

10-1-2005

The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past

Robert R. Weyeneth

University of South Carolina - Columbia, weyeneth@sc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/hist_facpub

 Part of the [History Commons](#)

Publication Info

Published in *The Public Historian*, ed. Randolph Bergstrom, Volume 27, Issue 4, Fall 2005, pages 11-44.

Weyeneth, R. R. (2005). The architecture of racial segregation: The challenges of preserving the problematic past. *The Public Historian*, 27(4), 11-44.

DOI: 10.1525/tph.2005.27.4.11

"Published as The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past, Robert R. Weyeneth, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 11-44 (Fall 2005). ISSN: 0272-3433, electronic ISSN 1533-8576. © 2005 by the Regents of the University of California/Sponsoring Society or Association. Copying and permissions notice: Authorization to copy this content beyond fair use (as specified in Sections 107 and 108 of the U. S. Copyright Law) for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by the Regents of the University of California/on behalf of the Sponsoring Society for libraries and other users, provided that they are registered with and pay the specified fee via Rightslink® on JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/r/ucal>) or directly with the Copyright Clearance Center, <http://www.copyright.com>."

*Memory and Space:
Research*

The Architecture of Racial
Segregation:
The Challenges of Preserving
the Problematical Past

ROBERT R. WEYENETH

The article examines racial segregation as a spatial system and proposes a conceptual framework for assessing its significance. It analyzes how the ideology of white supremacy influenced design form in the United States and how Jim Crow architecture appeared on the landscape. For African Americans, the settings for everyday life were not simply the confines of this imposed architecture; the article analyzes responses such as the construction of alternative spaces. The discussion concludes by considering the architecture of segregation from the perspective of historic preservation.

EVEN THOUGH SEGREGATED SCHOOLHOUSES, colored waiting rooms at bus stations, and separate water fountains in public buildings are some of the most familiar images of the Jim Crow era, little scholarly attention has been paid to how racial segregation created a distinctive architectural form. We know much about segregation as a political, legal, and social institution but relatively little about it as a spatial system. Examining what I call the “architecture of racial segregation” helps us understand how segregation shaped the

American built environment between 1880 and 1960. Looking at this story of space and race also helps us comprehend more fully the day-to-day experience of segregation, particularly from the perspective of African Americans.

This article offers some general reflections on the history of the “racing” of space in the United States following the end of Reconstruction. The first two sections analyze the *spatial strategies of white supremacy* during the Jim Crow era. The first section identifies two major ways that the races were separated architecturally—*isolation* and *partitioning*—and offers examples of the types of spaces that resulted. In so doing, it seeks to define a vocabulary for analyzing the architectural typologies of white supremacy. The discussion then turns to the *means* by which these forms were created, examining the techniques of *adaptive use* and *new construction*. The third section looks at the response to these imposed spaces. It examines how African Americans actually used these places and how blacks were able to construct *alternative spaces*. The fourth and concluding section raises the question of whether any extant examples of the architecture of racial segregation should be preserved for their association with this troubling but important period of American history. It concludes that there are distinct *challenges* to preserving the material culture of segregation.

The following discussion offers some preliminary observations drawn from a larger project currently underway. As such, certain provisos are in order. The architecture of segregation is a national story, and I have tried to cast my net widely to include illustrative examples from throughout the South and elsewhere in the country as appropriate. Much of the present research draws deeply on the South Carolina experience because of its richness and accessibility, and therein lies the first proviso. This is not a case study of South Carolina as much as it is a report from the field (or my desk): it is a snapshot in time of a national study in progress. The emphasis on architectural typologies in the limited space of an article has necessarily compressed my ability to discuss change over time, and this is the second proviso. In identifying the two ways in which the architecture of segregation appeared, adaptive use and new construction, I have delineated the broad contours of change but also invited a host of related questions about historical specificity and causation. We might ask, for example, when and why did certain architectural forms appear? Which forms were employed first and which developed later? Were they responses to new demands from an emerging black middle class? Did they result from white perceptions of mounting black threats? It is important to ask these kinds of social history questions about architecture, but this morphological history is beyond the compass of the present article. Finally, we need only consider one intriguing example of the spatial separation of the races—the so-called Negro pew of antebellum New England churches—to set forth a third proviso. The architecture of the Jim Crow era has its own antecedent history in the racialized spaces of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that are themselves rooted in a long history of discrimination, inequality, and slavery. Separation of the races was an institution that existed before the Civil War and one that was present at some

point in the North and West, as well as the South.¹ This context and the regional variations deserve, and find, extended treatment in the larger project. With these provisos in mind about antecedents, engines of change, and scope, let us turn to a precis of the research at this stage.

The Spatial Strategies of White Supremacy: Forms

The architecture of racial segregation represented an effort to design places that shaped the behavior of individuals and, thereby, managed contact between whites and blacks in general. African Americans were the group targeted by these architectural initiatives and on whom segregationist architecture was imposed, but whites were also expected to follow the rules in their use of these spaces. Racial segregation was established architecturally in two major ways: through architectural isolation and through architectural partitioning. Architectural isolation represented the enterprise of constructing and maintaining places that kept whites and blacks apart, isolated from one another. Architectural partitioning represented the effort to segregate within facilities that were shared by the races. Throughout the Jim Crow era, both isolation and partitioning remained standard architectural strategies for incorporating racial segregation into community and institutional life.

Architectural Isolation and its Forms

The core idea of architectural isolation was that racial contact should be minimized (the ideal was to avoid contact altogether but this was impractical) by requiring blacks and whites to inhabit completely separate spheres in the conduct of their daily lives. Exclusion, duplication, and temporal separation were the spatial strategies typically employed to isolate the races from each other.

Exclusion. Exclusion may be the architectural form best remembered today. Millions of people who never experienced segregation have seen the photographs of schools, libraries, and other facilities available only to whites and of the businesses whose signs declared “Whites Only” or “No Negro or Ape Allowed in Building.”² What might be called “white space” could be created either by the mandate of law or by the unwritten rules of social custom, but the intent was the same: African Americans were to be excluded from specific places by prohibiting their entry and use. Exclusion could characterize a va-

1. Although this study focuses on the experience of African Americans, spatial segregation was also a part of Native American and Asian American lives.

2. The latter sign was photographed in Calhoun County, South Carolina in 1959 by Cecil J. Williams. See his *Freedom & Justice: Four Decades of the Civil Rights Struggle as Seen by a Black Photographer of the Deep South* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995), 27.

riety of spaces, from public facilities like schools and parks to private establishments such as restaurants or gas stations. Sometimes signs were used to designate spaces for the exclusive use of whites, but much of the time signage was unnecessary because white space was commonly recognized and acknowledged by both races. The white university and the white library had no need to post a sign. No black man traveling to a southern city would seek to stay in its major hotels. In a small town everyone knew that the white doctor did not welcome black patients into his office.

Law rather than custom or signage made schools one of the first places where exclusion was instituted by state governments. The legislature in South Carolina, for example, passed a statute in 1896 that declared it “unlawful for pupils of one race to attend the schools provided by the boards of trustees for persons of another race.”³ The statute codified what South Carolina’s new segregationist constitution required. While the Reconstruction-era constitution (1868) had provided that “All the public schools, colleges and universities of this State, supported in whole or in part by the public funds, shall be free and open to all the children and youths of the State, without regard to race or color,” the post-Reconstruction constitution (1895) mandated segregated schools: “Separate schools shall be provided for children of the white and colored races, and no child of either race shall ever be permitted to attend a school provided for children of the other race.” The practical effect, of course, was to provide public support only for a white school system.

Because few cities set aside parks for blacks, municipal recreation grounds were almost always “white people’s parks.” One man who grew up in Birmingham, Alabama recalled a park that “was about a block from where I was born and raised and where I lived, and it was known as the white people’s park. They had a tennis court there and nice park trees, and blacks wasn’t allowed in that park. I mean we just couldn’t go there.” One long-time resident of Columbia, South Carolina remembered that she and other African Americans would stand outside Valley Park (now Martin Luther King Park) and watch white children play, recalling how difficult it was for parents to explain to their children why they could not play there. Blacks were not to enter these spaces, not even to traverse them to get to the other side.⁴

One way to assess the appeal of exclusion as an architectural form is to look at how it permeated the world of Jim Crow. On the eve of the modern civil rights movement in the early 1950s, activist and attorney Pauli Murray spent two years compiling an encyclopedic list of what she called “states’ laws on race

3. *Code of Laws of South Carolina 1962: Annotated* (Charlottesville, Va.: The Michie Company, 1962), §21–751. The *Code of Laws* is useful to researchers because the annotations trace statutory history and indicate the year in which a version of the current statute was first legislated.

4. Charles Gratton quoted in William H. Chafe, et al. (eds.), *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South* (New York: The New Press, 2001), 7; *An Oral History Interview with Thomasina Briggs and her Sister Elnora Robinson, 24 May 2001*, videotape (Columbia: Richland County Public Library Film and Sound Department, 2001); Mamie Garvin Fields, *Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir* (New York: The Free Press, 1983), 57–58.

and color.” The compendium focused on *de jure* rather than *de facto* segregation (she wanted to understand law, not social custom, in order to challenge the legal basis of segregation) and on state law rather than local ordinance, but it nevertheless offers a useful snapshot in time.⁵ Among public spaces, schools were most commonly set aside as white space. Twenty-one states (not all of them in the South) and the District of Columbia had laws that either required or permitted segregated schools for black and white students. In many states, separation of the races was also mandated for reform schools, agricultural and trade schools, teacher training schools, colleges, and facilities for the “deaf, dumb, and blind.” Exclusion characterized other realms of life as well. While local ordinance was commonly the means for segregating public libraries, three states chose to mandate it state-wide. Hospitals, mental hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages, prisons, and cemeteries were all the subject of segregation requirements at the state level, as were public parks, playgrounds, and bathing beaches. Occasionally state government sought to carve out exclusionary space in the private sector. By the 1950s four states required segregation of white and black students in private schools. Oklahoma mandated separate telephone booths for the races, and Texas insisted that the venues for boxing and wrestling matches be for the exclusive use of a single race. Using its authority to license operators of billiard and pool halls, South Carolina prohibited “any person of the white Caucasian race to operate a billiard room to be used by, frequented or patronized by, persons of the negro race” or any African American to operate a pool hall patronized by whites. Georgia had a similar prohibition. State law sometimes required exclusion at places of amusement, as the Texas, South Carolina, and Georgia examples suggest, but more often states mandated partitioning, rather than isolation through exclusion, in commercial establishments and public transportation.⁶

Duplication. To maintain exclusive white space, it was sometimes necessary for government to make provision for black space. In this sense, exclusion could force *duplication*: the establishment of separate self-standing facilities for African Americans that replicated existing white facilities. Separate schools, the colored wing of a hospital, the Negro Area of a state park, and separate public housing were all examples of duplicate black space provided, albeit grudgingly, by state and local government. As public policy, duplication represented a feeble nod in the direction of providing “separate but equal” facilities that were emphatically separate and never equal.⁷

The idea of duplication guided the architects who planned the expansion

5. Pauli Murray, compiler and editor, *States' Laws on Race and Color* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997). It was first published in 1951, with a supplement in 1955. For her description of how this compilation was assembled, see Pauli Murray, *The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest, and Poet* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 283–89.

6. Murray, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, 14–18, 89–90, 372, 408, 443.

7. Institutions such as schools, libraries, and hospitals that served the black community were commonly established through the initiative of African Americans and occasionally white phi-

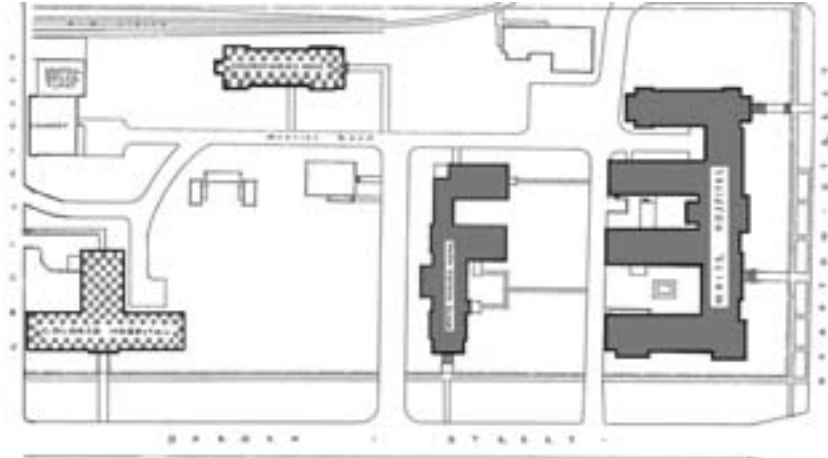


Figure 1. Plan for Columbia Hospital of Richland County, South Carolina, c. 1940–43. The colored hospital and colored nurses home were placed near the central boiler plant and laundry at the southern end of the two-block parcel. Records of Lafaye Associates, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

and remodeling of the Columbia Hospital of Richland County in South Carolina in the early 1940s, to accommodate more patients and staff of both races (see fig. 1). Three wings were to be added to the white hospital and a wing to the white nurses home. To provide for African Americans, architects designed several new structures completely separate from their white counterparts: a colored hospital and a colored nurses home. Although the collection of buildings on Harden Street shared a parcel of land, white and black space was functionally separate. The two hospital buildings sat two city blocks apart, the white on Hampton Street and the colored on Lady Street, with the two nurses homes in between separated from each other by service roads.⁸

Although state parks in South Carolina existed primarily to serve whites, duplication replaced exclusion after 1940. The state devised three general forms for duplicative parks. One form involved the creation of a *Negro Area* within a single state park. At Greenwood State Park in the piedmont, the Negro Area was equipped with picnic shelters, a barbecue pit, and a baseball diamond. It was separated by a county road from the much larger and more lavishly furnished White Area, which fronted a 12,000-acre lake and offered opportunities for boating, swimming, and fishing. Opened in 1940, Green-

lanthropy. Within the private sector duplication represented an expression of black entrepreneurial energy, as in the development of black business districts in response to Jim Crow. These institutional and private ventures are analyzed as “alternative spaces” in the third section.

8. Job A-558, c. 1940–43, Records of Lafaye Associates, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

wood was the first state recreation area for blacks in South Carolina. A second solution for providing duplicative recreational space was the *satellite park*. Here a park for blacks was administered by a white park that was located at some distance from the black park. Thus, Mill Creek State Park for Negroes (1941) was a satellite of Poinsett State Park in Sumter County, and Campbell's Pond State Park for Negroes (1947) was a satellite of Cheraw State Park. The third and least common form, at least in South Carolina, was the *separate self-standing park* exclusively for African Americans. Pleasant Ridge State Park for Negroes, located in the hills of Greenville County, was established in 1955 and was the only self-contained black park in the system.⁹

Duplication was characteristic of public housing projects as well. When federal money from the Public Works Administration and subsequently the United States Housing Authority funded three public housing projects in Columbia, South Carolina in the 1930s, racially separate buildings were necessary. University Terrace housed a biracial but completely segregated population of five hundred residents. Apartments for about fifty white families were located near the top of a sloping site facing the segregated campus of the University of South Carolina; some seventy-five black families occupied rowhouses down the hill fronting the African-American high school. The two complexes were two hundred yards apart, and black and white children were expected to play only in their own area. The first tenants moved into University Terrace in 1937 while two other public housing projects were underway: Gonzales Gardens and Allen-Benedict Court, constructed between 1938 and 1940. Here duplication took a slightly different form. Rather than sharing the same site, as at University Terrace, these two projects occupied two different sites several blocks apart, Gonzales Gardens for whites and Allen-Benedict Court for blacks. The layout and amenities were similar, although the plan for Gonzales Gardens incorporated a branch of the public library.¹⁰

Provision of duplicate facilities cost money, and sometimes the expense of duplication reached almost comic proportions. One small community in South Carolina had a black school and teacher for the twenty-eight African-American pupils on the island—and a white school and teacher for the *one* white pupil. On at least one streetcar line in Columbia—the beltline that ringed the city—cars ran in both directions in order to segregate. Streetcars moving clockwise carried only blacks; whites rode in cars moving counterclockwise. At one point the United States Navy considered the possibility of duplicate all-black ships, under the command of white officers, but the idea

9. Greenwood State Park General Development Plan, 5 September 1940, in the historical files, Resource Management Office, South Carolina State Park Service, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Columbia; Stephen Lewis Cox, *The History of Negro State Parks in South Carolina: 1940–1963* (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1992), 18–61.

10. Melissa Faye Hess, “Where People Learn to Live Better”: The Prescriptive Nature of Early Federal Public Housing (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2002), 1–39.

was deemed too expensive. In general, the price of duplication was prohibitive, meaning that only white space was provided.¹¹

Temporal separation. Both exclusion and duplication are fairly familiar examples of how the concept of architectural isolation influenced the design of Jim Crow space. Less familiar is how space was segregated through *temporal separation*: time was employed to segregate. Who used a space was determined by day of the week, time of the year, or time of day.

In the rural South, Saturday was often considered “black people’s day,” when African Americans were welcome to come into town. “Saturday was the day all the black people were supposed to go and shop,” one South Carolinian recalled. “Those white folks didn’t want you to come to town in the week-day at all. They wanted you to come on Saturday.” In cities public facilities might be open to African Americans one day per week. The Overton Park Zoo in Memphis was open on Tuesdays for blacks. On those days, a sign outside the zoo announced “No White People Allowed in Zoo Today” by order of the Memphis Park Commission. When the Fourth of July fell on a Tuesday and it was important for whites to have access then, blacks were allowed entrance on Thursday. Sometimes white space became black space once a year. For a while after the end of the Civil War, whites in Charleston, South Carolina viewed the Fourth of July as a Yankee holiday and, as a consequence, avoided making holiday excursions to the Battery, a city park at the tip of the peninsula. Blacks seized the time and flooded into this white people’s park for a day of picnicking, children’s games, and socializing.¹²

At other times, temporal separation was a concept incorporated as a routine part of daily life. In a movie theater with a single exit, blacks sitting in the balcony were expected to wait as whites seated on the main floor were allowed to exit first. White doctors who were willing to take on African-American patients might set aside separate office hours so white patients could avoid blacks. Commonly, United States Army posts had duplicate facilities for the races, but when some training areas, like the firing range, were shared, segregation became an issue of scheduling white and black use at different times. In so-called “sundown towns,” African Americans were not allowed to be within the city limits after sunset. They could work or shop there during the day, but a sign might advise them: “Nigger, Don’t Let the Sun Set on You in Orange City.” South Carolina used the strategy of temporal separation to manage racial contact in the state’s cotton textile mills. Blacks and whites were prohibited from simultaneous use of the same entrance and exit doors, stairways, windows,

11. Septima Poinsette Clark, *Echo in My Soul* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1962), 40; [Columbia] *The State*, 25 April 1904; Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 83–84.

12. *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South*, compact disk (Minnesota Public Radio, 2001); Fields, *Lemon Swamp*, 52–57, 71–73; Mark P. Leone and Neil Asher Silberman, *Invisible America: Unearthing Our Hidden History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 251. Note that the compact disk is a companion to the book of the same name.

and pay stations. All these spaces were temporally segregated by a statute passed in 1915.¹³

Architectural Partitioning and its Forms

While architectural isolation was a strategy designed to keep whites and blacks completely apart from one another through exclusion, duplication, and temporal separation, architectural partitioning represented the effort to segregate within facilities that were shared by the races. A degree of racial mixing was to be expected and tolerated, but contact was to be carefully managed through the compartmentalization of settings. Both fixed and malleable partitions, as well as behavioral separation, were strategies used to subdivide shared space and separate by race.

Fixed partitions. Fixed partitions offered one solution by delineating a clear boundary between black and white space. Separate entrances leading to separate interior spaces was one of the most commonly used forms of fixed partitioning. The railroad station in Lenoir, North Carolina is illustrative (see fig. 2). North Carolina had mandated separate waiting rooms at train stations in 1899, and architects designed the building in 1912 to meet the requirements of state law. Passengers arriving at the station entered separate white and colored waiting rooms through separate entrances whose doorways were only a few feet apart. Each waiting room had its own ticket window, served by a single agent's office. By custom, the agent served blacks only after all whites had been issued tickets. The white waiting room was half again as large as its colored counterpart, and it offered the luxury of a "ladies resting room" in addition to toilet facilities. Passengers exited through separate doors onto the boarding platform, from which they boarded separate railroad cars (since 1899 North Carolina had also required separate coaches on trains).¹⁴

In movie theaters, the racial boundary line was often a distinctive architectural feature—the balcony—where African Americans were seated. Offering the least desirable seating because it was furthest from the screen, the balcony was referred to using various terms of derision, such as the buzzard's roost, crow's nest, and peanut gallery. The Royal Theater on Main Street in

13. *Remembering Jim Crow*, compact disk; Fields, *Lemon Swamp*, 172; Steven D. Smith, *A Historic Context Statement for a World War II Era Black Officers' Club at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri* (Prepared for U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories Cultural Resources Research Center, November 1998), 57; Stetson Kennedy, *Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was* (Boca Raton: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1990), 227 [first published in 1959]; Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 239–40; *Code of Laws of South Carolina 1962*, §40–452. On sundown towns generally, see James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

14. Job A-121, July 1912, Records of Lafaye Associates; Murray, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, 344.

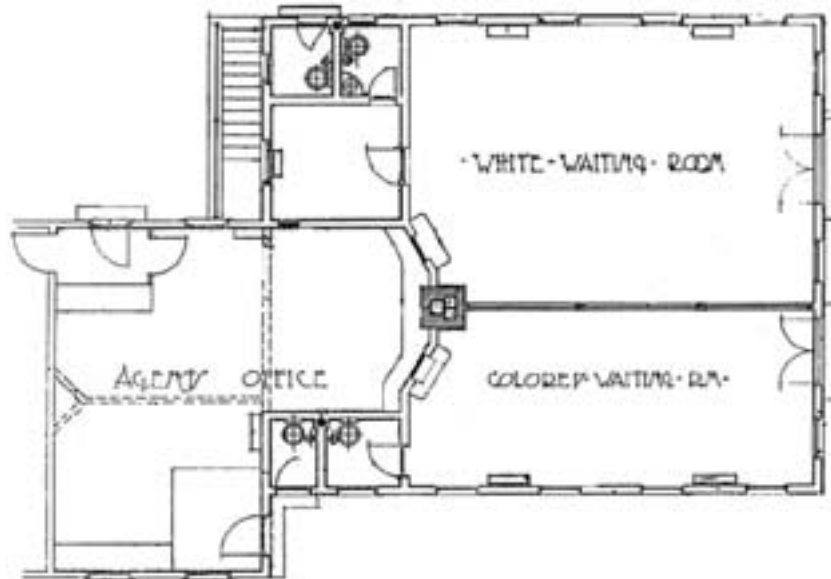


Figure 2. Plan for Railway Station, Lenoir, North Carolina, 1912. The smaller rooms were labeled, clockwise from top left: white men, ladies, ladies resting room, colored women, colored men. Records of Lafaye Associates, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

the small Georgia town of Hogansville was characteristic in its layout. It was built in 1937 in the Art Deco style by the Tucker and Howell architectural firm of Atlanta, which incorporated into the design a side entrance marked “colored,” a balcony, and balcony restrooms for African-American patrons. The Sunrise Theatre in Fort Pierce, Florida was designed in a blend of the Mission and Mediterranean Revival styles by Miami architect John N. Sherwood in 1922 as part of a larger commercial block. African Americans who wished to attend shows at the theater reached the balcony via a set of metal fire stairs, where they found a small closet-like room which served as a combination ticket booth and concession stand, as well as a set of cramped rest rooms. Somewhat more unusual was a divided balcony, shared by the races, as in the Holly Theatre in Dahlonega, Georgia. The Holly movie house was designed in 1948 by architect G. R. Vinson in a simplified Art Moderne style. The colored entrance was on the front of the building, to the left of the main entrance. Just inside the door, African Americans purchased tickets at a separate window and then climbed the wooden stairs to the balcony, which was partitioned by a wall into black and white seating areas. Whites climbed to their side of the balcony by stairs from the main lobby.¹⁵

The outdoor movie theaters of the automobile age occasionally incorporated

15. Fields, *Lemon Swamp*, xiii, 32; Murray, *Autobiography*, 32; “Royal Theater, Hogansville, Troup County, Georgia,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 15 April 2001;

fixed partitioning into their layouts. The general pattern was exclusion—there were white drive-in theaters and a few black drive-ins—but a handful of outdoor theaters admitted both races. The Bellwood drive-in near Richmond, Virginia was constructed to welcome (but partition) the races. When it opened in 1948, the Bellwood had segregated motor entrances leading into two separate parking areas defined by a wall in between. African Americans entered the drive-in from the back, along its northern side, and parked in the walled-off northeastern corner of the theater lot. Separate concession stands and restrooms were provided in the vicinity.¹⁶

Less architecturally complex than separate doorways and walled-off parking areas was the use of simple materials to demarcate spatial division. Despite its slightness, a length of rope could function as an effective physical barrier and fixed partition. A line of rope was used to separate blacks and whites wishing to conduct business in one Virginia courthouse. Ocean swimming was partitioned at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina by a rope anchored offshore. One African American recalled that in North Carolina liquor stores, rope was also used to separate blacks and whites. No conversation was permitted across that barrier unless a white man initiated it. And when the University of Oklahoma was forced to integrate its law school, it chose to do so on a segregated basis: portions of the library and classrooms were roped off for the black student.¹⁷

In outdoor venues or public buildings, partitions could be fixed—but impermanent. Many people today are surprised to learn that the Lincoln Memorial, the modern symbol of the struggle for equality in the United States, was dedicated before a segregated audience. At the dedication on Memorial Day 1922, President Warren G. Harding addressed a crowd of 35,000 people assembled on the mall in front of the new memorial. African Americans within this crowd, both prominent figures and ordinary citizens, had been gathered into a “colored section.” The section melted away as the crowd dispersed. On the rare occasions when blacks were invited to attend a public talk at a segregated institution (such as the University of South Carolina before it was integrated in 1963), a portion of the seats in the lecture hall would be temporarily designated “for colored.” While improvised and impermanent, these kinds of partitions delineated racial space as clearly as the permanent architectural barriers in railroad stations and movie theaters.¹⁸

“Sunrise Theatre, Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, September 2001; “Holly Theatre, Dahlonega, Lumpkin County, Georgia,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 26 October 2001.

16. Shannon Eileen Bell, *From Ticket Booth to Screen Tower: An Architectural Study of Drive-in Theaters in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-Richmond Corridor* (M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1999), 20, 33–34, 38–39, 131, 178.

17. Ivor Noël Hume, *In Search of This & That: Tales from an Archaeologist's Quest* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1996), 35–36; Theodore K. Sims, quoted in [Columbia] *The State*, 17 December 2003; A. J. Turner, quoted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 February 1998; Jim Gabbert, Oklahoma Historical Society, letter to author, 24 February 2003.

18. Christopher A. Thomas, *The Lincoln Memorial & American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 152–58; Clark, *Echo in My Soul*, 77.

In some places, fixed partitions were not physically or visually demarcated. Instead, racial space might be defined within a community by seemingly immaterial boundaries invisible to outsiders. In Chicago, swimming beaches on Lake Michigan were segregated. The beach at 29th Street was for exclusive white use, and the black beach was located at 25th and 26th streets. The racial dividing line extended into the offshore waters, as became clear one hot summer day in July 1919. When a group of five black youths playing on a homemade raft started drifting in the direction of the white beach, they were greeted by a rock-throwing white man standing on a breakwater. One of the youths, Eugene Williams, was hit by a stone and drowned. A bloody race riot ensued, and over five days of violence almost forty people died and five hundred were injured. The riot did not result from the act of crossing a racial partition—race relations in Chicago had long resembled a powder keg, and the death of Eugene Williams was simply the proximate cause—but the incident suggests the importance and impermeability of fixed but invisible boundaries.¹⁹

Malleable partitions. Partitions could be *malleable* as well as fixed. In this sense, the boundary separating the races was real—it was known, acknowledged, and essential—but it was also fluid and fluctuating. Streetcars provide a good illustration of how malleability worked. State law segregated streetcars in South Carolina after 1919, for example, and statutes also mandated the process by which seats were assigned in the vehicle. Whites boarding a streetcar were to sit in the front and fill towards the rear, and blacks would fill from the back forward. (By law only the last two rear seats were reserved for blacks.) Generally an empty space without seated passengers separated the two groups, and the size of the space would fluctuate as passengers got off and on. As one long-time Charleston resident recalled, “A segregated streetcar didn’t have a definite middle; the middle moved, but most of the time it was an empty space.” This was a straight-forward arrangement when a streetcar was not crowded. The tricky part of segregating a small enclosed space came as the capacity of the vehicle filled and the empty middle ground disappeared. The conductor, who was always white, was key. The state deputized conductors with “the police powers of a peace officer” and they had the authority to move passengers. Thus, blacks would be told to surrender a seat and move to a vacant seat further toward the rear to accommodate white passengers, and whites could similarly be instructed to move to vacant seats nearer the front. Passengers were permitted to stand in the aisles at the discretion of the conductor, as long as the races were “kept in the portion of the car assigned to each, so that white and colored passengers shall be kept separate as far as practicable.” Conductors could also em-

19. For a general discussion of the riot, see William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

ploy movable signs to indicate the current location of the migrating racial divide on the streetcar.²⁰

At times the partitions of public transportation could materialize spontaneously, although seldom unexpectedly. Barriers might be completely absent until a public carrier entered Jim Crow space, when the partition would descend swiftly and abruptly. In Washington, D.C., for instance, the daily commute presented African Americans a special set of challenges. The District of Columbia did not segregate streetcars and busses (even though it systematically denied blacks access to restaurants, hotels, and theaters), but neighboring Virginia did. African Americans who commuted between jobs in the district and homes in northern Virginia could board a city bus and sit anywhere, but as they crossed the midpoint of the Potomac River and entered Virginia, state law required them to move to the rear. The topographical visibility of the political boundary partitioned the interior space of outbound busses as clearly as a physical barrier suddenly constructed.²¹

Public transportation offers a particularly dramatic example of how the concept of malleability worked, but it was characteristic of other spheres of life as well. Seating in auditoriums and theaters was often designated to reflect the anticipated demographics of an audience. Thus, in Columbia's Township Auditorium, African Americans were generally seated in the second floor balcony in the colored section. However, when a show featured a well-known black orchestra, blacks were admitted to the main floor, while whites paid to watch the dancing from the balcony. There was a similar flexibility in seating arrangements at other venues when a large African-American audience was expected. When a noted black tenor came to the Columbia Theater in 1931, rather than consigning black patrons to the balcony, as was customary, half the seats were set aside for African Americans.²² The malleable partition may have been migratory, but it was as real as its stationary cousin, the fixed partition.

Behavioral separation. Both fixed and malleable partitioning were commonly used to segregate the races in shared spaces; a third form of partitioning might be called *behavioral separation*. Here the strategy was to delineate appropriate from inappropriate activities when a place was theoretically open to both races. More often than not, custom rather than law defined the racial dimensions of these spaces. The idea of behavioral separation meant that whites enjoyed access to a full range of activities in a shared space, while black behavior was significantly constrained.

Shopping in department stores was an especially complicated activity for African Americans in a segregated world. At first glance, shopping appeared

20. *Code of Laws of South Carolina 1962*, §58–1331 to §58–1340; Fields, *Lemon Swamp*, 64–65.

21. Murray, *Autobiography*, 200, 233.

22. Martha Monteith, interview with author, 19 November 2003; John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740–1990* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 384.

to be a largely integrated activity. Blacks and whites populated the sidewalks of central business districts and often patronized the same stores. Behavioral separation, though, was the reality. White customers were served first, even if a black shopper had been waiting longer. Black shoppers were almost always welcome to spend money, but they were not tolerated in the lunch rooms of department stores, nor were they usually allowed to try on clothes in white-owned stores. One African American recalled picking up a hat in a haberdashery in Raleigh, North Carolina and hearing the clerk call out to him, “You put it on and it’s yours.” The interior design of department stores during Jim Crow reflected this behavioral separation, accommodating a full range of white activities but making no provision for colored lunch counters or fitting rooms. One can see precisely this plan in the 1939 design for the locally owned Tapp’s Department Store in downtown Columbia, which provided no fitting rooms, no lunch counter, and no toilets for its black customers. Although the Tapp’s layout may have been the norm, one can occasionally find exceptions. Not too far from Tapp’s on Columbia’s Main Street were Dean’s, a women’s clothing store, and Dexter’s, a men’s clothing store. Each provided separate fitting rooms for whites and blacks.²³

In general, restaurants were a form of isolated space: blacks and whites did not eat together in restaurants when they were owned by whites. Perhaps the most well-known reminder of this arrangement are the early sit-in protests which chose to target the lunch counters of national chains such as Woolworth’s, Kress, and other five-and-dimes where African Americans could not eat alongside whites even though they were welcome to spend their dollars. Not wanting to turn their backs entirely on black food sales, though, many white restaurants would provide take-away service. Curiously, the rules on eating could vary. Airplane travel came of age toward the end of the Jim Crow era, and one African-American traveler recalled that terminals were usually segregated, but planes were not. On one trip between South Carolina and Louisiana she changed planes in Atlanta and although the terminal was segregated, she was able to eat at the airport restaurant. On her return trip, the same restaurant refused her service.²⁴

Partitioning through behavioral separation could be found beyond stores and restaurants. Both blacks and whites could stroll around one city park in Charleston, at Colonial Lake, but the benches there were reserved for whites.

23. A. J. Turner, quoted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, 25 February 1998; Job A-532, April 1939, and Job A-441, 1934, Records of Lafaye Associates. Although they seem to be different commissions, the plans for Dean’s, Inc. are unnumbered and mixed with plans for Dexter Speciality Co. in the South Caroliniana collection. For an extended discussion of the nuances of shopping and more generally the consumer culture of the Jim Crow era, see Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), especially 121–97.

24. Monteith interview. On airplane travel, see also Murray, *States’ Laws on Race and Color*, 481; Kennedy, *Jim Crow Guide*, 179.

Even a black nurse pushing a carriage with her white employer's baby was not allowed to sit, and local police enforced the rule. One long-time resident of Columbia could not recall ever setting foot inside the South Carolina State House during the Jim Crow era. She assumed that African Americans were not permitted inside the seat of white power. She knew, though, that the landscaped grounds surrounding the capitol were similarly off-limits—except for the lawns on the west side along Assembly Street, which by custom were the colored grounds.²⁵

Because the rules of behavioral separation differed from city to city and state to state (and were sometimes applied inconsistently), travel took on a special challenge. Journeying beyond the familiar terrain of one's hometown, African Americans had to learn quickly how to navigate and survive in the new terrain. Where to get a meal, or just a drink of water? Where to find a toilet? What stores to patronize? One learned the lay of the land through friendly advice, tense encounters with whites, and simply watching to see what other African Americans were doing. Were they sitting on that bench or was the park off-limits? Were they making calls from that phone booth, or was it for whites only?²⁶

The discussion in this first section has examined the kinds of places that were created during the Jim Crow era to manage racial contact. It has sought to identify some of the distinctive architectural *forms* that emerged to separate the races through the spatial strategies of isolation and partitioning. The next section moves from this discussion of typology to an analysis of the *means*: how the architecture of racial segregation came to be constructed.

The Spatial Strategies of White Supremacy: Means

In the decades following Reconstruction, public officials, architectural firms, local businesses, national corporations, and others grappled with the logistics of creating spaces and places that conformed to the requirements of evolving legal mandates and social customs. Tennessee passed some of the first segregationist laws regulating passenger seating on trains in 1881. The drumbeat of disenfranchisement reached a peak between 1889 and 1908, effectively dissolving African-American political power at the polls. In general, raced space was invented in two ways. Existing spaces were adapted to reflect the emerging requirements of law and custom. Even more ambitious was the design of buildings that incorporated the new racial ideology into their conception and construction.

25. Fields, *Lemon Swamp*, 9–10; Monteith interview.

26. John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* (New York: New American Library, 2003) is filled with this kind of detail about travel in the Jim Crow South in the late 1950s. The book was first published in 1960.

Adaptive Use

One comfortable assumption for whites was that blacks would never use certain kinds of places. The distinguished historian John Hope Franklin encountered this presumption as a young scholar in 1939:

I well recall my first visit to the State Department of Archives and History in North Carolina, which was presided over by a man with a Ph.D. in history from Yale. My arrival created a panic and an emergency among the administrators that was, itself, an incident of historic proportions. The archivist frankly informed me that I was the first Negro who had sought to use the facilities there; and as the architect who designed the building had not anticipated such a situation, my use of the manuscripts and other materials would have to be postponed for a few days, during which time one of the exhibition rooms would be converted to a reading room for me.²⁷

This encounter between the researcher and the archivist—and particularly its outcome—suggest that the architecture of Jim Crow appeared on the American scene much like a weed, springing up as conditions inspired its growth. John Hope Franklin’s experience in Raleigh in the 1930s also emphasizes the point that *adaptive use* was the most common strategy for modifying existing structures to the new racial reality. Buildings could be remodeled to separate the races, some more readily than others. In the simplest of adaptations, a rear door would become the colored entrance to a building. Separate waiting rooms could be set aside within a courthouse by designating the lobby for whites and a back corner for blacks. The utility elevator in an office building could be designated “Negroes and freight.” Where blacks were not to have access to interior space, as in the case of a restaurant or a bar, the rear door became a point of access (to order food or beverages) but not an entrance. Of course one solution for adapting an existing building was to deny access altogether to African Americans and provide no alternate accommodation. Thus, blacks would simply be barred from the local public library, turning it into a whites-only building.²⁸

Sometimes adaptive use could involve the seemingly spontaneous invention of duplicate space. Such a strategy offered a workable solution to immediate problems of racial separation, especially as the civil rights movement began to transform the racial landscape in the postwar decades. For instance, seven black applicants showed up at the Naval ROTC building to take the law school admissions test at the University of South Carolina in

27. John Hope Franklin, “The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar,” in *Soon, One Morning: New Writing by American Negroes, 1940–1962*, ed. Herbert Hill (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 72. See also John Hope Franklin, *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938–1988* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 288. The recent autobiography is *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

28. David Matthews, quoted in Chafe, *Remembering Jim Crow*, 110; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 236; Ray Sprigle, *In the Land of Jim Crow* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), 8.

the early 1960s. Unlike in an earlier era, they were permitted to do so, but not before being singled out from the group of prospective white students. Each African American was told individually that it was “too crowded” in the campus structure and all seven, and only the seven, were escorted to a building several blocks away on Main Street where they wrote the examination in isolation.²⁹

Despite what one might expect given the nature of executive authority within the national government, the federal government was segregated in a rather unsystematic way. This seat-of-the-pants approach was reflected in how and when buildings were modified to separate the races. College history texts tell us that the federal government was first segregated during the administration of southerner Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921), implying that the process occurred all at once with universal impact, in response to a presidential directive. In fact, some of the first steps toward segregating federal buildings occurred prior to Wilson’s inauguration, and some federal departments proved more keen to segregate than others. As early as 1904 a “Jim Crow corner” was established at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (within the Treasury Department), and shortly thereafter separate lunchrooms, washrooms, and lockers were designated in buildings that housed the offices of the Department of the Treasury and the Department of the Interior. While some departments of the executive branch showed reluctance to segregate, Treasury and the Post Office embraced racial separation avidly. At Treasury, official segregation flowed from an order issued in July 1913 by Assistant Secretary John Skelton Williams mandating separate toilet facilities for the races in that department.³⁰

Segregation had arrived a few months earlier at the Post Office—and can actually be traced to a specific day at the department’s Washington, D.C. headquarters. A total of seven African Americans worked in the building in 1913. When they came to work on 31 May 1913 they discovered a new arrangement: three who worked for the Bureau of Supplies had been transferred to the Dead Letter Office, where three other blacks already worked. In the Dead Letter Office itself, a ten-foot-high row of lockers was erected to divide the room. The six African Americans worked on one side of the improvised partition, the white employees on the other. (Four months later, these six were transferred, along with a number of whites, out of headquarters altogether.) The seventh black employee worked in the office of the chief inspector and was presumably more indispensable to postal operations than the other six. He kept his position at headquarters, and his desk was not moved. Instead, screens were placed around it so that so his white co-work-

29. I. S. Leevy Johnson, remarks on the occasion of “The 40th Anniversary of the Desegregation of the University of South Carolina,” Columbia, 11 September 2003.

30. Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation’s Capital* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 165–66; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 368–71.

ers did not have to look at him.³¹ In these ways, heretofore integrated space was adapted to segregated space.

New Construction

If adaptive use of buildings was weed-like in its spread, much of the *new construction* of the Jim Crow era can be likened to a carefully crafted garden design. Numerous structures built in the first half of the twentieth century were conceptualized and erected as a self-conscious architecture of segregation. Operating within the assumptions of contemporary racial ideologies, and often bound by the requirements of segregationist state laws and municipal ordinances, architects designed these buildings to separate the races through both isolation and partitioning.

From the standpoint of architectural isolation, much of this new construction was for whites only. New schools, libraries, hospitals, and parks clearly reflected the policy of exclusion: these were white spaces. The new building designed in 1950 for the Richland County Public Library at Washington and Sumter streets in Columbia made no provision for a separate colored entrance, reading room, or restrooms because no blacks were allowed to set foot in the library.³² African Americans were seldom the recipients of significant public construction efforts, although occasionally there were feeble efforts at (separate and unequal) duplicate facilities. In general, though, two parallel architectural universes began to develop in the United States, buildings only for whites and buildings for blacks.

From the standpoint of architectural partitioning, in facilities shared by the races, the Jim Crow era inspired an intriguing and distinctive array of buildings characterized by the incorporation of physical barriers to mixing, as in South Carolina's Greenville County Courthouse. Completed in 1918 and designed by architects Phillip Thornton Marye of Atlanta and H. Olin Jones of Greenville, the Beaux Arts style courthouse was constructed to partition the races during the conduct of public business. Architects provided a side entrance only for African Americans, which led to a separate stairway and to the balcony of the courtroom. In some southern courthouses, black attorneys were expected to present their cases from the gallery.³³

A telling example of new construction that embraced architectural partitioning is the Louisville and Nashville Combine Car Number 665, a so-called "Jim Crow car." The state of Kentucky had mandated separate accommodations for the races in rail travel in 1892, specifying that in a single coach the separation should be "a good and substantial partition, with a door therein"

31. Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 370–71.

32. Job A-777, October 1950, Records of Lafaye Associates.

33. "Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 16 June 1993; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 250.

with each compartment clearly designated for “the race for which it is set apart” by a conspicuously displayed sign. Car Number 665 was built for the Louisville and Nashville line in 1913 by an Indiana foundry. A central baggage compartment separated the two passenger areas. Although one seating area was slightly larger than the other, and each had its own toilet, the passenger compartments seem to have been interchangeable between the races. Whites always sat in the front seating area, so when there was a change of direction, passengers climbed off the train on different sides and exchanged compartments. This railroad car was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and is currently owned and displayed by the Kentucky Railway Museum in New Haven.³⁴ Although the combine car was built for use in Kentucky (and to comply with its state law), designs for segregated railroad cars would have become fairly standardized in the industry by the 1910s since so many states required separate accommodations. An important part of the spatial story of segregation is the development of design “formulas” for partitioning the races whether in railroad cars, office buildings, or medical facilities.

The Pentagon represents a dramatic example of this self-conscious architecture of segregation, but also—because of its sheer physical size—a revealing illustration of the financial expense of constructing architecturally partitioned facilities. Erected in the early 1940s to provide centralized offices in the nation’s capital for the War Department, the building was actually located across the Potomac River in Arlington, Virginia. Its design and construction were highly controversial at the time. Many critics questioned the need for such an immense structure and wondered what it would be used for after the war, when it was assumed that the American military establishment would shrink to a small peacetime force. Of particular concern was cost, and budgetary constraints influenced the Pentagon’s utilitarian design and the simple (even austere) appearance of its exterior and interior spaces.³⁵ Despite the relative absence of architectural ornamentation, the Pentagon was constructed to have twice as many restrooms as would have been needed if it had been built to segregate toilets simply by gender. Because its architects operated in conformity with Virginia law, they designed the structure to include separate toilet facilities for blacks and whites. Apparently even President Franklin Roosevelt was startled to discover this fact, especially in light of the executive order he had signed in June 1941 requiring nondiscrimination at federal agencies and for private businesses with defense contracts:

A story describing an inspection tour the President and [his advisor] Harry Hopkins made of the partly completed Pentagon told of their astonishment at find-

34. Murray, *States’ Laws on Race and Color*, 169; “Louisville and Nashville Combine Car Number 665, New Haven, Nelson County, Kentucky,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 21 July 1997.

35. For background on the planning and construction of the Pentagon, see Alfred Goldberg, *The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1992).

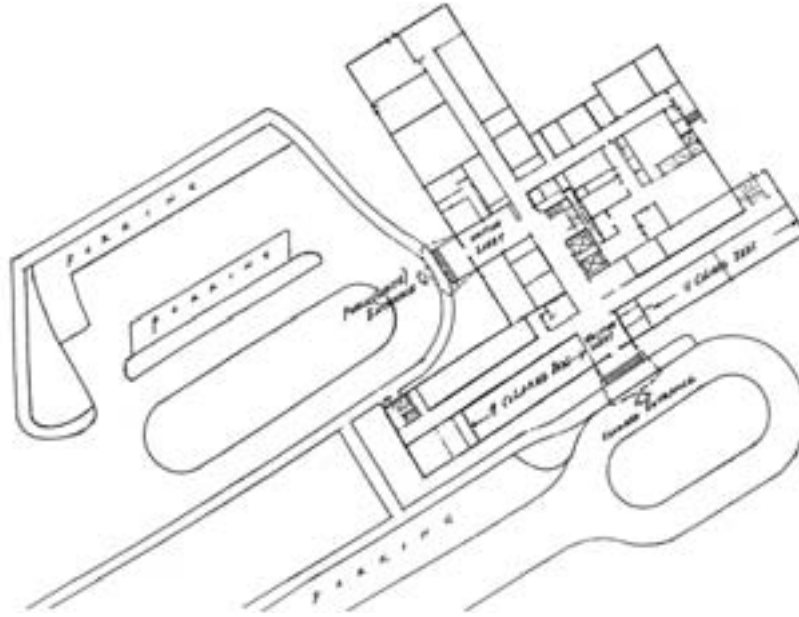


Figure 3. Chester County Hospital, Chester, South Carolina, 1947–48. First floor plan showing separate driveways, parking lots, entrances, waiting rooms, and twenty colored beds. Records of Lafaye Associates, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

ing four huge washrooms placed along each of the five axes that connect the outer ring to the inmost on each floor of the building; upon inquiring the reason for such prodigality of lavatory space, the President was informed that non-discrimination required as many rooms marked “Colored Men” and “Colored Women” as “White Men” and “White Women.” The differentiating signs were never painted on the doors.³⁶

In spite of the on-going debate about the price tag for the new headquarters for the War Department, state law had mandated the costly addition of several hundred duplicate restrooms, and Pentagon architects had complied. From an architectural standpoint, racial separation could be an expensive necessity in new construction.

Most other office buildings used a less expensive strategy that might be called “the basement solution.” Toilet facilities for African Americans were simply placed on the basement floor, out of sight of whites. This construction solution was employed when the Lafaye and Lafaye firm designed a new State Office Building adjacent to the South Carolina State House in 1938. Archi-

36. Green, *The Secret City*, 257. She recounts the same story in *Washington: Capital City, 1879–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 477, which is quoted in Goldberg, *The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years*, 62.

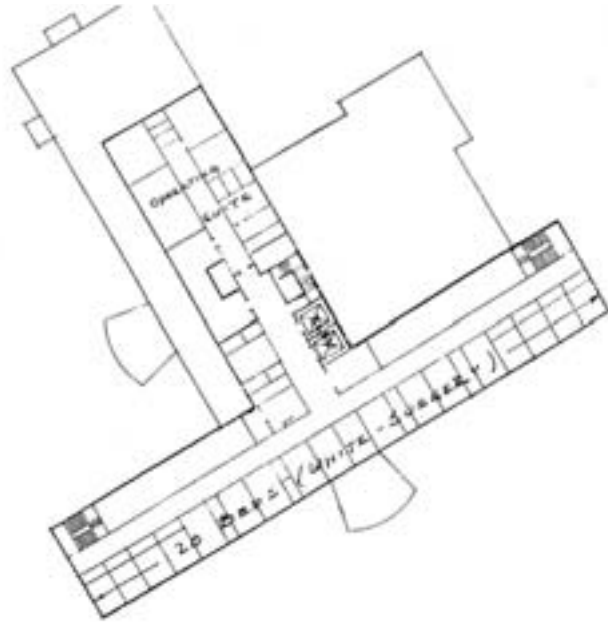


Figure 4. Chester County Hospital, Chester, South Carolina, 1947–48. Second floor plan showing the shared operating suite and twenty-eight white beds. Records of Lafaye Associates, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

tects placed restrooms for white men and women on each of the building's six floors. A single colored men's and colored women's toilet was located in the basement next to the receiving room and the janitor's supply room. The "basement solution" represented one example of how *verticality* could be used to separate the races. A plan for the three-story Chester County Hospital made similar use of vertical space in one proposal from the 1940s where even the approach to the hospital was to be segregated (see figs. 3 and 4). Separate drive-ways and their associated parking spaces led visitors to separate white and colored entrances and then into separate waiting rooms on the first floor. Twenty colored beds were provided on the first floor, next to the colored entrance to the building. On the second floor, where the operating suite was located, were twenty-eight white beds, and on the third floor, where the delivery room was located, were another twenty-eight white beds. The operating room and the delivery room were used by both races, but black patients were moved downstairs to the first floor to recuperate.³⁷

A form of *horizontal* segregation could prove a useful spatial solution for a facility that consisted of a number of related but unconnected structures. It

37. Job A-529, November 1938, and Job A-668, 1947–48, Records of Lafaye Associates.

was a common strategy for providing duplicative facilities within the United States Army, where separation flowed from its organization into all-white and all-black units that were trained and housed independently. As a consequence, two of almost everything were necessary: duplicate barracks, mess halls, athletic and recreational facilities, training areas, branch exchanges, chapels, U.S.O. clubs, and so forth. Fort Leonard Wood, constructed in rural Missouri in 1940 during the Jim Crow era, is illustrative. Its engineers designed its layout with the necessities of segregation firmly in mind. Thus, housing for white and black troops was erected north of the parade ground in an area bounded by First Street and Nebraska, North Dakota, and Missouri avenues. North “I” Street divided the two sections, with whites housed to the west and blacks to the east. Within their respective subdivisions were white and colored service clubs, movie theaters, and guest houses for visiting family members; one dental clinic served the entire post. The extent of duplicate facilities depended on the size of the African-American population stationed at a base at a particular time. At Fort Huachuca in southern Arizona, where the army trained more African Americans during World War II than anywhere else, there was a full range of duplicative structures including separate white and black hospitals, the latter fully staffed by African Americans. The fluctuating number of incoming black troops always represented a challenge to the geography of segregation. If housing and recreation facilities were built for seven white battalions and three colored, for example, a different racial mix of units would result in overcrowding and/or underutilization of the space as designed. Remedies were found in left-over and makeshift accommodations.³⁸

Medical and dental buildings offer an interesting perspective on the experience of segregation. We tend to assume that doctors, dentists, and nurses treated only patients of their own race, as Maya Angelou suggests in her novelistic autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. As a young girl in rural Arkansas, she is taken to a white dentist by her mother, because it is an emergency and the black dentist is an expensive bus ride away. Mother and child go to the back stairs of the white dentist’s office, and even though her mother had assisted the dentist in the past by lending him money, they are rebuffed when the dentist informs them, “I’d rather stick my hand in a dog’s mouth than in a nigger’s.” As the example of the shared operating and delivery rooms at the Chester County Hospital mentioned above indicates, though, Maya Angelou’s experience was not universal. One (presumably) white dentist in Edgefield,

38. Smith, *Fort Leonard Wood*; Steven D. Smith, *The African American Soldier at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 1892–1946* (Prepared for U.S. Army, Fort Huachuca, Arizona and the Center of Expertise for Preservation of Historic Structures & Buildings, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, February 2001). See also Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, *Historic American Buildings Survey of Noncommissioned Officers’ Service Club Complex, Fort Bragg, North Carolina* (Prepared for Public Works Business Center, United States Army, Fort Bragg, September 2001). Officially, the armed forces were desegregated by President Harry Truman through Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948, although all-black units continued to exist through the mid-1950s.

South Carolina commissioned a two-story office building to house his practice, with a retail store on the first floor. Dr. J. S. Byrd had a racially mixed clientele, as is evident from the separate dental facilities in his second-floor offices. Whites and blacks entered through a single door at the front of the building, climbed a common set of stairs, and then went their separate ways. Whites turned right toward the front of the building, where the white waiting room and the white operating room were located with a view of Main Street below. Blacks turned left to the colored waiting and operating rooms at the rear.³⁹

Buildings like these constructed during the Jim Crow era, as well as those older structures subsequently adapted to the new social order, represented the “imposed” architecture of white supremacy. Whether newly erected or subsequently remodeled, these spaces were monuments to an effort at social engineering in which the concepts of architectural isolation and architectural partitioning were intended to manage racial contact. Flourishing in the first half of the twentieth century, these places represent a unique chapter in the history of the American built environment when racial ideology influenced design form.

Resisting Imposed Architecture: Alternative Spaces

Everyday life in a world constructed to reenforce and reflect the values of white supremacy inspired a range of imaginative reactions on the part of African Americans, from strategies of quiet accommodation to active resistance and protest. The most elaborate architectural response was the construction of what we might call alternative spaces: business blocks, hospitals, schools, and motels, to name a few.

One way that African Americans could minimize some of the indignities of racialized space was simply to avoid these places. A common strategy for parents was to shield children from the realities for as long as possible by keeping them away from segregated white-owned businesses. Some of the affronts of the Jim Crow era could be avoided by embracing a form of voluntary temporal separation. By arrangement with a local theater, one teacher recalled taking her students to the movies at special times so that they would not have to sit in the balcony. A philosophy of avoidance made sense to many adults, who in the course of their daily lives engaged in countless acts of private protest. They walked wherever they could, for example, rather than riding on segregated streetcars. Many refused to patronize establishments that partitioned the races: large numbers of African Americans simply avoided going to the movies. Why spend one’s scarce leisure time and money to watch a film if the price of admission included climbing a separate stairway into a segregated balcony?⁴⁰

39. Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1969), 156–64; Job A-186, c. 1915–20, Records of Lafaye Associates.

40. *Remembering Jim Crow*, compact disk; *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow: Fighting Back, 1896–1917*, videotape (Quest Productions, VideoLine Productions, and Thirteen/WNET New

One could not completely avoid some shopping downtown, however. The key to resisting the insults of imposed architecture was careful planning ahead of time. Thus, before making the trip to Main Street, blacks might eat a meal, have a glass of water, and use the bathroom at home. Such foresight lessened the chances that they would have to buy a take-away meal from a restaurant that would serve but not seat them, drink from a colored water fountain, or search for a colored toilet. As his African-American mentor explained to John Howard Griffin in New Orleans as the white journalist began his experiment of passing as black in the South in 1959: “You’ve got to plan ahead now. You can’t do like you used to when you were a white man. You can’t just walk in anyplace and ask for a drink or use the rest room. There’s a Negro café over in the French Market about two blocks up. They got a fountain in there where you can drink. The nearest toilet’s the one you just came from.”⁴¹

The construction of alternative spaces represented the most intriguing response to the imposed architecture of white supremacy. A combination of black initiative and innovation, sometimes with white philanthropy or investment, created a range of private and public facilities that helped meet African-American needs in a segregated world. In the private sector they represented expressions of entrepreneurial energy, of black businesses serving black customers. Alternative spaces also filled the gaps left by the refusal of white authorities to provide public services such as health care and education. It is important to make a distinction between alternative spaces and the separate-and-unequal duplicate places provided by whites. Alternative spaces offered a landscape of options and proactive responses to the spatial strategies of white supremacy. What follows are a handful of examples, by way of illustration, to suggest that the settings for everyday life were not simply the contours of imposed architecture.

The black business district was a cornerstone of African-American life during Jim Crow, and the key to its success was the ability of merchants to provide goods and services denied blacks in white establishments. In general, black businesses could not compete with white-owned businesses such as department stores because of their access to large inventories (and commercial credit) and their willingness to sell to black customers. Two spheres where black businesses could operate were personal services and retail food. Thus in the black downtown of Columbia, South Carolina—Washington Street—were buildings that housed beauticians, barbers, dressmakers, tailors, shoe stores, drug stores, funeral homes, grocery stores, and restaurants. Large business districts might have a movie theater and a hotel, or even a bank and life insurance company. Dentists, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals would

York, 2003); Murray, *Autobiography*, 32; Monteith interview; Janna Jones, *The Southern Movie Palace: Rise, Fall and Resurrection* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 58–59.

41. Monteith interview; Griffin, *Black Like Me*, 25.

have their offices there as well. Institutional life would be represented by churches, the lodge halls of fraternal orders, and other social centers.⁴²

Medical care was always a challenge for African Americans during Jim Crow. Often white hospitals and white doctors refused to serve African Americans. Sometimes white doctors would consent to see black patients, but only after all white patients had been served. Experiences like these helped to fuel a drive to establish black hospitals. In Columbia, the Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital was constructed in the early 1950s for the African-American population in the city and in seven neighboring rural counties. Prior to its construction, African Americans in the region had been served by two modest medical clinics established in the early part of the twentieth century and, eventually, a Negro wing at Columbia Hospital funded by two white philanthropic organizations. Financing for the Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital came from a multi-year fund-raising effort within Columbia's African-American community, together with public monies and a grant from the Duke Foundation. In addition to operating as a black hospital and a training school for black nurses for almost twenty years, until 1973, the establishment of Good Samaritan-Waverly was long regarded as an important symbol of community accomplishment.⁴³

Perhaps the most well-known example of white philanthropy providing a catalyst for the construction of alternative spaces were the schools funded by Julius Rosenwald throughout the rural South. Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, directed much of his philanthropy to improving educational opportunities for African Americans. Beginning in 1910 he helped to fund construction of YMCA buildings for black men, especially in northern cities. He worked closely with Booker T. Washington on a number of projects; one gift to Tuskegee Institute in 1912 became the seed for the rural schools program. Formally established in 1917, the Julius Rosenwald Fund helped to construct over five thousand schools for African Americans in fifteen states by the time of Rosenwald's death in 1932. The schools were financed through a system of grants and matching contributions in which blacks and whites in the community were expected to participate in school construction through donation of land, state tax revenues, and labor. Sets of architect-designed plans (for schools with from one to seven classrooms) standardized the process of construction and no doubt reflected Rosenwald's familiarity with the successful Sears mail-order houses. By one estimate, over 90 percent of the black population in the South lived in a county with a Rosenwald school.⁴⁴

42. For an overview of Columbia's Washington Street business district, see Steven Andrew Davis, *Historic Preservation and the Social History of the New South* (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1995), 73–84.

43. "Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital, Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 4 July 2001. Draft version in author's possession.

44. Jeffrey Sosland, *A School in Every County* (Washington, D.C.: Economics & Science Planning, 1995), 42. See also Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The*

Like education and health care, traveling presented a particular set of challenges that, in turn, inspired the establishment of an entire geography of black hotels, motels, boarding houses, and “tourist homes.” Large cities usually had at least one hotel that catered to blacks. The two-story Booker Terrace, built in Miami in 1953, had twenty rooms each with kitchenette and private bath and boasted a swimming pool, restaurant, and nightclub. Its clientele included middle-class travelers, as well as entertainers who performed in nearby Miami Beach, but who could not stay there. Renamed the Hampton House, it was abandoned and boarded up in the 1980s and has been the object of preservation efforts in Miami. Perhaps the most well-known historically black motel in the United States is the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was staying when he was assassinated on its second floor balcony in 1968. The motel is now the site of the National Civil Rights Museum, a modern building constructed behind the old motel in order to retain the historic facade. The tourist home represented another housing option for black travelers. Usually these structures were substantial single-family residences that had been subsequently transformed into rooming houses for overnight guests. At other times the tourist home might be more modest: the spare room that the lady of the house was happy to rent out. For a few dollars a night the traveler would get a bed, breakfast, and a sandwich for the day’s journey.⁴⁵

Although word of mouth was an important form of communication for locating accommodations that served African Americans, savvy travelers did not pin their hopes on such a hit-or-miss strategy when visiting strange places. Instead, they relied on a unique genre of travel guide inspired by Jim Crow: handbooks that listed accommodations and restaurants where African Americans were welcome to stay and to eat. One of the most popular series was published by the Victor H. Green Company of New York, beginning in 1936. Entitled the *Travelers’ Green Book*, the guides advertised “Assured Protection for the Negro Traveler” and “Vacation Without Aggravation.” The 1965–1966 edition included a short discussion of the recently passed Civil Rights Act of 1964, characterizing it as “a new bill of rights for everyone” with its promise of access to hotels, restaurants, theaters, and other forms of public accommodation. Suggesting the gap, though, between the new expectations of federal law and the continuing realities of travel, this edition of the *Green Book* still included lists of hotels, motels, tourist homes, restaurants, resorts, and camps in all fifty American states and the District of Columbia, as well as a number of international destinations. Another series, the *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring*, made a point of including among its listings for southern states

Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949); Bob Gorman and Lois Stickell, “Partners in Progress: Joseph B. Felton, the African American Community, and the Rosenwald School Program,” *Carologue* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2002), 14–20; David Gregory Blick, *Preservation and Interpretation of the Rural African-American Schoolhouses of Richland County, South Carolina, 1895–1954* (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1995).

45. [Columbia] *The State*, 3 February 2002; V. S. Naipaul, *A Turn in the South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 68.

Amoco gas stations whose services, such as rest rooms, were available to African-American motorists.⁴⁶

Preserving the Architecture of Segregation: Challenges

By way of concluding the analysis, let us consider the architecture of racial segregation from the perspective of historic preservation. A subject like segregation recalls one of the most disturbing periods of American history, and objections can be raised about the wisdom of preserving places linked to this dark past. Some will ask: why preserve places that reflect shameful episodes in American history? These critics might propose that we focus on places that speak to values such as tolerance rather than prejudice. Others might object that the simple presence of a building on the landscape ratifies a particular ordering of the world. To this way of thinking, existence in and of itself makes a prescriptive statement of how things should be. Thus, the remnants of Jim Crow architecture are dangerous monuments to institutionalized racism. Still others might argue that preserving places like these can represent a form of “double victimization.” Victimized once by enduring life in a segregated world, African Americans would be victimized a second time by having to remember, recall, and relive the Jim Crow era.⁴⁷

Clearly no African American alive wishes to return to the era, but many would like their children and grandchildren to understand it. In part, it’s a case for historical knowledge: the world of Jim Crow seems increasingly distant and incomprehensibly foreign to blacks and whites born in the wake of the civil rights movement. In part, it’s also an issue of relevance and public policy: the segregated history of the United States is inextricably intertwined with the state of modern race relations, one of the most significant unresolved items on the nation’s political agenda. Few would go as far as the man in St. Louis who suggested that every American community should preserve at least one site associated with segregation in order to remind us that there are two racial universes in the United States and that we are not a single unified nation. Whatever the merits or practicality of the proposal, his larger points will resonate for many, both white and black: the country remains divided by race, and historic preservation has a potential to inspire reform.⁴⁸

In thinking about preserving the architecture of racial segregation, though, we confront the challenges of disappearance, invisibility, and selectivity.

46. *International Travelers’ Green Book, 1965–66 Edition* (New York: Victor H. Green Co., 1965). See, for example, *Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring: Official Directory of the Nationwide Hotel Association, Inc.*, 4, no. 4 (May 1955).

47. For some of the objections that can be raised against preserving the architecture of segregation in the specific case of movie theaters, see Jones, *The Southern Movie Palace*, chapter 5.

48. Comments of an audience member at a public forum on “The Power of the Past: The Role of Historic Preservation in a Multi-Cultural Society,” University of Missouri-St. Louis, 16 March 2004.

Disappearance

First and foremost, *much of it is gone*. One reason for its disappearance from the American landscape is historical, rooted in the 1950s and 1960s. The physical manifestation of segregation was as much a target of the civil rights movement as were racial prejudice, job discrimination, and the denial of voting rights. In fact, one measure of the success of the civil rights struggle was the dismantling of segregated space. Colored water fountains were removed from buildings, basement toilets became janitors' closets, and signs over doorways were repainted. At one movie theater in Durham, North Carolina, the second balcony was covered up with a false ceiling, in part to hide a new heating system but also because after integration neither whites nor blacks wanted to sit in the stigmatized balcony.⁴⁹ More often than not, the material evidence of Jim Crow did not survive the systematic destruction of this latter-day reformation. Desegregation represented a campaign for spatial reform as much as for social, legal, economic, and political redress.

In contemplating the survival of the material legacy of segregation, signage seems to have been especially evanescent. One journalist noticed the incremental disappearance of these signs as each new civil rights victory made them illegal in more places. In November 1961, less than two weeks after an Interstate Commerce Commission ruling went into effect outlawing segregated facilities in interstate bus travel, the reporter decided to see for herself how busses and bus stations were complying with the federal order in the southern states. "I was certainly not welcomed with open arms and I could sense the hostility brought on by my presence in some towns, but I was served without incident," she reported of her experiences in waiting rooms and restaurants. Invariably she could discern the formerly separate rooms and also the recent removal of the telltale signage:

After a while I began to look for the different methods used in covering over these signs. In no case were new ones installed. Above the doors to rest rooms the color designations were often painted out or covered with metal strips, leaving an off-centered "Men" and "Women." But there were still four rooms, their racial backgrounds identifiable by location and by the length of the covered-up area on the signs. . . . But at the smaller towns where the interstate express busses do not stop, the signs were still up, and all along the highway I noticed that Negroes and whites were still using separate waiting rooms.⁵⁰

Today it does not occur to many of us that signs like these that were disappearing in the 1960s had to come from somewhere. Some were hand-lettered, of course, but once upon a time segregation signage was a standard retail commodity widely available. As the legal foundation for segregation was steadily

49. Jones, *The Southern Movie Palace*, 55–56.

50. Bettye Rice Hughes, "A Negro Tourist in Dixie," in *Reporting Civil Rights: Part One American Journalism 1941–1963* (New York: Library of America, 2003), 633, 636.

undermined, it became harder and harder to purchase signs that said “Colored” or “Whites Only.” As an experiment, one white journalist set out in December 1961 to try to buy signs in Jacksonville, Florida. His visits to Woolworth’s, Kress, Western Auto, and local hardware stores all proved fruitless. Clerk after clerk reported that the stores had returned their inventories to distributors.⁵¹ In this additional way—manufacturers discontinuing a line of heretofore popular merchandise—segregation signage passed further into history.

Another reason for the disappearance of the architecture of segregation, besides the successes of the civil rights movement, was that many places associated with Jim Crow lost their economic rationale for existence. This is particularly clear in the case of black-owned businesses. Cafes, variety stores, barber shops, beauty salons, tailor shops, and shoe stores that had served an African-American clientele during Jim Crow eventually lost patronage in an integrated world. In one of the great ironies of the civil rights movement, desegregation undermined the historic need for black business districts and contributed to the economic hardship experienced by businesses that could not make the transition.⁵²

Finally, much of the architecture of the Jim Crow era is gone because federal and local government programs set out to level it in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In the name of “urban renewal” large sections of American cities were demolished. More often than not, these areas were residential neighborhoods and shopping districts historically associated with the African-American community.⁵³

Invisibility

A second challenge in thinking about preserving the architecture of segregation is that *it can be difficult to recognize*, even when it is still extant. In this sense, it is oddly invisible rather than expressly absent. For a spatial system that was so firmly rooted in law and custom and so dominant in American life for so many decades, it is paradoxical that people today may not be able to recognize its material legacy even where it survives.

Much of this invisibility is rooted in the age of the observer and the specifics of a locality. Not being alive in a community at the time handicaps one’s eye for the traces. For instance, a simple change in signage that transformed a colored entrance at the rear or side of a building into today’s emergency exit

51. William [Stetson] Kennedy, “Dixie’s Race Signs ‘Gone With the Wind,’” in *Reporting Civil Rights*, 627–28.

52. On the rise and decline of one black business district in Columbia, South Carolina, see Davis, *Historic Preservation and the Social History of the New South*, 72–140.

53. Federal urban renewal programs eventually inspired passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, which in time has encouraged communities to recognize the importance of preserving African-American heritage.

would most likely be invisible unless one knew the “before and after” stories of the building. Similarly, carry-out windows that were boarded up as they fell out of use may not today reveal their former function. One county courthouse in Mississippi still retains a set of separate drinking fountains, with the original racial signage covered up by bronze plaques; a casual observer would likely not recognize the duplicative facilities or be aware of the hidden signs.⁵⁴

A striking example of invisibility is the dual parking lots at a formerly segregated beach. Today they might seem like far-sighted provision for ample public parking rather than remnants of duplicate racial space. A one-time resident of Lewes, Delaware recalled his childhood:

The “Colored Beach” had its own parking lot and pavilion, near to the “White Beach,” but separated by a sand dune, and although they were not legally segregated when I was a child, people still tended to go to “their” respective beach by custom. Now, the covered pavilions are gone, and there is no discernible difference in how the beaches are used, but the separate parking lots are still there. One would never know the past history of this just by looking. I imagine similar remnants exist in the landscape of parks and beaches all over, invisible to anyone who does not know their history.⁵⁵

One expects that the immaterial partitions of the Jim Crow era would not be apparent today, such as the boundary in the water at the Lake Michigan beach that helped to precipitate the Chicago Race Riot of 1919. But it is revealing that something as concrete as a duplicative parking lot would be invisible without the quasi-anthropological assistance of a local informant.

The paradox of invisibility emphasizes the essential contribution that oral history projects have made, and will continue to make, to our understanding of the everyday experience of segregation.

Selectivity: Moving Beyond Heroic Architecture

A third challenge is to *preserve representative examples of the material record*. At the moment, we are choosing to be selective rather than candid in our thinking, looking for whatever can be perceived as upbeat in the segregationist story and identifying places that can articulate optimistic and ennobling narratives. To use the typological vocabulary in this article, where are the examples of isolation and partitioning, in addition to the alternative spaces?

Alternative spaces reflect African-American innovation and resistance, and as such they represent the “heroic architecture” of the Jim Crow era. The resourcefulness required by African Americans to construct alternative spaces was impressive, and it is therefore not surprising that these are the places that

54. Richard J. Cawthon, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, letter to author, 9 May 2003.

55. Bill Macintire, Kentucky Heritage Council, letter to author, 21 February 2003.

have begun to attract attention. Perhaps the most visible and geographically wide-ranging effort is the on-going work of the National Trust for Historic Preservation on behalf of Rosenwald schools. In 2002, the National Trust listed Rosenwald schools on its annual list of “America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.” In cooperation with state historic preservation offices throughout the South, the trust is now embarked on a major campaign to document and preserve the schools. The Rosenwald initiative is an enormously important undertaking sponsored by the country’s leading nonprofit preservation organization, and championing this cause will have a decisive impact on preserving African-American properties throughout the rural South. However, it is important to realize that these kinds of alternative spaces tell only one part of the Jim Crow story. As a staff member with the state historic preservation office in Kentucky observed:

There is pretty strong support for the preservation of segregated African-American resources like Rosenwald schools, churches, and buildings such as the Hotel Metropolitan in Paducah. While these reflect some painful memories they also reflect a history of African Americans working together in the face of adversity, so they have many positive associations.⁵⁶

It is easier to preserve buildings connected with the triumph of individual and collective initiative rather than with the racially charged imposition of architectural partitioning and isolation. It is also more comforting and less disturbing, especially for white Americans, to focus efforts in this way. Places that represented imposed architecture and the values of white supremacy tell us different stories about everyday life in the Jim Crow era.

It may be time to begin thinking in a systematic way about preserving the architecture of segregation in all its forms. This capacious approach may be a preservation frontier, but one can point to a few pioneers. The state of Georgia’s efforts began over a decade ago. Recent nominations to the National Register of Historic Places from Georgia make a point of noting within the text that movie theaters (which often have their original balconies intact), train and bus stations (with their partitioned interior spaces), and public buildings such as courthouses (with their original layout of restrooms) “often represent the last physical vestiges of segregation.”⁵⁷ Florida has taken a similarly inclusive view. Its recent nominations to the National Register have included segregated movie theaters and cemeteries, black tourist homes, and duplicative beach parks. When its National Register review board evaluated the

56. Macintire to author, 21 February 2003. The reference is to a black hotel; see “Hotel Metropolitan, Paducah, McCracken County, Kentucky,” Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1 August 2001. On the National Trust’s Rosenwald initiative, see <http://www.rosenwaldschools.com/>.

57. Steven H. Moffson, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, letter to author, 24 February 2003. See, for example, the nominations of “Royal Theater, Hogansville, Troup County, Georgia,” 15 April 2001; “Eastman Bus Station, Eastman, Dodge County, Georgia,” 15 April 2002; “Douglas County Courthouse, Douglasville, Georgia,” 20 August 2002.

nomination of one railroad depot, it urged the property owner to retain “some vestige of the black/white waiting rooms and ticket windows.” The city of Daytona Beach has been restoring City Island Ball Park where Jackie Robinson broke the color line in professional baseball. As part of the restoration the city is reconstructing the Jim Crow stands for their historical interest, not for their historical use.⁵⁸

South Carolina has been a leader in using the National Register process to raise awareness of the importance of preserving sites with segregation connections. In 2005, its National Register review board approved a multiple-property nomination for “Resources Associated with Segregation in Columbia, South Carolina, 1880–1960.” The document provides a framework that encourages the continual addition of appropriate properties. The “Segregation in Columbia” multiple-property nomination employed the architectural typologies that I developed for this article and was prepared by graduate students in the University of South Carolina Public History Program. Over the years, USC Public History students have prepared a number of segregation-related M.A. theses (some of which are cited in the notes here) and National Register nominations that include, among others, the All Star Bowling Lane, the Benjamin Mays Birthplace, Bettis Academy, Ladson Presbyterian Church, the Modjeska Monteith Simkins House, the North Carolina Mutual Building, Randolph Cemetery, St. Phillip School, Sidney Park Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, and Siloam School.

One can also find promising efforts at the national level, particularly within the National Park Service over the last few years. Publications such as the report *Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States* (2000) and *African Reflections on the American Landscape* (2003) have directed attention to the story of segregation, as has the web-based travel itinerary, *We Shall Overcome: Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement* (1998). Forthcoming are two other NPS studies: *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation in Public Accommodations* and *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*. In addition, a growing number of segregation-related sites have been declared National Historic Landmarks, including extant black business districts in several southern cities and black and white schools in states that were parties to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case.⁵⁹

A Final Question: White Resistance

The discussion of the issue of selectivity begs a final question, one that is quite delicate. Should places associated with white resistance to the civil rights move-

58. Barbara Mattick, Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, letter to author, 21 February 2003.

59. For more information, see the NPS website: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/themes/themes.htm>.

ment be preserved in some form? Isn't this also a part of the architecture of racial segregation? Or is this one frontier too far?⁶⁰

From one perspective, it is an appalling and fearsome question that perhaps should not even be asked. But from the perspective of using material culture to understand the texture of race relations in the Jim Crow era, white resistance is an inextricable part of the fabric. If a place associated with the first white Citizens Council meeting in the United States, which was founded in Mississippi in 1954, could be located, should it be acknowledged in some way, coupled perhaps with an analysis of the role of racism in American society? If not, why not? Is it intellectually abhorrent? Politically impossible? Racially dangerous? Would identifying sites of white resistance perpetuate misunderstanding? Would they become racist shrines rather than historic sites? Less hypothetical are the so-called Byrnes schools in South Carolina. One of the more imaginative spatial responses to the impending threat of desegregation, the schools took their name from Governor James F. Byrnes. Anticipating that courts would soon find the state's public schools to be both separate and unequal—and therefore unconstitutional—South Carolina set out in the early 1950s on a school equalization program to construct new schools for both white and black students.⁶¹ In this way, the Byrnes schools represented a form of “backlash” architecture, intended to be a self-conscious architecture of white resistance designed as a response to the increasingly effective civil rights movement.

To those who might argue that historic white resistance is an obvious context too widely known to need explanation, it is useful to listen to the tale of a young man whom I met in Birmingham's Kelly Ingram Park. The two of us were waiting one morning for the Civil Rights Institute to open. When I learned he was from Anniston, Alabama, about sixty miles from Birmingham, I asked whether he had heard about the Freedom Rides and the bus that was bombed near Anniston in 1961. He had not. That did not surprise me, though, quite as much as what he volunteered next. He told me that the civil rights movement had been a process in which African Americans proved themselves worthy in white eyes—through achievement in sports—at which point whites had bestowed rights on blacks. I was stunned by how little understanding this young African American had about either the struggle over power or the role of militancy and confrontation, even as we stood among the dramatic metal sculpture of the park with its depictions of snarling police dogs, water cannons, and jailed children.

60. I raised a similar question in my study *Historic Preservation and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's: Identifying, Preserving, and Interpreting the Architecture of Liberation* (1995). The following discussion is drawn from Section 3.4 of the report. Synopses have appeared in *CRM: Cultural Resource Management*, 19, no. 2 (1996): 26–28 [<http://crm.cr.nps.gov/archive/19-2/19-2-12.pdf>] and *CRM: Cultural Resource Management*, 18, no. 4 (1995): 6–8 [<http://crm.cr.nps.gov/archive/18-4/18-4-1.pdf>].

61. For a general history, see Rebekah Dobrasko, *Upholding “Separate But Equal”: South Carolina's School Equalization Program, 1951–1955* (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2005).

The anecdote illustrates why it is important to think about identifying, preserving, and interpreting the material legacy of Jim Crow segregation and perhaps even white resistance. As one woman commented upon seeing the former colored entrance to a movie theater during a walking tour of historic sites in Durham, North Carolina, “Being able to see the separate doors and think about that is profound. I mean, you can’t believe people treated other people that way.”⁶² Preserving the architecture of racial segregation in all its forms can be a way to facilitate public education, understanding about modern race relations, and social tolerance.

ROBERT R. WEYENETH is professor of history and co-director of the Public History Program at the University of South Carolina.

This article is drawn from a report prepared for The James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation of New York. I am grateful to the Fitch Foundation and to the College of Liberal Arts (now the College of Arts and Sciences) of the University of South Carolina for their generosity in funding a semester of research on this project, as well as to my colleagues in the Department of History for making it possible for me to take a leave from teaching responsibilities then. Project expenses were funded by a grant from the University of South Carolina Research and Productive Scholarship Fund. For their willingness to share knowledge of their collections, I appreciate the assistance of Beth Bilderback and Robin Copp of the South Caroliniana Library, Charles Lesser of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and Richard H. Smith of the National Archives and Records Administration. Staff at a number of state historic preservation offices made time to furnish me with valuable information and perceptive observations: Ellen Mertins in Alabama, Ralph S. Wilcox in Arkansas, Barbara E. Mattick in Florida, Steven H. Moffson in Georgia, Martha Hagedorn-Krass in Kansas, Bill Macintire in Kentucky, Laurel Wyckoff in Louisiana, Richard J. Cawthon in Mississippi, Steven E. Mitchell in Missouri, Jim Gabbert in Oklahoma, Claudette Stager in Tennessee, and Gregory Smith in Texas. For offering helpful insights and pointing me to specific examples of the architecture of segregation, I am delighted to thank Stephen and Janet Andersen, Leslie Arnovick, Teresa Barnett, Randy Bergstrom, Ginger Berni, Shelley Bookspan, Dan T. Carter, Andrew Chandler, Kendrick Clements, David Glassberg, Albert Hester, Kathleen Hilliard, Amanda Lee, Valinda Littlefield, Leon Litwack, Marty Matthews, Martha Monteith, Brian Newsome, Dwight Pitcaithley, Tracy Power, Daves Rossell, Constance Schulz, Steven D. Smith, Rodger Stroup, Patricia Sullivan, and Daniel Vivian. None of these individuals or institutions bears responsibility for the conclusions of this article; they are the author’s alone. Thanks to Lee McAbee for preparing and simplifying the images for publication.

62. Lois Cavanagh-Daley, quoted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, 15 February 2003.