

“CASUALTY OF PROGRESS”: THE WARD ONE COMMUNITY AND URBAN RENEWAL,
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1964-1974

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother
and the residents of Ward One.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to complete this work, many individuals contributed a tremendous amount of energy and support. I would like to thank the staff at the South Caroliniana and the Thomas Cooper Libraries for their help in providing amazing resources and guidance. Also, the Columbia Housing Authority for allowing dozens of students to search through their “mountains” of files. I would be remiss if I did not thank Ms. Debbie Bloom of the Richland County Public Library and the student researchers for assisting with the retrieval of countless census and newspaper materials. My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Bobby Donaldson, Mrs. Agnes Perez, and the residents of Ward One for truly introducing me to the field of public history and helping me uncover lost pieces of my own family’s past.

ABSTRACT

For nearly thirty years, multiple cities in the United States worked tirelessly to establish themselves as the forerunners in modern structures, advanced highway systems, and beautiful landscapes. The urban renewal projects enacted during the 1950s and 1960s allowed for many of the sweeping changes that were seen in American cities. These advancements were often funded by federal government legislation and adopted by city governments as well as collegiate institutions.

In Columbia, South Carolina during this time period, urban renewal swept through this city's downtown area and completely revamped its appearance. The plans, set forth by the City of Columbia, the Columbia Housing Authority, and the University of South Carolina in the 1960s and 1970s called for a new downtown area in which beauty and modernity were top priority; seemingly anything or anyone not fitting this criteria was ultimately uprooted or demolished.

Casualty of Progress examines the role the City of Columbia, the Columbia Housing Authority, and the University of South Carolina played in the Urban Renewal Projects in Columbia, South Carolina between 1964 and 1974 that led to the displacement of a predominantly African-American neighborhood. This work will add to the current discussion on how racial ideology and government policies are strategically used in the planning of American cities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Here are men that alter their neighborhood's landmarks...shoulder the poor aside, conspire to oppress the friendless. Reap they the field that is none of theirs, strip they the vineyard wrongfully seized from its owner...A cry goes up from the city streets, where wounded men lie groaning...

-Clergymen from a Chicago parish quoting the biblical figure Job in Jane Jacobs', *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Since the inception of American cities, urban planning and development have evolved into a major component in the creation of communities. Beginning in the 1890s and early 1900s, planners sought to create ideal cities that would ensure the best quality of life for its dwellers. Subsequently, British city planner Ebenezer Howard advanced this strategy by introducing the “City Beautiful Movement” to cities in the United States. Initially incorporated in northern cities such as Washington, DC, Chicago, and New York, Howard’s plan called for the creation of societies where people lived harmoniously with the environment.¹ However, this idea was quickly dismantled in the twentieth century as cities saw a rapid expansion of their cores due to an influx in industrialization and a rise of immigrant communities. Designs for these utopian cities failed to come into

¹ Heavy influences were adopted from the Beaux Arts Movement of the 19th century. A focus was placed using design elements such as grand sculptures, green spaces, and classical/neoclassical architecture. Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd, 1902. See also Nicholas Papayanis, *Planning Paris Before Haussmann*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; David P. Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann*, New York: Free Press, 1995; William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989; and Peter Geoffrey Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003.

fruition, as they did not account for the poor or low-economic classes. Many of the designers, consciously or unconsciously, used Howard's plan in designing various cities across the country. According to Howard, it was necessary to maintain strict class divisions in society. Jane Jacobs, a writer and anti-mass urban redevelopment activist, argued that the push to create a model society did not account for the fluidity of social and economic classes. America's shift to industrialization further proved the perfect idea to be null and void because it did not provide for the two concepts to coexist.²

Despite the evident flaws of the City Beautiful Movement and the growing exodus of residents who sought to escape during urban sprawl, city planners and government officials continued to pursue the "ideal city" model.³ To achieve these goals, planners focused on the construction of new highways and high-rises to promote suburbia as well as improve inter city-commuting routes.⁴ Against the hope of many avid followers of Howard, urban sprawl resulted in class and racial diversification of many suburban areas, which angered many of its white residents.⁵ The 1934 National Housing Act sought to combat this diversification by enacting the practice of redlining, which targeted certain racial groups and permitted them to obtain mortgages only in certain areas. With the 1937 Housing Act, city planners were able to harden the lines of segregation and transform urban areas through the use of slum clearance legislation. This

² Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Random House, 1961.

³ For a more detailed discussion on urban sprawl, see Gregory D. Squires, *Urban Sprawl: Causes, Consequences, & Policy Responses*, Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 2002 Kenneth and Fox, *Metropolitan America: Urban Life and Urban Policy in the United States, 1940-1980*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986.

⁴The Federal Highway Act of 1915, 1916 provided the means to develop a more standardized road system that favored private transportation.

⁵This idea of "White Flight" from city centers was seen as one of the underlying causes for the rise in urban sprawl as segregation and racial tensions in America were steadily on the rise. , Jon C. Teaford, 2001.

"Urban Renewal and Its Aftermath," *Sage Urban Studies Abstracts*. 29, no. 1: 3-135

act created the Low-Rent Housing Program that provided local governments with funds for building public housing after the slums were cleared. Just over a decade later, Title One of the Housing Act of 1949 provided federal funding for cities to initiate slum clearance under the auspices of urban renewal.⁶

Initially called “urban redevelopment,” urban renewal first took root in large northern cities such as Pittsburgh and Boston as they cleared sections of their cities to make way for new roads, businesses, and government buildings. To secure the land for these endeavors, local governments shifted traffic patterns, divided neighborhoods, and seized property through the use of eminent domain.⁷ The residents of these neighborhoods were considered the “victims of inertia” as they needed to be pushed out of blighted areas to help them better themselves and to advance the “progress” of the wider community⁸

Like the large cities of the north, southern cities began enacting their own urban renewal programs in the 1950s and early 1960s. From Charlotte, North Carolina to Birmingham, Alabama, cities implemented plans to build new roads and infrastructures to improve the quality of their communities. Like their northern counterparts, southern

⁶ United States. Federal Laws: Urban Renewal; Excerpts from Housing Act of 1949 and Related Laws, As Amended Through June 30, 1961. Washington: Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1961. See Peter H. Rossi and Robert A. Dentler. *The Politics of Urban Renewal: The Chicago Findings*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961; Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; and Gregory D. Squires, *Capital and Communities in Black and White: the Intersections of Race, Class, and Uneven Development*, Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994.

⁷ The **use of eminent domain provided that private the government could seize property for public purpose** with just compensation. The United States Supreme Court in the case of *Berman v. Parker* cemented the legality of this concept and later the case of *Kelo v. the city of New London* (2005). Harry J. Haynsworth, "Urban Renewal: Acquisition of Redevelopment Property by Eminent Domain." *Duke Law Journal*, 1964, no. 1: 123-138.

⁸ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and United States. Urban Renewal Projects and Slum Clearance, Hearing Before Subcommittee No. 2 , 84-2, Pursuant to H. Res. 114. 1956.

cities often made these improvements at the expense of disadvantaged residents who were displaced in the wake of modernization and expansion. These plans were not solely for city improvements, but were also used by large universities partnering with city officials to expand their campuses. Examples of this type of expansion efforts took place in cities such as Atlanta, Georgia where Georgia State University displaced thousands of residents in their downtown revitalization project.⁹ In Columbia, South Carolina during the same time period, one downtown community was faced a similar fate.

The Ward One neighborhood, located in the center of Columbia, was originally known as the East Glencoe community, named after the Glencoe Mill, a cotton mill that occupied land in this area from 1908 until March of 1939. Bounded by present-day Main, Huger, Heyward, and Gervais streets, the more common name, Ward One, stems from a legislative act that constituted the area as the “First Ward” voting district.¹⁰ Ward One was home to **many** African Americans as early as the Reconstruction period.¹¹ During this period, African Americans began creating new lives as free citizens in **many** cities across the country. **Many** moved from rural areas to partake in the growing industrial development in large cities. After relocating to these communities, they established schools, churches, and a number of businesses.

During the late 19th century, the Ward One area was composed of both black and

⁹ David C. Perry, *The University as an Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis*.

¹⁰ *The State*, 1914, Richland County Public Library. These are the understood boundaries by the community’s residents. Earlier boundaries for Ward One extended farther east toward Harden Street, today’s Five Points area.

¹¹ While the area did include several white families, for the purpose of this study, on the African American residents will receive attention as the white residents were few and far between. For a more in depth discussion on the demographics of the Ward One community see Paige Fennell, *Anatomy of a Neighborhood: Ward One*, Honors College Thesis (B.A.), University of South Carolina, 2009 and John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993.

white residents. The interracial population often lived side by side and held many of the same occupations, such as housekeepers and factory laborers. By the turn of the 20th century, racial tensions in American cities grew and the area experienced a strong shift in the division of labor and population demographics. With new government legislation prohibiting the races from working together, Ward One's black residents now held most of the manual labor jobs, such as quarry workers and housekeepers, while whites held mostly jobs such as firemen, grocery clerks, and government employees. By 1930, many whites moved closer to Gervais Street or moved out of the area completely. Many affluent blacks also moved out of Ward One to communities, such as the Waverly neighborhood across town. Ward One was now identified as a predominately African-American neighborhood.¹²

Ward One took on a different physical appearance compared to many white Columbia neighborhoods. The architectural styles of the structures throughout the majority of Ward One consisted of small wooden shotgun houses often lined with metal roofing. Erected mainly between 1900 and 1920, the buildings represent a popular style between 1870 and circa 1940 that was often used in early mill villages. As this area began to change from mostly residential to include more non-residential spaces, Ward One saw an influx of structures having more Greek and Gothic inspired designs as seen in the areas churches and more Colonial Revival influence in many of the newer homes. Local businesses and large brick warehouses owned by small, local textile factories later overtook much of the land occupied by these shotgun-styled buildings.

Just to the north and east of the Ward One community stood the campus of the

¹² Fennell, *Anatomy of a Neighborhood: Ward One*.

University of South Carolina. While this institution prided itself on producing the next generation of businessmen, civic leaders, and scholars, the school also created strong tensions with neighboring African-American communities. In the aftermath of Reconstruction, Black Columbians were not allowed to attend or even walk on the campus.¹³ The call for the expansion of USC facilities in the early part of the 1960s caused the already strained relationship to take a turn for the worse. This project analyzes the steps the Columbia Housing Authority, the City of Columbia, and the University of South Carolina took to implement Urban Renewal project within the Ward One neighborhood between 1964 and 1974. In order to understand the reasons for the displacement, the following chapters will cover the general plans for the Columbia renewal projects and how the plans were implemented. During these projects, hundreds of the residents of the Ward One Community were displaced and simply deemed a necessary casualty of progress.

¹³ Henry H. Lesesne, *A History of the University of South Carolina, 1940-2000*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2001.

CHAPTER II

URBAN RENEWAL PLANS FOR COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

By the 1940s and 1950s, Columbia's population grew from 63,300 to 86,900. This surge in growth spurred city officials to focus more on new infrastructures and transportation systems to enable Columbia to move successfully into the modern era.¹⁴ To encourage municipalities like Columbia to modernize its city center, the National Civic League created the All-American Award in 1949 to recognize communities where "members, governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations work together to address critical local issues."¹⁵ Columbia won this prestigious award in 1951, which motivated the city to embark on further city redevelopment projects.¹⁶

To maintain this push towards continuing Columbia's designation as an "All-American City," its local government developed a "council-city government" model and elected its first city manager in order to "provide the highest degree of professionalism and non-political administration of public service in accordance with policies set by an elected mayor and city government."¹⁷ This new office was coupled with a new mayor in 1958. Lester Bates Sr. fought vigorously during his twelve-year stint as mayor to redevelop Columbia's urban center and to redefine its reputation among American cities. As soon as Bates took office, he made plans for a wealth of new structures, including parking garages, a new post office, Federal Reserve Bank, a new airport, and a coliseum,

¹⁴ Lynn Salsi and Margaret Sims, *Columbia: History of a Southern Capital*. Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2003.

¹⁵ "All-American City Award," National Civic League, <http://ncl.org/aac/about.htm>, accessed 20 February 2010.

¹⁶ Lesene, *A History of the University of South Carolina* and John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990*.

¹⁷ "City Manager Profile," City of Columbia, <http://www.columbiasc.net/citycouncil/51>, accessed 20 February 2010.

which were all constructed several years later.¹⁸ While these plans sought to drastically change the downtown landscape, city administrators had to first deal with the large neighborhood that sat in the middle of their project area. Around the same time, the Columbia Housing Authority (CHA) began investigating possible Urban Renewal projects that could be incorporated within the city. Under Urban Renewal, the city would be required to relocate people and structures and to implement a policy site clearance. These projects would be federal funded, and the city would have the opportunity to make the desired changes to its urban landscape. In 1960, CHA applied for clearance to begin various Urban Renewal projects and was approved soon after by city council. Since slum clearance was a primary initiative under Urban Renewal, Bates favored this approach and work aggressively to identify and demolish structures that lacked modern amenities.

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During the previous year, the University of South Carolina began making plans to secure land west of Assembly Street to alleviate the strains of an overcrowded campus. The campus administrators were also concerned about the inevitable interactions between USC students and the “consequent aggravations” felt because of pedestrian traffic from Ward One to Booker T. Washington High, the neighboring African-American high school.²⁰ CHA administrator John Chase approached the President of USC, Robert L. Sumwalt, with a proposition for USC to join the city and CHA in the Urban Renewal

¹⁸ Salsi, *Columbia: History of a Southern Capital*.

¹⁹ A 1965 brochure boasts of clearing 62 blocks in the city’s center and building new structures valuing at \$6, 500,000. City officials claimed this city redevelopment project improved living conditions, boosted morale and created overall “community uplift.” Officials also state in this publication that relations between whites and African-Americans are doing well “despite deep-seated traditions and radicals on both sides.” Columbia won the All-American Award again in 1964. *All-American City*, 1965.

²⁰ Intra-office memo from Assistant to the President, Ashley Halsey, Jr. to Dean of Administration, “Rationale for Purchase of Booker T. Washington High School,” *Records of the VP of Operations, Harold Brunton, 1986-1983*, South Carolina Library.

project. Chase explained that under the urban renewal legislation, the federal government would provide two-thirds of the funding to clear blighted areas. USC would then be responsible for the remaining third and paying for any desired parcels of land. This arrangement was accepted by Sumwalt as Chase convinced him that this would solve the problems for all parties involved.²¹

In 1965, an article in *The State* entitled, “Richland and Lexington County Joint Planning Commission Report” or “Design for Progress” publicly laid the groundwork for the city’s future plans for new developments.²² Led by A. C. Flora, the Commission designed the report to “help businesses, public officials, and residents” on how to successfully “plan and chart future developments in an orderly manner.” The report focused approximately on an eight mile radius with the State House at the center.²³ In March of 1965, a special meeting was called by the CHA. The purpose of the meeting was to review requests by the governor, city mayor, and the president of the University of South Carolina regarding various urban renewal projects, establishing more low-rent housing, and securing adequate funds for said projects. In the fall of 1965, the CHA unanimously voted to add the entire East Glencoe area (bounded by Gervais, Main, Blossom, and Lincoln Streets) into the urban renewal project instead of its previous inclusion under the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP).²⁴ Chase, the CHA

²¹ Robert L Sumwalt, Building Program: “Letter from John Chase to Robert L. Sumwalt,” Land: Four Block Acquisition Project, *Records of the Office of the President 1960-1961*. South Caroliniana Library.

²² Salsi, *Columbia: History of a Southern Capital*.

²³ *The State*, 1965.

²⁴ General Neighborhood Renewal Plans were reports on the condition of building structures and an analysis of land usage. This plan was for informational purposes in order for guide potential future projects. Columbia’s first Urban Renewal Project in the Wheeler Hill neighborhood (located to the south of the USC campus) underwent a similar study and it was later deemed eligible for site clearance under Urban Renewal. Many of the displaced residents were relocated to University Terrace, a nearby public housing apartment complex. Henry H Lesesne,, *A History of the University of South Carolina, 1940 - 2000*

administrator, convinced the Housing Authority committee to make this project status change in order to allow the University of South Carolina to obtain the land more quickly. The General Neighborhood Renewal Survey study called for the land development to be completed in four years. However, placing the project under the Urban Renewal project status made it possible for the land to be developed in two years.²⁵ This need to move the project along at a rapid pace was to ensure the land was secured for the construction of the university's coliseum scheduled to open by the fall of 1968. Because universities were not allowed to make purchases under the name of urban renewal, the Carolina Research and Development Foundation was created to secure the land on behalf of the University of South Carolina.²⁶

CHA enacted their Workable Program "to attack the problems of urban decay" in which they commissioned local firms to appraise land and conduct studies to determine the value of stable structures and the cost to demolish the deteriorated ones.²⁷ A CHA worker, Joseph Winter, did one of the most noted studies of the area.²⁸ Along with various reports conducted by CHA, Winter took photographs of the East Glencoe area as proof of the area's extreme blight and to give the housing authority, the city, and the university reasons to push for the "condemnation of structures under eminent domain."²⁹

and *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 21, 1965*. Columbia, S.C.: Columbia Housing Authority.

²⁵ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 21, 1965*.

²⁶ Robert L. Sumwalt, "Letter from John Chase to Robert L. Sumwalt."

²⁷ The Workable Program was a required step in all urban renewal projects to "analyze housing found in neighborhoods and create a plan to combat the deterioration in that area." Fennell, *Anatomy of a Neighborhood* and the *Columbia Record*, 1959, undated newspaper clipping in the CHA Collection.

²⁸ Along with being a CHA worker, Joseph E. Winter (1920-1992) was a housing inspector from 1955-1965 and the Director of the Columbia Rehabilitation Commission from 1965-1980; "Fight Blight 1961::Fight Blight. no. 13025. 1961. South Caroliniana Library Digital Collections.

²⁹ Letter from the South Carolina Assistant Attorney General, Joseph C. Coleman to Vice President of Business Affairs at the University of South Carolina, Harold Brunton, 28 November 1966. *Records of the VP of Operations*. South Caroliniana Library

These photographs illustrated mostly homes that were in disrepair with falling roofs and deteriorated wooden frames. Studies, such as the Winter's images and investigations, gave CHA evidence to send to the Atlanta Regional Office of Urban Renewal Agency to move forward with the city's urban renewal projects. These projects included the construction of the University of South Carolina's memorial complex (today, the Carolina Coliseum) and an adjoining municipal parking lot.³⁰

³⁰ Joseph E. Winter, *Fight Blight 1961: Fight Blight*. no. 13025. 1961, South Carolina Library Digital Collection.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN RENEWAL IN WARD ONE

In light of the urban renewal objectives, CHA administrator John Chase “encouraged the demolition of structures and complete site clearance” and concluded that relocation should be limited to structures of historical significance.³¹ Throughout the life span of the East Glencoe Urban Renewal Project (Project S.C. R-11), condemnation hearings and recurring demolition dates were scheduled. In the fall of 1968, the condemnation and demolition process began in Glencoe. The area saw four to five structures demolished each month for over a year-long period.³² Once the last structure in the project area was demolished, the title to the cleared land was presented to USC in November of 1971.³³

Securing funding for the Glencoe project initially proved to be very difficult. In January of 1966, an application for Project S.C. R-11 was filed with the Regional Office of the Urban Renewal Administration (URA) to obtain financial support; however, by February, CHA was informed that all monetary assistance for the required survey and planning process were “exhausted.” For the next year and a half, the Housing Authority commissioners were plagued with insufficient funds and the East Glencoe project

³¹ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 19, 1965*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

³² *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 10, 1968*. Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

³³ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 11, 1971*. Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

appeared to be at a stand still. As CHA waited for the project funds to arrive, several of the agents that were hired specifically for the East Glencoe Renewal project saw a drastic cut in pay, and some positions were terminated completely.³⁴ Amid the commission's growing concerns about the future of the project, City Manager Carey C. Burnette authorized the land appraisal surveys to begin and indicated the city's willingness to underwrite the cost in lieu of waiting for funding approval to come from the URA. The University of South Carolina, also affected by the delay, requested a letter of consent for Early Land Acquisition from the Regional Housing Authority for various properties in the project area. This request sought to secure an agreement that permitted the designated land to be obtained before the surveys were completed and that enabled coliseum construction to remain on schedule. Coupled with the university's letter of consent and funding given by the city, contracts were established with Eric Hill and Associates, a planning and survey firm, and Walton H. Greever Jr. and Harvey J. Rosen, a local appraising company.³⁵ Legal services were also secured through a contract with the local law firm, Robinson, McFadden and Moore.

In November of 1967, the first re-use appraisal report valued the East Glencoe area measuring 573,756 sq. ft. at a value of \$2.18 per square foot or \$1,254,000.³⁶ CHA pushed the appraising firm to finish the second report in time for the 1968 opening of the coliseum.³⁷ The report suggested the maximum value for each property in the project

³⁴ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 10, 1968*. Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

³⁵ Sumwalt, Four Block Acquisition Project. "Harvey J. Rosen Appraisal." South Caroliniana Library.

³⁶ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 9, 1967*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

³⁷ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, January 18, 1968*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

area and any owner not satisfied with the price would face condemnation proceedings.³⁸ Once the second report was filed in November of 1968, CHA applied for a loan and grant from URA for \$1,303,940. These funds would repay the \$1,568,000 credit that was provided by the University of South Carolina to purchase 31 parcels that were identified in the reports.³⁹ However, until the funding was received from the Housing Authority Regional Office, all new contracts were suspended and the project expenditure budget was reorganized to account for the delay. A sum of \$1,127,940 in capital funds arrived in the beginning of the following year for all of Columbia's Urban Renewal projects with \$11,000 solely for the East Glencoe Project.⁴⁰ These much needed funds allowed the Columbia Research and Development Foundation to purchase 23 of the 31 parcels in the Glencoe project area. Unfortunately, the newly acquired allotment of funds did not solve the financial problems associated with Project S.C. R-11.

By October 9, 1969 the project was running grossly over budget by \$986,694 and needed to be reduced in order to continue. To reduce the overage, CHA could 1) eliminate parcels from the project area, 2) delay acquisition of any additional parcels, 3) request an additional \$1,000,000 from the national Housing Urban Development commission, or 4) ask the University of South Carolina, the City of Columbia, and the State Highway Department to collectively provide \$1,000,000.⁴¹ After a thirty-day advisory period, the Central Office of HUD in Washington, D.C informed CHA that their

³⁸ This method of acquiring property was deemed legal based on the law of eminent domain, in which the government could seize private property for public use with justified reasoning.

³⁹ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, February, 1968*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴⁰ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, July, 1969*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴¹ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 1963* Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

financial problems could only be solved by eliminating parcels from the project area. By December of 1969, final settlements were reached on the purchase of 22 parcels by CHA from the Columbia Research and Development for \$657,701. Created by the city, CHA, and South Carolina, a corporation was formed and made a deal with the “City,” a corporation composed of the mayor and the city council, to settle loan repayments. Under the agreement, the “City” would provide thousands of dollars in tax credits for site improvements such as storm drains, traffic signals, water, sewers, and parking facilities. Towards the end of 1971, a final deed transfer from CHA to USC was settled in the amount of \$366, 943.10.⁴² Most of the land was then prepared for the construction of the memorial complex, which held the honor of being the largest athletic arena after its completion of construction in 1968. The remaining portions of land were left undeveloped for almost forty years.⁴³

⁴² *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 9, 1971*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴³ Forty years after the completion of the East Glencoe Urban Renewal project, the unused land was developed for the site of the Colonial Life Arena, an athletic facility with a seating capacity for 18,000 people. It is the largest basketball arena in South Carolina and the tenth largest in the nation. In addition to the sports arena, the University of South Carolina began work in 2005 on Innovista, a high-tech research district adjacent to the campus. A large portion of the land designated for this project is composed of parcels that were cleared and left vacant since the 1970s. “The Colonial Center.” <http://www.coloniallifearena.com/600/GeneralInformation.asp>. accessed 7 April 2010 and “Innovista: University of South Carolina,” <http://innovista.sc.edu/about/>. accessed 7 April 2010.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISPLACEMENT OF A COMMUNITY

In an effort to reimburse property owners for the demolition of their properties, CHA passed a resolution to authorize relocation payments to the displaced.⁴⁴ Families, individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations were eligible for the repayment program. Families and individuals could be reimbursed for moving expenses and loss in property value. These also could opt for fixed payments if they were 62 years old, had an income five times less than that required to live in a public housing unit, or if there was no public housing available at the time of their relocation.⁴⁵ Businesses qualified for monies if they were conducting business within the area, did not have locations outside the project area, filed an IRS tax form at least one year prior, and its income did not exceed \$25,000 per year.⁴⁶ Title I of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 required that the process for the distribution of relocation payments was not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin. Unfortunately, most of the residents in Ward One were only tenants and did not receive financial assistance for their relocation.

Based on requirements under the 1949 Housing Act, adequate housing must be

⁴⁴ Renters were not addressed in discussions of relocation payments as the guidelines for these payments stipulated only homeowners could receive these funds. *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, December 16, 1965*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴⁵ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, December 12, 1969*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴⁶ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, April, 1968*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

made available to persons displaced due to urban renewal projects. A 1965 survey of Ward One recorded 322 families, 64 individuals, and 42 businesses to be affected by Project S.C. R-11.⁴⁷ These figures increased once added to the total number of persons displaced by earlier CHA construction projects. Immediately after the East Glencoe Project was established, CHA began clearing sites for public housing to accommodate displaced individuals in the project area. Ironically, dozens of individuals, families, and businesses living in the areas of proposed public housing developments were displaced.⁴⁸

In November of 1965, the city approved zoning for 300 new low-rent housing units in order to satisfy the requirements of the Housing Act. Priority was given to those displaced by the urban renewal projects and the elderly. CHA was also mandated to follow a strict non-discrimination policy as it conducted its operations.⁴⁹ CHA requested permission from the city council to build 800 more public housing units throughout various sections of the city. This request came in light of the 1,050 residents on waiting lists, including the 350 individuals displaced by the East Glencoe Urban Renewal Project.⁵⁰ Part of these housing units included a 111-unit dwelling at the corner of Oak and Read Streets (Project S.C. 2-8). Construction on the Oak-Read Street apartments began in the early months of 1967 and was ninety-eight percent complete by August of that same year.⁵¹ By November 73 families had moved to the apartments and by February

⁴⁷ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, December 16, 1965*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴⁸ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, 1963-1971*. Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁴⁹ Federal legislation did not provide specific guidelines on the proper procedures to counter discrimination. This was left to the discretion of the regional housing authority offices. *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 1, 1965*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵⁰ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, February 9, 1967*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵¹ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, August 10, 1967*, Columbia,

of the following year, the apartments were at full occupancy. Another portion of the approved 300 units went to the acquisition of land for Latimer Manor (Project S.C. 2-9) in January of 1966. A slow construction cycle delayed the project for almost three years. In addition to the Oak-Street Apartments and Latimer Manor, CHA proposed plans for hundreds of new public housing units across the city. These locations included 330 units at English Avenue, a 150-unit building for the elderly on Washington Street near Liberty Hill, and adding approximately 100 additional units to an existing public housing complex, the Hendley Homes housing project, near the city center. Despite the delay of financial assistance for the demolition of old structures, CHA was given \$1,590,000 in federal bonds to fund these new housing projects.⁵²

As with most housing projects across the country, CHA required minimums and implemented rent caps for its residents. These rates were based on applicant income levels and the potential for income increase with continued occupancy. In 1966, the maximum rent for a family of four would be about thirty-three dollars and their collective income could be no more than \$4,250 per year. These numbers, which included occupants' utilities, increased at a rate of about 10% per year to adjust for cost of living increases.⁵³

By the end of 1960s, Urban Renewal began to face heavy criticism for its affect

S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵² *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, 1967*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵³ These rates were based on the average rental rates of "comparable privately owned housing". The housing authority records do not detail the race of the occupants moving into the dwellings, however, national studies have shown an overwhelming increase in the number of African-Americans in public housing versus any other race. *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, October 12, 1967*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority and Robert C. Weaver, "Class, Race and Urban Renewal". *Land Economics*. 36, no. 3: 235-251.

on residents and an emphasis was placed on the importance of preservation.⁵⁴ In 1967, the national Housing Authority Administration joined this new movement by initiating a new program focusing on upgrading low-rent housing projects. CHA enacted a modernization plan for all older housing projects and proceeded to make improvements to new structures with “all deliberate speed.” Unfortunately, these plans had very mixed results. The Columbia Housing Authority made great efforts to update the units such as installing new kitchen appliances, correcting plaster damage, and improving the surrounding landscape with beautiful foliage and manicured lawns. New childcare centers and increased public transportation stops were also added to the areas. City council even praised CHA’s efforts and noted that the new projects provided “clean, safe, sanitary housing for residents.”⁵⁵ Silently, CHA dealt with serious problems. Not long after their opening, CHA saw a startling rise in violence in and around the new housing projects. The commissioners tried to combat this problem but their own administrative offices became targets of various burglaries. Despite several attempts to alleviate the problem, it was determined by the commission that based on the layout of the projects, they would be difficult to police.⁵⁶ This new revelation, however, did not alter any future

⁵⁴ For further discussion on the shift from urban renewal to preservation movement, see Paul A. Woodward, “Historic Preservation and Revitalization in Working-Class Communities,” Thesis (M.S.), Clemson University, 2007; Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*. 1975.

⁵⁵ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, November 13, 1969*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵⁶ Similar examples of the increase in violence in public housing projects can be seen in other cities involved in Urban Renewal projects, such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York. In all these cases, the majority of city resources were distributed to the growing, outer lying city suburbs leaving those in the city centers to fend for themselves. See Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; and Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and Redevelopment of the Inner City*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993.

plans for public housing.⁵⁷

From the early stages of the East Glencoe project, unrest and disapproval among the areas' families and businesses were high.⁵⁸ Several property owners, all whom were white, attempted to file court injunctions to prevent the condemnation of their parcels. Individuals such as P.P. Levetis Jr. sent letters to the CHA Commission requesting that his parcel be removed from the project area as he felt it was "unfair [for] an institution or a city or a state [to] take advantage of an individual citizen by forcing him to sell his property against his will."⁵⁹ Others like Robert Monckton Jr., who owned multiple properties facing demolition, voiced his complaints to the commission in person.⁶⁰

A number of the African-American residents, many of whom were renters, attended at least one of the four public hearings to protest the removal of their neighborhood. Although the CHA believed these hearings would "help them [residents] understand their rights," they only fueled the tension between the Commission and the African-American community.⁶¹ It was reported that dozens of angry residents walked out of one of the public hearings stating the CHA administrator "refused to talk to them" about the mismanagement of public housing facilities, the poor condition of many of the units, and the high cost of rent that forced a number of the black inhabitants back into

⁵⁷ From 1965 through 1971, only one reference was made to the rise in violence in the city's public housing units. While the CHA commission members discussed the severity of the problem, no solution was given in any future meetings on how to alleviate this issue. *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, May 15, 1969*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁵⁸ It should be noted that not all African Americans were opposed to Urban Renewal. Several prominent African Americans, such as C.A. Johnson served on the "Negro Committee" of the CHA.

⁵⁹ Letter from P.P. Leventis, Jr. to the John A. Chase, CHA Administrator. 30 January 1970. Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁶⁰ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, May 23, 1968*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁶¹ *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, December 16, 1965*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

slum areas. A few of the attendants of this particular public hearing later told a reporter that it was not a “racial issue” and that they were “just fighting for human rights.”⁶²

The success of Urban Renewal projects relied more on the public perception of the program than many people realized. Propaganda pieces were routinely featured in the *State*, Columbia’s local newspaper, highlighting the city’s plans to “prevent blight and protect sound neighborhoods.”⁶³ Photographs of dilapidated buildings detailing various “slum tours” were featured during the 1960s exposing the poor conditions of many of the structures in East Glencoe project area.⁶⁴ Images of smiling African-American families in new public housing apartments were also used to illustrate the benefits of Urban Renewal for displaced residents.⁶⁵

Unlike *The State* newspaper, the *Columbia Record* (an evening publication) sought to counter largely positive reviews of CHA by featuring articles explaining the Urban Renewal project in greater detail and its impact upon African American communities and families.⁶⁶ These papers were key in distributing pertinent information to residents and allowing them a safe forum to express their discontent with the project. The CHA public hearing in which dozens of residents walked out was featured in the *Columbia Record* and not the *State*. Neville Patterson, a writer for the *Record*, reported that CHA administrators did not want journalists or camera crews in the hearing in order

⁶² “Tenants Walk Out on Meet with Administrator,” *Columbia Record*, 1965.

⁶³ “City Joins in Move to get Land for USC,” *The State*, 2 February 1960.

⁶⁴ *The State*, 4 December 1960.

⁶⁵ *The State*, 30 April 1953.

⁶⁶ *Columbia Record*, 1965. For further discussions on the use of the media by African Americans during Urban Renewal projects, see June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf, *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997 and Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*, New York, N.Y.: Metropolitan Books, 2009.

to protect the “dignity and privacy” of the residents.⁶⁷ However, with the exclusion of African-American reaction from most mainstream newspapers, proponents of Urban Renewal sought to give the impression that their plans faced little protest within the targeted communities. Although opposition clearly existed, most of the pleas for CHA to abandon the project were disregarded.⁶⁸ Many of the residents, including businesses and churches, within the project area were relocated by the fall of 1971.

One exception can be seen in the case of the Greene Street Methodist Church, a predominantly white church originally located in the East Glencoe project area. However, it was one of the few parcels to be spared from demolition as it employed a media campaign and legal challenges against Urban Renewal officials. Led by its pastor C. Murray Yarborough and assisted by Columbia lawyer, Travis T. Medlock, this congregation formed a “grassroots campaign” to protest the seizure of the church by Urban Renewal officials. Supporters of this campaign passed out flyers, wore stickers reading, “Save Green Street Methodist Church!,” and secured repeated coverage in various newspaper articles.⁶⁹ From 1967 until 1969, the church vigorously protested and was able to successfully save their property from seizure and demolition.

⁶⁷ *Columbia Record*, 1965.

⁶⁸ *The State*, 1969 and *Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, August 8, 1969*, Columbia, S.C: Columbia Housing Authority.

⁶⁹ Lesesne, *A History of the University of South Carolina*.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF URBAN RENEWAL

Urban Renewal projects of the 1960s proved to have very mixed results. Large cities, such as New York, Boston, Chicago, sought to reaffirm their position as dominant leaders among American cities. Smaller cities such as Memphis, Birmingham, and Columbia fought to redefine their image to the rest of the country and prove they too could compete with larger cities.⁷⁰ These dreams were often delayed as urban renewal proved to be a more complicated program than originally conceived. Initially, the guidelines for urban renewal projects were ambiguous; therefore, local government often used programs for other projects, such as new transportation systems.⁷¹ This ambiguity was coupled with the long length of time it took to complete projects and the mountain of paperwork that was required to initiate each project phase.⁷² In the case of Ward One, the

⁷⁰ Carl G. Lindbloom, Morton Farrah, and Alfred P. Van Huyck. *The Citizen's Guide to Urban Renewal*. West Trenton, N.J.: Chandler-Davis Pub. Co, 1968.

⁷¹ One of the lasting effects of Urban Renewal in cities such as Chicago and New York is there vast highway system constructed under the auspices of Urban Renewal. The city of Columbia also improved many of their roads, stating they were needed to due to the construction of new public housing units. See Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Knopf, 1974.

⁷² Teaford, "Urban Renewal and Its Aftermath."

urban renewal project took almost ten years to complete. The officials constantly dealt with returned applications from the regional urban renewal office, and they were often declined for financial assistance.

Rising from the growing discontent in the late 1960s, government legislation in the 1970s began to reflect this negative attitude toward urban renewal policies.⁷³ In 1974, the new Housing and Community Redevelopment Act created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which focused on improving blighted areas rather than demolishing them. Local governments could also use money from the program to enforce building codes and area conservation.⁷⁴ Following the 1974 Act, the 1977 Urban Redevelopment Act sought to reduce the red tape in the paperwork filing process associated with Title One of the 1949 Housing Act, which provided funds for sewer systems and infrastructure improvements. Although this Act supplied funds to local governments without the stipulation of conducting “slum clearance,” the public disdain for urban renewal was too high because of the high volume of residential displacement.⁷⁵ As a result, these federal programs later proved to be unsuccessful and city acceptance of federal funds declined. Local governments began finding other avenues to acquire revenue for city improvements and shifted their focus in the 1980s and 1990s to the preservation and rehabilitation of older structures.⁷⁶

Today, although many of the structures are gone, residents of these displaced

⁷³ Michael E. McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*. New York: Free Press, 2003.

⁷⁴ Paul A. Woodward, *Historic Preservation and Revitalization in Working-Class Communities*. Thesis (M.S.) -- Clemson University, 2007.

⁷⁵ Peter Medoff, , and Holly Sklar. *Streets of Hope: the Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*. Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1994 and Megan C. Waters, *Gentrification and displacement Effects : Urban Renewal Plans for Olympia Mill Village*. Honors College thesis (B.A.) -- University of South Carolina, 2001.

⁷⁶ Woodward, “Historic Preservation and Revitalization in Working-Class Communities”.

communities have joined this preservation movement to document the affects of urban renewal on their communities. In San Francisco, residents of the Fillmore community partnered with PBS to create a documentary as a part of a series entitled *Neighborhood: The Hidden Cities of San Francisco*. The film and corresponding website tell the story of the residents' removal from the area and highlights its connection to Japanese Americans and to its strong jazz roots that later gave the area the nickname "The Harlem of the West."⁷⁷ Chicago's Hyde-Park community, one of the earliest sites for urban renewal projects, also uses web-based materials created by the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC). This organization seeks to inform the public of the community's history, its connections to urban renewal, and serves as a "watchdog" agency to protect the interests of the community's residents and businesses.⁷⁸ In South Carolina, the Southside community of Spartanburg has come together to publish *South of Main*, which uses oral history interviews, photographs and other visual materials to document the affects of urban renewal on their community.⁷⁹ The members of the Ward One community have worked diligently since the 1970s to preserve its memory. Through organizations, annual reunions, and monthly events, the residents of this once active neighborhood continue to celebrate their community even though their homes and institutions have long disappeared. In recent years, organizations in the city of Columbia, such as the Historic Columbia Foundation, and even the University of South Carolina, have joined forces with the residents in working to carry on the legacy of Ward One by

⁷⁷ *Neighborhoods: The Hidden Cities of San Francisco, The Fillmore*, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/kqed/fillmore/index.html>, accessed 6 March 2010.

⁷⁸ "Urban Renewal," Hyde Park Kenwood Community Conference, <http://www.hydepark.org/>, accessed 6 March 2010.

⁷⁹ Beatrice Hill, Brenda Lee, and Raymond Floyd. *South of Main. Spartanburg SC: Hub City Writers Project, 2005.*

hosting reunion lunches, honoring prominent Ward One leaders, creating exhibits, and erecting city markers.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION: AND, LEST WE FORGET: REMEMBERING WARD ONE

From 1964 until 1974, the University of South Carolina along with the city of Columbia and the Columbia Housing Authority facilitated the removal of many families living in Ward One during Urban Renewal. These groups followed models set by projects from other cities and was awarded nationally for their efforts. The East Glencoe Urban Renewal project brought millions of dollars to the state that was used to clear large tracts of land and build dozens of public housing units to housed displaced residents. Although some residents fought against these efforts, many of these voices were overlooked. Other resistance groups understood and utilized the power of the media and were able to save their property from being leveled. Despite the challenges during its implementation, the Urban Renewal projects in Columbia, South Carolina in the 1960s and 1970s forever changed the city landscape and set the stage for future discussions on urban planning in the city.

EPILOGUE:

AND, LEST WE FORGET: REMEMBERING WARD ONE

During the Urban Renewal projects in Columbia, many of the voices of those directly affected were never captured. Many of their concerns were never heard and the deeply felt neighborhood pride was suppressed. When Agnes Harris Tucker Perez was asked about her memories of Ward One, she remarked:

*The way you came up and the way you live-- -it will never leave you because it set certain guidelines, principles and responsibilities. You learned that when you were young...and that's what Ward One taught us...it taught us how to live life.*⁸⁰

Although the buildings are no longer standing and many people have moved away, the residents of Ward One do not want to be “a neighborhood that’s forgotten.” They want the world to know that “people lived there and they were happy.”⁸¹

In January of 2010 to commemorate those who lived in this community, I was asked to curate an exhibit highlighting the history of the community including its seizure and demolition by the University of South Carolina. The material in the exhibit was a culmination of various research conducted by students in several history courses

⁸⁰ Agnes Perez, Interview. 1 April 2009.

⁸¹ Carrie Bell Tucker, Interview, 2003

instructed by Dr. Bobby Donaldson, Professor of History at the University of South Carolina. The exhibit featured eight garnet and black text panels detailing the neighborhood's history, its boundaries, maps and images of the area from the past and present, an overview of the Urban Renewal project, and ended with images of students interacting with former Ward One residents on the university's campus and at events held in their honor. Three cases accompanied the panels which included both historic and contemporary photographs of Ward One and its residents taken by student researchers, CHA worker Joseph Winters, and by the residents themselves.

During the exhibit's opening reception, the residents, along with faculty, students, President Harris Pastides, filled the lobby of the South Carolina Library to have one more glimpse at the area hundreds of people once called home. Many of the residents smiled and laughed while reading the panels as they reminisced about the time they spent living in Ward One. Ever so often an unsuspecting student would be pulled into the conversations. The residents would then share with the student the life lessons that they learned when they were growing up. Heart-felt speeches were given as the residents expressed their appreciation to the university for recognizing their beloved neighborhood. The reception ended with the residents singing the alma mater of Booker T. Washington High, their former high school and one of the only high schools for African-Americans in Columbia during the Urban Renewal era. As the residents joined hands and sang with overflowing pride, it was clear that although the dwellings of Ward One are gone the heart and soul of the neighborhood still live.

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