing perception of heritage as uniformly positive. This has been replaced with a more nuanced approach to heritage as value-generative process that replicates, produces, or occasionally underwrites social relations of power and inequality (Geismar, 2015:73). Drawing from settler colonial theory or critical whiteness theory, theorists have called for increased attention to the close linkages between race, settler colonialism and the production of the past as national patrimony. Indigenous theorists provide key insights into the settler colonial structures that underpin many state-sponsored heritage projects, particularly those attempting to interpret the Indigenous past within the boundaries of the modern settler colonial state. Heritage management in these contexts can serve to reify existing colonial power structures that empower the state at the expense of Indigenous groups (Ren 2006; Simpson 2007). In like manner, critical whiteness theorists have demonstrated that heritage is frequently invoked to solidify racialized social hierarchies (Hargrove, 2009). Heritage provides a venue in which competing visions of the past and future are negotiated amongst

competing groups. In this way, heritage sites record a “complex pastiche of public memory,” that offers both an interpretation of the past and a prescriptive for the future (Forest et al 2004:357). Heritage in settler colonial states serves as an arena in which to reconfigure the past to secure the foundations of white supremacy for the future (Blakey, 2001).

Researchers working in heritage contexts have increasingly turned to consider the politics of preservation work (Bsheer 2017; Breglia 2005; Stoutamire 2016), yet work remains to explore the social histories of heritage sites. First, few studies address political maneuverings within heritage work in a diachronic way. An approach considering evolutions in preservation policy and changing representations of heritage work may illuminate how particular sets of heritage values become embedded in the public consciousness over time. Examining how perceptions of emplaced heritage develop among local populations promises to cast new light on racialized ideologies and practices that underpin structures of settler colonialism and white supremacy.

Blending settler colonialism into critical whiteness theory, this paper examines the appropriation of Indigenous heritage by European Americans in northwest Georgia during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. I examine whiteness as a settler colonial identity in terms of its aggregative qualities and modes of effecting dominion over space, place, and racialized “others.” I suggest that these methods of solidifying white hegemony

manifested in the development of an Indigenous heritage tourism industry in Georgia during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Through a case study of the first state-funded heritage development project in Georgia, this study reports on the first decade of preservation activities associated with the Georgia Historical Commission from 1953-1963. The GHC was established by an act of the Georgia legislature in February, 1951 for the purpose of “permanently preserving...objects, sites, areas, structures and ruins of historic or legendary significance...” in the State of Georgia” (Gilmore, 1979:13). The organization coordinated the vast majority of preservation projects within the state between its initial formation in 1952 and its integration into the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in 1977. Over the course of its 22-year history, the GHC board of commissioners included five local citizens appointed by Secretary of State Ben Fortson for their demonstrated interest in Georgia history. These included Alexander Lawrence and Henry A. Alexander, both from Savannah, Joseph B. Cumming of Augusta, Dr. A.R. Kelly, an archaeologist from Athens, and Milton L. Fleetwood, owner of two locally-circulating newspapers in Cartersville (Gilmore, 1979:13). The Commission also hired archaeologist Lewis Larsen, a PhD student at University of Michigan at the time, to direct archaeological research in the Mounds area (Hally, 2004:142). Also on the GHC payroll was Henry Tumlin, the son of the former property owner whose family had won the Etowah lot in the 1838 Georgia Land

Lottery (Bartow Herald, 1953). The Commission's first major development project involved the purchase of a 60-acre tract of the Etowah Mounds, a Mississippian-period mound and village site located in Cartersville, Georgia. As I will argue, in the 1950s, this predominantly white, rural town sought to capitalize on the post-War economic boom and their industrial manufacturing economy through the development of a heritage tourism industry. The industry was geared in part towards directing out-of-state tourists to historical sites that were most closely affiliated with the modern Cherokee and Muscogee Creek Nations (Cumming to Hubbard, 2/15/1952).

In analyzing the appropriation of Indigenous heritage in northwest Georgia, I apply a recent theorizing on the nature of whiteness, settler colonialism, and the role of heritage in cementing racialized structures of colonial rule. I outline the long history of Indigenous dispossession and settler appropriation in the American South to show how the origins of Indigenous heritage tourism built on an established settler colonial apparatus that deployed race to service commercial and economic development schemes (Haveman, 2016; Hudson, 2010). In this vein, my study highlights state-funded infrastructural development, newspaper reports, commercial interests, and community practice as key nodes in an integrated system facilitating appropriation and solidifying white control over space and place. To tackle this complex interdependence, I formulate

a conception of heritage practice drawn from Hargrove's (2009) model of whiteness as habituated cultural practice, and tie this discussion into heritage studies emphasizing the transformation of historic landscapes into white public space (Lewis, 2015). I then contextualize heritage building at Etowah within an evolving tourism economy and New South ideology that positioned white supremacy in relation to modernity, and demonstrate how GHC practitioners utilized archaeology and architecture to reinforce this ideological framework at Etowah Mounds. My study also considers media representations of heritage practice to examine evolutions in heritage values throughout the first decade of preservation work at Etowah Mounds. Tracking trends in the press coverage of ongoing preservation activities at Etowah Mounds, my study charts the gradual production of heritage values tied not to commercial interests but to the site's perceived historical and archaeological significance as Georgia's flagship preservation project. I argue that the repositioning of this site as national patrimony served to legitimate the appropriation and continued possession of Indigenous land, resources, and material culture by establishing ancestral connections between white communities and the region's pre-contact inhabitants.

### **Etowah Mounds: Culture Historical Background**

Etowah is a ceremonial town or *italwa~etalwv* whose primary occupational history is most closely associated with the ancestors of the modern Muscogee Creek Nation. Between 1000 A.D. and 1600 A.D., Indigenous peoples built six earthen mounds at the center of the village and connected two borrow pits with a large, semicircular defensive ditch that enclosed the village and approximately 21 ha of land. Archaeologists have identified nine sequential periods of occupation at the site, suggesting that Etowah's pre-Contact populations experienced the rise and fall of several Mississippian chiefdoms (King, 2002:50). Its last period of intensive domestic occupation is associated with the Itabas, one of three Muskogean-speaking groups within the Coosa paramount chiefdom (1400-1600 A.D.). Following the collapse of the Coosa chiefdom in the early-17<sup>th</sup> century, surviving members among the Coosas, Itabas, and Ulibahalis traveled

south along the Coosa River and coalesced with other Indigenous refugees, including Kymulgas, Natchez', and some Shawnees. This

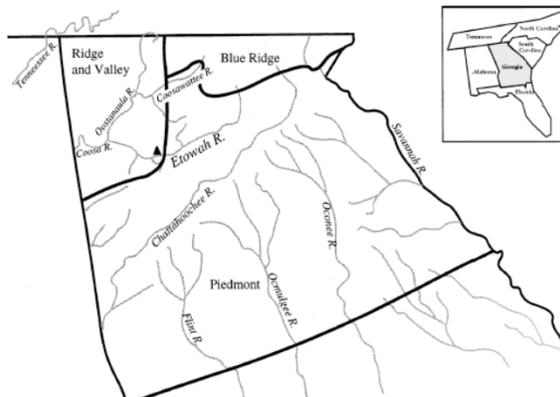


Fig. 1: Map Showing Location of Etowah Mounds Site (9BR1)  
(Source: King, 2003:281)

coalescent community eventually came to comprise the Abihkas, one of

four provinces that collectively composed the Upper Creek faction of the Creek Confederacy (Ethridge, 2003:27).

The Creek Confederacy was a loose alliance of autonomous towns grouped into Upper and Lower factions. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Creek Confederacy secured regional political power by exploiting imperial alliances, engaging in English-sponsored slaving raids, and heavy participation in the English deerskin trade. By the early-19<sup>th</sup> century, the declining profitability of trade combined with the relentless encroachment of white settlers onto Creek lands bred internal disputes among the allied Creek factions (Ethridge, 2003:27). Tensions culminated in a bloody civil war known as the Red Stick War (1813-1814). Georgian regiments quickly entered the conflict in an effort to subdue the militant Red Sticks, who launched assaults against American settlements along the Chattahoochee River. During the war, Yuchis and Upper Creeks defended Georgian cities against Red Stick attacks. Their military service to the United States was ill-appreciated, however, by expansionist settler colonists.

The early national period following the American Revolution crystallized a particular vision of American expansionism predicated on Indian Removal and veiled under the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny (Johannsen et al., 1997). The ideological connections between infrastructural development and settler colonial expansionism is visible in the history of Indigenous dispossession the American South; as

expansionist ideologies that culminated in calls for Indian Removal were conditioned in part by the increasing mobility of settler colonists along Creek paths and on the newly-constructed of federal roads crisscrossing Indian territories (Hudson, 2010). As thousands of white settlers flooded onto Creek lands beginning in the 1820s, expansion was driven, justified, and supported by a network of federal, state, local and private interests (Haveman, 2016). Land surveyors, development firms, and other commercial interest groups lobbied for federal and state support in the development of a “systematic program of ethnic cleansing” that sought to eradicate Native people from their lands and resources in the east (Haveman, 2016:3). While about 4,500 Creeks voluntarily removed to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma, the remaining 16,000 were either coerced, defrauded, or forcibly relocated in the 1830s. Through Indian Removal, all groups within the Creek Confederacy were removed from Georgia and other Southern territories and forcibly relocated to what is now Oklahoma (Ethridge, 2003:21). In a well-established pattern by the 1830s, Creek and Cherokee lands in the east were then surveyed and subdivided into individual plots which were subsequently distributed to white settlers through a lottery system (Martin and McMahan, 1952).

**TABLE I**  
**LAND LOTTERIES IN GEORGIA, 1803-1831**

Lottery Acts (Year)	Size of Lots (Acres)	Estimated Number of Lots	Estimated Number Of Acres Distributed
1803	202 ½	4,000	810,000
	490	1,100	539,000
1806	202 ½	9,300	209,250
1818	250	17,500	4,375,000
	490	10,000	4,900,000
1819	250	1,100	275,000
	490	1,100	539,000
1821	202 ½	12,200	2,470,500
1825	202 ½	21,000	4,252,500
1830	160	18,300	2,928,000
1831	40	35,000	1,400,000
Total	172.3	130,000	22,440,250

Source: Enoch Marvin Banks, *The Economics of Land Tenure in Georgia*, (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1905), p. 18.

Fig. 2: Table showing total land distributed in Georgia through the land lottery (1803-1831) (Source: Martin and McMahan, 1952:49)

Commencing approximately one century after the last remnant Indigenous communities were removed from the area, the GHC's preservation work at Etowah Mounds was intrinsically tied to US settler colonialism. The development of this site as a tourist destination and heritage site followed and was made possible only by the successive waves of Indigenous dispossession in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, scholars implicate infrastructure expansions, southern newspapers, and corporate and commercial interests in the consolidation of Indian Removal policy in the Jacksonian era (Haveman, 2016:3; Hudson, 2010). In 1950s Georgia, I argue that white settlers deployed the same settler colonial nexus in the appropriation of Indigenous sites of heritage for their exploitation within a maturing tourism industry. Heritage building at

Etowah involved appropriating Indigenous things, including their racialized bodies, material culture, and sacred monuments, and sanctifying European American claims to Indigenous places. This process marked an effort to emplace white identities into the deep-time fabric of the Indigenous, pre-colonial past (Deloria, 1998). In this way, by constructing a view of pre-contact peoples as antecedent Georgians, white communities bolstered their claims to appropriated lands and materials.

### **Theoretical Overview to Structures, Spaces, and Practice: Settler Colonialism and Critical Whiteness**

Emerging from distinctive social, intellectual, and theoretical traditions, critical whiteness theory and settler colonial theory nonetheless share a number of key perspectives, premises, and orientations (Boucher et al., 2009). In fact, theorists in both traditions often highlight the intersections of colonialism and race, suggesting that these intertwining structures work to co-enact global Euro-American hegemony (Boucher et al., 2009; Orser, 2007). Race developed as a means to justify the colonization and exploitation of non-European-descent groups by those bearing the privileged status of whiteness (Fabian, 2010; Orser, 2007). By providing the ideological legitimation for colonial conquest, race provides the schema that organizes settler colonial societies such as the United States (Wolfe, 2006:387). Following this approach to studies of race and

colonialism, I position whiteness as a settler colonial identity (see Allen, 2009; Grimshaw and Standish, 2009; Lake, 2009; Mar, 2009). This paper blends insights from settler colonial theory and critical whiteness theory to articulate a conception of whiteness as responsive and metamorphic, spatially imposed (see Lewis, 2015), and habituated through practice (Hargrove, 2009).

Settler colonialism is defined as a particular mode of colonial conquest involving sustained efforts by a foreign power to acquire, possess, and permanently inhabit new territories held by one or more Indigenous groups (Veracini, 2011:2). The process involves the attempted usurpation of territory by an invading foreign power, the elimination of Indigenous peoples, and the construction of a new colonial society on appropriated lands (Wolfe, 2006:388).<sup>1</sup> While settler colonial theory acknowledges the tendency for settler states to actively promote the separation and subjugation of colonized groups (Gosden, 2004), Veracini (2011:3) notes that a distinguishing characteristic of settler colonialism lies in its ultimate objective: to “extinguish itself.” Settler colonialism strives to “supersede the conditions of its operation,” by entirely eradicating, absorbing, or otherwise expunging its subjects from the expropriated land base (Veracini, 2011:3). As I discuss below, the settler colonial logic of

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<sup>1</sup> Other forms of colonialism do not necessarily involve efforts to establish a permanent settler society on a new land base, and often work to reproduce the colonial order by perpetuating social relations that suppress the colonized subjects (Veracini, 2011:2).

elimination is paralleled in the aggregative ideologies identified within whiteness (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996; Hooks, 1992; Roediger, 1994).

Patrick Wolfe (2006) suggests that the process of elimination is simultaneously generative and destructive, relying on paired processes of Indigenous dispossession and settler appropriation. While seeking to destroy Indigenous societies, colonists also coopt Indigenous identities and histories to roll into the foundation of new settler identities (Wolfe 2006, 387). To this end, dispossession functions as a means to free up physical or conceptual space for the erection of a new settler colonial society, and appropriation allows the new social order to anchor itself on the expropriated land base (Wolfe 2006:390). Finally, the settler colonial “logic of elimination,” stitches these annihilative and productive attributes into a pervasive and enduring structure, a multivalent system of practices, relationships and dispositions with considerable historical longevity (Wolfe, 2006:387), and continuity into the present (Macoun and Strakosch, 2013:426).

Importantly, settler colonial theory holds that while the logic of elimination can assume varied and intangible or discursive forms, settler colonialism as process is intrinsically conditioned by territorial possession of Indigenous lands by the settler state (Brown, 2014:6). In this sense, while the state accumulates resources through Indigenous dispossession, this enduring structure is stabilized only by the continued possession of

expropriated lands (Brown, 2014:6). Settler colonial theory's emphasis on territorial possession prompts a critical consideration of heritage development projects in the United States, as the process is enabled only by the state's continued tenancy on Indigenous lands (Brown, 2014:6). This exposes the "quietness of possession," as part of a continuing process of settler colonialism (Blomley, 2004:14). According to this line of thought, the GHC's development work at Etowah Mounds was necessarily settler colonial in the sense that members of an all-white, state-funded institution maintained occupancy and ownership of a space expropriated by the settler state through Indian Removal in the 1830s.

The connections between settler colonialism and race are visible specifically within the context of heritage through the kinds of representations that state organizations disseminate about the "others" pasts (Blakey, 2001). Rewriting the histories of racialized "others," in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries increasingly drew from the burgeoning disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology. Such processes often served to buttress ideas about the intrinsic superiority of European-descent groups by portraying people of color as backwards, primitive, or exotic (Blakey, 2001; Gould, 1996). In this sense, manipulating heritage representations can facilitate settler colonial projects by "reinforc[ing] a sense of whites' entitlement" to the resources and territories of others (Blakey, 2001:390). Often, this form of entitlement ideology results in the

appropriation of the Indigenous past as state or national heritage (Ren, 2006:11). Enveloping Indigenous pasts into national narratives of emplaced heritage does more than simply reinforce the ideology of entitlement; it serves as a mechanism by which to embed Indigeneity into whiteness (Deloria Jr., 2003:14-15). Yet as I suggest, the particular version of Indigeneity that settlers appropriate often does not approximate the multiform sensibilities held by living Indigenous people.

This form of appropriation is viewed by some as an intrinsic quality of whiteness (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996). As one of several ways scholars have theorized the nature of whiteness (see Rasmussen et al., 2001), white identity is construed as normative, invisible, uniquely unmarked (Frankenberg, 2001). A related stance proposes that whiteness is an intrinsically vacant cultural space (Rasmussen et al., 2001:10). Devoid of any independent identity in this sense, whiteness amasses the content of its identity through the appropriation of cultural traits belonging to its racialized “others” (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996; Hooks, 1992; Roediger, 1994). While this perspective lends itself to a consideration of how whiteness as appropriative intersects settler colonialism’s logic of elimination, recent theorizing on transculturation and hybridity complicate the narrative of whiteness as cultural void. In this vein, critics have suggested that blending traditions to produce syncretic social practices, beliefs, and material cultures is less a singular characteristic of whiteness

than of human sociality writ large (see Fishkin, 1995; Saldivar, 1997).

Accepting that hybridity is not necessarily bound to race, white appropriation must be considered in tandem with the structural relations of privilege and inequality that service whiteness at others' expense (Duster, 1995).

While the above-mentioned approaches consider multiple dimensions of whiteness in terms of its content and character, another collection of works seeks to elaborate on the effects of whiteness as structural privilege. These studies draw from the theoretical foundations of W.E.B. DuBois (1899, 1936), who argued that whiteness and white racism operate at a highly-internalized, structural level. In this view, white identity provides certain material and social benefits to its members, allowing them to accumulate wealth, status, power, and multiple forms of social and symbolic capital inaccessible to non-whites (DuBois, 1899). Racism and white privilege channel resources to the dominant group by restricting access to racial minorities. Moreover, the inheritability of white privileges and continuous redistribution of wealth around the field of whiteness acts to maintain these unequal relations of power (DuBois, 1936).

Understanding whiteness as a privileged position within a structural system that materially and socially disadvantages people of color (Frankenberg, 2001), a distinction may be drawn between cultural arrogation and less innocuous forms of hybridity. In this sense, white

appropriation, or what Hooks (1992) terms, “eating the other,” functions as a means to solidify white dominion over marginalized groups.

Appropriation then can be viewed as one of a myriad of ways in which white supremacy draws on spaces, discourses, practices, objects, and historical events to perpetuate a social order that privileges whites at the expense of non-whites (Twine and Gallagher, 2008:7). This social order is continually contested, defended, and redefined in an effort to maintain white privilege (Gallagher, 1997; Hargrove, 2009; Morrison, 1992; Nayak, 2002; Weis, 2004). However, specific methods of stabilizing white privilege are often multidimensional, locally-mediated (Twine and Gallagher, 2008:7), and conditioned by other intersecting layers of identities (Lott, 2001; Puar, 2001; Ware, 2001). As I will argue, media representations of the Etowah Mounds and the broader significance of heritage work evoke a complex interplay of local, regional, and national identities in the configuration of heritage values. In particular, the production of white public space at Etowah mediated tensions between participants’ identities as white Americans, white southerners, and Cartersville locals. As a means of solidifying white privilege, the appropriation of Indigenous heritage at Etowah Mounds responded to a contradictory social milieu in which white Georgians aimed to express their commitment to American nationalism while retaining southern distinctiveness within the unified nation.

While recent critical whiteness scholarship has been more successful in integrating these analyses within discussions of situated context and social practice (see Hargrove, 2009), scholars have critiqued settler colonial theory for being too firmly indebted to structuralism at the expense of agency and the near-total neglect of practice (Macoun and Strakosch, 2013). In an effort to mitigate some of this structural rigidity within SCT, I select from Melissa Hargrove's (2009) model of the social field of whiteness as a way to foreground practice within heritage development. In this study of the early historic preservation movement in mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century Charleston, South Carolina, Hargrove defines the social field of whiteness as a "structured space of positions, with clearly defined stakes and interests" sharing a common denominator in the form of privileged whiteness. Drawing from Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Hargrove positions whiteness and white racism as a structuring and generative schema operating within the social field. Furthermore, Hargrove (2009) suggests that one mode of achieving white supremacy centers on intersecting heritage projects, urban renewal, and tourism. I follow in Hargrove's (2009) interrogation of heritage tourism's connections with urban renewal to position the Etowah Mounds project within an interlocking economic development strategy designed to preserve white supremacy in the New South.

Since Hargrove's (2009) adaptation of Bourdieu signifies that this schema is shaped and reshaped through habituated cultural practice, the settler colonial appropriation of the Indigenous past can be analyzed through the practices of heritage development. If whiteness amasses the content of its identity in part through the appropriation of heritage, I seek to examine the processes by which white settlers come to internalize ideas about Indigenous heritage as shared, state or national patrimony. To examine the social construction of heritage at Etowah Mounds, this paper advances a theory of heritage practice, which I define as the totality of activities, public events, and media representations through which historic resources are transformed into heritage sites.

Scholars have shown how public participation in heritage practices actively constructs senses of community and feelings of greater connection with history, heritage, and place (Coen et al., 2017; Giaccardi, 2012). In addition, reading and writing about ongoing heritage work in local newspaper or other media sources provides another medium through which heritage values can become inculcated. Following Giaccardi and Palen (2008), I position media representation as a form of heritage practice. According to this view, media generates the cultural and intellectual "infrastructure" that supports the social construction of emplaced heritage sentiments (Giaccardi and Palen, 2008:281). Thus, media representation and the continuous circulation of particular

discourses work to habituate systems of thought that advance the settler colonial project and maintain white privilege.

Fundamentally, heritage practice involves making physical transformations to historic landscapes in the form of construction work, infrastructural and utilities expansions, and/or archaeological excavations, all of which can help to refashion the built environment into what critical whiteness theorists have termed “white public space” (Lewis, 2015; Page and Thomas, 1994). As Lewis (2015:281) articulates, “white public space spatializes hierarchy and privilege and promotes white solidarity and white supremacy.” White public space reinforces social relations of inequality by establishing white claims to particular places and pasts and maintaining whiteness as normative and legitimate. Moreover, the organization of spaces and monuments, inclusion or exclusion of certain narratives, voices, or groups of people from the commemorative space, or the projection of racial ideas onto the past serves to communicate a vision for the future that is based in an imagined or constructed heritage rooted in place. Importantly, racial minorities are often excluded or subjugated within this symbolically-charged vision (Lewis, 2015:281). In this way, my approach to heritage practice grounds the development of heritage values and white identities in space, place, and practice.

### **Tourism, New South Ideologies, and Whiteness as Modernity**

Preservation work at Etowah Mounds in the 1950s built on an extant, early-20<sup>th</sup> century tourism industry fueled by the post-Reconstruction reformulation of white identities. Attempting to revive their crumbled economy after the close of the Civil War, ex-Confederates attempted to remake Southern white identities while preserving the racialized social structures of the antebellum period (Hale, 1998:44). In the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, white civic organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy latched onto the antebellum past as the platform for constructing a new racial order in the American South, one which “resurrected and reconditioned pro-slavery polemics” through the manipulation of Civil War memory (Hale, 1998:44). Through public memory works, former Confederates drew a distinction between the “Old South” of the past, and the “New South” of the present (Hale, 1998:49). In this way the New South ideology affixed itself to discourses of modernity that posited a distinctive break between past and present (Dawdy, 2010; Lucas, 2004). The ideological and discursive formations of the New South anchored themselves in the historical memory of the Civil War, infusing fanciful, romanticized depictions of the antebellum past as replete with idyllic plantations, benevolent masters, and loyal, happy slaves. The bucolic vision of the Old South was positioned in contrast to what former Confederates viewed as the postbellum decay of their resplendent social order (Hale, 1998:49). In this view, white Southerners’ shattered lifeways

resulted from Northern aggression and Black betrayal. An ideology of racial segregation inhered within the temporality of the represented Southern past, in which the Reconstruction-era was conceptually aligned with Blackness, and Confederate heroism with whiteness (Hale, 1998:50). According to Hale (1998:50), the racial segregation of time thus “paralleled and founded and deepened the segregation of space, providing the foundations of the southern future.”

Beginning in the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century, tourism became an important venue for broadcasting the ideology of the New South, and for promoting acceptance of the particular vision of whiteness that it encompassed. Automobile tourism to North Georgia was spurred by the construction of the Dixie Highway, which connected cities in the Southern states to those in the Northeast and the Upper Midwest (Lowry and Parks, 2007:7). In the 1920s, local communities successfully lobbied the Georgia Highway Department to fund the construction of two routes along the Dixie Highway extending from Chattanooga to Cartersville (Lowry and Parks, 2007:7). At this time, since automobile travel was prohibitively expensive for all but the wealthiest Americans, this early tourism industry serviced the economic elites with an experience of Dixie’s historic sites, scenic views, and local attractions (Lowry and Parks, 2007:11). Principal among the featured attractions were monuments and historic sites commemorating the Confederacy. While Etowah Mounds features in one brochure from the

early-20<sup>th</sup> century, the vast majority of heritage sites dealt with the South's involvement in the Civil War. Incorporating sites of Civil War memory along its route through North Georgia, the Dixie Highway brought tourists into contact with the valorous past imagined by the New South. The construction of the Dixie Highway through Cartersville also stimulated economic growth within the central business district, as motels, cabins, inns, restaurants, roadside markets, diners, gas stations, and hotdog stands popped up around town to service travelers (Lowry and Parks, 2007:8). It is important to note that visiting heritage sites along the Dixie Highway formed only one part of the touristic experience, and so representations of the past to be consumed at heritage sites were only one mechanism through which local tourism economies sought to transmit New South ideologies. Tourists from out of state, and predominantly from northern states, would have stayed the night in these southern towns, frequented southern establishments, and interacted with southern locals. In this way, the growth of these associated hospitality industries facilitated the expression and Southern culture and helped to ingratiate the values and ideologies of the New South for northern tourists (Preston, 1991:132).

Attracting tourists off the Dixie Highway, the Georgia Historical Commission's preservation activities at Etowah expanded this established tourism economy within the city of Cartersville and the surrounding county of Bartow. I argue that the shift towards preserving and developing

Indigenous heritage sites in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century emerged in response to the contemporaneous Civil Rights movement. Facing mounting opposition to overtly celebratory machinations of Confederate heritage, or perhaps in an effort to sidestep such criticisms, white Georgians seized upon the Indigenous past as a new venue for broadcasting their supremacy. Developing sites of Indigenous heritage, in this way, may have provided segregationist whites with an opportunity to avoid reckoning the challenge to their hegemonic order, or to covertly reinforce the structures of white dominion over racial minorities.

While the interpretive focus of Dixie Highway heritage sites shifted towards the Indigenous past, the performance of southern identity within Cartersville's central business district remained firmly entrenched in the touristic experience. While economic development and infrastructural expansions stemming from the Etowah project propelled industrial and commercial growth in the city center (The Weekly Tribune News, 9/4/1958), the distribution of this wealth was sharply divided along racial lines. In 1950, visitors to the Atlanta Metropolitan Area would have witnessed 45% of the African American workforce employed in the service industry, for instance, while only 5% of the European American population held such positions.<sup>2</sup> European Americans held 96% of all managerial,

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<sup>2</sup> According to the 1950 US Census, 22% of African Americans in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area worked as servants in private households, 23% were employed in other service industries, and another 24% held industrial manufacturing positions.

official, and proprietary employments in the region; among this class of workers, 85% were male. Thus, new proprietary opportunities afforded by the heritage tourism industry overwhelmingly benefitted white, male residents of Cartersville and other southern towns along the Dixie Highway. As out-of-state tourists traversed these business districts, their financial resources fed into particular channels of wealth that were mostly inaccessible to racial minorities. Moreover, because these diners and highway shops were set up as bastions of New South southern identity (Preston, 1991:132), social inequality and white supremacy may have been invigorated, masked, and normalized through touristic experiences within the central business district. The Etowah Mounds project can be viewed in this light as part of an integrated social economy maneuvering both within and around the tourism industry to defend white privilege in a number of multifaceted ways.

### **Etowah Mounds and Economic Development: Infrastructural Expansions in the “New South”**

Established by an act of the Georgia legislature in 1951, the GHC was tasked with preserving and publicizing Georgia’s historic resources, as well as promoting tourism within the state (Gilmore, 1979:9). Endowed to the Chamber of Commerce, the GHC was integrated into a state-wide infrastructural development program at the height of the booming post-

War economy (Gilmore, 1979:9).<sup>3</sup> To accommodate the rapid economic growth spurred by the expanding automobile industry, the state directed much of its surplus funds into Georgia's public education, housing, and transportation systems. Urban renewal projects, characterized by the destruction of older buildings and the construction of modern buildings and highway systems, rapidly transformed rural and urban landscapes throughout the state (Lyon, 1999:77).

In keeping with Hargrove's (2009) theorizing of the tripartite economic development scheme in the New South, the burgeoning historic preservation movement in Georgia crosscut many state-wide infrastructural development projects. I argue that historic preservation projects played a role in facilitating this expanded industrial growth throughout the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and were intimately bound up in processes of urban renewal. In fact, the Georgia Historical Commission's principal operations and goals were intrinsically tied to urban renewal through the highway system. One of the first goals of the newly-formed GHC involved erecting a series of historic markers along transportation

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<sup>3</sup> After the end of WWII, the General Assembly reported nearly a decade of record-breaking profits owing primarily to the rise of the American automobile industry. Increased automobile traffic throughout Georgia in the Post-War period generated soaring profits in the form of gasoline tax revenues. Georgia's 7 cent gas tax brought in over one third of its total revenue, and produced operating surplus in excess of \$18,000,000 by 1951 (Griffin, 1951:1). While the growth the automotive industry represented a boon to state profits, increased motor traffic throughout the state placed a heavy strain on Georgia's decrepit transportation infrastructure. Economists warned that such unprecedented growth would present new challenges to the state in terms of infrastructural development and public service requirements (Griffin, 1950:2).

routes, for instance. Likewise, developing an industry for heritage tourism hinged on successfully integrating historic sites into the highway system, as site visitation depended on providing vehicular access to the property. It is not surprising then, that the formation of the Georgia Historical Commission was accompanied by a simultaneous proposal to build a highway system linking a set of “interesting Indian tourist attractions in a line across North Georgia and not too far apart” (Georgia Historical Commission, No. 496, Senate Bill No. 75).

A key component of heritage practice at Etowah Mounds involved these infrastructural development projects, which often involved the local white community at multiple scales, including as investors, contracting firms, laborers, and readers of locally-circulating news reports.

Transforming Etowah Mounds into a tourist destination required significant investment in new infrastructure both at the site and in the surrounding region. Despite increasing industrial development in the city center, the area around the Etowah Mounds site remained distinctly rural, and residents had limited access to the city’s infrastructural grid. However, accommodating tourist market at Etowah required that the Commission provide visitors with running water, power, and adequate routes of access to the site. After allocating \$12,000 to run a water pipeline to the mound site (Tumlin to Jewett, 8/10/1960), the city of Cartersville began to invest

in expanding its electric and water grid to include the area around the mounds.

In addition to spurring utilities expansions into rural, outlying areas in Cartersville, the Etowah Mounds project stimulated construction, urbanization, and industrialization in the immediate vicinity of the archaeological area. In 1958, Mayor Cowen credited Henry Tumlin with convincing a visiting CEO to locate a new industrial plant in Cartersville. Expecting continued economic growth in the region, the businessman had been so impressed with Tumlin's "manner and ability in presenting the points of interest at Etowah Mounds" that he determined to establish a corporate expansion in Cartersville (Cowen to Cumming, 10/27/1958). By 1960, housing developments began popping up along either side of the road leading to the museum (Gregory to Jewett, 8/10/1960).

In addition to these state-funded development projects, numerous privately-owned businesses in Cartersville invested in building the infrastructure at Etowah Mounds. As enumerated by Etowah caretaker Henry Tumlin in 1960, the list of corporate donors to the project included the Georgia Power Co. provided used telephone poles to the Commission for use in furnishing the museum area parking lot (Tumlin to Jewett, 8/10/1960). New Riverside Ochre Co. supplied 85 loads of gravel for another parking lot on the site. The pipe metal gate to the property was built by the Chemical Products Corp. L&N Railroad contributed crossties

for the construction of staircases leading to the apex of the mounds (Tumlin to Jewett, 8/10/1960). The involvement of local corporations in these landscaping and construction projects speaks to the close interrelationship of heritage tourism and industrial development, and may similarly reflect businesses' recognized commercial interests in the growing tourism industry stimulated by the Etowah Mounds project. Yet significance of these corporate contributions by local firms extends beyond the financing of industrialization motivated by capitalistic enterprising.

These donations are suggestive of several layers of social complexity in maneuvering within whiteness to secure the Indigenous past for market consumption. Occupying various positions within the social field of whiteness, GHC staff navigated an intricate web of relationships with each other as well as with state and local interest groups involved the plan to develop Etowah Mounds as a heritage site. To coordinate transactions with local proprietary groups, the Commission turned to Henry Tumlin, the caretaker of the Etowah site and son of the former property owner. As a white, male descendent of one of the first white settlers in the region, Tumlin occupied a privileged position at the intersection of race and regionalism in the social field of Southern white identity. Here the nexus of race and community identity superseded class. For many involved in the Etowah Mounds project, membership in one of Cartersville's founding families established Tumlin's long-standing connections to place in

Cartersville and legitimated his standing in the local white community. Tumlin mobilized his familial connections to curry favor with the mayor, the governor, the county commission, and the Chamber of Commerce. He was then able to ingratiate himself with the local-born business elite of Cartersville and secure investments from local companies. Moreover, while Tumlin never secured a permanent, high-ranking position amongst GHC staff, his connections to one of Cartersville's "founding" families insulated him from the consequences of his alleged profiteering activities at his wife's privately operated gift shop across the street from the Etowah Mounds (Cumming to Henson, 10/7/1958).

## **Methodology**

Drawing from Hargrove's (2009) theorizing of whiteness as habitus, I examine how appropriation proceeded through the practice of heritage development. I consider the ways in which construction activities, public events, media coverage, and archaeological excavations led local white communities in Cartersville to develop a collective sense of emplaced heritage at Etowah Mounds and ultimately to undermine the claims of descendant communities to this site by positioning themselves in close affinity with the region's Mississippian-period inhabitants. To this end, I situate my analysis within both the public and private domains of GHC management to show how conceptions of heritage values shifted between

1953 and 1959. Through an examination of administrative records and newspaper articles, I chart evolutions in GHC policy and publicity throughout the first years of site governance at Etowah Mounds. Administrative records were examined to illuminate a landscape of competing interests in the operation of the Etowah Mounds site. Letters of correspondence between staff members record a significant amount of infighting and bitter feuds over administrative issues. This paper focuses on preeminent conflicts that engendered concrete resolutions in the form of administrative policy shifts that redefined the nature of heritage value at the site. To do so, the roughly 1,000 pages of correspondence written by GHC staff primarily between 1953 and 1959, were examined and central disagreements were plotted through time. During its formative decade, the GHC maintained few formal records of its policies, goals, and administrative apparatus. Certain correspondences (such as those sent by the chairman of the Commission) were recognized as official records of GHC policy (Cumming to Gregory, 11/20/1958). Moreover, these letters appear to have been a method by which the GHC negotiated, resolved, and codified administrative decisions regarding the operation of the Etowah site.

All administrative records were coded and analyzed with the objective of illuminating individual agents' varied and competing strategies for consolidating power and influence over the process of development of

Etowah Mounds as a heritage site. Staff correspondences were entered into a database recording the names of the sending party, the recipient, the date of the letter, and a brief description of its contents. The database noted internal political strife within the Commission as identified by the articulation of competing or hostile viewpoints between two or more staff members regarding a singular issue or decision. The identification of points of contention was limited to embattled issues of pertinence to the future administration of the Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site. Letters of contention were grouped topically so as to cluster all opposing perspectives on the same topic or debate point. If available, the relative positions of each staff member involved in the debates were recorded, and effort was made to track the influence of particular ideas, events, or individuals on subsequent administrative decisions.

In addition to reviewing these policy disputes, this paper attempts to illuminate patterns in media representations of the Etowah project as evocative of the shifting value systems driving the GHC's effort to develop Etowah as a heritage site. To do so, newspaper coverage of the Etowah Mounds project was analyzed using keyword analysis. A search of Georgia Historic Newspaper database indicates that before the 1950s, Etowah Mounds received very little press within the state of Georgia. Several Georgia newspapers reported on the results of archaeological investigations conducted at the site in the 1880s and 1890s, circulating a

total of three articles. Media reporting on Etowah Mounds skyrocketed after the site's purchase for development, and the GHC collected these newspaper clippings from numerous publications in a series of scrapbooks. These scrapbooks now contain 415 articles detailing various aspects of the Etowah Mounds project (GHC-DO Scrapbooks, folder 1953-1959, GA Archives). These articles cover a range of topics relating to GHC preservation work at Etowah Mounds between 1953 and 1959, and 99% (n = 410) of these were circulated within Georgia newspapers.

It is important to note that these newspaper articles also represent the bulk of the GHC publicity campaign during the first ten years of its existence. In addition to promoting site visitation, newspaper coverage satisfied the Commission's chartered task of publicizing historical resources throughout the state (Gilmore, 1979:9; Townsend, 2001:9). Commissioners relied heavily on press reports to disseminate information to the wider public, advertise the site as a tourism destination, and even to codify administrative decisions. To this end the Commission relied heavily on Milton Fleetwood, one of its founding members and publisher of two local Cartersville newspapers (Gilmore, 1979:11). Fleetwood tapped into local publishing networks and ran regular columns about GHC preservation work at Etowah in his newspapers, *The Daily Tribune* and *the Weekly Tribune*. Another influential player in the GHC publicity efforts was C.E. Gregory, columnist of the *Atlanta Journal* who served as secretary of

the Commission until 1960. Commissioners' efforts to secure media attention for their project resulted in a near-continuous circulation of information about the project across a large number of publications in Georgia. With two staff members in the publication industry, the GHC was uniquely empowered to strictly control the content of its public image. Moreover, several staff correspondences suggest that newspaper coverage functioned as a key mechanism by which the GHC attempted to implement its administrative and marketing agendas. Some letters even hint that press reports were weaponized by warring GHC staff members as a means to forcibly extend a policy decision on contested issues (Cumming to Gregory, 11/20/1958). In this way, newspaper articles in the GHC scrapbooks provide a lens through which to examine the GHC's official public record of its preservation activities at Etowah Indian Mounds.

In order to determine the content of the GHC's constructed public image for the Etowah project, keyword analysis was employed to generate a list of frequently-used words from the headlines of the newspaper articles. In utilizing keyword analysis to interpret themes and trends in GHC press coverage of the Etowah Mounds project, this study draws from other anthropological and sociological investigations of printed media (see Baker 2004; Wu et. al 2012). Keyword analysis is commonly applied to newspaper headlines because headlines are deliberately crafted to "optimize the relevance" of the article for readers by providing a brief,

summative description of content that can be rapidly scanned for keywords (Dor, 2003:695).<sup>4</sup>

To generate a list of frequently occurring keywords, the 431 articles were first coded in a database that recorded the author, publisher, and date of publication, as well as the headline and sub-heading for each article. An algorithm was then applied to the text of the headlines and sub-headings to generate a list of keywords from the totality of newspaper articles. The most frequently used words, “mounds,” “Etowah,” and all usages of the word “Indian” in conjunction with the previous were removed from the list as they refer in all instances to the name of the site. All other uses of the term “Indian” were kept in analysis. Likewise, all conjunctions, prepositions, numbers, and pronouns were excluded, as they carry no independent meaning and their frequency of use is of little relevance to the research questions. Singular and plural noun forms as well as various conjugations of the same verb were tallied together and assigned a total frequency of stem use.

Following this preliminary data trimming, a series of themes were identified within the remaining list of keywords. In this study, keywords were grouped into one of seven categories on the basis of shared meaning or referents. These included tourism, archaeology, infrastructure,

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<sup>4</sup> Including keywords in headlines is therefore an important rhetorical device that writers deliberately employ in order to “provide readers with the optimal ratio between contextual effect and processing effort” (Dor, 2003:695).

administrative, museum, heritage, and Indigeneity. Similar studies examining the dissemination and inculcation of ideology through newspaper reporting have employed analogous coding schemes to identify themes, cognitive structures, and social relations of power embedded within headlines (Bonyadi and Samuel, 2013; Dragas, 2012; Cerulo, 1998; Muschert, 2009).

Unfortunately, the keyword algorithm was not able to control for instances where multiple keywords appear in a single headline. To minimize the distortive effect of this oversight on the overall results, each newspaper article was examined individually and assigned membership in one of the seven categories defined through keyword analysis. Additional steps were taken to classify headlines exhibiting multiple keyword categories (see for instance, “Etowah Mounds Museum Seen as Big Attraction,” (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1958) where “museum” falls into the museum category and “attraction” falls under tourism). Headlines containing two or more keyword themes usually occurred in one of three forms. Keywords across categories were either joined in adjectival phrases, separated by a colon which divided the heading from the subheading, or combined in a single headline as per the example provided above. For the purposes of this investigation, keywords were grouped into primary and secondary themes on the basis of their relative centrality to the overall meaning of the headline. Following Develotte and

Rechniewski's (2001) methodological framework for newspaper headline research, themes were classed according to their order of appearance and font size. Compound keywords appearing as adjectives were listed as secondary themes because they were seen to qualify the subject of the article. Keywords appearing in sub-headlines were also classed as secondary. In distinguishing sub-headlines from headlines, it was assumed that publishers followed the entrenched conventions of news reporting in which more important issues are printed in larger font (Develotte and Rechniewski 2001).

### Publicizing Heritage at Etowah Mounds

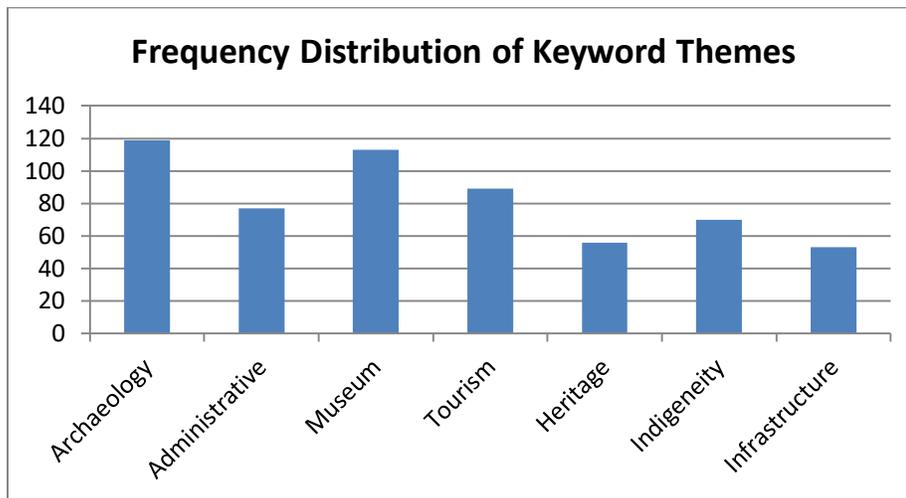


Fig. 3: Categorical distribution of keywords across themes

The results of the keyword analysis demonstrate that press coverage of the Etowah Mounds project between 1953 and 1959 was fairly evenly distributed across the seven identified themes. The most

frequently addressed topics included ongoing archaeological investigations at the site (n = 119) and the construction, dedication, and exhibitions at the Etowah Archaeological Museum (n = 113). Keywords in each of these categories appear in roughly 20% of all of newspaper headlines. Tourism trails just behind the archaeology and museum groups at 15% (n = 89) of the sample. Words associated with Indigeneity (n = 70) and administration (n = 77) appear respectively in 12% and 13% of the sample. The categories of heritage (n = 56) and infrastructure (n = 53) are the least represented topics in the corpus of GHC press, each appearing in about 10% of newspaper headlines.

This analysis of newspaper headlines alludes to set of widely-shared and publicly-recognized economic motivations driving the heritage work at Etowah Mounds. That the effort to develop Etowah Mounds as a heritage site harmonized with the state's economic development plans is suggested by the importance of tourism as a central theme in newspaper headlines, the prominence of infrastructure-related issues in press reporting, and the relative dearth of media interest in the topic of heritage. That infrastructure appears at all as a theme in the GHC corpus of newspaper articles relating to preservation work at Etowah Mounds is evocative of heritage tourism's intersections with urban renewal and industrialization. In keeping with the structural embeddedness of heritage and urbanization (Hargrove 2009), newspapers frequently publicized

planned highway and road paving, utilities expansions, and construction projects in conjunction with the Etowah Mounds project. Likewise, the low density of press reports about the historic, cultural, or heritage values of the site similarly allude to Georgia's economic motivations for historic preservation in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

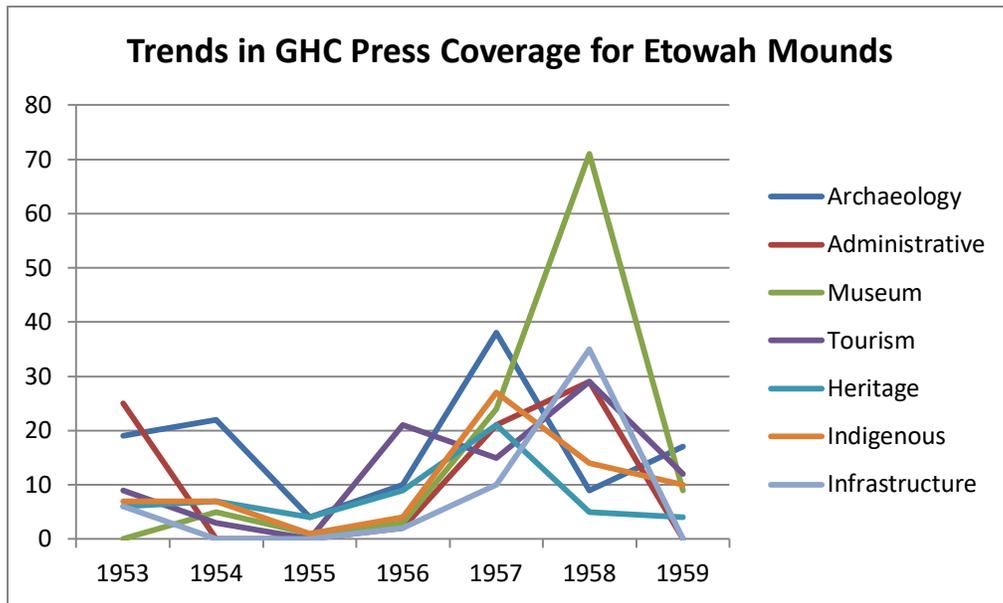


Fig. 4: Trends in press reporting across each theme for the years 1953-1959

Trends in press reporting across each theme were determined by plotting the relative frequencies of primary and secondary themes for each of the first seven years of development work at Etowah. The results of this analysis suggest an early press interest in archaeology and administrative matters. The prominence of administrative reporting in 1953 (n = 25) reflects the preponderance of articles covering the purchase of the site by the state in this year. In this first year, coverage of the initial purchase was

nearly matched by that of the planned archaeological excavations at the site (n = 19). This trend suggests that archaeology, even at the outset of the project, was seen to contribute to its newsworthiness. In this sense, archaeology was deeply embedded in the public image of the Etowah Mounds, and was positioned as one of the most significant or interesting aspects of the project.

The number of headlines under the theme of archaeology waxes and wanes between 1954 and 1958, as tourism, infrastructure, and the Etowah Archaeological Museum gained traction in the press. Notably however, trends in the press coverage of archaeological work were echoed in reporting of the Indigeneity and heritage themes. Often, keywords under these three themes comingled within the same headline, for instance in this article: “statues found here give cultural insight to ancient tribe,” where “found” refers to archaeological excavations, “ancient” is designated under heritage, and “tribe” is classed under Indigeneity (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1956). These correlations suggest a conceptual linkage between archaeology, heritage, and Indigeneity within the particular vision of the Etowah Mounds project that GHC Commissioners sought to publicize. The correlation between archaeology and words associated with past referents (i.e. heritage) is altogether unsurprising given the nature of archaeological research as studying the past. Likewise, the positive correlation between Indigeneity

and heritage in press reports may result from the subject matter, that being the Indigenous past. Nonetheless, the ways in which newspaper reports position archaeology in relation to the past hints at a deeper, more structural ideological relationship between archaeology, heritage, and the social construction of whiteness through the appropriated Indigenous past.

In the corpus of GHC newspaper articles, archaeology was positioned as a method to extract historic and cultural significance from the enigmatic, prehistoric past. In this way, the press circulated a view of the Indigenous past as “secret,” and mysterious, while at the same time establishing archaeology as the preeminent method of exposing that secret. “Whatever the secrets of the mounds may be,” one article in the *Atlanta Constitution* surmised, “there will be no final answers until Dr. Kelly and his crew start excavating” (Hogg, 1953). Despite repeated assertions by archaeologists that a definitive cultural and temporal sequence for the site had been established prior to the excavations, newspapers portrayed the content, construction, and cultural affiliation of the mounds as shrouded in mystery.

During the first three years of site development, an idea circulated within local newspapers that science and technological advancements in the modern age allowed white Americans to “catch up” to the advanced civilization of the ancient Etowahs. Perceptions about the architectural and technological sophistication of the mound builders blended with ideas of

ritualism, exoticism and savagery (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1953). In one sense, the mounds captivated white public imagination as hulking remnants of a lost race of people far more advanced than European civilization had been at the same point in linear time. One article mused that this “amazingly advanced culture” had produced intricate artworks at “about the time Europeans were debating about whether the earth was flat or round” (Nixon, 1956). Newspapers reported that the builders and occupants of the Mounds displayed “the highest achievements in the art of moundbuilding, temple construction, carving of stone, engraving of shells and copper, and pottery making” (Marietta Daily Journal, 1953). In this way, Etowah was seen as the apex of pre-contact civilization in which Indigenous peoples outperformed whites in agricultural, architectural, and artistic pursuits.

These mythologized beings were also adept at hiding their secrets from the prying eyes of whites. Archaeology stepped in to peel away these layers of mystery, “to dig up the true facts” that had previously been concealed (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1953). Due to advances in scientific approaches to studying the past, one Cartersville woman wrote, “light will be turned on a past history of a race of people who built well enough for their secrets to stand hidden for ages” (Adams, 1953).

Lowenthal (2015:168) notes that one legacy of Enlightenment thinking in heritage contexts is the positioning of science and technology

of the modern age in relation to the artistic or aesthetic sophistication of ancient groups. There is an implicit assumption in this logic that technological advancement and objective knowledge, epitomized by the 'science' of archaeology as a vector for expanding the knowable, allows civilizations in the modern age to surpass those of antiquity (Lowenthal, 2015:68). In this way, modernity's possession of "science" as method for accumulating this ancient knowledge distinguishes it from antiquity and renders it superior. Modernity thus supersedes antiquity in its ability to extract knowledge from that which was heretofore unknowable. Once known, the artistic finesse of past peoples' can be freely incorporated into modern society. Once "the past is safely mapped, its pleasures tried and tested, its perils located and confined," it can be thoughtfully learned from- its useful bits can be distilled and rolled into modernity (Lowenthal, 2015:69). Through this quilting of scientifically accumulated knowledges, modernity ensures the linear progression of Western civilization (Lowenthal, 2015:168).

In aligning archaeology within this conceptual framework as an instrument of modernity, GHC press coverage of the Etowah Mounds project also facilitated an appropriation of Indigenous heritage for residents of Georgia. Reporting on archaeological excavations at the site from 1953-1955 was followed by a heightened focus on tourism in news reports published in 1956. Elevated press interest in tourism at Etowah

Mounds reflects a growing concern with the site’s ability to attract the sustained attention of audiences outside the Cartersville area. Nineteen headlines from this year refer to Etowah Mounds as a looming “tourist mecca,” with the potential to launch the site into the national spotlight (Bartow Herald, 1956; Bremen Gateway, 1956; Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1956; Columbia News, 1956; Cuthbert Times, 1956; Elberton Star, 1956; Ellijay Times Courier, 1956; Franklin News and Banner, 1956; Griffin Daily News, 1956; Marietta Daily Journal, 1956; McDuffie Progress, 1956; Millen News, 1956; Newnan Times Herald, 1956; North Georgia Sentinel, 1956; Savannah Sun, 1956; Tallapoosa Journal, 1956; Tri-County Courier, 1956). As GHC publicity relished touristic interest in the project, Etowah Mounds were publically reimagined as a Georgian site. In this sense, newspaper headlines reified the state’s ownership of the

Mounds and laid a descendant claim to its history.

References to the Etowah Mounds site, its history, or its

Indigenous occupants as belonging to

Georgia spiked in 1957. Intriguingly, trends in this form of possessive

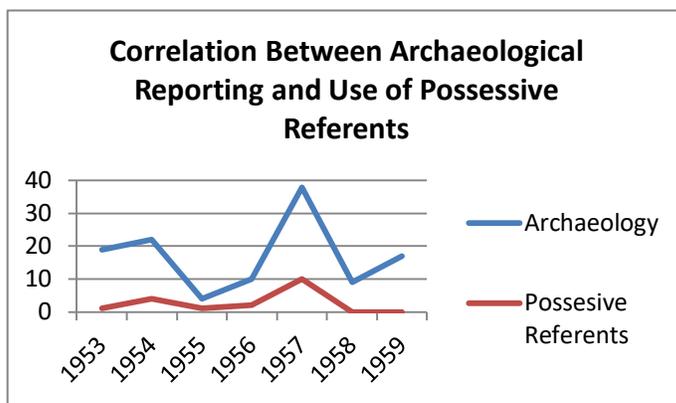


Fig. 5: Relationship between press coverage of the archaeology theme and the use of possessive referents

framing parallel evolutions in press coverage of archaeological excavations, and may suggest a relationship between archaeology and the appropriation of Indigenous heritage at Etowah Mounds.

At this time in 1957, archaeology was once again positioned as a tool to access Indigenous heritage. Excavations promised to “reveal Georgia’s Indian history” (Swit, 1957) or to “reveal Georgia’s past” (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1957; The Weekly Tribune News, 1957). The ancient Etowahs were thus portrayed as antecedents to modern Georgian society, described in one headline as “early Americans,” (West, 1957). Moreover, the public exalted the Indigenous builders of the mounds for their great “contribution to American civilization” (Henson to Cumming, 9/29/1958). This contribution largely centered on the Etowah Indians’ agricultural production, and Etowah Mounds became the site of America’s “first cornfield” in several newspaper headlines (Columbus Enquirer, 1957; Macon Telegraph, 1957; Savannah News, 1957). I argue that this process is illustrative of the settler colonial logic of elimination, whereby the Indigenous past is torn from living descendant communities and “appropriated and exploited as national patrimony” (Ren, 2006:11). By establishing the Indigenous past as mysterious, exotic, violent, or ritualistic, representations of Indigenous history are warped, sensationalized, and built into the foundation of new, white identities (Ren, 2006:10). Abstracted from living Indigenous communities and

appropriated by white Georgians, the Indigenous past at Etowah Mounds thus became a platform on which to inscribe a new version of Georgia's past, one in which the primitive, yet artistically and architecturally savvy Indigenes bury secrets in the earth that can only be exposed through the science of archaeology.

In 1958, a substantial increase in press coverage of infrastructure, tourism, and museum activities coincided with the construction of a permanent, archaeological museum on the property. Administrative records suggest that the GHC perceived the construction of the museum as the keystone of their preservation project at Etowah, citing its completion as a turning point in the project's larger responsibilities and aims (Cumming to Henson, 10/22/1958). Likewise, the museum was touted in press reports as a "big attraction," of international prowess (Bremen Gateway, 1958; Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1958; Dallas New Era, 1958; Dalton Citizen, 1958; Douglas County Sentinel, 1958; Hahira Times, 1958; Hinesville Sentinel, 1958; Jesup Sentinel, 1958; Millen News, 1958; North Georgia Tribune, 1958; Ocilla Star, 1958; Steward Webster Journal, 1958; Talbottom New Era, 1958).

Designed in American International style, a popular mid-20<sup>th</sup> century style that grew out of the modernist movement in architectural design, the building was a spectacle of the grandeur of Etowah's

development as a tourist attraction.<sup>5</sup> Its architectural design was intended for an avant-garde demonstration of the latest developments in building technology, including structural steel skeletons, plate glass, flat roofs, and ribbon windows (McAlester and McAlester, 2006:470). Superfluous decorative elements were stripped from the exterior façade for a streamlined, minimalist appearance. The building's structural steel skeleton was left partially exposed on the west side, and three, floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows slanted inward towards the lobby and a cantilevered roof section jutted out over the window. These features dramatized innovations in structural support systems by exposing the outer walls as non-loadbearing. These symbolic demonstrations of technological and architectural sophistication paralleled ideas circulated within the press that about the architectural prowess of the ancient Etowahs, and reinforced notions that scientific advancements allowed white Georgians to surpass these antecedent peoples in architectural design.<sup>6</sup>

While the press positioning of archaeology as an objective, professionalized scientific discipline distanced excavations from public

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<sup>5</sup> Conclusions about the architectural design of the new museum building are based on an architectural drawing depicting the planned Etowah Archaeological Museum. This sketch was completed for the GHC by architect and engineer, Philip B. Windsor, and is now located in the Georgia Archives, 61-1-1, box 9, Georgia Historical Commission (GHC) Directors Office Administrative Records, folder 1953-1957.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Cumming approved the museum's architectural design in 1957, but retained doubts about its relevance to the Etowah Mounds project. "It would be better if the style were somewhat more suitable to the subject matter," Cumming suggested after approving the design for construction (Cumming to Lawrence, 8/2/1957).

involvement, coverage of the museum theme sought to reestablish ties between Georgian communities and the heritage project at Etowah Mounds. Perhaps in an effort to cultivate feelings of local investment in the project, much museum-oriented reporting highlighted the construction of the building by the Womack Co., a Cartersville firm. In addition, through calls for site visitation and public attendance at museum events, the local population was invited to participate in the construction and performance of heritage at Etowah Mounds. Through their direct and indirect participation, the local community was encouraged to take pride in the Etowah Mounds as the highlight of their city's international allure.

### **Etowah Mounds as White Public Space**

In supplying the material, ideological, and economic foundation for the Etowah heritage project, archaeology and exhibition design became vital ingredients in the production of white public space. After purchasing the site from the Tumlin family in 1953, members of the all-white and predominantly male GHC sought to define the ways in which minority groups would participate in the heritage process. White public space was policed through a number of means, including fencing the site off from recreational activity, constructing segregated facilities, by muting Native American opposition to invasive archaeological testing in burial contexts,

and by limiting the involvement of descendent communities. In 1959 for instance, twelve members of the Uchee Tribe in Oklahoma visited the Etowah Mounds historic site. Among these were Rufus George, Chairman of the Tribal Council and other tribal leaders, including George Watashe, John Tiger, Ann Dale, and others (Wells, 1959). In advance of this visit, a staff member warned the Commission that the Uchees “claim their ancestors built your mounds, and they may try to take them back” (Gregory to Neitzel, 7/2/1959). This correspondence is punctuated by the silence around it, as the Commission issued no official reply and no other instances of Indigenous resistance (while they may have and likely did occur) are preserved in the records for the period examined in this case study.

Press coverage also established archaeology and the mounds project as white public space through the discursive projection of heritage practice as time travel. While modernity posits a break between past and present, heritage collapses this dichotomy by facilitating an exploration of past temporalities (Lowenthal, 2015:55). This rhetoric appears in headlines such as “Time Detectives Unearth History,” (Hogg, 1953) or “Indians meet White Men in Worker’s Excavations” (The Weekly Tribune News, 1953) which condition archaeology as a form of time travel. This form of discursive practice also constitutes a form of “simulated imperialism,” in which symbolic reenactments of colonial encounters serve

to reinforce imperial formations in settler colonial states (Hom, 2013:25). Normalizing empire through symbolic re-encounters, simulated imperialism spatializes difference by simultaneously enhancing and immobilizing the imagined “other” (Hom, 2013:40). Establishing archaeologists as “time detectives” sent to meet the ancient Etowahs, press reports presented archaeology as a figurative re-enactment of first-contact.

Indigenous groups of the ancient past are thus granted a degree of conditional agency in their ability to “meet” archaeologists. However, their agency is confined to the spatial extents of excavations and filtered always through a Western scientific framework. They are exoticized and enhanced, whitewashed in a way, and venerated for their “great contribution to American civilization” (Henson to Cumming, 9/29/1958), but also caste in place and time, to be idle, silent, and encountered. An intriguing parallel can be drawn between this form of simulated imperialism at Etowah and contemporaneous efforts to preserve segregation policy within Georgia. In kind with the immobilized Etowahs, segregation restricted Black mobility. Segregated spaces confined Black people to particular places and demanded conformity in terms of how Black individuals engaged with racialized space. As Black activism in the 1950s began to dismantle segregation policy, white southerners’ legal framework for securing their dominion over public space came under

threat. Perhaps the simulated imperialism of the Indigenous past was a way for white southerners to reinforce the ideological underpinnings of racial segregation in an alternate cognitive/intellectual space. Such representations may have buttressed white supremacy by establishing whiteness as uniquely mobile, active, and temporally fluid in the sense that whiteness through science can engage in the kinds of “time travel” described above. In these qualities, whiteness found supremacy over the ancient Etowahs, construed as the static, passive racialized “other.” Because whiteness alone is intellectually, temporally, and geographically liberated, segregation is in this way naturalized and justified.

### **Changing Heritage Values: From “Tourist Mecca” to “Historic Shrine”**

Administrative records from the period between 1953 and 1959 suggest that GHC officials were internally divided regarding the place of the local Cartersville population relative to the process of heritage building at Etowah Mounds. These debates played out in a series of complaints leveled against several members of the GHC staff. Henry Tumlin figures in the administrative records as one of the most controversial figures involved in the Etowah Mounds heritage development process.

Commissioners chastised Tumlin for his profiteering activities, including the construction of a privately-owned gift shop on his property across the

street from the Etowah Mounds. In addition to Tumlin's attempts to derive personal profit from the heritage project, the corpus of administrative correspondences reflect multiple, recursive iterations of similar complaints surfacing at different points in the history of the site's development. Several letters were submitted against Milton Fleetwood for inundating the GHC with his peculiar brand of rabid anti-intellectualism, and against professional archaeologists for their "brutal, nasty attitude toward the public" (Fleetwood to Cumming and Lawrence, 9/13/1958). The co-presence of two insoluble value systems within the core Commission lay at the heart of these altercations.

These competing ideological perspectives surfaced most clearly in debates over the appropriate position of professional archaeology in the Etowah Mounds project relative to local community or private business interests. Archaeologists on staff, including Dr. A.R. Kelly and Lewis Larsen, understood the project's significance in terms of Etowah's potential to advance scientific knowledge about the Indigenous past. Kelly perceived this historic value as a cultural inheritance for the state of Georgia, and argued that the site should be recognized as a "cultural monument" whose significance extends beyond the economic sphere into the spiritual realm (The Weekly Tribune News, 1953).

Another faction spearheaded by Milton Fleetwood and Henry Tumlin, the former property owner, sought local white ownership of the Indigenous past at Etowah Mounds. These men attempted to control various aspects of the administration of the site in order to capitalize on the mounds' potential for economic growth. Motivated by commercial interests, Fleetwood and Tumlin worked consistently to establish the property as a "tourist attraction, first, and a 'CULTURAL' attraction secondary- about two percent, let us add" (Fleetwood to Cumming, 12/14/1958). They detested archaeologists for what they perceived as haughty elitism, and felt coerced into relinquishing control over the Etowah project. In the process, they both endeavored to reap private proprietary benefits from the operation of the site. Throughout the development process, Fleetwood pleaded with Commissioners to "accord to Cartersville some degree of home rule" (Fleetwood to Cumming, N.D.). Local Cartersville residents, Fleetwood maintained, should be granted the authority to profit from the site and to direct the development process.

Beginning in September, 1958, the most salient dispute within the GHC centered on the future administration of the Etowah Mounds Archaeological Area (Lawrence to Fleetwood, 9/16/1958). The decision to hire a superintendent to oversee archaeological operations at the site generated a host of disagreements on each side of the ideological spectrum. Fleetwood campaigned vigorously to have Tumlin appointed

superintendent, writing numerous letters to Lawrence and Cumming that were apparently, “vituperative and abusive to some degree” (Cumming to Fortson, 10/16/1958). Dr. A.R. Kelly and Lewis Larsen both argued against Tumlin’s hire, suggesting the name of a professional archaeologist instead. The remaining Commissioners were similarly wary of Tumlin’s proprietary ventures in relation to the Etowah Mounds project; the operation of a private gift shop, the presumed sale of the artifacts recovered from earlier excavations, and Tumlin’s association with a known relic hunter were among their concerns. Disillusioned by Fleetwood’s irascible behavior, Cumming and Lawrence grew increasingly irritated by his “frantic, almost hysterical, insistence that we employ no one at the Museum except young Tumlin (Cumming to Fortson, 10/16/1958).

The Commission’s reticence to hire Henry Tumlin was not initially accompanied by a desire to include professional archaeologists in the permanent operation of Etowah Mounds. Until this point, the GHC had vacillated on its stance towards the value of archaeological research in Etowah’s development as a heritage site. Lawrence in particular was “not wedded to the idea of hiring an archaeologist,” suggesting that “it is quite possible that a layman could manage the project as capably...” (Lawrence to Fleetwood, 7/21/1958). However, in 1958 the GHC codified a new vision for Etowah Mounds in which the archaeological area should function as a professionally-interpreted “cultural monument” (Cumming to

Henson, 10/7/1958). As part of this policy shift, Cumming determined that the superintendent's position should be filled by a professional archaeologist, suggesting that "a trained archaeologist...would be a credit to the State of Georgia" (Cumming to Lawrence, 7/16/1958). In rationalizing this decision to the GHC, Cumming cited policy at several NPS managed mound sites in Georgia in which professional interpreters guided visitors throughout the archaeological area. He similarly appealed to Etowah's archaeological renown, noting there was "no reason why the Etowah Mounds in Cartersville cannot be operated in the same manner as Ocmulgee, Moundsville and others which apparently have not attained the significance in the archaeological world as the incomparable Etowah Mounds" (Cumming to DuBose, Fleetwood, Kelly, Lawrence, 8/1/1958). In November, 1958, Cumming extended an offer to Robert Neitzel, a seasoned archaeologist with several decades of curatorial experience (Cumming to Henson, 11/10/1958).

Writing to the Chamber of Commerce, Cumming justified his decision to hire an archaeologist for the position of site superintendent by rebranding the Etowah Mounds as a "cultural monument of the utmost importance- a site of unique significance and nation-wide interest" (Cumming to Henson, 10/7/1958). Codifying this policy change in a letter to the Commission on October 30, 1958, Cumming wrote:

These sites are properly spoken of as 'historic shrines'; that is, places in which dwells the spirit of our glorious past and in which the visitor contemplates and is inspired by deeds of heroism and other noble acts of our forebears which are worthy of worship. Being worthy of worship, each of these places is a temple from which the money-changers must be driven; otherwise, this worship would be polluted with dross and would degenerate into a more materialistic, money-grubbing, profit-seeking activity.

In keeping with the settler colonial "logic of elimination" (Wolfe, 2006: 388), Cumming's discourse reflects a hijacking of the Indigenous past for Georgian use. Describing the Mississippians at Etowah as Georgia's own "forebears," Cumming grounds Georgian communities' ancestral roots in Native America. The message that visitors should be "inspired by" the actions of these ancestors suggests a vision for the future based in a shared, appropriated Indigenous past.

While maintaining accumulated power and privilege within a closed-circuit of white male agents, this act reshuffled power away from the local interest groups to whom the fledgling Commission had been initially beholden. Materializing this policy shift required careful maneuvering, however, as Fleetwood and Tumlin had acquired a cult-like following in Cartersville and Fleetwood's "demagogic appeals to illiteracy" garnered a considerable amount of local, institutional support (Cumming to Dubose,

Fleetwood, Kelly, Lawrence, 10/9/1958). Fleetwood enjoyed the favor of the Bartow County Commission and the Chamber of Commerce, both of which had exerted considerable pressure on the GHC to capitulate in the appointment of Henry Tumlin as site superintendent. Reliant on Chamber of Commerce funding for the completion of the archaeological museum, the GHC tread carefully in defying this request. Cumming circulated this policy statement and a few “well-selected copies of Fleetwood’s letters,” to Secretary of State Ben Fortson and members of the Chamber of Commerce, hoping these correspondences would “show them that a wild man is trying to ruin a good project” (Cumming to Gregory, 11/20/1958).

After several calculated correspondences with Chairman Henson, the Chamber of Commerce approved the new policy statement and the hiring of Robert Neitzel (Henson to Cumming, 10/8/1958). This policy shift signaled the success of the Etowah Mounds project in embedding in GHC practitioners as well as local white communities and government institutions a sense of ownership over this site of Indigenous heritage. That GHC staff felt a kind of possessive pride in Etowah is further suggested by their zeal to police the management and use of this space. Defending a decision to fence the property and disallow recreational activities, Cumming wrote that “the proper administration of a site of this sort compels a control of the visitors to prevent depredation and misuse of the property” (Cumming to Henson, 10/7/1958). Additionally,

administrative records repeatedly refer to the GHC's "responsibility" for preserving and administering this important heritage site (Cumming to Henson, 10/7/1958; Cumming to DuBose, Fleetwood, Kelly, Lawrence, 8/1/1958).

In strapping the GHC with a sense of weighty responsibility for this "cultural monument," the policy change also reified the broadening scope of the Etowah

Mounds project.

After 1958,

administrative

records

positioned the

Etowah Mounds

as a state, rather

than a local

project. The

expansion of the Etowah Mounds project into a state enterprise is echoed

in the changing geographic scope of GHC press coverage. Between 1953

and 1957, the proportion of articles circulated in Georgia publications

outside the Atlanta Metropolitan Area increased from 19% to 41%.

Importantly, trends in newspaper coverage also suggest a sustained press

interest in the project within the Atlanta Metropolitan Region. That over

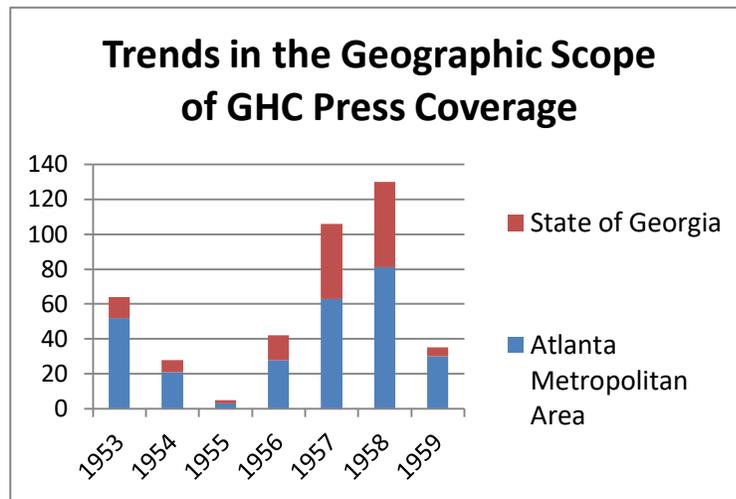


Fig. 6: Trends in the distribution of local and regional vs. state-circulated newspapers

4,000 local residents attended the dedication of the museum in 1958 further demonstrates that local communities continued to view GHC preservation work at the Etowah Mounds in relation to their own town-based identities as a Cartersville project (Cartersville Daily Tribune News, 1958).

While Fleetwood's rantings distanced his colleagues from the touristic perspective of the site as a purely local endeavor, expanding notions of the project's significance were driven by the construction of the Etowah Archaeological Museum. "With this museum," Cumming wrote, "the Mounds are no longer a Cartersville project" (Cumming to Henson, 10/22/1958). Likewise, the site's archaeological potential was invoked as a means of magnifying the project's importance for the state as a whole. The point that "excavations have already attracted international attention" is repeated within newspaper headlines and in administrative records (Gregory to Lawrence, 9/4/1958). Concurrent with the appropriation of Indigenous heritage as Georgian patrimony, the administrative records and the corpus of newspapers reiterated a message that heritage practice at Etowah (the construction of the museum and archaeological excavations) placed a spotlight not only on Cartersville, but on the entire state of Georgia.

Likewise, GHC administrators became increasingly sensitive to the international optics of their preservation regime at Etowah. "We are

launched into a big-time operation,” Cumming observed, “in which the eyes of the world will be upon Georgia to see if this outstanding cultural monument is going to be regarded as a local venture or a place of national interest” (Cumming to DuBose, Fleetwood, Kelly and Lawrence, 10/26/1958). The GHC imagined and assumed great responsibility for developing the Etowah Mounds in kind with other federally-managed heritage sites. In fact, some evidence suggests the GHC assumed a measure of competition with other the federal government in managing heritage. The Etowah Mounds project was situated as a symbol of the GHC’s importance as a civic institution. By 1958, Cumming proclaimed that “the Georgia Historical Commission is just as important in its field as any national service which preserves historic sites for the American people” (Cumming to DuBose, Fleetwood, Kelly, Lawrence, 8/1/1958). The GHC envisioned its critical role in heritage management for demonstrating Georgia’s independence from US federal aid. The Commission was tasked with dutifully administering heritage in the state, “so that it will never be said that the Federal Government handles its responsibility any better than the State of Georgia” (Cumming to Henson, 10/7/1958).

## **Discussion**

The process of turning Etowah into a heritage destination, first conceived as part of a regional economic development strategy, helped to ingrain in local white communities a sense of emplaced heritage at this Mississippian-period mound center. Participation of the predominantly white local community in the production of marketable heritage cultivated interest in the site and its history. Furthermore, this case study suggests that the practice and performance of memory in association with the development of Cartersville's heritage tourism industry precipitated a settler colonial appropriation of the Indigenous past and a refashioning of white identities in Georgia. Furthermore, the nexus of archaeology, memory, industry within heritage practice allowed white communities in Georgia to claim Etowah Mounds as evidence of their own ancestral connections to Indigenous people. Establishing Indigenous heritage as their own, Georgians then mobilized these connections to imprint their own senses of place onto the Indigenous landscape.

I suggest that the social construction of whiteness at Etowah Mounds centered on the reconstitution of the Indigenous landscape into white public space, a process that combined destructive and reconstructive elements. Designing heritage at Etowah involved making permanent, physical alterations to the landscape in the form of road paving and utilities expansions, the construction of a permanent museum facility adjacent to the mound center, archaeological excavations, and

outdoor exhibition design. These large-scale development and construction projects at Etowah signaled the state's capacity for expanded growth at the height of booming, post-War economy, and even worked to hasten urbanization and industrialization in the surrounding region. Archaeology played a key role in mediating this growth by securing the mythologized Indigenous past for sale to out-of-state tourists. Archaeology was conceived as a method by which the Indigenous past was made knowable, significant, and open for appropriation.

At the intersection of archaeology and state-funded infrastructural development, the GHC's flagship project at Etowah evolved into a symbol of Georgia's identity in the modern age. Joseph Cumming, chairman of the Commission, wanted the new facility to showcase Georgia's ability to administer historic resources within the state and to develop its own tourism industry independent of federal aid. In response, Cumming issued an administrative policy change that foregrounded the historic, archaeological, and cultural values of the site. Denigrating the commercial interests that spurred the initial project development, the new policy rebranded the Etowah Mounds as a cultural monument of national historic significance. As archaeology, museum construction, infrastructural development, and landscaping activities worked to reshape the Indigenous landscape at Etowah into white public space, the Etowah

project transformed conceptually from a principally economic enterprise into a point of state and national pride.

An important result of this revaluing of Indigenous cultural heritage was the cementation of a set of values, principles, and institutional guidelines for historic preservation within the state of Georgia (Gilmore, 1979:9). The rhetorical positioning of the site as national patrimony helped to secure a permanent role for state and federal institutions in the management of Indigenous heritage for reasons extending beyond the economic development potential of a tourism industry. Rather, in establishing the mounds as a “cultural monument,” the Commission asserted the value of the site for state and national interests as derived from its historical and archaeological significance. This rhetoric enabled white Georgians to claim Indigenous ancestral roots by defining the mounds as shared, national heritage. As Vine Deloria Jr (2003) demonstrates, constructing the Indigenous past as state or national heritage can be interpreted as a settler colonial effort to expropriate Indigenous heritage and integrate a version of Indigeneity into the structures of white identity.

Today, the Etowah Mounds State Historic Site remains in the ownership of the state, and is managed by the State Parks and Historic Sites Division of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). After the GHC dissolved in 1973, its functions were transferred to the DNR, and all

GHC resources, properties, and policies were carried over into the Historic Sites Division (Gilmore, 1979:11). State officials involved in heritage management at Etowah continue to struggle against deeply entrenched structures that work to impede recent attempts towards less colonizing practice in heritage management. The DNR remains beholden, for instance, to some state and local interest groups, as well as the demands of the tourist market (Council on American Indian Concerns, Meeting Minutes, 10/14/2009). These issues are often compounded by strained budgets, low staff and time constraints, as well as Etowah's aging infrastructure (Council on American Indian Concerns, Meeting Minutes, 4/8/2009).

Nevertheless, in recent years Indigenous people have been able to assert more control over the administration of their ancestral heritage sites. Backed by federal legislation such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, Etowah's culturally-affiliated federally-recognized tribes have campaigned for the return of their ancestors' remains and funerary objects, which had accumulated in curatorial facilities across the United States after decades of invasive archaeological excavations (DOI, Notice of Inventory Completion, 9/13/2005). The Muscogee (Creek) Nation is one of several groups with ancestral ties to Etowah that worked to challenge the hegemony of the state in an attempt to reclaim control over their ancestral people and

places (NPS, 2005). Others include the Uchee Tribe in Oklahoma, the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, the Kialegee Tribal Town, the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town in Oklahoma, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama. Recent collaborative engagements have involved tribal disputes between federally recognized tribes following the passage of NAGPRA, as competing tribes bid for the repatriation of excavated human remains and associated funerary objects from the Mounds. Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the United Keetowah Band of Cherokee Indians exert a claim to Etowah, but these groups are considered ineligible for repatriation of Etowah cultural material under the conditions of NAGPRA (NPS, 2005).

Archaeologists, curators, and state organizations involved in the management of the Etowah Mounds State Historic Site have also sought a more collaborative relationship with Etowah's Indigenous descendent communities. In part mandated by NAGPRA compliance, this shift in heritage practice grants Indigenous people more control over the process of heritage management, including the site interpretation and the exhibition of cultural material (Council on American Indian Concerns, Meeting Minutes, 11/18/2009). At Etowah Mounds, efforts at engagement have principally focused on involving the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in archaeological research and site enhancement planning (Council on American Indian Concerns, Meeting Minutes, 10/14/2009). Recent

archaeological and geophysical surveys were conducted between 2005 and 2013 by Adam King, Kent Reilly of Texas State University, and Chet Walker of Archaeo-Geophysical Associates in collaboration with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's CPO (King, 2013:20). The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has also taken an active role in supporting ongoing research and interpretive programming at Etowah Mounds by funding archaeological excavations (People of One Fire, "Etowah Mounds," 2018), and contracting their own researchers to survey extant datasets and craft new exhibits (Thornton, 2015). In 2006 for example, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation hired Richard Thornton, an Itsate-Creek architect and city planner, to conduct an architectural analysis of the Etowah Mounds and to develop a scale model of the town ca. 1375 AD. Thornton published a series of blog entries detailing the results of his research into the history of archaeological work at the site, and eventually organized a Muscogean research collective known as the People of One Fire (Thornton, 2015).

## **Conclusions**

This study builds on previous studies examining the intersections of heritage, race, and colonialism by demonstrating how perceptions of emplaced heritage emerged amongst communities and organizations involved in the development of Etowah Mounds as a tourist attraction. Highlighting the significance of intra-organizational politicking to the

outcomes of preservation work within the Georgia Historical Commission, this case study contributes a new layer of complexity to current debates regarding the contested, value-laden process of heritage production. My investigation reveals how recursive interactions between individual agents, interest groups, and social structural forces congealed to form a shifting set of heritage values at the site which ultimately authenticated the appropriation of Indigenous places through the sacralization of Indigenous historic resources. In doing so, it foregrounds the interplay of structure and agency within heritage production, and contributes new insight into the evolving relationship between New South ideologies, settler colonialism, and heritage tourism in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It calls attention to the historical continuities within American political economic systems that condition appropriation and dispossession through particular avenues of infrastructural and economic development, and emphasizes the powerful role of heritage practice for processes of identity construction, place-making, and public memory work.

The case study also alludes to regionally and historically-situated tensions between state and national identities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century American South. Some scholars have argued that while sectarian divisions between the North and South had persisted through the Reconstruction-era, the influence of the Great Depression and World War II cultivated a sense of nationalism and unity (see Deloria Jr., 1998:130).

Others contend that civic rituals and public memory works in the Southern states worked to preserve a sense of Southern identity outside the US Government (See Blair 2004). Elements of both processes emerge through this case study at Etowah Mounds, suggesting that by the 1950s, Southerners began to internalize a conception of themselves as simultaneously American and unified as well as distinctly Southern. Because slavery, race, and Confederate secession were deeply rooted in this New South identity (see Hale, 1998), sharing a layer of identification with Americans from the North posed a contradiction for ex-Confederates. To resolve the tensions in their own identities and secure their privilege for the future, white Georgians plugged into a well-established discursive and political-economic infrastructure developed in the early national period (see Haveman, 2016; Hudson 2010). Through this settler colonial nexus, local white communities appropriated a warped version of Indigenous heritage and transformed it materially and conceptually into white public space.

I argue that the transformation of the Etowah Mounds into white public space ushered in a new set of values into heritage tourism that altered the particular configuration of white supremacy within heritage management. Heritage values vested in Etowah shifted away from commercial interests in tourism, and towards the “non-material or spiritual values- values which come from the historic, aesthetic and cultural assets

of a community” (Cumming to Fleetwood, 10/27/1958). This new set of heritage values vested in the Etowah Mounds project were used to bolster the Commission’s standing within the state legislature and augment its role in the modernization project. These values, moreover, were intended to promote pride, as well as allegiance and devotion to the state of Georgia. Following Cumming’s 1958 administrative policy shift, the redefined purpose of this newly-minted heritage site was to “stir the visitor with a feeling of loyalty to and pride in his State and the accomplishments of our distinguished forebears” (Cumming to Fleetwood, 10/27/1958). The expansive press coverage of GHC preservation activities such as building the archaeological museum or archaeological investigations suggest that Georgians were prompted to take pride in the development work itself, as well as the historic and scientific value of the Mounds as an “asset.” Moreover, the Indigenous past typically figured in these narratives in relation to other aspects of development work, such as archaeology. In this way, the GHC, local publishers, and civic and corporate interest groups were more interested in preservation activities occurring in the present, than learning about how Indigenous people had lived in the past, or in the present. In this way the Etowah Mounds project, more so than the Mounds themselves, came to symbolize Georgia’s identity and its modernization efforts in the post-War period. “With the development of our historical sites,” Governor Griffin told a crowd of 4,000 at the museum

dedication, “Georgia is moving forward,” (GA Newsletter, 1958). This linear progress narrative, combined with the rhetoric of Indigenous absence proposed by archaeological interpretations of the site’s history, craft an imperial ideological mechanism by which to secure the foundations of white supremacy for the future. Within this schema, white hegemony is legitimated, Blakey (1990:41) notes, by heritage narratives that present “truly human whites [as] linked with future-progress, [and] dehumanized non-whites with past-extinction.” At the confluence of such ideas, the development of Etowah Mounds as a tourist destination and heritage site in the 1950s records a complex story of intersecting, conflicting identities, perspectives, motivations, and sociohistorical processes that shaped the contours of whiteness and settler colonialism in the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century American South.

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