

“REMOVING THE DANGER IN A BUSINESS WAY”: THE HISTORY AND MEMORY OF
QUAKERTOWN, DENTON, TEXAS

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Overall this thesis analyzes a strain of the white supremacist vision in Denton, Texas via a case study of a former middle-class black neighborhood. This former community, Quakertown, was removed by white city officials and leaders in the early 1920s and was replaced with a public city park. Nearly a century later, the story of Quakertown is celebrated in Denton and is remembered through many sites of memory such as a museum, various texts, and several city, county, and state historical markers. Both the history and memory of Quakertown reveal levels of dominating white supremacy in Denton, ranging from harmless to violent.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 focus on the history of Quakertown. I begin chapter 2 by examining as many details as possible that reveal the middle-class nature of the black community and its residents. Several of these details show that Quakertown residents not only possessed plentiful material items, but they also had high levels of societal involvement both within their community as well as around Denton. Despite being a self-sufficient and successful community, Quakertown residents were not immune to the culture of racial fear that existed in Denton, which was common to countless towns and communities across the South during the Jim Crow era. I identify several factors that contributed to this culture of fear on the national level and explore how they were regularly consumed by Denton citizens in the 1910s and 1920s.

After establishing Quakertown and the racist society in which it thrived, in chapter 3 I then examine the various sects of what I term the “white coalition,” such as local politicians, prominent citizens, and city clubs and organizations, who came together to construct a reason to remove the black community out of fear because of its proximity to the white women’s college,

the College of Industrial Arts. I then look at the steps they took that secured the passage of the bond referendum that would allow them to legally remove the black neighborhood.

Chapter 4 largely focuses on the ways in which the white coalition ensured the black community was transferred from Quakertown to its new community on the outskirts of town, Solomon Hill, from 1922-1923. These ways overwhelmingly included outright racial violence or the repeated threat of it. I then briefly describe the quality of Solomon Hill in the years after the relocation. I also summarize how and why the story of Quakertown was lost over time—among both white and black citizens—and conclude with the discovery of a Quakertown artifact in 1989, which initiated the renaissance period of Quakertown’s memory.

In chapters 5 and 6 I switch gears and analyze the memory of Quakertown today via sites of memory. I begin by providing a brief historiography of New South memory studies in chapter 5. This review is important before delving into the specifics of the memory of Quakertown, because 1920s Denton was a microcosm of the New South, specifically in terms of race relations and dominating white supremacist ideals. I explore some of the different techniques utilized by memory historians to evaluate how and why the white supremacist vision dominated the southern region during the Jim Crow era; I, in turn, then use those same techniques to reveal how the white supremacist vision in Denton dominated at the same time.

In chapter 6 I provide in-depth analysis of the most prominent sites of memory in Denton that, today, are dedicated to the memory of Quakertown. Collective analysis of these sites reveals levels of white exploitation, blatant omissions, and general misuse surrounding the story of the black removal and experience. I conclude my thesis by stressing that although the white vision today is shaped differently than it was during Jim Crow, it nonetheless still exists in Denton today, as evidenced in the treatment of the sites of Quakertown’s memory.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1922 and 1923, city officials in Denton, Texas, dismantled a middle-class black neighborhood in the heart of the city. In the two-year time span, they transferred dozens of homes across the railroad tracks to a newly designated area miles away, not to keep the community intact but to keep the black citizens excluded from the center of town. Espousing southern progressive ideals contemporary to the time, political and social white groups in the North Texas county seat had aligned years earlier to ensure that the forty-year-old black community would be relocated.¹

City officials forced black citizens to sell their land to the city and eliminated the neighborhood through a process that is today known as eminent domain. A bill, referred to as the Park Bond Issue, had passed in the spring of 1921 stipulating that the thriving black community called Quakertown be torn down and replaced with a park.² Quite literally on paper, the white coalition comprised of politicians, their wives, and Denton's elite residents had argued that the multi-acre section of land Quakertown occupied was the prime location for a public park large enough to also hold the annual county fair.³ As they pointed out, the park and fairgrounds were something they had wanted to construct in the city for years but had never found a suitable location.⁴ They also contended it would support the growth of the twenty-year old, all-white female College of Industrial Arts just north of the area.⁵

¹ William S. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xii.

² Editorial, *Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC)*, April 4, 1921.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

In reality, this final argument was the one white leaders in Denton had recently become obsessed with. It did not matter that Quakertown had existed prior to the college; all that mattered was that white girls, away from home for the first time, were living blocks away from a black neighborhood. This proximal relationship did not fit in with Denton's southern progressive vision, and like countless other southern cities during the vitriolic Jim Crow era, Denton decided to separate the black community from the white. What made this move unique was that the city obtained racial separation not by extralegal measures but through the law itself.

Because of the bill's legal status and because Denton's black citizens did not have access to the same resources as the white coalition, Quakertown residents had no choice but to move to the new area known as Solomon Hill. Some left Denton entirely, but most remained. Residents went through the motions of rebuilding their community, but Solomon Hill was a constant reminder they had been unwanted and mistreated by the city, and they did not speak of their forced exile.⁶

The new Civic Center Park debuted at the end of the 1920s. With the economic help of two state-supported colleges, Denton grew steadily over the years.⁷ Solomon Hill remained the primary black neighborhood in Denton. By the time of integration in the 1960s, the story of their former community was all but lost within the neighborhood, where most of Denton's first black college students lived. Those who were old enough to remember had grown so accustomed to the silence surrounding Quakertown that they had forgotten it and had not passed on the story to their children.⁸ Unsurprisingly, white Denton had forgotten the story too.⁹

⁶ Alma Clark, oral history interview by Shereyn Yancey, Archives and Rare Books Department, University of North Texas (UNT OH) no. 1636, September 29, 2006, 19-20.

⁷ Today, the College of Industrial Arts and North Texas State Normal College are Texas Woman's University and the University of North Texas, respectively. Both have gone through several name changes since the 1920s.

⁸ Charles Williams, oral history interview by Shereyn Yancey, UNT OH no. 1637, October 23, 2006, 31.

White and black citizens had forgotten about Quakertown and its removal for different reasons, yet both were equally curious in 1989 when a cistern was discovered in Civic Center Park with old bottles and aluminum cans that had not seen the light of day in decades. Who had lived here? Why did they not live there anymore? When did they live there? What had become of the people who had once occupied that space?

In the years following the cistern discovery, the story of the former community slowly came to life. The local historical society and college students conducted research, professors and librarians wrote various articles and books, a museum was planned by the county, and historical markers were erected by the city, county, and state. All are what French historian Pierre Nora terms “sites of memory,” as they all commemorate the memory of Quakertown.¹⁰ What is interesting about these sites is that they celebrate not just a former neighborhood but a memory that was forgotten. Although other black neighborhoods existed in Denton along with Quakertown, they did not suffer the same fate, and as such they are not revered today.

Collectively, the aforementioned sites today comprise Quakertown’s historical memory. W. Fitzhugh Brundage describes historical memory as “a genealogy of social identity” that “transmits selective knowledge about the past,” implying that while certain historical events are celebrated, even elevated to national holiday status, others are just as easily—and purposefully—forgotten.¹¹ Quakertown suffered the latter fate, and its intentional removal from Denton’s historical record and memory remains its most interesting characteristic today.

⁹ Richard Byrd, “Interracial Cooperation in a Decade of Conflict: The Denton (Texas) Christian Women’s Inter-Racial Fellowship,” *Oral History Review* 19, no. 1/2 (Spring-Autumn 1991): 36, 44, 50.

¹⁰ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 18-19.

¹¹ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 4.

Determining how and why Quakertown was forgotten begins with its demise, which requires an understanding of white culture and its purpose in the New South. The 1920s were over a half-century removed from the Civil War, yet the South—Denton included—was still licking its wounds from the loss. Many historians, such as David Goldfield in *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History*, have successfully argued that nearly all white southerners' social actions, beginning after Reconstruction and lasting well into the twentieth century, were done with the intention of assuaging the Confederate loss. Their actions created binary racial identities; they formed divisive social stratifications based on race and enforced them by any means necessary. Although white-on-black violence was the most terrorizing and deadly, white southerners also worked to establish a dominant Anglo-Saxon identity that had little room for African Americans, especially if they appeared to be rising above their designated second-class citizenship. Quakertown, as a self-sustaining and vibrant middle-class community, fits into this category.

Physically removing Quakertown in the 1920s and then forgetting its existence afterward was a part of what David Blight refers to as the “white supremacist vision.” This vision was made up of several components that worked together for one sole purpose: to manufacture a social hierarchy in which African Americans remained inferior to whites.¹² In Denton, this vision manifested itself as a conscious decision on the part of city leaders to eliminate the black community from Denton's past, present, and future in order to create a homogenous southern identity. This component of Denton's white vision seemed to last until the 1990s, when the resurgence of the Quakertown story brought the memory of the neighborhood back to life. Collectively, the many sites of Quakertown's memory suggest that Denton rectified its historical

¹² David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 301.

wrong after nearly seventy years. The memories consecrate the community to a place and time, celebrate its existence, and commemorate its significance in history. Individually, though, they reveal something different.

In 1920, Denton's African American citizens accounted for 9% of the population; ninety years later, that percentage slightly increased to 10.3%, meaning Denton's white demographic was still an overwhelming majority.¹³ The post-1989 revisions of history that created space to include Quakertown were completed mostly by white citizens. To be sure, these white researchers included Denton's black voices, but their inclusions were selective. Analysis of prominent sites of Quakertown's memory reveal the white vision is still dominant in Quakertown's public memory today, just as it was nearly 100 years ago when white Denton elites relocated the black community.

Contemporary histories about Quakertown tend to absorb white memories and neglect African American sensitivities toward the past. White researchers either act as apologists for the actions of their predecessors or view the removal through the lens of expediency and business progressivism. Many local historians neither apologize for racial discrimination nor accept blame for the removal.¹⁴ On the other hand, when African Americans recount the episode of demolition and removal, their views differ from the white majority. Not every site of Quakertown's memory today is white-controlled, nor does every existing site of memory that was produced by a white person mean that the black voice was excluded, either.¹⁵ These are anomalies, however, as the most visible and public sites of Quakertown's memory are presented mostly via the white vision.

¹³ 1920: *Denton City Directory 1923* (Denton, TX: Retail Merchants' Association, 1923), 7. 2010: "Denton (city), Texas," State & County Quick Facts, U. S. Census Office (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 2015), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4819972.html>, accessed February 28, 2015.

¹⁴ James W. Loewen, "Victimized by Folklore," *History News Network* (blog), <http://historynewsnetwork.org/blog/142700>, accessed January 31, 2015.

¹⁵ Solomon Hill is a site of Quakertown's memory, but the neighborhood is still overwhelmingly black today and is not white controlled. Also, Michelle Glaze's manuscript, which provided a lot of research for this

This thesis not only establishes a comprehensive chronology of Quakertown's demise but examines its memory as well. The first three chapters focus on Quakertown's history. Chapter 1 briefly describes Denton and Quakertown's development up to 1920, which lays the groundwork for the impending removal of the black community. Next, the quality of the Quakertown neighborhood will be described in detail and several factors that made the community middle class will be identified. Then, three categories of the Jim Crow system that were evident in Denton, Texas will be introduced and broadly examined.

Chapter 2 introduces race relations—perceived and actual—that both directly and indirectly affected the culture of Denton in 1920. This chapter describes the different organizations that came together to form a united white coalition that orchestrated Quakertown's removal and detail the actions that helped it achieve its goal.¹⁶ Chapter 3 focuses on the physical relocation of the community from Quakertown to Solomon Hill. It identifies the few small forms of black resistance against the relocation that were unsuccessful and examines the role the Ku Klux Klan played in instituting fear to ensure the black community would be relocated to the area of town designated by the white coalition. It briefly describes the establishment of Solomon Hill and the new Civic Center Park that replaced Quakertown once the black neighborhood's relocation was complete. It then explains how the story of the Quakertown relocation was lost among both white and black Denton communities over the next several decades and how citizens of both were equally curious and interested in the former community when household items were discovered in a cistern in the park in 1989.

this thesis, appears to have been based mostly off of interviews with Solomon Hill residents and documents belonging to them.

¹⁶ A note on terminology: More often than not, I refer to this coalition as “white Denton” throughout this thesis. Not every white citizen in Denton in the 1920s was a part of this group, but because this coalition included some of the most powerful and prominent white citizens in Denton who united together with a similar agenda to push, together they were a solid opposition that Quakertown residents could not defeat.

Chapters 4 and 5 turn to Quakertown's memory. Chapter 4 describes the differences between collective history and memory and look at how the two affect one another in a society. The chapter gives an overview of the historiography of New South historical memory, which contextualizes the historical memory of Quakertown. Specifically, it examines the competing white and black memories that emerged in the post-Reconstruction era. It identifies three strains in which it is evident that the white memory overwhelmed the black memory not only in the South but also nationally.

Chapter 5 identifies Denton as a microcosm of the South in terms of the dominant white memory. Using the same three strains as in the previous chapter, it examines the ways in which the white memory overwhelmed the black memory in Denton. It then describes sites of memory and the roles they play within a community. It ends by identifying and discussing three sites of Quakertown's memory that still reveal an overwhelmingly white perspective, even though this is a black story and experience.

CHAPTER 2

QUAKERTOWN IN 1920s DENTON, TEXAS: RACE RELATIONS IN A JIM CROW SOCIETY

Before examining Quakertown's demise, one must first look at the culture of Denton in the 1920s that openly supported racial discrimination. This chapter briefly covers the development of Denton and Quakertown into the twentieth century and describes in detail the characteristics of the Quakertown neighborhood in 1920. Finally, this chapter examines the rabid Jim Crow system under which the entire southern region—including Denton—operated.

The Development of Denton and Quakertown

Denton was established in 1857 as the seat of Denton County in North Texas, and by the first decades of the twentieth century it exhibited all the signs of a developed town.¹⁷ Three national railroads arrived in Denton in the 1880s and brought with them an economic boom.¹⁸ The new three-story limestone county courthouse stood as the tallest building in the center of the town square. Businesses lined the streets that bordered the downtown square: Oak Street on the north, Locust Street on the east, Hickory Street on the south, and Elm Street on the west. Many of Denton's wealthy white residents lived in sprawling Victorian-style homes on Oak Street. As their popularity increased, automobiles were seen with more and more regularity. Denton took pride in maintaining its road system, which expanded both north and south out of town.¹⁹

¹⁷ C. A. Bridges, "The Nineteen Twenties, 1920-1929," in *History of Denton, Texas, from Its Beginning to 1960* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1978), 327-366.

¹⁸ E.F. Bates, *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*, 3rd ed. (Denton, TX: Terrill Wheeler Printing, Inc., 1989), 171-173.

¹⁹ Bridges, *History of Denton, Texas*, 330-331.

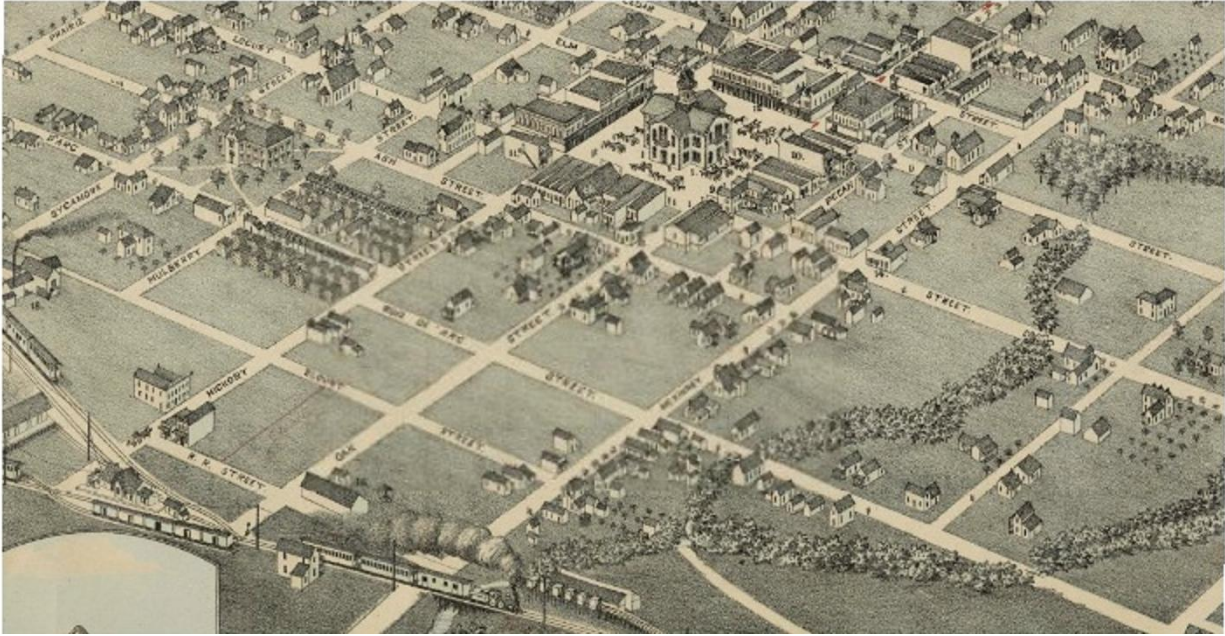


Image 2.1: Bird's eye view of Denton, Texas in 1883. Quakertown existed to the right of the courthouse in this image, and forty years later Solomon Hill would exist south of the railroad at the bottom of the map. Photo courtesy of the Portal to Texas History.

By 1920, Denton's population had grown to over 7,600.²⁰ There were five public schools and thirteen churches.²¹ The city was also home to two state-recognized institutions of higher learning. The North Texas State Normal College (the Normal College), a teacher training school, and the College of Industrial Arts (CIA), which combined a basic education with domestic skills for girls and women, were both within five miles of the county courthouse square.²² Citizens had organized various civic associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and the Denton chapter of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs.²³ There were nearly twenty fraternal orders, such as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and several Masonic chapters.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., 327.

²¹ *Denton City Directory 1920* (Dallas, TX: Shaw-Powell Typesetting Co., 1920), 3-4.

²² Joyce Thompson, "Texas Woman's University," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kct37>, accessed January 19, 2014.

²³ *Denton City Directory 1920*, 3-4.

²⁴ Ibid.

Denton's professions in 1920 could be broadly categorized into four groups: farmers, teachers, working-class laborers, and upper-class professionals. Of the nearly 2,000 who reported their professions in the 1920 city directory, the breakdown was as follows: 149 were farmers; 220 were teachers or professors; 233 were upper-class professionals such as physicians, managers, executives, ministers, government employees and politicians, and individuals employed in upper-class fields such as insurance, real estate, and the oil business; and 1,173 were working-class employees, including laborers, clerks, telephone operators, porters, salesmen, railroad employees, and those who were self-employed.²⁵ Agriculture and education were two of the biggest businesses in Denton, and the town remained prosperous year after year.²⁶

In addition to its varied workforce, Denton was also home to a diverse population. Several all-black communities had developed throughout Denton in the decades following emancipation. There was a neighborhood known as Peach Orchard Hill on Mingo Road about a mile-and-a-half northeast of the square as well as another along Egan and Congress Streets northwest of downtown.²⁷ But the most populous—and perhaps most important—neighborhood

²⁵ *Denton City Directory 1920*. A note on the classification of professions from *Denton City Directory 1920*: Two problems were present when totaling these numbers: 1) Notes at the beginning of the Directory state some omissions are highly probable and that the 1920 U.S. Federal Census had not appeared at the time of the Directory's printing, therefore names and final numbers were not double checked by the editors; and 2) It appears that occupations listed in the Directory were determined by the individuals, i.e. there was no uniform standardization on how to classify one's occupation. Many in the Directory did not list their occupation, and many others did not make differentiations in their employment statuses (for example, both Dolph Evers and Elmer Fitzgerald listed Evers Hardware Store as their employer, but Evers is clearly the business owner and Fitzgerald is one of his employees). Because most who were business owners did not list themselves as such, they had to be counted with the working-class employees even though they probably should have been with the upper-class professionals. Determinations between a working-class employee and an upper-class professional have been made solely by the author based on class discrepancies and the probability of a job being paid hourly versus by salary. Therefore this is not an exhaustive compilation of all who were employed in Denton in 1920 and there are also most likely discrepancies with the real categorizations of professions. Nonetheless it can still be considered a fairly representative broad breakdown of Denton's professions in 1920.

²⁶ E. Dale Odom, "Denton County," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcd06>, accessed April 3, 2013.

²⁷ Laura Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas," (Narrative written as an application for a Texas State Historical marker: Denton, TX, 2010), 1.

was Quakertown. Its central location between the county square and CIA, both places of employment for many in the black community, was key to its significance.²⁸

The first all-black settlement in Denton appeared in the early 1870s on Bois d'Arc Street southeast of the courthouse.²⁹ These first settlers were most likely comprised of twenty-seven families from the White Rock settlement in Dallas, and they called their settlement Freedman Town.³⁰ Within a decade, former slaves and their families began purchasing plots of land in other areas of town. One such area was just north of the courthouse. Settlers soon began referring to this area as Quaker, or Quakertown, in homage to the nineteenth-century abolitionists.³¹

This area was probably chosen for several reasons. First, it was closer than Freedman Town to the county square, where businesses and employment opportunities were. Second, the Frederick Douglass Colored School (Fred Douglass School) had been established in Quakertown in 1878.³² Illiterate former slaves across the South understood all too well that freedom depended upon education, and it is likely this drive was apparent in Denton also.³³ Third, agricultural and economic opportunities were available in the North Texas region.³⁴ Denton's rich, productive soil and inexpensive land, no doubt, attracted former slaves.³⁵ Most likely, though, freedmen and their families moved to the Quakertown area because it was close to a water source; Pecan Creek

²⁸ Bridges, *History of Denton, Texas*, 250.

²⁹ Michelle Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," *The Denton Review: A Journal of Local History* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1991), 3. Today, Bois d'Arc Street is Industrial Street.

³⁰ Ibid; Texas Historic Marker Designation, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Denton County (1985), no. 4442.

³¹ Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas," 3.

³² Mark Odintz, "Quakertown, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hrqgk>, accessed April 3, 2013. The Fred Douglass School burned in 1913 and rebuilt in another area of town in a few years' time. It was renamed the Fred Moore School in 1949 and remained the only black school in Denton and the only black high school in Denton County until integration in the 1960s.

³³ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5.

³⁴ Walter Buenger, *The Path to A Modern South: Northeast Texas between Reconstruction and the Great Depression* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), xx, xvi.

³⁵ Chelsea Stallings, "Harrington, Cassady, and Clark Cemeteries," (Narrative written as an application for a Texas State Historical marker: Denton, TX, 2013), 4-11.

was one of the dozens of creeks off the Elm Fork of the Trinity River in Denton County. Because the creek was prone to flooding, it was most likely considered undesirable to white citizens and was therefore deemed an acceptable area for freedmen to settle.³⁶

These first black settlers undoubtedly had some agency in deciding where they wanted to live in young Denton. But in a Jim Crow society, African Americans had few choices over which areas they could settle that were deemed acceptable by white society.³⁷ In Denton, these options were limited to undesirable locations such as the aforementioned one near a flooding creek. Historian Michelle Mears argues that black fear, driven by white intimidation, was also a strong motivator in creating enclaves within city limits and that “freedmen settlements had a greater degree of social ‘tightness’ and mobilized help more often.”³⁸ Although it is unknown whether fear played a part in the places where freedmen settled in Denton, the “tightness” was nonetheless apparent in Quakertown.

Quakertown in 1920

By 1920, Quakertown was considered Denton’s black business district because of its status as a middle-class neighborhood and its central location.³⁹ The black community can be classified as middle-class for four reasons: the rate of home ownership, residents’ job statuses,

³⁶ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, November 1, 1919; Norvell Hill Williams Reed, oral history interview by Sherelyn Yancey, UNT OH no. 1638, September 14, 2006, 7.

³⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1922).

³⁸ Michelle Mears, *And Grace Will Lead Me Home: African American Freedmen Communities of Austin, Texas, 1865-1928* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1970), 9. Although Quakertown was created within city limits, other African Americans created their own black townships. Despite different conditions, both were reactionary products of black fear at the time. For a more detailed look at the creation of black townships in the South, see: Rhonda Ragsdale, “A Place to Call Home: A Study of the Self-Segregated Community of Tatums, Oklahoma, 1894-1970,” (M.S. Thesis, University of North Texas, 2005).

³⁹ Glaze, “The Quakertown Story,” 5.

the quality and quantity of material possessions owned by the residents, and the level of social activities residents enjoyed. According to the 1920 census, there were eighty households in Quakertown. Fifty-eight, or 73%, of the households were black families.⁴⁰ The other twenty-two, or 27%, were white. The white households were all located on the outskirts of the neighborhood; none were located in Quakertown's interior. Of the black homes, thirty-nine, or 67%, were owned and not rented. Twenty-nine of the black homeowners had their homes paid off and had no mortgage payment. Fifteen were old enough to have been born into slavery and were homeowners by 1920.⁴¹ Every black home in Quakertown, with the exception of four, had a family in it.⁴² In stark contrast, out of Quakertown's twenty-two white homes, only six, or 24%, were owned, not rented.

⁴⁰ These homeownership statistics are taken from the 1920 census, but there were more homeowners in Quakertown at the time of the 1922-23 relocation. For instance, in the 1920 census T. C. Hill, son of Will Hill, is listed as a part of his father's household. But by January 1923 T. C. and Othello Hill were Quakertown homeowners who sold their house to the city of Denton.

⁴¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920.

⁴² *Ibid.* The term "family" here is used to denote at least a spouse or immediate family member, i.e. a child or a parent, living in the household. If the only other member listed in the household was a roomer or an extended family member such as a cousin, they were not counted.

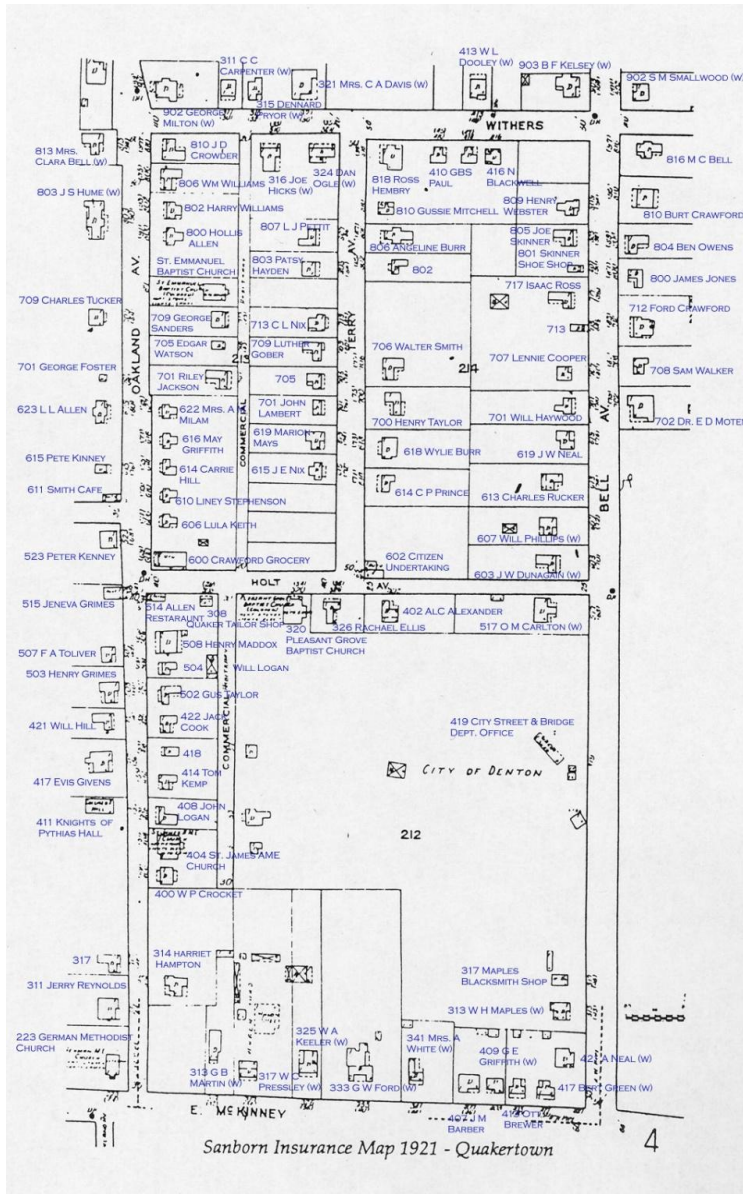


Image 2.2: 1921 Sanborn Insurance Map detailing Quakertown. Photo courtesy of the Perry-Castañeda Library of the University of Texas.

Quakertown's streets were lined with residences, businesses, and community institutions. Businesses included the Smith Café; Crawford's Grocery Store, owned by Bert Crawford; the Allen Restaurant; Henry Maddox's boarding house; Skinner Shoe Shop, owned by Joe and Alice Skinner; Dr. Edwin Moten's medical practice; Quaker Tailor Shop; Citizen's Undertaking Funeral Parlor, owned by Bert Crawford's son, Ford; the Buffalo Bayou Café; a drug store, a

confectionery, and three barbershops.⁴³ Community institutions included four churches and multiple fraternal lodges, such as the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, the all-female Household of Ruth Lodge, the Knights of Pythias, and others.⁴⁴ The Fred Douglass School had been one of the first buildings in the community, but by 1920 it existed in a different part of town.⁴⁵



Image 2.3: Ford Crawford's grocery store, date unknown. The upstairs was used for the Odd Fellows Hall. Photo courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

The majority of these businesses and community institutions were owned by Quakertown residents.⁴⁶ Those who did not own their own businesses were wage earners such as cooks, hotel waiters, or store porters; domestics employed in private homes; laundresses who took in laundry;

⁴³ Denton 1921 Sheet 16, Texas Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Pre-1923), Map Collection, Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas at Austin; Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 3; Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas," 3-4; *Denton City Directory 1920*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Odintz, "Quakertown, TX," "Negro School Building Finished," *DRC*, June 8, 1916.

⁴⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920.

and city or public laborers who did various jobs.⁴⁷ Even the term “laborer” is broadly defined, with individuals such as Henry Maddox, owner of Quakertown’s only boarding house, identifying himself as a laborer.⁴⁸ Several residents were landlords, including Maddox, Ross Hembry, Wylie Burr, and Wylie’s mother, Angeline, all of whom owned several homes that they rented out for profit, some to white families.⁴⁹

The economic freedom enjoyed by Quakertown residents meant there was money in the neighborhood. As detailed in the black newspaper, the *Dallas Express*: “Mr. B.F. (Ford) Crawford sold one of his lots last week to Mr. James Jones for \$800.00 and another this week to Mr. Herron for \$600.00. Mr. Jones has already taken possession and is comfortably located.”⁵⁰ Homes in Quakertown varied in size and were influenced by the clean lines of the contemporary bungalow style. While many had a modest two-bedroom layout, others were much bigger.⁵¹ Several residents, such as John Logan, Ford Crawford, Will Hill, Henry Maddox, Willie Clark, L.L. Allen, and M.C. Bell owned automobiles.⁵²

⁴⁷ Ibid; *Denton City Directory 1920*.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Denton 1921 Sheet 16, Texas Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Pre-1923).

⁵⁰ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, October 25, 1919.

⁵¹ “Maude Woods Clark Hembry House,” photograph, n.d., Texas History Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, University of North Texas, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph20752/?q=quakertown%20denton>, accessed April 29, 2013; “Edwin Moten House,” photograph, n.d., Denton County Office of History and Culture, Denton County, Denton, TX; Denton 1921 Sheet 16, Texas Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Pre-1923).

⁵² Reed, UNT OH no. 1638, 93; “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, June 7, 1919; August 23, 1919; July 14, 1923; September 1, 1923; October 1, 1924.



Image 2.4: Norvell Hill Williams Reed as an infant in Quakertown, circa 1922. Photo courtesy of the Oral History Program of the University of North Texas.

Quakertown's wealth was manifest not only in its infrastructure and technology but also in its residents' consumption of luxury goods. Residents such as Will, Ada, and Ida Spikes Hill regularly wore up-to-date fashions. Thick fur coats for winter, decorative wide-brimmed hats for special occasions, and delicate, light material for breezy summer dresses regularly graced the streets of the community.⁵³ Children were not overlooked when it came to quality clothing. Young children, such as infant Norvell Hill, were often seen wearing thick, bright winter coats with matching hats and high-quality summer shirts, shorts, socks, and shoes.⁵⁴ Parents like the Bells were keen to see that their children also had the most current toys, such as a tricycle with a

⁵³ "Ida Spikes Hill, Will Hill, and Ada Hill," photograph, ca. 1910, Texas History Collection, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph20749/?q=quakertown%20denton>, accessed April 29, 2013; "Members of Household of Ruth Lodge," photograph, n.d., Denton County Office of History and Culture.

⁵⁴ Reed, UNT OH no. 1638, 93.

pony for a seat.⁵⁵ Children also played with wagons and dolls, and infants rested in elaborate rocking carriages.⁵⁶

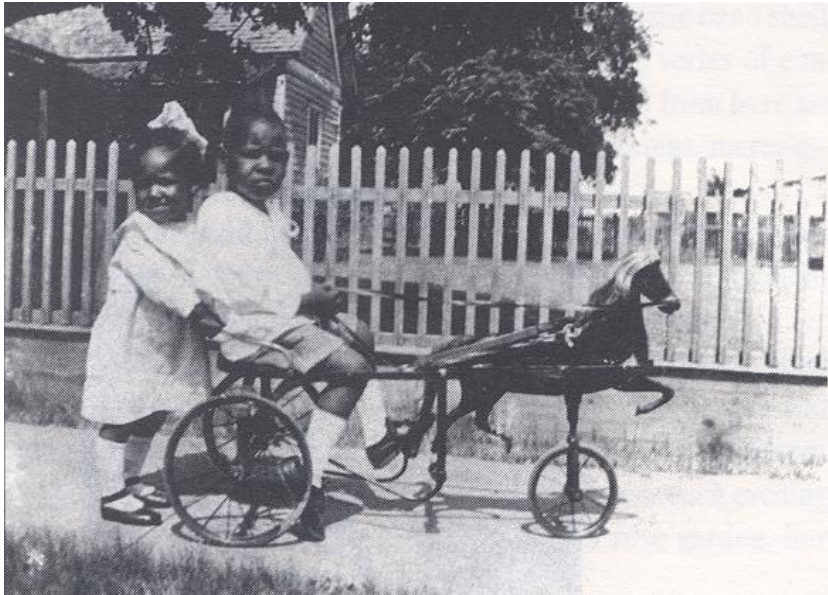


Image 2.5: Children of Marcellus C. Bell playing in Quakertown, circa 1919. Photo courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

Quakertown residents not only cared about material finery, but they also went to great lengths to keep their neighborhood aesthetically pleasing and to combat uncleanliness and sickness in their community. Many of the streets and sidewalks in Quakertown were paved.⁵⁷ Both telephone and electric lines ran through the neighborhood, gracing the residents with modern conveniences.⁵⁸ Henry Taylor, another self-identified laborer who was employed as a master gardener for a white family on Oak Street, took such pride in his own garden featuring a rare white lilac bush that his yard was sometimes referred to as “the park of Quakertown.”⁵⁹ Most who lived in Quakertown had at least a small garden and several animals, thus having

⁵⁵ “Bell Children in Front of Their Home,” photograph, 1919, Denton County Office of History and Culture.

⁵⁶ Reed, UNT OH no. 1638, 93; “Children in Quakertown Playing with Wagon,” photograph n.d., Denton County Office of History and Culture.

⁵⁷ “Joe and Alice Skinner,” photograph, n.d., Denton County Office of History and Culture.

⁵⁸ Reed, UNT OH no. 1638, 93; “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, January 31, 1920.

⁵⁹ Glaze, “The Quakertown Story,” 11.

regular access to their own seasonal food.⁶⁰ A well in the center of the community provided fresh water to all residents.⁶¹ Quakertown residents worked hard to keep the neighborhood clean, and in 1915 it was reported in the town newspaper, the *Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC)*, that the community had been disease-free for at least two or three years.⁶² When residents did get sick, they received prescriptions from Dr. Moten, who doubled as the community's dentist.⁶³ Residents also formed their own committees to focus on health and combat sickness.⁶⁴



Image 2.6: Members of the Household of Ruth Lodge pose on a Pecan Creek bridge in Quakertown, date unknown. Photo Courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

Quakertown residents were invested in their community not only financially and aesthetically but also socially. Grocer Ford Crawford was president of the Citizen's Business

⁶⁰ Letitia deBurgos, ed., *Folklife Preservation, Quakertown: 1870-1992, City of Denton, Denton County, Texas* (Denton, TX: Denton County Historical Commission, 1991), 3.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Health and Sanitation Meeting To Be Held at Negro School," *DRC*, October 14, 1915.

⁶³ "Dr. Moten Prescription Register," 1917-1920, Denton County African American Museum, Denton County Office of History and Culture; "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, September 27, 1919.

⁶⁴ "Health and Sanitation Meeting to be Held at Negro School," *DRC*, October 14, 1915; "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, April 14, 1923.

League, the black equivalent of the city's Chamber of Commerce.⁶⁵ He was also active in the Odd Fellows fraternal organization.⁶⁶ J.W. Reynolds served as the Vice Grand Mentor of the Knights and Daughters of Tabor, another fraternal order.⁶⁷ Many of these organizations regularly sponsored community-wide picnics for the neighborhood to enjoy.⁶⁸

Men were active in the fraternal orders, but women were not excluded when it came to social activities. They hosted parties to celebrate events such as wedding anniversaries.⁶⁹ They held social dinners and luncheons also, serving dishes such as “grape fruit with cherries, fricassee of beef, creamed potatoes, macaroni el’Italienne [sic], emergency biscuit, French salad, celery, prune soufflé, [and] banana cake.”⁷⁰ Many also participated in one of many women’s clubs such as the Jewel Arts Club or the Busy Bee Club. The former club served as a form of entertainment, while the latter focused primarily on beautification of the Fred Douglass School.⁷¹

The Fred Douglass School, a community institution and a site of education, was extremely important to the Quakertown community. In February 1919, the Busy Bee Club sponsored a tea social to raise funds for the school.⁷² Two months later, the club successfully installed water on the school grounds with the help of Denton city commissioners.⁷³ Another club focused on school beautification was the Fred Douglass Parent Teacher Club.⁷⁴ Students were involved with school activities including hiking, celebrating holidays, playing sports, and

⁶⁵ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, April 19, 1919.

⁶⁶ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, February 1, 1919.

⁶⁷ “The Lodges of Quakertown,” Denton County African American Museum, Denton County Office of History and Culture, Denton, TX, visited September 20, 2013; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920.

⁶⁸ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, August 23, 1919.

⁶⁹ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, October 18, 1919.

⁷⁰ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, March 15, 1919.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*; “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, April 19, 1919; July 14, 1923.

⁷² “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, April 19, 1919.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ “Texas Towns: Denton,” *Dallas Express*, December 2, 1922; January 13, 1923; April 7, 1923; “Much Interest in Civic Work; Negroes Planning Clean Up,” *DRC*, February 28, 1916. Articles do not specify what the “beautification efforts” were, only that Quakertown residents focused on these various efforts regularly.

performing in the Choral Club.⁷⁵ Many students had goals of advancement in life and went on to continue their education at colleges such as Paul Quinn (in Waco, Texas), Wiley (in Marshall, Texas), and Prairie View (in Prairie View, Texas).⁷⁶

Quakertown residents were highly involved in church activities also. Two of the churches had their own society groups: The Minister's Alliance of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church and the Christian Endeavor Society of the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church (St. James A.M.E.), of which Dr. Moten was president.⁷⁷ These societies regularly conducted rallies, both alone and in collaboration with other churches' groups, to raise funds for the churches themselves and for Fred Douglass School.⁷⁸ Pleasant Grove and St. James A.M.E. also held beauty contests, hosted annual Easter egg hunts, and celebrated baptisms.⁷⁹ Pastors W.F. Crockett and J.R. Swansey could be heard preaching the gospel every Sunday morning.⁸⁰

By 1920, Quakertown residents had established a thriving communal and business neighborhood through both financial and social investments. Residents not only owned their homes but displayed ample material finery and technology as well. They enjoyed economic freedoms, formed civic organizations, and strove to make substantial improvements to their community. This type of black self-sufficiency existed outside of the white vision, and was most likely the exact reason white Denton began vocalizing disapproval of the black community in 1920. Among other things, the white vision in the early twentieth century stipulated black dependency on whites. These race relations were tightly controlled with fear and violence in the Jim Crow South.

⁷⁵ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, May 1, 1920; November 18, 1922; January 13, 1923; April 7, 1923.

⁷⁶ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, October 21, 1921; October 1, 1924.

⁷⁷ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, August 2, 1919; May 31, 1923.

⁷⁸ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, February 1, 1919; May 31, 1919; April 24, 1920.

⁷⁹ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, April 10, 1920; May 15, 1920; May 10, 1923.

⁸⁰ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, February 1, 1919; May 15, 1920. J.R. Swansey did not live in Quakertown but still preached at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church.

Denton in the Jim Crow South

Jim Crow was a system in which white southerners employed countless tactics to ensure former slaves and their descendants remained second-class citizens. As Edward Ayers summarizes, “According to custom, the two races did not shake hands, walk together, or fraternize in public. Black men removed their hats in public places reserved for whites, while whites did not remove their hats even in black homes.”⁸¹ Jim Crow customs were not only limited to places of interracial interaction. They commanded spheres of physical separatism that segregated every part of a community, such as schools, churches, neighborhoods, passenger cars, theaters, restaurants, barbershops, even funeral homes and cemeteries. Denton was no exception to the systematized segregation imposed by these customs, as the segregated Quakertown community suggests. Three loosely categorized areas that Jim Crow dictated the most in Denton as elsewhere in the South were politics, the economy, and social interactions between the two races.

One of the first actions white southerners took under Jim Crow was ensuring that former slaves stayed out of politics. Like the rest of the South, Texas became overwhelmingly Democratic when Radical Reconstruction ended in 1877. Without slavery to legally differentiate social distinctions, southerners were faced with the emergence of new racial identities and a reconfiguration of race relations that challenged their beliefs and ways of life.⁸² With the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, southerners had a chance to reconstruct race relations to secure the protection of human and civil rights that had been guaranteed in the Constitution. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 had also made racial discrimination

⁸¹Edward L. Ayers, *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 89.

⁸²Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 4.

illegal in places of public accommodation, entertainment, and public and official buildings and locations.⁸³ However, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional in 1883, and soon after lawmakers across the South passed disfranchisement laws in an effort to “ensure the subordination of African Americans and the dominance of the political and economic elite of the Democratic Party.”⁸⁴ In Texas, this first step toward the exclusion of black citizens from politics started in the 1890s when the state legalized the creation of white primaries.⁸⁵ Shortly after instituting this practice, the Democratic Party solidified its stronghold in 1902 with the passage of the poll tax amendment.⁸⁶ The poll tax, which required voters to pay taxes in the seasons preceding the fall election, prevented citizens—mostly African Americans—from participating in elections. As a result, the southern Democratic Party remained in power in Texas for decades, and Denton was no exception.⁸⁷ Denton’s elite white citizens paid their poll taxes and encouraged their friends and families to do the same in order to maintain their access to voting and control politics across town.⁸⁸

The passage of the poll tax amendment secured white Texans’ stronghold over the second component of Jim Crow, the economy. The ravages of the Civil War and the eradication of slavery ruined the southern economy, forcing the region to create an entirely new labor system. Under President Abraham Lincoln, the South was to cooperate with the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, or the Freedmen’s Bureau, to reestablish the

⁸³ Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-187* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990), 226.

⁸⁴ Michael Perman, *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 273-274.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ “Historical Barriers to Voting,” Texas Politics, The University of Texas at Austin, http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/6_5_3.html, accessed January 27, 2014.

⁸⁸ Federation of Women’s Club (Denton) Minutes, 1918-1920, Women’s Collection, Mary Evelyn-Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, TX, pp. 55a, 57a.

economy and society.⁸⁹ Once Andrew Johnson, who was sympathetic to the southern cause and desired a swift southern economic restoration, ascended to the presidency however, all plans for an economic reconstruction in the South based on racial equality came to a halt.

In the fall of 1865 Johnson issued a decree that stated all confiscated land in the South in Freedmen's Bureau hands would be returned to former owners, and freedmen had the choice of either working for the white planters or face eviction.⁹⁰ Johnson's actions encouraged the creation of the sharecropping system, which heavily favored former plantation and farm owners and looked uncannily similar to indentured servitude, or slavery. Language shifted from "master and slave" to "employer and laborer," and the contracts that millions of landless and illiterate freedmen were forced to sign "not only specified modes of work and payment, but prohibited blacks from leaving plantations, entertaining visitors, or holding meetings without permission of the employer."⁹¹ The contracts that illiterate freedmen were forced to sign were written in elusive language, typically specifying that the majority of crops produced were to pay for room and board, the rest for interest accrued, and food and supplies for their own consumption were purchased on credit.⁹² Within decades, the majority of the South, including Texas, operated under the sharecropping economic system.⁹³ The new system not only assuaged white southerners' bruised egos and restored their sense of superiority but also led to economic success; by the turn of the century, Texas was the leading cotton-producing state in the nation.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*, 64.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹² Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 115.

⁹³ Litwack, "Back to Work: The New Dependency," in *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 387-449.

⁹⁴ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1.

Sharecropping left an overwhelming majority of black southerners in cyclical debt and unable to provide for themselves; it forced them to become dependent on whites for survival.

None of the African Americans in Quakertown were sharecroppers, and less than 10% of Denton's overall population were farmers. However, just outside of Denton the rest of the county was overwhelmingly rural and agricultural.⁹⁵ The majority of African Americans in the remainder of the county were farmers, and it is likely that many of them were sharecroppers.⁹⁶ Denton's African American residents no doubt knew sharecropping existed just a few miles outside of their insulated community and understood the implications of the codependent system. As long as black laborers were under white supervision, they were considered industrious. However, whites viewed those who were self-sufficient as indolent.⁹⁷

Even blacks who were considered industrious could not escape what was arguably the most terrible component of the Jim Crow system. Racial interactions were controlled by Jim Crow. Specifically, black-and-white interactions were constantly scrutinized by the system. If blacks made one move that was not considered acceptable by whites, they were subject to any form of punishment for not staying "in their place." Racial violence occurred on such a regular basis that black children learned firsthand from an early age that they were likely to encounter it.⁹⁸ By the beginning of the twentieth century, thousands of lynchings had occurred across the South, along with countless other forms of racial violence. Recorded numbers indicate that between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 lynchings of African Americans occurred, almost three times as many lynchings of whites.⁹⁹ An overwhelming majority of the total lynchings, 74%, occurred in

⁹⁵ *Denton City Directory 1920.*

⁹⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census, 1920: Stallings, "Harrington, Cassady, and Clark Cemeteries."*

⁹⁷ Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*, 60.

⁹⁸ Litwack, "Baptisms," in *Trouble in Mind*, 3-51.

⁹⁹ Douglas O. Linder, "Lynchings: By State and Race, 1882-1968," University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchstats.html>, accessed September 10, 2014.

states of the former Confederacy, and of those, 86% were black.¹⁰⁰ Also of the total lynchings, 59% occurred in the seven states that make up the Deep South. Of those, 87% were black.¹⁰¹

Beatings and head bashings for crimes such as conversing with white women or arguing over crop prices were so commonplace that they were rarely rendered worthy of being listed in newspapers. In his groundbreaking study *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*, historian Leon Litwack details the everyday experiences, tragedies, and heartbreak that constituted daily life for black southerners. The intimidation and fear, which Litwack describes as ranging from myriad threats to actual lynchings, came at the hands of angry resistant whites following Emancipation: “the limited options, the need to curb ambitions, to contain feelings, and to weigh carefully every word, gesture, and movement when in the presence of whites. To learn to live with this kind of harsh reality became no less than a prerequisite for survival.”¹⁰² He argues that white southerners who believed themselves racially superior employed violence not because of black failure, but because of the alarming rate of black successes that included increasing education, economic advances, and use of political power, all of which were becoming increasingly evident in Quakertown.¹⁰³

Whites in Texas and elsewhere in the South viewed race relations as a social institution that needed constant maintenance and vigilance. They considered controlling and monitoring nearly all blacks’ actions via Jim Crow as progressive, and their contemporary segregation touched all corners of the South. In his aptly named study *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, historian William S. Link identifies the juxtaposition between “segregation” and “progressive”:

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Deep South states are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. Ibid.

¹⁰² Litwack, “Baptisms,” in *Trouble in Mind*, 3-51.

¹⁰³ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, xiii.

Paternalism explains the often erratic behavior of reformers: how they embraced uplift and progress, yet believed in a hierarchy of race and culture; how they were fervent advocates of democracy, yet also endorsed measures of coercion and control. Functioning with an assumption of the superiority of their new, modern culture over rural culture—or over the culture of southern blacks—reformers offered uplift and improvement but wanted to limit local participation and control.¹⁰⁴ Southern towns like Denton employed the Jim Crow system to enforce these limitations.

Despite political exclusion, the debilitating sharecropping system, and thousands of black lynchings across the South, many cities prided themselves on their modern race relations and boasted that they were benevolent to their African American populations.¹⁰⁵ In reality, the intimidation of violence or death for actions deemed unacceptable by whites kept blacks paralyzed in second-class citizenship.¹⁰⁶

There is no known evidence of racial lynchings in Denton, yet hundreds occurred across Texas, including the notorious 1916 lynching of Jesse Washington in Waco, less than 150 miles south of Denton.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of whether or not they actually occurred, it can be assumed that black citizens in the city and county understood they were possible at any given moment. However, other components of Jim Crow were evident in Denton such as limited political involvement via the poll tax and sharecropping just outside city limits. Denton operated under this enforced racial hierarchy, and it appears that by 1920, white citizens determined Quakertown residents were ascending to social positions higher than their white vision stipulated.

¹⁰⁴ Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, xii.

¹⁰⁵ David Fort Godshalk, “Atlanta: Junction of Everything Finest and Most Foul,” in *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 13-34.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid; Litwack, “Baptisms,” in *Trouble in Mind*, 3-51.

¹⁰⁷ James SoRelle, “Jesse Washington Lynching,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jcj01>, accessed March 19, 2015.

CHAPTER 3

RACIAL VIOLENCE AND DENTON'S WHITE POWER STRUCTURE: THE COALITION TO REMOVE QUAKERTOWN

Although there were no known lynchings in the early 1900s in Denton, other instances of racial violence born out of fear had occurred in the North Texas region, beginning with regularity during the Civil War era.¹⁰⁸ This included the 1862 mob lynching of nearly fifty presumed Union sympathizers in the seat of Cooke County, immediately north of Denton County.¹⁰⁹ By the twentieth century, whites in Denton were well aware of national events such as the popular film *The Birth of a Nation* and the race riots of 1919 that reinforced stereotypes of African Americans—mostly black men—as violent and savage. Widespread access to media coverage regarding these events perpetuated these stereotypes. Believing the “violent” negro image was applicable to Quakertown due to its location near the white women’s college, the different branches of the white power structure in Denton came together to secure the removal of what they perceived as a threat to white womanhood.

Early Racial Violence in Denton

One of the earliest instances of recorded racial violence in Denton was the burning of the Fred Douglass School. The school was chartered in Quakertown in 1878, making it one of the

¹⁰⁸ John Ross, “Lynching,” Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jgl01>, accessed March 19, 2015. For more information on lynchings in Denton County, both white and black, during the Civil War, see: Bates, “Secession and War—Our Contribution of Men—Its Effects on the Morals of Our People” in *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*, 95-119.

¹⁰⁹ See: Richard B. McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994).

first buildings in the community.¹¹⁰ Recorded information about the early years of the school is limited, but in 1895 Quakertown homeowner Henry Bell, who was principal of the school until his death in 1913, issued the following statement about Frederick Douglass Colored School after spending a day at a Dallas colored school: “Our observations—First, that with all the modern appliances, school apparatuses, and with an ample supply of teachers, and a programmed schedule of from 35 min. to 45 min. to each recitation, the Denton Col. School—from a stand point of scholarship—is not second to the Dallas schools...”¹¹¹ Records also show that in 1895 there were 162 students present for the first day of class and that two years later the building was used as the meeting site of the Colored Teacher’s County Institute.¹¹² The school, as both an educational institution and a meeting place, was a pillar of the community.

When students arrived at their school on the first day of classes in 1913, they discovered that the building had burned to the ground, an event that never left former Quakertown residents and their families.¹¹³ One Fred Douglass student at the time of the burning was Rosa Lee Daniels, née McColeman, whose family was staying with Principal Bell and his family. When interviewed nearly eighty years later, Daniels recalled the event in great detail. “We wasn’t under Professor Bell and them too long before the school burned,” she explains. “They think somebody set it. They were bound to--wasn’t no electricity or nothing in it. Gas and electricity wasn’t in it. Somebody had to set it.”¹¹⁴ Another Quakertown family who remembers the burning of the Fred Douglass School was the Logan family. In 1920, both John Logan and his son Arthur were

¹¹⁰ Odintz, “Quakertown, TX.”

¹¹¹ H. C. Bell to Denton City Schools Board of Trustees, November 4, 1895, H. C. Bell papers, Michele Glaze Collection, Denton County Office of History and Culture.

¹¹² Editorial, *Denton County News*, September 5, 1895; “Colored Teachers County Institute,” *Dallas Morning News (DMN)*, April 16, 1897.

¹¹³ “Negro Schoolhouse Burns,” *DRC*, September 8, 1913.

¹¹⁴ Rosa Lee Daniels, oral history interview by Michelle Glaze, UNT OH no. 932, March 21, 1992, 11.

Quakertown homeowners.¹¹⁵ John's great-grandson Reginald describes the handed-down story of the burning of the school and the impetus behind it:

The young ladies and people would have to walk through Quakertown to get to the school. So they had asked the community to move. They did not move so they set the school land--the church--on fire. The *next* time they came back, they set it on fire and burned it to the point where it could not be repaired. They put [out] a strong emphasis: that if they didn't want anything else burned the community would relocate.¹¹⁶

The official report of the burning came in the county's only newspaper, the *DRC*. The inconclusive finding listed the cause of the fire as unknown.¹¹⁷ But both Daniels and Logan have memories of the burning of the school as an act of arson, presumably committed by white citizens. The school was rebuilt in a few years' time, yet it was rebuilt not in Quakertown but on the southeast side of Denton, several miles away.¹¹⁸ The burning of the school and subsequent reconstruction on the other side of town sent a foreboding message to the black community.

No comparable acts of violence against the Quakertown community occurred in Denton in the immediate years following the school burning. Nevertheless, the *DRC*'s national news coverage during that time undoubtedly contributed to the white population's already negative perceptions of African Americans. Forms of printed news had been in publication in Denton since 1882, but by the 1910s the *DRC* was the only newspaper for the county.¹¹⁹ Its reputability had put other newspapers out of business, and consequently there were no other local sources from which Denton residents could get their daily news.¹²⁰ The *DRC* was considered an

¹¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920.

¹¹⁶ Reginald Logan, oral history interview by Sheryl Yancey, UNT OH no. 1642, November 28, 2006, 14.

¹¹⁷ "Negro Schoolhouse Burns," *DRC*, September 8, 1913.

¹¹⁸ "Negro School Building Finished," *DRC*, June 8, 1916. It is unknown if the schoolhouse was rebuilt by white citizens, black citizens, city officials, or a combination of any of the above.

¹¹⁹ The *DRC* has remained the only newspaper published in Denton County. David Minor, "Denton Record-Chronicle," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eed15>, accessed June 30, 2014.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

exclusive source of information, and its well-established reputation undoubtedly held considerable sway over its readership.

Denton and the “Violent Negro” Image

Two national events that regularly made front-page news contributed to the “violent negro” image. Repeated praise in the *DRC* for the southern redemption film *The Birth of a Nation* and details of race riots that swept the nation in the summer of 1919 exacerbated growing racial tensions in Denton. The ubiquitous image of the black male rapist was solidified in the national psyche with D.W. Griffith’s film *The Birth of a Nation*, based on Thomas Dixon’s 1905 novel *The Clansman*. Soon after its release in 1915, the motion picture was regarded as “rich in historic values” and was featured across the country.¹²¹ The film claims to promote reconciliation between the North and the South following the Civil War, and it features white actors in blackface portraying African Americans who, following the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, came together to disfranchise white voters and chase white women to satiate their animal-like lust. The film ends with the Ku Klux Klan coming to the rescue just as the society was on the verge of a complete breakdown at the hands of caricatured blacks. The movie was revered nationally soon after its release for its exaggerated portrayals of white virginal victims and black sexual predators.¹²²

The archetype of the black male rapist was certainly not new in the 1910s, but it reached new heights of sensationalism in *The Birth of a Nation*. Historian Donald G. Mathews writes that “masking the political functions of their acts, white men invented a ‘sexual alibi’ for punishing

¹²¹ “The Birth of a Nation: D.W. Griffith’s World’s Mightiest Spectacle,” *DRC*, January 15, 1917.

¹²² D.W. Griffith and Frank E. Woods, *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by D.W. Griffith (1915; Kino on Video, 2002), DVD.

African American men” as a part of enforcing their white vision.¹²³ This alibi served as the thematic basis for *The Birth of a Nation*. If “the political functions of their acts” were the political and economic components of the Jim Crow system, then the black rapist male image was the ideological counterpart, invented to justify white supremacy and legitimize racial violence. The film was touted as the “world’s mightiest spectacle,” and white Americans appeared to accept this ideology.¹²⁴

The Birth of a Nation also filled a void in white revisionist mythology. Historian Davarian Baldwin argues that “*The Birth* represented Reconstruction as an apocalyptic end of days with black savages and interloping white northern race traitors colonizing a plantation South.”¹²⁵ This revisionist mythology, known as the Lost Cause, was integral to enforcing white supremacy and was eagerly welcomed all across the South, including Denton.¹²⁶ When the film debuted in 1915, the closest it came to Denton was Dallas and Fort Worth, both of which are approximately forty miles south of the city. A November 1915 article ran in the *DRC* advertising the showing in Fort Worth, mentioning that extra matinees had been scheduled to avoid the over flow of crowds experienced in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.¹²⁷ It described the film as “The wild rides of the Ku Klux Klans on their deeds of vengeance and mercy for the rescue of the South from terrors worse than those of war.”¹²⁸ At both of the showings in Fort Worth and Dallas, many of Denton’s prominent white residents were present: Reverend M.E. Hudson; real

¹²³ Donald G. Mathews, “The Southern Rite of Human Sacrifice: Lynching and Religion in the South, 1875-1940,” <http://jsr.fsu.edu/mathews.htm>, accessed September 10, 2014.

¹²⁴ “‘The Birth of a Nation’ to Show at Fort Worth Next Week,” *DRC*, November 13, 1915; “The Birth of a Nation: D.W. Griffith’s World’s Mightiest Spectacle,” *DRC*, January 15, 1917.

¹²⁵ Davarian L. Baldwin, “Our Newcomers to the City: The Great Migration and the Making of Modern Mass Culture,” in *Beyond Blackface: African Americans and the Creation of American Popular Culture, 1890-1930*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 166.

¹²⁶ See: Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹²⁷ “‘The Birth of a Nation’ to Show at Fort Worth Next Week,” *DRC*, November 13, 1915.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

estate agent Curvier Lipscomb and his wife, Birdie; teacher Minnie Paschall, whose family could claim ownership of the longest-standing building on the Denton Square; Grace L. Wright, daughter-in-law of William Wright, builder of the Wright Opera House off of the northeast corner of the Denton Square; Nettie Edwards, wife of *DRC* editor and manager; and Miamie Schweer, member of the Denton Federation of Women's Club and wife of banker L.H. Schweer of the First National Bank on the east side of the Denton Square.¹²⁹

The first time the film, advertised as “a red blooded tale of true American spirit,” played in Denton was in January 1917 at the College of Industrial Arts (CIA), chaperoned by professors.¹³⁰ There are no extant roll calls of the Denton residents present for the showings, but it is clear that in 1917 citizens were still eager to view the two-year-old film.¹³¹ A month later, the *DRC* republished a quotation from the *Beaumont Enterprise*, the closest it would come to printing an editorial opinion about the lasting meaning of the film: “This is a time when a glimpse of the past will help us solve the problems of the future. *The Birth of a Nation* will inspire noble thoughts and patriotic deeds.”¹³² The film was mentioned in the *DRC* dozens of times over the course of two years, keeping the “cinematic masterpiece,” which portrayed African Americans as savage, wild beasts who could not contain their violence or their lust, at the forefront of Denton citizens' minds for a prolonged time.

¹²⁹ “Late Personal News,” *DRC*: October 15, 1915, November 20, 1915, November 22, 1915.

¹³⁰ “The Birth of a Nation: D.W. Griffith's World's Mightiest Spectacle,” *DRC*, January 15, 1917.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² “From Another Viewpoint,” *DRC*, February 13, 1917.

College of Industrial Arts Denton		2 NIGHTS WEDNESDAY		JAN. 17	
		MATINEE THURSDAY		THURSDAY JAN. 18	
Prices	Nights \$1.00 Matinee 75c	\$1.50 \$1.00	Seats now on sale at Curtis' Drug Store and at College	No Phone Orders Taken or seats held for this engagement	Nights 8:15 Matinee 2:15
<small>The Most Stupendous Dramatic Spectacle the Reins of Man Has Yet Witnessed and Revealed</small>					
D. W. Griffith's World's Mightiest Spectacle					
Rich in Historic Values	18,000 People	THE BIRTH OF A NATION		3,000 Horses	See This Masterpiece
A Red-Blooded Tale of True American Spirit				Conceived, Inspired, and Created in America	
<small>Ford's Theatre, Washington. Reproduction in the Smallest Detail for the Lincoln Tragedy.</small>			<small>What the Conflict of '61 Meant to Wives and Daughters of the Universe</small>		
<small>See the Decisive Battles of the Civil War, Sherman's March to the Sea.</small>			<small>Grant and Lee at Appomattox, the Tragedy of the Death of Abraham Lincoln</small>		
<small>Cities Built Up and Then Destroyed by Fire.</small>			<small>The Biggest Battles of the Civil War Re-enacted</small>		
<small>Founded on Thomas Dixon's Famous Play "The Clansman"</small>	Cost \$500,000		<small>NOTE—Mr. Griffith's new spectacle "INTOLERANCE" the first and only production he has made since "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" has been proclaimed the artistic triumph of the world. "INTOLERANCE" is now playing at the Liberty Theatre, New York City, and will be soon here later in the season.</small>		
			<small>Mail orders from out of town patrons will be accepted now when accompanied by money order payable to C. A. Trippe, College of Industrial Arts.</small>		
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF TWENTY PIECES					

Image 3.1: Advertisement for viewing of *The Birth of a Nation* at the College of Industrial Arts. *Denton Record-Chronicle*, January 15, 1917.

The second contributor to Denton’s worsening racial climate was news coverage of the 1919 race riots that erupted across the nation. In the course of a single summer, hundreds died and countless more were badly injured in what is now termed the Red Summer by historians. Although race riots had been occurring since before the new century, this wave culminated when Great War soldiers returned home to find that the jobs they had left behind were now occupied by African Americans.¹³³ A 1919 *New York Times* piece, summarized by former executive director of the National Urban League and sociologist George Edmund Haynes, states that the “new industrial contacts between white and negro workers aggravate the problem... It is estimated that during the war period 500,000 negro workers migrated from the South to the North. In whatever northern city they have settled in numbers there is the menace of racial clash...”¹³⁴ The massive relocation of African Americans from the South to the North, which

¹³³ “For Action on Race Riot Peril,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1919, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9C04E7D61F30E033A25756C0A9669D946896D6CF>, accessed January 29, 2014.

¹³³ Ira Berlin, “The Passage to the North,” in *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2010), 152-200.

¹³⁴ “For Action on Race Riot Peril,” *New York Times*.

historians have coined the Great Migration, would continue for decades as thousands of migrants grew into millions. Even in the infancy stage of the Great Migration, the sentiment of “the menace of the racial clash” expressed in Haynes’ article in 1919 still resonated profoundly.¹³⁵

The Red Summer riots took place in the North and in the South, as far north as Washington D.C. and as far west as Arizona. Of the thirty-five riots that occurred during this time, three occurred in Texas.¹³⁶ Nearly all began with white-on-black violence, but unlike antebellum racial violence in which whites expected—and typically received—black subordination, this wave of aggression was met with black retaliation and resistance.¹³⁷ David Fort Godshalk calls these retaliators New Black Men, and argues that “their elitist ideals equated black manliness with intellectual achievement and a courageous willingness to speak out against racial injustice, even in the face of white threats.”¹³⁸ This black resistance did not sit well with white Americans and was enough for them to justify murdering and lynching African Americans by the dozens in 1919.

Although the race riots never reached Denton—the nearest occurring in Longview, Texas, some 165 miles east—Denton residents were well aware of the riots and the new forms of black resistance and retaliation by reading local and national newspapers. In late July 1919, the *DRC* ran a front-page article entitled “Martial Law May Be Necessary to End Washington Race Riot 5 Persons Killed Last Night [sic].”¹³⁹ Less than three months later, the *DRC* ran another article detailing the Elaine, Arkansas race riot, giving it a sensationalistic portrayal: “The Arkansas race rioting, in which there have been probably thirty persons, white or black, seems to have been

¹³⁵ Berlin, “The Passage to the North,” in *The Making of African America*.

¹³⁶ Marilyn Von Kohl, “Riots,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jcr02>, accessed March 26, 2014.

¹³⁷ “For Action on Race Riot Peril,” *New York Times*.

¹³⁸ David Fort Godshalk, *Veiled Visions: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot and the Reshaping of American Race Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 2.

¹³⁹ “Martial Law May Be Necessary to End Washington Race Riot 5 Persons Killed Last Night,” *DRC*, July 22, 1919.

bottomed on the discrimination of rabid propagandist literature among ignorant negroes, making all sorts of promises if the negroes would arm themselves and rise against the whites.”¹⁴⁰ The most accessible news source for Dentonites in 1919 painted a picture of violent, aggressive African Americans. These continuous portrayals in the news of victimized white men and militant black men, combined with the glowing editorial reviews of *The Birth of a Nation*, contributed to white Denton’s perceptions of their own black communities and created racial tension, despite the absence of any actual riots.

Denton’s White Power Structure

White Denton regularly consumed the news of the “violent negro.” Although Denton had a bustling business center on the county courthouse square, its two main economic assets—the Normal College and CIA—and their contributions to Denton’s growth were the impetuses behind most of white Denton’s decisions on city enhancement. When CIA, first known as the Girls Industrial College, was created as a private college in 1901, Quakertown was already an established neighborhood directly to its south. The college was founded as an institute of higher education for white women with a purpose to provide vocational and domestic training for girls to assist in their future roles as wives and mothers, including such courses as home economics, childcare, and nursing.¹⁴¹ The college attracted small-town and rural girls from across the state, and its establishment in a growing town like Denton undoubtedly added to its appeal. Although Denton was expanding, it was still much smaller than its neighboring city Dallas, and had thus

¹⁴⁰ ---, *DRC*, October 2, 1919.

¹⁴¹ Thompson, “Texas Woman’s University.”

been chosen by the state of Texas as the site for the new school, based on the expectation of growth and room for expansion.¹⁴²

The college had been created during the Twenty-seventh Texas Legislature and was the result of decades-long lobbying for a state-funded all-girls school by women's organizations such as the Grange, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Texas Woman's Press Association, as well as various individual lobbyists.¹⁴³ The college's first building, Old Main, opened its doors in 1903 to 186 students and fourteen faculty members.¹⁴⁴ The year 1904 saw the first commencement, and in 1905 the school changed its name to the College of Industrial Arts to reflect the more academic reputation it was hoping to attain. CIA administrators understood that growth of the school would lead to increased state recognition and funding, and thus expansion remained a top priority for the school in its first two decades of existence.

The initial relationship between Quakertown and CIA was solely geographical. When Denton was chosen as the site of the college in 1901, neither the school nor Quakertown were large enough to disrupt one another. But North Texas's constant economic development placed the two institutions in uncomfortably close proximity by 1920. As CIA grew, prominent leaders of both the college and the white community began looking upon Quakertown as a blemish. Despite the community's financial and social achievements, as earlier detailed, white residents honed in on the "mud-lined streets, laundry-filled yards, and profusion of black children," and thus considered Quakertown dirty.¹⁴⁵ Besides regarding Quakertown as a threat for potential CIA students, the residents of Denton took note that the location of CIA just north of the well-

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.; "Brief History of TWU," Texas Woman's University, <http://www.twu.edu/administration/brief-history.asp>, accessed July 11, 2014.

¹⁴⁵ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 6.

established black neighborhood meant that further forms of campus expansion would be stunted.

Chamber of Commerce member H.F. Browder voiced this opinion:

We promised the state of Texas when the CIA was located here that this part of town should be improved and made a beauty spot. That promise is twenty years old and has not been fulfilled. Texas has carried out her part of the contract and placed one of the greatest assets this town ever had on the ground selected that blustery March day but Denton has failed to perform her part of the contract [sic].¹⁴⁶

As noted earlier, Quakertown had been found to be disease-free in 1915.¹⁴⁷ Yet the fact that a committee had been drawn up to conduct a sanitary report of a black neighborhood suggests that white Denton was beginning to look for ways to reinforce black second-class citizenship.

Although the residents of Quakertown co-existed peacefully with the women's college by all accounts, the white population and the college were unwilling to do the same.¹⁴⁸

CIA's inability to coexist with Quakertown worsened under the tutelage of Francis Marion Bralley, who became the third president of the school in 1913. Following a fifteen-year career as a teacher and superintendent, he began a three-year stint as the chief clerk in the State Department of Education in 1905. In 1909, he served as the General Agent of the Texas Conference for Education and the President of the Texas School for the Blind. Later that year, Governor Thomas Campbell appointed him State Superintendent of Public Transportation, a position he held for four years. He worked briefly as the head of the University of Texas Extension Department before coming to CIA in 1913.¹⁴⁹ His extensive résumé and his successful lobbying in 1909 to amend the state constitution to levy local taxes for the sole purpose of

¹⁴⁶ Editorial, *DRC*, April 4, 1921.

¹⁴⁷ "Health and Sanitation Meeting to be Held at Negro School," *DRC*, October 14, 1915.

¹⁴⁸ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 3.

¹⁴⁹ Minor, "Bralley, Francis Marion," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbr18>, accessed April 3, 2013.

maintaining school buildings indicate that he specialized in advancing education expansion across Texas.¹⁵⁰



Image 3.2: Francis Marion Bralley, CIA president 1913-1924.
Photo courtesy of the Mary Evelyn Blagg-Huey Library of Texas
Woman's University.

When Bralley arrived in Denton, CIA's enrollment was 700, and he immediately made school expansion his top priority. Prior to 1913, CIA had only granted two-year degrees. One of Bralley's first steps was to initiate a four-year degree and a college level curriculum in 1914. A year later, the college awarded its first Bachelor of Science degrees.¹⁵¹ All CIA buildings erected

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

before Bralley's arrival were remodeled and expanded under his tenure, and several others were built as well.¹⁵² Bralley also immersed himself in Denton's civic affairs. By 1920, he was the president of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. He was the chairman of the Board of the Christian Church of Denton and president of the Board of Regents of the Normal College. He was also a Mason and a member of the local Knights of Pythias chapter.¹⁵³ He regularly received praise from the *DRC* and also often commanded entire front pages and a majority of the paper's print.¹⁵⁴ In addition to popular support, his experience as a state education employee and his ascension to numerous civic offices made Bralley one of the most powerful men in Denton.

Around the time of Bralley's arrival in Denton, the most pressing civic issue in town was locating a space large enough to house a public park and host the annual county fair. Denton's central location made it the heart of the county, but the town's constant growth and development were slowly encroaching on any land large enough to host the fair and rodeo.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Denton had long been upstaged by Dallas, the largest city in North Texas.¹⁵⁶ Denton citizens had not forgotten that their town had been chosen over Dallas for the CIA, and by 1920 both cities boasted many cultural and social improvements that enhanced quality of life and increased aesthetic appeal.¹⁵⁷ Dallas, however, had one achievement that Denton could not yet match. As

¹⁵² Ella Ernestine Lunday, "The Biography of Francis Marion Bralley, LL.D.," (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, 1925), 228-233.

¹⁵³ Minor, "Bralley, Francis Marion."

¹⁵⁴ "College of Industrial Arts for Girls," *DRC*, October 14, 1915.

¹⁵⁵ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 9; E. Dale Odom, "Denton, Texas (Denton County)," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hed05>, accessed June 30, 2014.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth York Enstam, "City of Women" in *Women and the Creation of Urban Life: Dallas, Texas, 1843-1920* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 96-115.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*; City Federation of Women's Clubs, *History of First Sixteen Years of the City Federation of Women's Clubs, Denton, Texas* (Denton, TX: The City Federation, 1929), 15.

one of the first cities to embrace the nationwide City Beautiful Movement and the new concept of urban planning, Dallas was home to several public city parks by 1920.¹⁵⁸

The City Beautiful Movement was a conscious refashioning of cities by middle- and upper-class citizens.¹⁵⁹ The movement had first appeared in the late nineteenth century in cities such as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Kansas City, Missouri; Denver, Colorado; and Seattle, Washington. Dallas was one of the first cities in the South to embrace it.¹⁶⁰ The movement sought to make public environments aesthetically pleasing around ideals of “beauty, order, system, and harmony.”¹⁶¹ Architecturally designed public buildings, planned road systems, civic centers, and maintained and manicured parks and other green spaces were some of the many physical products of the City Beautiful Movement.

Historian William H. Wilson claims that besides beautifying public spaces, there was another component to the City Beautiful Movement. He argues that it was a political movement that “involved a cultural agenda, a middle-class environmentalism... it demanded a reorientation of public thought.”¹⁶² A large component of the cultural agenda was the fact that city beautiful improvements often required voter approval through bond issues and special elections.¹⁶³ These improvements, then, were done by and for the enjoyment of middle- and upper-class white citizens. That, combined with the fact that the majority of blacks in the South were unable to vote, meant that the City Beautiful Movement sought not only to make areas of town more aesthetically pleasing, but in the process it also clearly defined social class distinctions and stratifications. Both the physical and social products of the City Beautiful Movement were

¹⁵⁸ John H. Slate and Dallas Municipal Archives, *Historic Dallas Parks* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 23.

¹⁵⁹ William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

present in Dallas. Given the amount of time dedicated to following in Dallas's footsteps and also regularly hosting Dallas leaders at luncheons and conventions, it is likely that Denton desired to emulate Dallas's achievements.¹⁶⁴

The idea of a public park had circulated around Denton for years. Articles appeared regularly in the *DRC* calling for the creation of a city park, including an editorial plea as early as 1913.¹⁶⁵ In 1916, Lucy Owsley, wife of Alvin Owsley, Chamber of Commerce member and future American diplomat, held a meeting with the Denton City Federation of Women's Club literature group, the William Shakespeare Club. They discussed plans for a park and asked for potential site recommendations.¹⁶⁶ Nothing came of that meeting, and in April 1919 the Women's Club discussed the issue again. A potential site was available, stemming from an offer from Mrs. C.F. Witherspoon to sell the city five acres in North Denton for \$3,000. The Women's Club appealed to the Chamber of Commerce to purchase the plot, which was declined.¹⁶⁷ A year-and-a-half later in September 1920 there was a discussion of yet another possible site. The land west of the railroad station, just east of the county square, could be converted into a park, and the Daughters of the Confederacy agreed to maintain it if trees were planted.¹⁶⁸ A month later, *DRC* articles were still calling for necessary land for a fairground and park: "Remember that the livestock interest is only one of the reasons why Denton should have a park and a playground. Are you for it or are you against it?"¹⁶⁹ Despite the articles, editorials, meetings, and proposals

¹⁶⁴ Slate and Dallas Municipal Archives, *Historic Dallas Parks*; Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life*; "Need of Park Emphasized in Need for Place to Hold Denton Co. Exhibit," *DRC*, March 1, 1917.

¹⁶⁵ Editorial, *DRC*, March 10, 1913.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Alvin Owsley went on to be a United States Ambassador to many European countries in the 1930s.

¹⁶⁷ City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 44b.

¹⁶⁸ City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 65b-66a. Women's Club records did not state which branch of the United Daughters of the Confederacy agreed to maintain the proposed park, but most likely, it was the Katie Daffan Chapter, as that was the branch that installed the Confederate Memorial on the courthouse lawn in 1918.

¹⁶⁹ "Chamber of Commerce Notes," *DRC*, October 25, 1920.

between 1913 and 1920, the issue remained unresolved and there were no official plans for a park.¹⁷⁰

One possible explanation as to why these previous sites were ignored is that none were big enough for a public park, a fair ground, and a coliseum at which livestock shows could be held.¹⁷¹ Denton Chamber of Commerce Secretary Felix M. Reeves stated that “the thing to do is to get busy and buy a tract of land for park purposes on which this County Exhibit can be held. This County Exhibit is regarded by many of our citizens of the county as well as the city as being one of the best moves made in a while.”¹⁷² Whatever the cause for the delay, Denton was still undecided as to a location for a public park by late 1920.

Having shown past interest in finding grounds for a city park, by the fall of 1920 the Denton Federation of Women’s Clubs (the Women’s Club) had taken it upon themselves to spearhead the movement for a suitable park location.¹⁷³ The Denton branch of the Women’s Club was established in 1913, and like other branches was an invitation- and white-women-only organization. The Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs had been around since 1897, and from the beginning the statewide organization focused on charity and beautification efforts through local branches.¹⁷⁴ All branches had a hierarchical executive order, with over ten active committees overseeing the Denton branch’s efforts at any given time. For example, a 1915 committee assisted in a beautification effort of Quakertown. Notably, this committee, which

¹⁷⁰ Glaze, “The Quakertown Story,” 7. Michelle Glaze argues that “as early as 1914, CIA professor C.N. Adkisson suggested converting the Quakertown property,” which would have been an ominous foreboding of the eventual removal of the neighborhood. However, no records have been found supporting this statement.

¹⁷¹ “Will Ask For Vote on Park Bonds April 5,” *DRC*, December 29, 1920.

¹⁷² “Need of Park Emphasized in Need for Place to Hold Denton Co. Exhibit,” *DRC*, March 1, 1917.

¹⁷³ City Federation of Women’s Club (Denton) Minutes, 65b-66a.

¹⁷⁴ Megan Seaholm, “Texas Federation of Women’s Clubs,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vnt01>, accessed January 21, 2014.

included many members of the Women's Club, worked with Quakertown women to clean up the neighborhood.¹⁷⁵

Although the Texas Federation endorsed suffrage, the majority of white women sought to make changes within the comforts of their domestic and gender roles instead of working to gain entrance into the political arena.¹⁷⁶ Women's activism was a new phenomenon, and in the South a large component of it included the creation of distinct gender roles that reinforced the social, gender, class, and racial hierarchies that were integral to the post-Reconstruction white vision.¹⁷⁷

All of this was evident in Denton in 1920. Most of the members of the Women's Club were wives of prominent Denton businessmen such as doctors, professors, real estate agents, and bankers.¹⁷⁸ Many lived in the massive Victorian homes on Oak Street just west of the county square.¹⁷⁹ While their husbands tended to business and political affairs across town, Denton clubwomen were free to participate in civic work as needed. They promoted themselves as concerned with "civic improvement and civic attraction" and were no strangers to activism.¹⁸⁰

Women's groups were a by-product of the post-Reconstruction era, and activist women across Texas believed "the personal was political."¹⁸¹ In Denton, this belief was manifested in two ways. First, the women saw their activism in public arenas as natural extensions of their domestic roles. By 1920, the successes of the Women's Club included city clean-ups, hosting both a child welfare exhibit and a tuberculosis sanatorium for returning Great War soldiers, raising scholarship funds for students at Denton's two colleges, and calling for higher standards

¹⁷⁵ "Much Interest in Civic Work; Negroes Planning Clean Up," *DRC*, February 28, 1916.

¹⁷⁶ Judith N. McArthur, *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 1.

¹⁷⁷ Joan Marie Johnson, *Southern Ladies, New Women: Race, Region, and Clubwomen in South Carolina, 1890-1930* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ *Denton City Directory 1920*; City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 65a.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 65a.

¹⁸¹ McArthur, *Creating the New Woman*, 1.

of fresh meat and pasteurized milk at the Market Mondays that took place around the county courthouse square.¹⁸² Cleanliness, sanitation, and education were believed to all be part of women's duties in the household, which meant they were acceptable arenas of activism for women outside the home.

Second, many of their efforts physically memorialized the Lost Cause in an effort to reclaim the white authority that had been eradicated at the end of the Civil War. Joan Marie Johnson argues that "white clubwomen embraced a past in which the Confederate cause was just, slavery benign, and slaves racially inferior... white women significantly shaped the culture of the newly segregated South; segregation thus became natural and timeless."¹⁸³ This occurred in Denton in 1918 when clubwomen raised enough funds to install a Confederate Memorial on the south entrance of the county courthouse lawn.¹⁸⁴

Altogether, the Texas clubwomen's actions promoted white supremacy in multiple ways. First, they actively participated in the Jim Crow system by requiring all members' families to be current on their poll taxes so they could vote in all elections, big or small.¹⁸⁵ Second, by containing their activism to arenas of domesticity, the clubwomen reinforced gender roles that limited women's involvement to familial affairs, which simultaneously elevated white men to a protector status. Finally, by installing a Confederate Memorial and participating in city planning efforts such as locating a suitable park district, they were perpetuating Anglo-Saxon dominance in public spaces.

¹⁸² City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 1a-65b.

¹⁸³ Johnson, *Southern Ladies, New Women*, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Denton County Confederate Memorial, Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District, Texas Historical Landmark (2000), ref. no. 1582.

¹⁸⁵ City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 55a, 57a.



Image 3.3: Denton Federation of Women's Club, date unknown. Photo courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

The Vote on Quakertown

The Women's Club had been collaborating with President Francis Bralley since 1918. That year they had voted to "extend to Professor Brally [sic] a vote of thanks for his kind invitation to the members of the Federation to work with the Chamber of Commerce, and that we pledge our support."¹⁸⁶ The year 1918 also saw the beginning of a multi-year collaboration between the Women's Club and the Chamber of Commerce for city clean-ups, which resulted in cleaning out gutters, vacant lots, and alleys and inspecting drug stores, grocery stores, restaurants, cafés, and several hundred homes.¹⁸⁷ A cleaner city was no doubt good for all Denton residents.

The clubwomen made numerous positive changes to the city over the years, yet their activism was noticeably "marred by its lack of compassion toward African Americans."¹⁸⁸ To the white power structure in Denton, Quakertown was considered an embarrassment in an otherwise

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 41a-b.

¹⁸⁷ "Civic Improvement Committee Report Gratifies C. of C.," *DRC*, May 13, 1919; "City Federation Meet Monday, Discusses Important Measures," *DRC*, June 14, 1920.

¹⁸⁸ Enstam, *Women and the Creation of Urban Life*, 109.

gleaming town. Bralley believed that the existence of the black community limited opportunities for campus expansion and was problematic for white citizens. He understood how vital the women's college was to Denton's economy and was aware that many parents were hesitant to send their daughters to a school that bordered a black neighborhood.¹⁸⁹

By late 1920, Bralley had the full support of Denton's business and civic leaders due to his CIA accomplishments. He then focused his attention on Quakertown as the sole limitation to CIA's—and Denton's—growth, and came up with a solution to his problem.¹⁹⁰ During a November meeting of the Rotary Club, he voiced a bold opinion: “[Denton] could rid the college of the menace of the negro quarters in close proximity to the college and thereby remove the danger that is always present so long as the situation remains as it is and that could be done in a business way and without friction [sic].”¹⁹¹ In order to remove the community “in a business way,” he needed to look no further than the Women's Club, which was still searching for a suitable city park location. Bralley's suggestion, although not yet public, was to remove the Quakertown neighborhood and place a park there instead.¹⁹²

Word spread quickly, and by early December 1920 the Women's Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Club officially backed the park movement.¹⁹³ Chamber of Commerce members President Bralley, physician Priestly Lipscomb, and Williams Drug Store owner Baylor Williams led the way.¹⁹⁴ Later that month the CIA hosted the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet. Undoubtedly many members of the Women's Club and CIA faculty were present, as were other citizens and farmers who were eager to hear about the proposed solutions for a new

¹⁸⁹ Glaze, “The Quakertown Story,” 6.

¹⁹⁰ Lunday, “The Biography of Francis Marion Bralley, LL.D.,” 228-233.

¹⁹¹ “College Relations to Local Business Told to Rotarians,” *DRC*, November 19, 1920.

¹⁹² Glaze, “The Quakertown Story,” 9.

¹⁹³ “Rotary Club Will Help with Park Project,” *DRC*, December 16, 1920.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

park and fairground.¹⁹⁵ At the banquet, Bralley announced Quakertown as the chosen site for the new park.¹⁹⁶ His suggestion provided a threefold solution. Not only would removing the Quakertown residents provide room for both a new civic center park and CIA expansion, but most importantly it would also relocate the black neighborhood from the center of town to the outskirts.¹⁹⁷ This solution would alleviate white Denton's perceived threats by the middle-class black community, and it was praised by all in attendance at the banquet.¹⁹⁸

Within a few days, the proposal became a full-fledged movement across town and even garnered support from the working-class Denton Carpenters Union.¹⁹⁹ On December 29, 1920, the *DRC* officially reported that Quakertown was chosen as the new park site.²⁰⁰ On the same day, the *DRC* ran an article detailing a brawl in a Quakertown lodge that led to the near-arrest of ten men and women.²⁰¹ It is unclear whether the two events were connected, but it is likely that the brawl had something to do with the announcement of Quakertown as the potential park location.

Citizens filed a petition with the city on January 18, 1921, in favor of including the civic center park on the election ballot. The petition, which called for the sale of \$75,000 in bonds to purchase the Quakertown land, was backed heavily by CIA administration and faculty.²⁰² City commissioners W.B. McClurkan, James Wright, John Alexander, De Kalb Allison, and William

¹⁹⁵ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 9.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ "Will Ask for Vote on Park Bonds April 5," *DRC*, December 29, 1920.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas," 6.

²⁰² "\$75,000 Park Bond Petition in Circulation," *DRC*, January 18, 1921; "Petition Completed Asking for Election on Park Bond Issue," *DRC*, February 22, 1921.

Long accepted the petition.²⁰³ The vote, which became known as the Park Bond Issue, was scheduled for April 5, 1921.

Denton's clubwomen once again took up the call to civic action. The first three months of 1921 saw an extensive door-to-door campaign in which the Women's Club canvassed the entire town, exhorting residents to vote in favor of the new park.²⁰⁴ As many as 607 people showed up to vote in the special election on April 5, and the results favored white Denton; 367 voted in support of the new park, 127 more than those who had voted against it.²⁰⁵ Quakertown would be removed.

²⁰³ "Election Ordered for April 5th," *DRC*, February 23, 1922; *Denton City Directory 1920*, 2.

²⁰⁴ City Federation of Women's Clubs, *History of First Sixteen Years of the City Federation of Women's Clubs, Denton, Texas*, 15.

²⁰⁵ "Park Bonds Carried by 127 Majority: Vote was 367 to 240; New Territory is Admitted to City," *DRC*, April 6, 1921.

CHAPTER 4

WHITE SUPREMACY IN DENTON: REINFORCING BLACK SUBMISSION AND FORGETTING QUAKERTOWN

Although the Park Bond Issue had passed and the removal was eminent, Quakertown residents still attempted to challenge the decision. It was a fruitless effort, however, as white Denton came together in the years following the special election to enforce the black community's removal. This time the white coalition was not limited to Denton's powerful and elite. Everyday white citizens banded together, ensuring the black community was relocated to the outskirts of town. Participation from the enlarged white front ranged from simply signing a petition to carrying out KKK violence against the black community. By 1923, all homes in Quakertown had been transferred to Solomon Hill. The new park would be open by the end of the decade, and Denton was on its way toward forgetting Quakertown ever existed.

Removing Quakertown

Responses to the verdict among Quakertown residents varied. Several residents, including Dr. Moten and landlords Wylie Burr and Ross Hembry, understood the confines of working with the white power structure and formed a committee days after the verdict in hopes of assisting the city commissioners in locating a new neighborhood for their community.²⁰⁶ Others were less willing to compromise. Will Hill and his son, T.C. were both Quakertown homeowners when the Park Bond Issue passed.²⁰⁷ The elder Hill was a self-identified laborer known throughout the community as "Dollar Bill" Hill—an affectionate nickname that reflected

²⁰⁶ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 8.

²⁰⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, 1920.

his well-known wealth.²⁰⁸ “Dollar Bill” was so incensed at the city’s decision to displace his family and community that he proceeded to file a lawsuit, which his grandson, Fred Hill, recalls:

When they displaced him, [my grandfather] showed resentment for it. He filed a lawsuit but was persuaded to not carry through after being threatened with injury to his family, to his grandchildren. Lacking protection for his family, he decided he didn’t want any harm to come to them, his granddaughter, my oldest sister. So he backed down.²⁰⁹

The threat of “Dollar Bill’s” lawsuit as well as the formation of a committee were both useless attempts though, as the city commissioners “were favorable to a segregation district for the negroes in order that they may be protected for the future.”²¹⁰ What had begun as a seemingly altruistic move among white citizens for a much-needed public park was quickly unraveling to reveal a calculated cover-up to a racist maneuver. Quakertown residents were not only going to be removed from their community due to their vicinity to the white women’s college, but they were also not allowed to be a part of the process that would determine where they would be relocated.

²⁰⁸ Debbie Denmon, oral history interview by Sherelyn Yancey, UNT OH no. 1634, December 4, 2006, 25.

²⁰⁹ Fred Hill, oral history interview by Sherelyn Yancey, UNT OH no. 1625, November 6, 2006, 6. A note on Will Hill’s lawsuit: Although the story of Hill’s lawsuit is well documented in oral history interviews and other forms of Denton’s history, no credible documentation—such as something from Denton County Court Records—has come available that supports this claim. Many possibilities as to why this is exist, including that perhaps the lawsuit was destroyed at one point; that Hill never filed the suit in the first place and just simply spoke so much about it that that was a threat to white Denton itself; or that documentation does exist and has just never been found.

²¹⁰ “Protection to be Given in Moving Negroes,” *DRC*, April 8, 1921.

Image 4.1:

Denton, Texas
Apr. 25, 1921

To the city Commissioners and Official Capacity:-

Greeting:- We your committee representing citizens in Park Bond Issue plz [please] beg leave to submit the following report.

After careful consideration and investigation we have found land available, no permanent location accepted. We are asking that you give this matter your careful and favorable consideration.

We, as citizens are making an earnest appeal that all properties be worth. We will be able to make permanent location after settlement is made. Hoping this report will meet your approval.

Signed
J. W. Burr (chairman)
M. Mays
Ross Hembry
(Mrs.) E. D. Jones (Sec)

Citizens Committee Letter

Denton, Texas
Apr. 25, 1921

To the city Commissioners and Official Capacity:-

Greeting:- We your committee representing citizens in Park Bond Issue plz [please] beg leave to submit the following report.

After careful consideration and investigation we have found land available, no permanent location accepted. We are asking that you give this matter your careful and favorable consideration.

We, as citizens are making an earnest appeal that you give compensation that all property is worth. We will also be able to make permanent location after settlement is made.

Hoping this report will meet your approval.

Signed
J.W. Burr (chairman)
M. Mays
Ross Hembry
(Mrs.) E.D. Jones

Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 8.

A few months after the verdict, the city took its first steps towards securing the Quakertown land. In June 1921, the city commissioners completed a transcript specifying the details of the bond sales and sent it to Austin to be approved by the state Attorney General.²¹¹ A Park Board Committee was formed in late September 1921 by the city commissioners. Members of the committee included grocer and city commissioner William Long, bankers Walter Smoot and Matt Deavenport, Professor James St. Clair, lawyer John Speer, *DRC* editor W.C. Edwards, and Maurice Whitlock, Effie Sledge, and Jennie Turrentine.²¹² A month later the committee visited Quakertown residents with instructions to buy their property outright if a reasonable price

²¹¹ "Expect to Have Park Bond Record Finished This Week," *DRC*, June 9, 1921.

²¹² "Official Notice of Park Board Appointments Given: Early Meeting Suggested," *DRC*, October 1, 1921.

could be agreed upon.²¹³ Although the commissioners were technically purchasing the lots in Quakertown on behalf of the city, they also took on the responsibility of disposing of the structures in the area. Quakertown homeowners had the choice of having their homes physically relocated to a new district, which was still undetermined in autumn 1921, or selling their homes to the city to be demolished. The first homes were purchased by the city in October 1921, signaling the beginning of the end of Quakertown.²¹⁴

By May 1922, the removal of the black neighborhood was underway. City commissioners and Park Board Committee members visited Quakertown regularly to discuss appraisals and estimates with the homeowners.²¹⁵ In some instances, residents gave estimations that were considered reasonable to the commissioners and their land was purchased immediately.²¹⁶ More often than not, however, the city commission considered the asking prices too high.²¹⁷ The negotiations caused a standstill, and only a handful of homes had been purchased by May.

Both the white and black communities discussed several possible locations for the new neighborhood. One potential area, directly east of CIA, was so favorable to Quakertown residents that Henry Maddox sold his property to the city and had his houses and buildings relocated to the area in early summer 1922. He purchased twenty acres with the intention to sell some of the land to the neighbors he believed would surely follow.²¹⁸ However, within two weeks of Maddox's settlement, Bralley publicly disapproved of his relocation: "If they were

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ "Fair Valuations Given on Bulk of City Park Lands: Commission Committee Partially Completes Work of Valuation," *DRC*, October 5, 1921.

²¹⁵ "First Land in Park Site Purchased Monday Night; City to Help Negroes in Securing Desirable New Location," *DRC*, May 23, 1922.

²¹⁶ "Park Bond Money Available Tuesday; City Commission in Now Making Final Appraisal of Property in Park Site," *DRC*, May 17, 1922; "Park Commission Will Hold its First Session Friday," *DRC*, May 20, 1922.

²¹⁷ "Park Commission Will Hold its First Session Friday," *DRC*, May 20, 1922.

²¹⁸ "Negroes Warned Not to Move East of CIA," *DRC*, June 30, 1922.

allowed to settle east of the CIA we would have about the same condition we are trying to remedy by buying their property for a park site.”²¹⁹

Around the same time, two petitions were circulating throughout Denton, both specifying limitations to where the black community should settle. The first petition stated that the displaced community be relocated south of McKinney Street and east of the railroad tracks. The second petition requested the community be relocated southwest of the city cemetery near the Frederick Douglass School in the southeast portion of Denton. These locations were on the undeveloped and undesirable outskirts of town.²²⁰ Both of the petitions, which went before the city commissioners, garnered hundreds of signatures within days of circulation.²²¹

A week after the petitions, Maddox was visited by two white citizens, tax collector B.M. Hammett and grocery store owner George Elbert.²²² Hammett and Elbert advised Maddox that he was not allowed to live east of CIA and offered to facilitate the sale of the land so he could get back what he paid for it.²²³ On the same day, two notices also mysteriously appeared in Quakertown. The anonymous notes read: “Negroes Take Notice... No building, no moving east of CIA, north of the R.R. or south of Jase Walker’s. Those already there will be given time to sell there [sic] property and move. Understand?”²²⁴ White Denton made it clear that it did not want the black community near the white women’s college or other specific parts of town.

Although the city’s process of buying homes was well underway by July 1922, no satisfactory area to relocate the displaced community had been selected. Later that month, white landowner Albert Miles, who owned land east of the county courthouse on the other side of the

²¹⁹ “Over Two Hundred...” *DRC*, June 23, 1922.

²²⁰ What would become the new neighborhood for the displaced community, Solomon Hill, encompassed parts of both of these areas.

²²¹ “Over Two Hundred...” *DRC*, June 23, 1922; “Petition Asks that Negroes be Located South of Cemetery,” *DRC*, June 23, 1922.

²²² *Denton City Directory 1920*, 36, 29.

²²³ ---, *DRC*, July 1, 1922.

²²⁴ “Negroes Warned Away From Denton Settlement,” *DMN*, July 1, 1922.

railroad depot, approached the city commissioners about selling his land to the former Quakertown residents. His motives were hardly altruistic. Miles was badly in debt and his land was about to be foreclosed upon.²²⁵ Desperate to start transferring the Quakertown homes, the city commissioners agreed to Miles's offer as a suitable location for the displaced Quakertown residents.²²⁶ This area, which was near an open sewage pit, has been described by local historians as "a converted cow pasture with no utilities and a severe mosquito problem."²²⁷ Soon after Miles's offer, the city began moving homes. Hoisted up on logs and pulled by mules at midnight, homes were dragged—one by one—to the new, segregated neighborhood now known as Solomon Hill.

Unsurprisingly, many Quakertown residents did not want to sell their homes. Several, in an act of mild resistance, waited as long as possible before conceding.²²⁸ Around this same time, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which was experiencing a resurgence across the South, appeared in Denton.²²⁹ It is unknown whether there was a Klan chapter in Denton, but two of the state's largest and most active KKK chapters were each less than fifty miles away. The Dallas Klan No. 66 was formed in late 1920, and the Fort Worth Klan No. 101 followed approximately six months later.²³⁰ Due to its vicinity to Denton, one of the two chapters probably considered

²²⁵ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 13.

²²⁶ "New Negro Colony to Be Known as Solomon Hill," *DRC*, July 13, 1922.

²²⁷ "Lost History Found: Denton Group to Commemorate Forced Exodus of Blacks," *DMN*, February 23, 1991; Kim Cupit, "Brief History of Quakertown, Denton, Texas," The Trails of Denton County, <https://sites.google.com/site/trailsofdentoncounty/Home/denton-city-trails>, accessed April 3, 2013.

²²⁸ Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 00186, 74, January 17, 1923; Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 00180, 587, August 12, 1922; Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 00181, 303, May 31, 1922; Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 12.

²²⁹ For a more detailed account of how the 1920s KKK grew as rapidly and amassed as many members as it did, see: Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²³⁰ Mark Noland Morris, "Saving Society through Politics: The Ku Klux Klan in Dallas, Texas, in the 1920s," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Texas, 1997), 40; Charles Alexander, *Crusade for Conformity: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, 1920-1930* (Houston: Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, 1962), 5.

Denton part of its jurisdiction.²³¹ Charles Alexander argues that the resurgence of the KKK in Texas “must be attributed to the white Protestant citizen’s reaction against the postwar crime wave and the supposed moral breakdown spreading over the state.”²³² Although “the postwar crime wave”—the race riots—did not touch Denton, the KKK’s appearance at the same time Quakertown residents resisted leaving their neighborhood near CIA suggests white citizens interpreted the black resistance as a form of moral breakdown.

The KKK in Denton

The KKK, whose members referred to themselves as the Invisible Empire due to the anonymity afforded them by their white and hooded regalia, had first offered its opinion on the Quakertown matter in December 1921 when they left a \$50 contribution to a city charity and a note for the *DRC*: “The KKK stands for law and order. It stands for the protection of the sanctity of the home and the purity of young girls—college girls who are without the immediate parental guidance.”²³³ The language of their note—specifically the line of the “purity of young girls”—evoked the aforementioned racist rhetoric of *The Birth of a Nation* and hinted that white womanhood at CIA was compromised by the neighboring black community.

Until summer 1922, white Denton had been civil when discussing and facilitating the removal of the Quakertown homes. However, once the KKK arrived in Denton that summer, the remainder of the relocation was tinged with violence. Norvell Reed, née Hill, was born in Quakertown in 1921 and was a toddler when her family was relocated to Solomon Hill. When interviewed in 2006, she recalled her family’s stories of KKK activity that exacerbated the

²³¹ No records have come available yet stating whether or not there was a Klan chapter in Denton, but due to the intense secrecy of the KKK regarding their historical documents it is not something that can be entirely ruled out.

²³² Alexander, *Crusade for Conformity*, 7.

²³³ “K.K.K. Denies All Responsibility for Purported Notices,” *DRC*, December 23, 1921.

trauma of the black community's removal to the new, segregated neighborhood. "I think that my mother said my uncle, my daddy's brother, had the first house moved over here," she explains. "They said the Klan or some of them set it on fire... I don't know if they just *knew* that it was the Klan, [it was] just [people] that resented [the sale of the property to African Americans]. They did it to let [the blacks] know that they resented it that much [sic]."²³⁴

Indeed, many in the white community were displeased that Miles had sold his land to the black community. Reverend Willie Clark was also a Quakertown homeowner when the verdict was passed. In the summer of 1922, he and his brother were helping Miles clear land for the new community when hooded riders with guns started circling the area.²³⁵ Clark recalled Miles directing them to hide until further notice: "Get behind this log and don't shoot unless I tell you to."²³⁶ The brothers must have hidden well, as no altercation occurred and no shooting took place on that day in Denton.

Although there had been no physical violence that day on Miles's farm, the KKK and their vitriolic rhetoric nonetheless still maintained a stronghold in Denton in 1922. In early August of that year, Reverend W. A. Hamlett of Austin gave a speech on the county courthouse lawn entitled "The Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." The lecture was heavily advertised in the *DRC*, with women and children "cordially invited."²³⁷ Mayor H. V. Hennen warmly welcomed Hamlett to the crowd, and hundreds of Dentonites came out to hear his words: "What's the difference in disguising the body to look like an Indian and disguising in other ways? To be sure, I'd rather choose a color nearer white than one nearer black. Thus the first instance on record of men taking the law into their own hands and disguising their bodies were

²³⁴ Reed UNT OH no. 1638, 65, 6.

²³⁵ "Exhibit Digs Into Quakertown's History," *DRC*, July 21, 2002.

²³⁶ Clark, UNT OH no. 1636, 18.

²³⁷ "The Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan..." *DRC*, August 2, 1922.

perpetrated in New England and not in the South.”²³⁸ Hamlett’s words implied that men with a body color closer to white than to black were the originators of order, implying that those who were white were aligned with law and civilization, and those who were black were aligned with anarchy and barbarianism. The audience of white Denton citizens, standing on the courthouse lawn, lauded Hamlett’s presentation.²³⁹

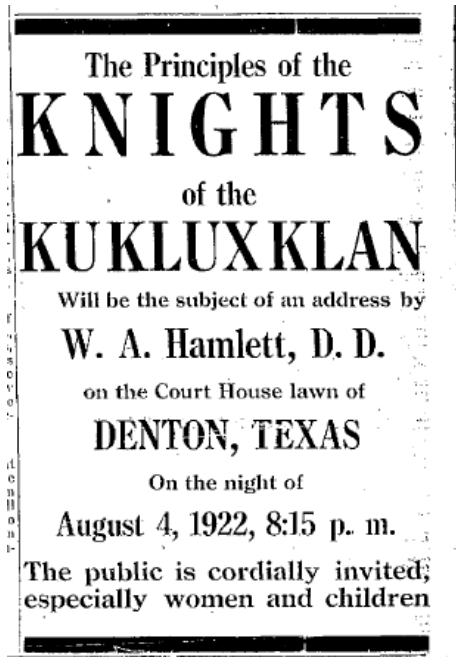


Figure 4.2: Advertisement for the KKK in Denton, *Denton Record-Chronicle*, August 2, 1922.

Within a month’s time after the rousing speech, at least three Klan initiation meetings were held in Denton. The first occurred a week-and-a-half after Hamlett’s appearance, when the St. James A.M.E. church choir was coincidentally performing on the county courthouse lawn. *DRC* reporter Gladys Wright was kidnapped from the crowd, placed in a car, and driven about half a mile north of the city to a field where she was forced to witness the initiation of ninety-six Klansmen.²⁴⁰ The next night, 163 more members were inducted.²⁴¹ The next initiation, which

²³⁸ “Principles of Klan Defended by Speaker Before Large Crowd,” *DRC*, August 5, 1922.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ “Klansmen Initiate Candidates in Field Just North of City,” *DRC*, August 16, 1922.

occurred on September 5, took place about two miles north of Denton, also in a field. At least 200 Klansmen attended to witness this induction of thirty-five more members.²⁴²

With hundreds of new members in one month, the KKK quickly became a prominent force in Denton by autumn 1922. Most former Quakertown residents were resettled in Solomon Hill by this time and were in the process of reestablishing their community. Plans were approved by the city to begin construction on a new St. James A.M.E. Church building to replace the one that had been demolished in Quakertown.²⁴³ In the interim, many churches and organizations had been sharing a temporary tabernacle located near the Alliance Mill Plant to conduct their services and gatherings.²⁴⁴ That September, the tabernacle was used for a revival of the Holy Roller faith, a sect of Protestantism that is characterized “by spontaneous expressions of emotional excitement,” such as individuals rolling on the ground or speaking in tongues when believed to be touched by the Holy Spirit.²⁴⁵

On the evening of September 5, immediately following the previous Klan initiation, six hooded and robed men carrying a lighted cross entered the tabernacle in the middle of a Holy Roller service and silently handed the pastor a note saying, “Worship God, but go pick cotton.”²⁴⁶ The next day, city attorney E. O. Hooper began an investigation to determine who the hooded men were. He stated he could positively identify four of the members, but without sufficient evidence he did not name his suspects.²⁴⁷ The ability to identify suspected individuals without evidence suggests Hooper was either familiar with purported members of the KKK or

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² “Klan Initiation Held in Field Near Town Tuesday,” *DRC*, September 6, 1922.

²⁴³ “Work on African Methodist Church to Be Started Soon,” *DRC*, September 26, 1922.

²⁴⁴ Today the Alliance Mill Plant is the Morrison Milling Company Plant.

²⁴⁵ Merriam-Webster Online, s.v. “Holy Roller,” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holy%20roller>, accessed April 3, 2014.

²⁴⁶ “Robed and Hooded Men Give Notice to Negro Holy Rollers,” *DRC*, September 6, 1922.

²⁴⁷ “Would Identify Hooded Men Who Wrote Negroes,” *DMN*, September 7, 1922.

was a member himself. He soon dropped the investigation, an action further implying a possible working relationship with members of the Invisible Empire.

Two weeks later, a Protestant Holy Roller meeting at the tabernacle was once again interrupted. This time, attendees were pelted with over a dozen eggs while they were trying to conduct the service.²⁴⁸ None attending the service saw who threw the eggs, and by the time City Marshal Joe Young and City Officer Ed Stallings arrived, there was no one outside the building. Their official comment was that “city and county officers...had no clues to the identity of the persons who bombarded the negro Holy Roller meeting.”²⁴⁹ Two instances in a row in which no perpetrators were caught or identified suggests that these injustices towards the black community were carried out not only by the hooded whites but also by the justice system. However, the Protestants continued with their revival.

The perpetrators, likely incensed by the black religious determination, were keen to continue enforcing their message of racial superiority. On the evening of September 25, less than a week after eggs were pelted at the revivalists, the tabernacle building was set on fire and burned completely to the ground.²⁵⁰ No evidence was ever discovered to determine whether the fire was set by an arsonist, but the city police admitted that an attempt to ignite the structure had been reported the night before.²⁵¹ As with all of the other investigations into the offenses against the tabernacle, no suspects were ever named for the incident, and it too was soon dropped.

Within a few months after the Holy Roller violence, all of the families and homes had been removed from Quakertown. Many who were financially able to leave Denton did so:

²⁴⁸ “Officers Have No Clue as to Persons Who Threw Eggs into Negroes’ Tabernacle,” *DRC*, September 21, 1922.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ “Tabernacle at Negro Meeting Destroyed by Fire; Probe of Origin of Blaze to Be Made” *DRC*, September 26, 1922.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Longtime drug store porter John Logan and his family; Burt Crawford, owner of Citizen's Undertaking Parlor, and his family; his father Ford Crawford, owner of Crawford's Grocery Store, and his wife; Dr. Edwin Moten, the community's only black physician, and his family; Charlie Rucker, longtime barbershop clerk, and his wife; and L. L. Allen, a fifteen-year barber in Quakertown.²⁵² The homes of those who had moved away or did not have their houses relocated to Solomon Hill were torn down by the city. The homes of others, who continually refused the city's offers, were eventually condemned by the city and subsequently torn down.²⁵³ The rest had been hauled away from the vicinity of the white women's college in the center of town to the southeast side across the railroad tracks, which eventually became known as "Shack Town," a nod to the neighborhood's undesirability.²⁵⁴ Many, like gardener Henry Taylor, were now too far away to walk to their places of employment and had to acquire transportation.²⁵⁵ Once black residents were in Solomon Hill there was nothing to do other than focus on reestablishing their community that had been dismantled, and for the most part they did not talk about the experience of the relocation.²⁵⁶

²⁵² Logan, UNT OH no. 1642, 13; "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, December 2, 1922; January 13, 1923; April 28, 1923; May 26, 1923; December 23, 1923.

²⁵³ "Exhibit Digs into Quakertown's History," *DRC*, July 21, 2002.

²⁵⁴ *Denton City Directory 1923*; Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas," 9; Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 13.

²⁵⁵ "Lost History Found: Denton Group to Commemorate Forced Exodus of Blacks," *DMN*, February 23, 1991.

²⁵⁶ Clark, UNT OH no. 1636, 24-25; Betty Kimble, oral history interview by Chelsea Stallings, UNT OH no. 1822, April 25, 2013, 17; Williams, UNT OH no. 1637, 31.



Image 4.3: Bert Crawford, owner of Citizen's Undertaking Mortuary, left Denton when Quakertown was dismantled. Photo courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

Creating Solomon Hill

By 1923, all of the homes were out of the former Quakertown neighborhood, and the land was being cleared and prepared for construction on the new park. Solomon Hill residents worked to reinstate much of what had been lost in the relocation, which over time grew to include “a

grocery store, cleaners, a movie theater... all kinds of restaurants, [and a] funeral home.”²⁵⁷

Although there was never an official city rule banning their presence, the residents who had established the vibrant and thriving community of Quakertown no longer felt welcome to visit the area of town that now housed the park that replaced their homes. Reverend Willie Clark never trusted white people again, and as his wife Alma later recalled, “He didn’t even want to go down into [the park] or go near it, because he did not like the memories that it brought about.”²⁵⁸

In 1928, a new Women’s Club building was finished, making it the first new structure on the park property, now called Civic Center Park.²⁵⁹ The park was open to the public soon after. The central area of town, which had previously been undesirable in the eyes of white Denton, had been transformed into a “beauty spot.”



Image 4.4: White Denton residents in Civic Center Park, circa 1930. Photo courtesy of the Denton County Office of History and Culture.

²⁵⁷ Not discussing Quakertown: “Quakertown Discussed,” *DRC*, February 20, 2000; “Lost History Found,” *DMN*, February 23, 1991. Construction of Solomon Hill: Kimble, UNT OH no. 1822, 28.

²⁵⁸ Clark, UNT OH no. 1636, 19-20.

²⁵⁹ City Federation of Women’s Clubs, *History of First Sixteen Years of the City Federation of Women’s Clubs, Denton, Texas*, 15-21.

Solomon Hill residents not only created their new neighborhood, but also made it a point to consecrate their community in a way they had not done in Quakertown. A new park in Solomon Hill was established in 1947, and residents overwhelmingly voted to name it Fred Moore Park in honor of the Douglass School principal with a thirty-year tenure.²⁶⁰ In 1948, the Fred Douglass School building that had stood in the neighborhood since the 1910s was razed and rebuilt.²⁶¹ Two years later, in 1949, the school was renamed Fred Moore High School, also for the beloved principal.²⁶² That same year, the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church building, which had survived the relocation from Quakertown, was torn down and reconstructed.²⁶³ In the late 1950s, Solomon Hill citizens successfully petitioned to the city council to repurpose an unused building in the neighborhood into a community senior center and meeting hall.²⁶⁴ The St. James A.M.E. Church, which had been one of the first buildings constructed in Solomon Hill, was revered as the oldest building in the neighborhood and as a pillar of the community.²⁶⁵

As time passed and new generations were born, the story of Quakertown faded away among both white and black Denton communities.²⁶⁶ Those who were old enough to experience the relocation had not spoken of it in years, as the experience had left them “heartbroken.”²⁶⁷ Consequently, their children, who were experiencing the transition from Fred Moore School to Denton High School during integration, did not know of their neighborhood’s past and origins.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁰ Sadie Moore, *Fred Moore: Narration in the First Person* (Denton, TX: Terrill Wheeler Printing, 1984), 24.

²⁶¹ “Negro School Building Finished,” *DRC*, June 8, 1916; Fred Moore High School, “About Fred Moore High School,” <http://www.dentonisd.org/domain/5864>, accessed August 17, 2014.

²⁶² Fred Moore High School, “About Fred Moore High School.”

²⁶³ Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, “About Pleasant Grove Baptist Church,” <http://pgmbcofdenton.org/about.php>, accessed August 17, 2014.

²⁶⁴ Kimble, UNT OH no. 1822, 28.

²⁶⁵ Texas Historic Marker Designation, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church.

²⁶⁶ “Work on African Methodist Church to Be Started Soon,” *DRC*, September 26, 1922; Williams, UNT OH no. 1637, 31.

²⁶⁷ Clark, UNT OH no. 1636, 25.

²⁶⁸ Williams, UNT OH no. 1637, 77-78.

Amidst the national tumult of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, black and white women from many of Denton's churches came together to form the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship. The organization was formed by no more than five mothers who wanted to integrate their young children during developmental stages, and initially the group had an "informal agenda."²⁶⁹ Founding member Dorothy Adkins recalls this initial goal, which was simply to "expand our group in just understanding and knowing about each other... the first aim was just to get acquainted and understand what was going on in both communities and what was important to both communities and ways that we could increase that friendship and that understanding."²⁷⁰ They held public integrated picnics, alternated meetings between the white and black neighborhoods, and frequently attended each other's churches to increase visibility.²⁷¹ Once the black and white women were comfortable around one another, the group took on more of an activist role. They tackled issues such as paving streets, raising awareness to ensure African Americans were not segregated in public places like movie theaters and department stores, establishing an interracial preschool, and regularly hosted events such as voter registration drives and job fairs.²⁷² The Fellowship disbanded in the 1970 with nearly eighty members, feeling that "specific goals had been achieved."²⁷³

By the 1970s, Denton—or at least its white and black churchwomen—believed harmonious integration had been successfully reached. This achievement partially stemmed from the assumption that Solomon Hill had always existed as it was. Will Hill's grandson, Charles Williams, recalls perceptions from his youth about the house he grew up in the 1970s: "I don't

²⁶⁹ Dorothy Adkins, oral history interview by Richard Byrd, UNT OH no. 705, November 17, 1987, 10; Byrd, "Interracial Cooperation in a Decade of Conflict," 36, 50, 44.

²⁷⁰ Adkins, UNT OH no. 705, 7.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 15.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 9-10, 18, 24, 29.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22; Byrd, "Interracial Cooperation in a Decade of Conflict," 52.

remember, I don't know where it came from. I don't know if it was moved there. We never discussed it until I got older, even the fact that my grandparents and great-grandparents were forced to move. It was never brought up until I was older, much older."²⁷⁴ Williams' recollections from his childhood represent the uncontested belief about Solomon Hill, which was the product of fifty years' worth of silence about Quakertown within the black community coupled with the consecration of an alternate black history in Denton. Buildings, homes, community institutions, and organizations that were established after the forced relocation had existed longer than Williams's generation could remember.

Black Denton did not speak of their relocation out of shame and humiliation; white Denton's silence on the topic—acknowledging neither Quakertown's existence or whites' own role in demolishing the black community—was largely due to apathy. White Denton had been eager to forget Quakertown as soon as it was removed and thus had no reason to question Solomon Hill's origins by the 1980s and 1990s, either. University of North Texas (UNT) graduate student Richard Byrd, who had conducted numerous oral history interviews with former Interracial Fellowship members, concluded in a 1991 *Oral History Review* article that “although a distinct minority, Denton blacks had little to fear from the white townspeople, for unlike a large number of Southern communities, the town did not have a history of racially motivated violence.”²⁷⁵ Byrd's conclusion, while incorrect, was drawn from the words and memories of dozens of Denton residents, both white and black, in the 1980s. Norvell Reed, who detailed violence towards Quakertown residents in a 2006 interview, painted a different picture when she was interviewed by Byrd in 1988:

I'm from a family of five children. My maiden name was Hill before I married. I'm a member of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church... I had a happy life growing

²⁷⁴ Williams, UNT OH no. 1637, 31.

²⁷⁵ Byrd, “Interracial Cooperation in a Decade of Conflict,” 38.

up ... I just had a real good life coming up, a nice school life. I don't have any bad memories... I lived right here in town. I was born and reared right here on this street -- not at this house but just up on the next block. I grew up right around here.²⁷⁶

It is unknown why Reed told Byrd that she had been born in Solomon Hill, when eighteen years later she would tell a different story to another interviewer.²⁷⁷ The practice of African Americans tailoring stories for different audiences has been debated by historians before.²⁷⁸ Regardless, it is unlikely that in 1988 Byrd would have had any reason to doubt the memories of Reed, then a sixty-seven-year-old lifelong Denton citizen and activist, and several other Denton residents. Reed's story, along with Byrd's conclusion drawn from multiple similar memories, suggest that Quakertown had been effectively erased from Denton's history and memory by 1991.

Discovering Quakertown

The timing of Byrd's 1991 conclusion could not have been more ironic, for two years prior a Denton city utility crew made a discovery that would eventually render his deduction of no racial violence untrue. The crew was digging a trench for a fiber optics cable near the Denton Senior Center, adjacent to Civic Center Park, when they hit a partial brick wall--most likely part of a former cellar--littered with medicine bottles, beverage bottles and cans, a chamber pot, various pottery shards, and rusted metal wagon parts.²⁷⁹ Items left behind during the Quakertown

²⁷⁶ Norvell Reed, oral history interview by Richard Byrd, UNT OH no. 720, March 11, 1988, 1-2.

²⁷⁷ Both of Norvell Reed's interviewers--Richard Byrd and Sherelyn Yancey--were white.

²⁷⁸ Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5-6. Also see: James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, "The View from the Bottom Rail: Oral History and the Freedmen's Point of View," in *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 177-212.

²⁷⁹ "Historic Materials Coding Sheet, Project: Quakertown Testing," August 20, 1999, Quakertown--Archaeology 1a, Quakertown File, Denton County Office of History and Culture, Denton, TX; Douglas K. Boyd and Kim Cupit, "Archaeological Investigation of a Historic Quakertown Well in Civic Center Park, Denton, Denton County, TX," (report, Quakertown--Archaeology 1a, Quakertown file, Denton County Office of History and Culture, April 2005), 7; "Quakertown: Utility Crew Find Brings Back Memory of Once Thriving Denton Community," *DRC*, March 25, 1990.

evacuation were seeing the light of day for the first time in nearly seventy years. Upon learning of the discovery, the Denton County Historical Commission (DCHC) immediately got involved, knowing that a cistern with used items in it signified that the area had once been occupied.²⁸⁰ They collaborated with UNT archaeologists to survey the area and negotiated contracts with the city of Denton for long-term management and preservation.²⁸¹

Modern artifacts such as medicine bottles and beverage cans found in the cistern suggested humans had occupied the area fairly recently; trying to determine *who* had lived in the area and *why* they left was not as obvious. Eager to learn more, the DCHC reached out to the public for any information surrounding the discovery.²⁸² DCHC officer Letitia deBurgos, along with Juanita Milam, granddaughter of Henry Taylor, ran an ad in the *Denton Record-Chronicle* pleading for those with information to come forward: “What I need are stories. I want to know where the people lived, what they did, about their churches and their schools.”²⁸³ White and black Dentonites alike, including descendants of Quakertown victims, knew very little about the former community to which the well once belonged.

Local historian and DCHC member Mike Cochran immediately took to the story. “For seventy years, it was hush-hush. It was hidden,” Cochran later explained. “Black folks were embarrassed about it and didn’t want to talk about it, I think. Whites didn’t, either.” With help from the DCHC about research directions, he reached out to Texas Woman’s University (TWU) student Michelle Glaze to look into the story.²⁸⁴ Glaze’s trail led her to Solomon Hill, where she

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.; Boyd, “Archaeological Investigation of a Historic Quakertown Well.”

²⁸² “Historian Seeks Quakertown Clues,” *DRC*, December 7, 1990. Today the Historical Society of Denton County is the Denton County Historical Commission.

²⁸³ Ibid.; “Lost History Found: Denton Group to Commemorate Forced Exodus of Blacks,” *DMN*, February 23, 1991.

²⁸⁴ “Marker,” *DRC*, February 27, 1991.

spent the summer sifting through residents' attics and closets.²⁸⁵ The resulting product was a manuscript entitled "The Quakertown Story," the first documented history of the community, which was published by the DCHC in *The Denton Review: A Journal of Local History* in 1991.²⁸⁶ That same year, a compilation of oral histories with surviving former Quakertown residents and their descendants was published locally by deBurgos, who had conducted her own research, and a Denton historical marker was installed in Civic Center Park.²⁸⁷ Two years later, author Carolyn Meyer wrote a young adult novel entitled *White Lilacs*, based almost entirely on Glaze's narrative.²⁸⁸

Between Glaze's article and Meyer's novel, knowledge of and interest in the former middle-class community began to spread through Denton. *White Lilacs* became a required reading at the seventh grade level in Denton middle schools by 2001.²⁸⁹ UNT English professor Lee Martin wrote a novel loosely based on the relocated community, succinctly titled *Quakertown*, published in 2001 as well.²⁹⁰ In the early 2000s, a Solomon Hill house was condemned by the city and scheduled to be razed; research of the home by city surveyors revealed the home had been built in Quakertown in 1904 and relocated to Southeast Denton in

²⁸⁵ Ruby Cole, oral history interview by Sherelyn Yancey, UNT OH no. 1643, November 29, 2006, 56-57.

²⁸⁶ A note on "The Quakertown Story": Although "The Quakertown Story" was the first comprehensive narrative reconstructing Quakertown's existence, a copy that lists all primary documents that Glaze used does not exist publicly. This proved slightly problematic in the research for this thesis, but three clues exist that suggest this narrative was, in fact, constructed using primary sources and can thus be considered a credible source itself. First, it is mentioned by multiple oral history interviewees. They can remember Glaze digging in their attics for any clues about Quakertown between 1989-1991. Second, a single box exists in the Denton County Office of History and Culture labeled "Glaze Research" with many primary documents pertaining to African American families in Denton. Several items in the box were not used in Glaze's narrative but have been used in this thesis. And third, in a phone conversation between Glaze and the author in spring 2014, Glaze stated that she still personally has many other boxes of primary documents that she used in her 1991 narrative but had no plans at that time to release them publicly.

²⁸⁷ deBurgos, *Folklife Preservation, Quakertown*; "Quakertown Truth Told at Ceremony," *DRC*, March 1, 1991.

²⁸⁸ "Author Gives History Novel Approach," *DRC*, November 17, 1993; Carolyn Meyer, *White Lilacs* (San Diego: Gulliver Books, 1993).

²⁸⁹ "Creative Curriculum Connections: White Lilacs," May 23, 2001, Quakertown Curriculum, Quakertown file, Denton County Office of History and Culture.

²⁹⁰ Lee Martin, *Quakertown* (New York: Penguin Group, 2001).

1922.²⁹¹ The house was quickly purchased by the DCHC for preservation, and after four years of refurbishing and transformation, the house opened to the public as the Denton County African American Museum.²⁹²

A citywide proposition, initiated by Mike Cochran, began circulating in 2006 to change the name of Civic Center Park to Quakertown Park, and the city officiated the name change the following year.²⁹³ In 2010, local librarian Laura Douglas wrote a narrative about Quakertown for a Texas State Historical Marker, building and expanding upon Glaze's research.²⁹⁴ The marker was installed by the state in 2013.²⁹⁵ Denton, as well as the state of Texas, was interested in not only remembering but also documenting Quakertown.

In 1989, the question was, "What was Quakertown?" In a little over a twenty-year time span, the middle-class black community was not only reconstructed and reinstated into Denton's memory but was also celebrated as a historical treasure. Yet a troublesome part of the story still lingered. An entirely self-sufficient community within a city was omitted from the historical record and forgotten for nearly seventy years. Furthermore, the rediscovery of Quakertown was singularly owed to chance and luck, something city utility crewmember Joey Torneo acknowledged: "If we had stayed at two feet, we probably wouldn't have found it."²⁹⁶ The

²⁹¹ "Quakertown House Fund-Raiser on Way," *DRC*, June 12, 2004; "Quakertown House's Doors and Windows Up for Grabs," *DRC*, December 18, 2006. A local story states that door hinges in the house, which had been condemned by the city, were discovered to pre-date 1920 by the city inspector; without the surprising discovery, the city would have proceeded with the demolition and the home would have been torn down. However, no sources have been found that prove this theory - most use elusive language and simply state that the house was "discovered" to have been built in Quakertown and was subsequently "rescued."

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ "Park Proposal Aims to Make Amends," *DRC*, October 9, 2006; "Site of Quakertown, Razed in the 1920s, Now Has State Historical Designation," *DRC*, February 17, 2013.

²⁹⁴ Douglas, "Quakertown, Denton County, Texas."

²⁹⁵ "Site of Quakertown, Razed in the 1920s, Now Has State Historical Designation," *DRC*, February 17, 2013.

²⁹⁶ "Quakertown: Utility Crew Find Brings Back Memory of Once Thriving Denton Community," *DRC*, March 25, 1990.

question of what Quakertown was has been answered, but the larger questions of why was it forgotten in the first place and why it should be remembered today are still pending.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL MEMORY: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand why Quakertown was forgotten, one must first identify and examine the players involved in the neighborhood's elimination and reveal the differences between history and memory. As touched upon in the previous chapter, white and black Denton residents marched forward and created their communities after the relocation, contributing to the collective omission of the memory of Quakertown's existence. This occurred in different ways, which hints at the power struggle that is central to the memorialization process. As historian W. W. Fitzhugh Brundage explains, "The historical South that exists today is the consequence not of some innate regional properties, but of decades of investment, labor, and conscious design by individuals and groups of individuals."²⁹⁷ White Denton consciously erased Quakertown's existence and relocation from the historical record. Their ability to do so reflects their position as the dominant power group in Denton.

Collective and Historical Memory

Memories and the process of memorialization are how people and groups interact with and make sense of the past. Brundage defines collective memory as "the product of intentional creation.... Collective remembering forges identity, justifies privilege, and sustains cultural norms.... Historical memory, in sum, transmits selective knowledge about the past."²⁹⁸ The term "selective" is significant, as collective memories are influenced by—and in turn influence—both

²⁹⁷ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Introduction: No Deed but Memory," in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2-3.

²⁹⁸ Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 4.

the societies in which people live and the shared memories from within the community. As such, collective memories are not expected to be objective.²⁹⁹ Collective memories and the process of historicizing them are significant because they consecrate a community with a shared sense of the past to a place, a region. In short, collective memories give meaning to groups and to places.

Upon first glance history and memory appear similar, as they both provide a space for interacting with and recreating the past. However, these are the only ways in which they are the same. History and memory function differently, provide different vehicles for interaction with the past, and have different products. In his seminal essay “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” French historian Pierre Nora details the differences between the two: History is the “reconstruction and representation of the past” that “calls for analysis and criticism because it is an intellectual and secular production.”³⁰⁰ He goes on to describe it as binding “itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and relations between things.”³⁰¹ On the other hand, memory “remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting.”³⁰² He argues that it “nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic... It is blind to all but the group it binds... Memory takes root in spaces, gestures, images, and objects.”³⁰³ In short, history purports to be static, concrete, continual, and objective; memory is malleable, abstract, non-linear, and subjective.

According to Nora, memories can be historicized. There are three ways this can occur, which he terms the historical metamorphoses of memory. The first is archive-memory, which is a product of modern and contemporary societies. Defined as a deliberate production and “the gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to

²⁹⁹ Brundage, “Introduction,” 3-4.

³⁰⁰ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory,” 8-9.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled,” it “has become an autonomous institution of museums, libraries, depositories, centers of documentation, and data banks.”³⁰⁴ The process of archive-memory typically has a tangible object as its final product.

Throughout time, recorded history has been the privilege of literate groups, such as high-ranking religious officials, powerful leaders, and the wealthy. But increased literacy rates in recent centuries and decades has allowed the commoner to become his or her own historian, even if their recorded histories do not necessarily fall into the category of autonomous institutions of recordings. A teenage girl may not have conceptualized her near-daily journal entries as a recording of her history, yet scholars and academics have long regarded Anne Frank’s diary as a first-hand account of an experience under Nazi occupation. It is precisely the means of both recording one’s memory and interacting with it that represents the archival-memory metamorphosis process.³⁰⁵

Increased literacy led to widespread distribution of reading material. Newspapers, which exploded in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century in the United States, have long been used by historians for primary research. Multiple newspapers from a specific area can paint two very different and contrasting pictures, much like the black newspaper the *Dallas Express* and the white newspaper the *Denton Record-Chronicle* did in the early twentieth century. Like the commoner’s journal or inscriptions in a family Bible, newspapers too are a final product of the process of archive-memory.

The second process of the historical metamorphosis of memory is duty-memory.³⁰⁶ Nora states that the task of remembering has grown so large that it has “overflowed the circle of

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 15.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

professional historians.”³⁰⁷ He argues that “ethnic groups and social minorities, every established group, intellectual or not, learned or not, has felt the need to go in search of its own origins and identity” and that genealogical research by non-historians has grown exponentially.³⁰⁸ As such, every individual has a duty, an obligation, to remember. This phenomenon is apparent in Alex Haley’s narrative, “Black History, Oral History, and Genealogy.” Haley, who grew up in Tennessee in the 1920s, recounts his childlike wonder at stories shared on porches in the twilight between his grandmother and extended family members, stories with enduring “family continuity” significance such as the cutting off of an ancestor’s foot, to whom they referred as “the African.”³⁰⁹ He describes in detail the revelation of slave children not knowing their fathers or grandfathers and the importance each new generation assumed of guarding the family’s cumulative tales.

According to Nora, duty-memory has a very individual and personal component; indeed, after being haunted by his family’s memories, Haley went in search of the tribe from which “the African” came to fully learn and understand his history. Haley’s familial stories and the process by which he reconciled them soon became the autobiographical narrative *Roots*, which almost single-handedly brought genealogy and African-American history into the American mainstream in the 1970s. By seeking to remember, Haley was actively engaging in and contributing to the duty-memory process. The very oral nature of all of Haley’s ancestors—from “the African’s” Mandingo tribe in the homeland to his grandmother’s ritualistic storytelling in Tennessee—and Haley’s desire to understand the phenomenon in its entirety are the heart of duty-memory. Where there is not a physical receptacle or written text of a memory, it is the duty of an individual or a group to remember and continue remembering.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Alex Haley, “Black History, Oral History, and Genealogy,” *Oral History Review*, vol. 1 (1973), 1.

Nora's final historic metamorphosis is distance-memory, or the revelation of a historic discontinuity where it was previously believed to be a continuity. For Nora, it is the revelation that distance between certain times in the past reveals that there is not a one true past, but that there can be multiple pasts. Histories throughout much of the twentieth century generalized the American South at the end of the 1800s as impoverished and stubbornly rural while the rest of the country charged forward with modernism and industrialism. By the 1990s, enough time had passed to allow for objective studies of southern life at the end of the nineteenth century to occur. In his book *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906*, contemporary New South historian Edward Ayers delves into all aspects of southern life where these "apparent continuities" of isolationism were, in actuality, "a complex series of backlashes, countercurrents, and unexpected outcomes."³¹⁰ Ayers argues that modernity did touch the New South but that these continuations were constantly interrupted by southern resistance in areas of culture, politics, and social life. In this final metamorphosis, the process of distance-memory occurred organically with the passage of time.

As described earlier, the memory of Quakertown underwent a renaissance of sorts in the 1990s and early 2000s when a myriad of tangible items were discovered that celebrated the former black community. The memories of Quakertown went through the historical metamorphosis process, and the resulting products are what Nora terms "lieux de mémoire," or "sites of memory."³¹¹ With each new site of Quakertown's memory that was produced over the twenty-year period, the memory became more complex and multi-faceted. It is worth noting that Nora also states "the historian is one who prevents history from becoming *merely* history... the

³¹⁰ Ayers, *Southern Crossing*, 1-2.

³¹¹ Nora, "Between History and Memory," 18.

historian has become no longer a memory-individual but, in [her]self, a *lieu de mémoire*.”³¹² In brief, this thesis is also a product of the historical metamorphic process, an addition to Quakertown’s memories, and aims to contribute to the constantly evolving discussion of historical memory.

Historical Memory: Brief Literature Review

It is important to understand the differences between history and memory because groups have often utilized their memory instead of history for a specific purpose. Historical memory analysis is looking at how different groups from a similar region and time have treated and manipulated collective memory. A time in American history and memory currently undergoing historical memory analyses is the sectional reconciliation period that occurred after emancipation. Reviewing current scholarship of post-Reconstruction historical memory prior to discussing Quakertown is important for two reasons.

First, Quakertown was founded soon after emancipation in Texas. Although the destruction of the black community and its eventual rediscovery and celebration occurred largely in the twentieth century, the community itself was a post-emancipation enclave in Denton. Second, because Quakertown was formed within this society, several themes present in southern post-emancipation memory are also visible in the revitalization of Quakertown’s memory. In short, Denton in the first few decades of the twentieth century was a microcosm of the same clashing historical memories at the national level. In order to understand the memory of Quakertown, it is important to first understand how other historians have analyzed and treated these themes in a similar–albeit larger–setting.

³¹² Ibid.

As briefly touched upon earlier, historians have recently begun to argue that there has been far more discontinuity in the South than previously believed. Faults, disruptions, and many forms of resistance regularly occurred across gender, political, racial, and socioeconomic planes south of the Mason-Dixon Line. This discontinuity contributed to clashing regional and racial histories and memories. The intersection of these competing remembrances is the topic of David Blight's book *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*.

Blight argues that during Reconstruction, the process of memorializing the Civil War and assigning meaning to it had to occur in order for the nation to heal and to reconcile.³¹³ Because the Confederacy lost, the South's need to understand, justify, and memorialize was stronger than the North's. The dominating memory of southern continuity was therefore not an accident; rather, the Lost Cause myth that prevailed was a "manufactured" past that recalled former plantation owners as benign, remembered slaves as content, and attempted to restore the white supremacy and hegemony that had been lost in the Civil War.³¹⁴ Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Anglo-Saxon leaders produced a plethora of pseudoscientific arguments that the black race was biologically inferior to the white race, a belief that permeated southern and American society well into the twentieth century.³¹⁵ As such, during Reconstruction the majority of those in the South believed former slaves and freedmen were incapable of being productive and contributing members of society.

The need for southerners to consecrate their Lost Cause memory was most likely also compounded by the fact that in reality, freedmen were not only achieving fully realized personhood but were also actively participating in civic and societal engagement at exponential

³¹³ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 3.

³¹⁴ Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War*, 2.

³¹⁵ George Frederickson, "Science, Polygenesis, and the Proslavery Argument" and "The New South and the New Paternalism, 1877-1890" in *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*, rev. ed. (1971; repr., Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 71-96, 198-227.

rates. By 1883, only twenty years after emancipation, African Americans were employed in leading professions such as politics, journalism, literature, academia, church ministry, and the military.³¹⁶ In short, what they were doing was not how members of the former Confederacy wanted them to be remembered. At this time, there were many differing items on the black leaders' agendas as they climbed toward the new century.³¹⁷ Yet with numerous holidays celebrating freedom and by honoring vocal abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass almost to the point of deification, it was clear that African Americans were keeping the memory of their battle for freedom and emancipation at the forefront of their history.

Blight terms these competing memories—the southerners' memories of the Lost Cause and the former slaves' memories of freedom—the “white supremacist vision” and the “emancipationist vision.” He argues that because the need for sectional reconciliation was so strong, it “overwhelmed the emancipationist vision in the national culture” and “by the turn of the century, [the white supremacist vision] delivered the country a segregated memory of its Civil War on Southern terms.”³¹⁸ To simplify, even though the South lost the Civil War, it emerged as the “winner” of whose version of the story was remembered because of its greater need to memorialize. Ultimately, the South used its Lost Cause myth to dictate how the Civil War was remembered nationally. In an effort to avoid admitting that slavery was the root of secession, southerners substituted the term “slavery” with “peculiar institution” and “agrarian way of life” and ardently clamored for the cause of states' rights in postbellum discourse.³¹⁹ This

³¹⁶ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 301.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 303.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹⁹ See: Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962).

diluted white supremacist vision prevailed as the dominant historical memory of the Civil War across the South and the nation into the twentieth century.

On the other hand, the emancipationist vision, which historically has had a complex definition, reveals the opposite of white southerners' beliefs about African Americans. Historians have shed light on "the myth that black society is a homogenous mass without significant and illuminating distinctions," which whites chose to believe after emancipation, along with denying the significance of black freedom.³²⁰ Although the emancipationist vision took many differing shapes among black communities across the New South, three themes—besides physical freedom from chains and bondage—were typically present: African Americans' vision included freedom to learn and be educated, freedom to celebrate God and religion, and freedom to commemorate emancipation as they pleased.³²¹ As Elizabeth Hayes Turner argues, the emancipationist vision "represented a public counter-demonstration to displays of Confederate glorification and a counter-memory to the valorization of the Lost Cause."³²² Succinctly, it represented black self-sufficiency and non-dependency on whites.

Although the white supremacist vision eclipsed the emancipationist vision in southern historical memory, this does not mean that blacks did not pursue their view of the past. Both visions had numerous forms and manifestations. Only three such strains will be discussed here.

Both the white supremacist and emancipationist visions were visible in the New South in

³²⁰ Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), ix; Elizabeth Hayes Turner, "Juneteenth: Emancipation and Memory," in *Lone Star Past: Memory and History in Texas*, eds. Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 144.

³²¹ For education, see: James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). For religion, see: William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). For commemoration, see: Kathleen Ann Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863-1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2005).

³²² Turner, "Juneteenth," 145.

physical buildings and infrastructure, in commemorations and celebrations in public spaces, and in the conscious creation of identities.

First, the Lost Cause myth dominated physical infrastructure as a form of memorialization in the South. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, southern cities erected Confederate monuments, memorials, and statues in public places to memorialize their version of the Civil War and to dictate the way it was to be remembered. Catherine W. Bishir argues “these new landmarks represented a set of interlocking beliefs about the place of the vindicated South in the American mainstream, the rightness of the Confederate cause, and the association of classical architecture with idealized southern virtues.”³²³ Dozens of these memorials dotted the southern landscape by the 1900s.

Bishir notes that by 1901, Raleigh, North Carolina, which had experienced some of the more crucial moments of the Civil War, was home to three landmarks whose architecture and visible locations represented these southern ideals and causes. The old state capitol commonwealth hearkened to the patriotic Revolutionary spirit; a new library, influenced by classical architecture, was noted as representing “the highest type of... cultured Christian womanhood;” and the newly erected Confederate monument represented the Lost Cause, reminding new generations of the loss of life for the southern cause.³²⁴ In Raleigh—and in many other southern towns—the Lost Cause memory silently dominated most public gathering spaces with such memorials and statues.

African Americans in post-Reconstruction society did not have the same access to funding or resources for expansive structures in public spaces like their white counterparts

³²³ Catherine W. Bishir, “Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past in Raleigh and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1885-1915,” in *Where These Memories Grow*, 140.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139-140. For a more in-depth look at how Confederates utilized Revolutionary language and patriotism for their own needs, see: Anne Sarah Rubin, “Seventy-six and Sixty-one: Confederates Remember the American Revolution,” in *Where These Memories Grow*, 85-105.

constructed. Nevertheless, they consecrated their historical memory of freedom in physical structures when possible. For former slaves and their offspring, education and religion were synonymous with freedom, and their emancipationist memory was consecrated in the naming of schools. In *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, James Anderson details how black education at all levels thrived despite the disparate difference in funding between schools for whites and for blacks.³²⁵

Although many industrial and country training schools were named for the county, region, or state, the names of black colleges and universities that were founded after emancipation reveal the vision of freedom: Wilberforce University, named for abolitionist William Wilberforce; Fisk University, named for Union General Clinton B. Fisk of the Freedman's Bureau; Howard University, named for Union General Oliver O. Howard; Spelman College, named for Harvey Buel and Lucy Henry Spelman, and their daughter Laura Spelman Rockefeller, wife of John D. Rockefeller; and Claflin University, named for Massachusetts governor and anti-slavery supporter William Claflin.³²⁶

The names of black colleges and universities during this time also represented different black churches, strengthening the symbolism of education and religion on a par with freedom: Allen University, named for African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church founder Reverend Richard Allen; Morris Brown University, named for AME Bishop Morris Brown; Miles College, named for Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Bishop William H. Miles; Lane College, named for CME Bishop Isaac Lane; and Morehouse College, named for Northern Baptist Home Mission

³²⁵ See: Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*.

³²⁶ Ibid., 135; "Historically Black Colleges and Universities Ranking," *U.S. News & World Report*, accessed December 10, 2014, <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/hbcu>. The previous name of Spelman College was Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary.

Society secretary Henry L. Morehouse.³²⁷ By naming their schools after abolitionists, anti-slavery supporters, Unionists, and black church founders, African Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century were publicly and rapidly consecrating their emancipationist vision of freedom in physical structures.

The second way in which the white supremacist vision dominated the emancipationist vision in the South is visible in commemorations and celebrations. Anglo-Saxon celebrations existed in public places to claim white dominance.³²⁸ The most public face of white supremacy in the decades following emancipation was undoubtedly the KKK, and as discussed in the previous chapter, in the 1920s the Invisible Empire thrived in Texas.

Historian Walter Buenger acknowledges that the KKK grew in the state because it capitalized on racial myths and memories, but he also argues that the KKK did not utilize these myths and memories solely “to control what the community remembered and what it forgot,” but also actively to transform the regional Lost Cause memory “from southern to American.”³²⁹ He notes KKK members at a 1920 Confederate Veterans Parade in Houston as carrying signs saying: “‘We were here yesterday, 1866.’ ‘We are here today, 1920.’ ‘We will be here forever.’”³³⁰ As evidenced by the public support for the KKK in the 1920s, white Texans wholeheartedly believed in the supremacist vision that called for black inferiority, white dominance, and separation of the races.³³¹

³²⁷ Ibid.; Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 135. Today, the acronym CME stands for Christian Methodist Episcopal church, a name change that was adopted in the 1950s. Previously, Allen College was Payne College, named for Wilberforce University founder Daniel Alexander Payne, and Morehouse College was Augusta Theological Institute and Atlanta Baptist College, respectively.

³²⁸ “Landmarks of Power,” 140.

³²⁹ Walter Buenger, “Memory and the 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Texas,” in *Lone Star Pasts*, 120.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Jacqueline M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003), 11-12.

This dominating characteristic of the KKK by the 1920s was no accident. Rather, it was a reaction to black celebrations of freedom and political progress. In *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863-1913*, Kathleen Ann Clark argues that the Invisible Empire was a political group whose sole purpose was to silence African Americans.³³² In her study, she chronicles African American commemorations of freedom in public spaces, beginning with the eruptive celebration of the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, which quickly became known as Emancipation Day.³³³ This singular event of literal black freedom touched all subsequent African American celebrations such as Lincoln Day, Memorial Day, Decoration Day, and Juneteenth.³³⁴ Over the years, the festivities included parades, freedom speeches, music, and dancing, as well as selling drinks, food, and trinkets.³³⁵ By the 1870s and 1880s, all black holidays and celebrations were defined by freedom and were celebrated to remember it.

Clark argues that even though black celebrations of freedom occurred with the most intensity immediately following the Civil War and emancipation, they by no means ended there; rather, black commemorations of freedom thrived well into the twentieth century.³³⁶ Perhaps unironically, in the decades following Reconstruction these “emboldened” celebrations featured more political speech-making and less interracial participation.³³⁷ Clark writes that “challenges to the black presence in public spaces, which had never entirely ceased, gained momentum, as whites in some places physically resisted black southerners’ right to occupy key public spaces on days of celebration.”³³⁸ The fight for remembering black freedom in a public landscape was met

³³² Clark, *Defining Moments*, 99.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 25.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 304-306.

³³⁵ Clark, *Defining Moments*, 96.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

with resistance, and as detailed above, was eclipsed by the KKK and other forms of white dominance.

The last way in which the white supremacist vision dominated the emancipationist vision was evident in not what was remembered but in what was consciously forgotten. By the beginning of the twentieth century, towns and communities began fabricating specific public images as a means of omitting what they deemed unworthy of remembering. Stephanie M. Yuhl details how in the 1920s three elite and influential white women came together to construct a public image for Charleston, South Carolina.³³⁹ Their image of Charleston consisted of stereotypically laborious and content African Americans working the soil while the white elite paternalistically looked on and contributed to white affluence and the continuity of their civilization.³⁴⁰

This fabricated antebellum identity was brought to life through the women's historical preservation efforts, which included commissioning paintings and restoring buildings and other public spaces.³⁴¹ Their work, continuing into the 1930s, became a source of tourism and revenue for the city, and Yuhl concludes that "by nationalizing Charleston's past and omitting potentially divisive elements from their cultural production, [the women] practiced historical amnesia as much as historical remembering."³⁴² Charleston, also home to some of the more crucial events of the Civil War, actively softened and outright omitted its violent racial history in the first few decades of the twentieth century as a means of creating a palatable image for public consumption.

³³⁹ Stephanie M. Yuhl, "Rich and Tender Remembering: Elite White Women and an Aesthetic Sense of Place in Charleston, 1920s and 1930s," in *Where These Memories Grow*, 227-248.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 228-229.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 230.

African Americans in a post-emancipation South also crafted images as a means of “cultural production,” although theirs was a class image instead of city-specific. Although the emancipationist vision was rooted in a memory of freedom, African Americans still sought to mold an image that pushed the basis of freedom–slavery–to the margins. This image came courtesy of the racial uplift philosophy, which has had a historically ambiguous definition. It was adopted by blacks at the end of the nineteenth century and served two purposes. First, it emphasized a growing black middle class based on “self-help, racial solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth.”³⁴³ It did not outright call for forgetting slavery, but because racial uplift advocated characteristics and achievements that were deemed the height of civility by Anglo-Saxons, and because slavery had long been used as a scientific justification that blacks were biologically inferior, racial uplift theory sought to distance itself from slavery.

Second, because it focused on the middle class, it also by definition challenged the Jim Crow perception that class distinctions did not exist within black communities.³⁴⁴ In *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*, Willard Gatewood argues that even though post-Reconstruction black society was constituted of “a larger lower class, a small but expanding middle class, and a miniscule upper class... a sufficiently large segment of the black community shared this self-image to legitimize the notion of an elite or what was described at the time as an aristocracy.”³⁴⁵ Although the majority of African Americans at the turn of the century were impoverished, these middle- and upper-class blacks–the politicians, journalists, authors, poets, academicians, professors, church officials, and servicemen–not only self-identified as the

³⁴³ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2.

³⁴⁴ Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, ix.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

leaders of their race but also vocally called for implementation of the racial uplift ideology by all as a means of race progress. These leaders still wanted black civility to be what the public saw as the face of African Americanism at the turn of the century despite overwhelming poverty. Both of these components of racial uplift came together for one reason—to omit areas of black history and memory that were deemed unacceptable and highlight those that were.

As briefly illustrated, despite a thriving black emancipationist memory in public spaces, the South in the decades following Reconstruction was nonetheless dominated by the Lost Cause myth, which altered the South's memory of the Civil War and its racial past, present, and future. As explained earlier, looking at three of these components of the historical memory of the Reconstruction era in the South—symbolism in physical infrastructure, commemorations in public spaces, and crafting specific images for public consumption—contextualizes the historical memory surrounding Quakertown in Denton, Texas. Several sites of memory exist for Quakertown today, and in all of them the supremacist vision trumps the emancipationist vision.

CHAPTER 6

DENTON'S HISTORICAL MEMORY AND QUAKERTOWN'S SITES OF MEMORY

Historical Memory: Denton

Historians have long argued that white southerners in the post-Reconstruction era believed “southern identity” was synonymous and interchangeable with “white identity” and therefore did not apply to African Americans who lived in the geographical South.³⁴⁶ W. W. Fitzhugh Brundage sums up this belief when he sarcastically asks, “What self-respecting southern county is satisfied without a statue of a stern Confederate soldier poised for battle in front of the courthouse?”³⁴⁷ As stated earlier, Denton is a microcosm of the South in terms of the fight for historical memory and identity in public spheres such as the county courthouse. The emancipationist vision was eclipsed by the supremacist vision in Denton after Reconstruction as it was nationally. In some ways, the black communities in Denton were able to commemorate their history. However, given that the white citizens of Denton were in a position of power and controlled resources unavailable to African Americans, white commemorations and celebrations far outweighed their black counterparts.

One of the earliest instances in which white Denton citizens celebrated their supremacist vision was a Confederate veteran’s reunion on the courthouse lawn in 1909. Confederate reunions occurred regularly in Denton, yet this particular reunion occurred in the most public of places in the city, perhaps because the fifty-year mark since the outbreak of the Civil War was near.³⁴⁸ This particular celebration drew dozens of veterans from across the county to the

³⁴⁶ Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 2.

³⁴⁷ Brundage, “No Deed But Memory,” 2.

³⁴⁸ Georgia Caraway and Kim Cupit, *Denton*, Images of America Series (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 82.

courthouse square for a celebration, with men and women dressed in fine attire.³⁴⁹ Although Denton County provided a modicum of Union support during the outbreak of the Civil War, no records currently exist that reveal any Union celebrations or reunions.³⁵⁰ This is an example of historical amnesia – the needs of white supremacy were such that the majority wanted to forget Union sentiment. This suggests that nearly forty-five years after the war ended, white Denton citizens still identified as southern and pro-Confederate and ensured their dominating identity was well consecrated before all Confederate veterans died.

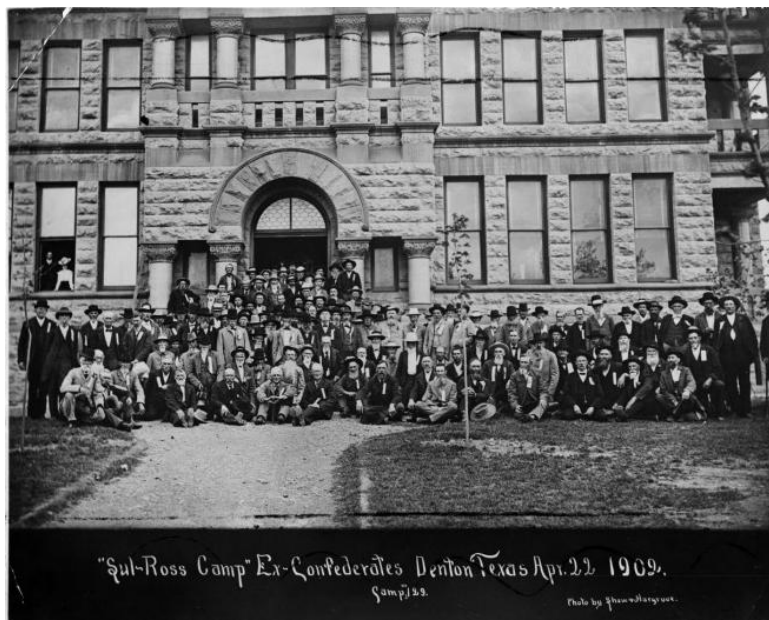


Image 6.1: Denton County Confederate Veteran Reunion outside the Denton County Courthouse, 1909. Photo courtesy of the Portal to Texas History.

The next instance of the supremacist vision in Denton occurred four years later in the same public location. In 1913, Denton was home to two state-supported institutions of higher education, the College of Industrial Arts (CIA) and the North Texas State Normal College

³⁴⁹ Confederate Veterans, photograph, 1902, Early Denton History Collection, The Portal to Texas History, accessed January 5, 2015, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph14779/>.

³⁵⁰ Bates, *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*, 105-106.

(NTSNC), and was considered a growing and thriving town.³⁵¹ That year, city officials choreographed a parade celebrating the town's prominent educational status and hired a cameraman to film the event.³⁵² Approximately two-thirds of the video footage still exists, which featured city officials, 3,000 CIA and NTSNC students, the senior class of Denton High School, and faculty from nearly all the public schools marching on and around the courthouse.³⁵³

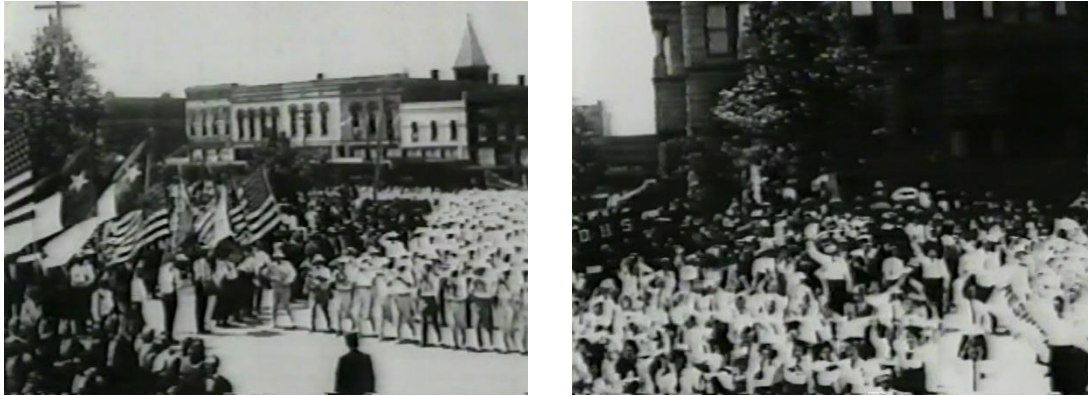


Image 6.2: Stills of the educational rally on the courthouse square from the film *Denton 1913*.

It is noteworthy that the one black school in the city is not visible in the footage and neither are its students or faculty.³⁵⁴ It is possible that since some of the footage from the parade was lost, black education may have been represented that day, unbeknownst to contemporary viewers. This is most likely not the case, however, as a good portion of the film features students and faculty marching by the camera. The entire march, from beginning to end, is captured in one shot. Also, approximately four months after the education rally, the Fred Douglass School structure in Quakertown mysteriously burned to the ground overnight.³⁵⁵ These two events in the

³⁵¹ Bridges, "The Nineteen Tens, 1910-1919," in *History of Denton, Texas*, 276-326.

³⁵² Approximately one-third of the video footage has been lost over time, and the remaining two-thirds has been preserved.

³⁵³ City of Denton, *Denton 1913*, directed by Sheree Turner (1913; City of Denton Public Information Office, 2002), DVD.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ "Negro Schoolhouse Burns," *DRC*, September 8, 1913.

same year, seemingly unconnected, suggest white Dentonites' forceful promotion of their own education.

A third instance of the supremacist vision in Denton took place three years after the educational rally, again on the county square. In 1917, the Women's Club raised enough funds in conjunction with the Katie Daffan Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to install a Confederate veteran memorial on the courthouse lawn.³⁵⁶ The monument, which still stands today, features an archway leading to the Denton County courthouse that is topped with a Confederate soldier, armed but at ease, forever facing the south. On each side of the arch is a water fountain. The left water fountain, dated "1861," bears an inscription that reads: "Erected by the Daughters of the Confederacy in memory of our Confederate soldiers, who in heroic self-sacrifice and devoted loyalty gave their manhood and their lives to the South in her hour of need."³⁵⁷ The right water fountain, dated "1865," also bears an inscription: "In memoriam - Their names graven on memorial columns are a song heard far in the future, and their examples reach a hand through all the years to meet and kindle generous purpose and mold it into acts as pure as theirs."³⁵⁸

The monument represents several lasting southern and supremacist ideals at once. First, the separate water fountains show Denton's adherence to Jim Crow segregation.³⁵⁹ Second, the romanticized language does not mention slavery but rather alludes to the southern clamor for state's rights that drew the Confederacy together.³⁶⁰ And finally, as explicitly stated on the

³⁵⁶ City Federation of Women's Club (Denton) Minutes, 65a; Denton County Confederate Memorial. For a more in depth discussion of how the Daughters of the Confederacy pushed a pro-Confederacy agenda in public spaces via monuments and statues, see: Kelly McMichael, "'Memories Are Short but Monuments Lengthen Remembrances': The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Power of Civil War Memory," in *Lone Star Pasts*, 95-118.

³⁵⁷ Denton County Confederate Memorial.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Kimble, UNT OH no. 1822, 13-14.

³⁶⁰ Rubin, "Seventy-six and Sixty-one," in *Where These Memories Grow*, 85-105.

monument, its existence sought to ensure that future Denton County generations would remember the Confederacy exactly as white southerners wanted it remembered.



Image 6.3: Denton County Confederate Memorial.
Photo courtesy of the Denton County Historical Commission.

White Denton was clearly creating a specific image with these public manifestations of the supremacist vision in the first decades of the twentieth century. The capstone of their triumphant claim to Anglo-Saxon dominance was arguably the removal of the Quakertown community just a few years after erection of the Confederate monument. The details surrounding the removal of the black neighborhood speak volumes about the motives behind their actions. As early as September 1922, approximately six months after the Park Bond Issue passed, the black neighborhood, where many homes were still standing, was no longer called Quakertown by white citizens—they referred to it as “the lot which was purchased by the city as a part of the new

park property.”³⁶¹ They were removing the name Quakertown from the local lexicon. White Denton also physically transformed the area. They made plans to reroute Pecan Creek to cease the flooding which had long contributed to their view of Quakertown as dirty.³⁶² By doing so, they were changing the landscape between CIA and the courthouse for their benefit. To remove Quakertown’s blackness from the center of town and ensure their supremacist vision was established, white Denton rearranged the city by eliminating the community.

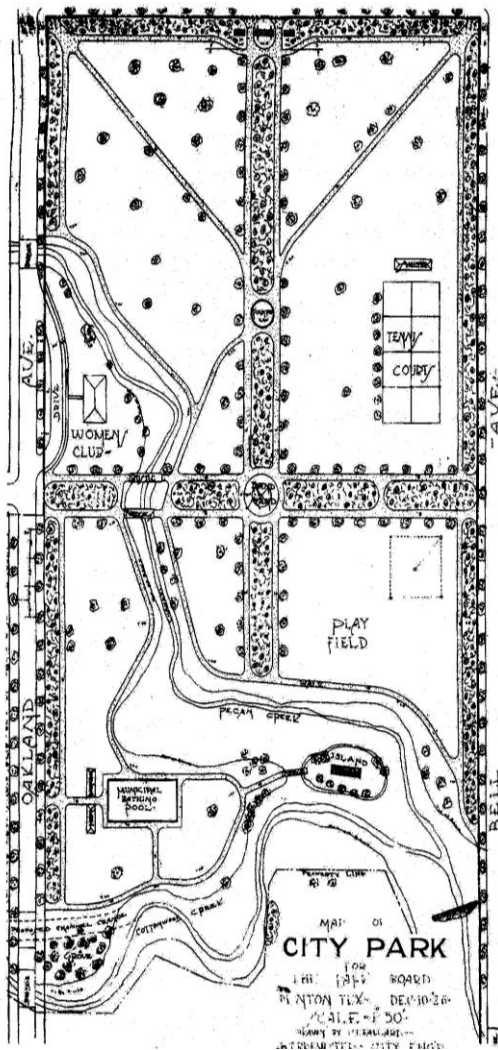


Image 6.4: A 1926 blueprint rendition of Civic Center Park. The quadrants of the former Quakertown neighborhood are still visible in this rendition. Photo courtesy of the Mary Evelyn Blagg-Huey Library of Texas Woman’s University.

³⁶¹ “Work on African Methodist Church to Be Started Soon,” *DRC*, September 26, 1922.

³⁶² “Sewage Turned in New Septic Tank,” *DRC*, July 23, 1923; “Ground is Broken Monday in Denton for Interurban,” *DRC*, June 24, 1924.

This elimination hints at another component of historical memory. The historical memory of a region or place is not only created by what is remembered and celebrated, but also by what is consciously forgotten. Because white southerners believed that their southern identity did not apply to African Americans, they sought to remove black contributions and experiences from the historical record, recent public memory, and the future. As evidenced in Denton with the Quakertown relocation and the numerous versions of Anglo-Saxon dominance in public spaces, white southerners in short were rewriting their history to remove instances of blackness that did not fit their vision.

The Quakertown residents had not consecrated their history and their contributions to society the way white Denton had by 1920. Until the cistern was discovered in 1989, there was no known tangible public remnant of the community once the residents were relocated to Solomon Hill. In the 1940s, the latter neighborhood started consecrating its history and contributions with school and park names. In fact, naming schools seemed to be the only way African Americans in both the city and the county celebrated the emancipationist vision.



Image 6.5: Frederick Douglass Colored School, date unknown. Principal Fred Moore is standing second from the left. Photo courtesy of the Mary Evelyn Blagg-Huey Library of Texas Woman's University.

There were eleven other black schools in the county, but the Fred Douglass School was the only black school that existed in Denton proper.³⁶³ It was named for the famous anti-slavery orator and was the only high school in Denton County for black students.³⁶⁴ Booker T. Washington School in Pilot Point was also named for the nationally known founder of Tuskegee Institute, but other county schools were named for local leaders.³⁶⁵ Jessie H. Bush Elementary in Carrollton was named for a beloved community member, and County School No. 50 in Lewisville was referred to as Lille J. Jackson School after a long-serving teacher.³⁶⁶ Denton County's black communities did not erect statues or hold parades in public squares, most likely because they either were financially unable to do so or because Jim Crow customs forbade them.³⁶⁷ But as education was arguably the most important component of freedom, they did commemorate the emancipationist vision in the one place they could—their schools.

Sites of Memory: Quakertown

Understanding the dominant white historical memory in Denton is important to the story of Quakertown because nearly a century after the forced relocation, Quakertown's memory is still alive in various physical spaces and structures. According to Pierre Nora, these sites of memory are “simple and ambiguous, natural and artificial, at once immediately available in

³⁶³ E. Dale Odom, *An Illustrated History of Denton County, Texas: From Peters Colony to Metroplex* (Denton: E. Dale Odom, 1996), 53.

³⁶⁴ Denton County high school students not living in Denton proper had to be bussed to Fred Douglass School. Some students who lived in towns such as Carrollton were bussed to Dallas Colored High School (renamed Booker T. Washington High School in 1922) instead, since those communities were on the southern edge of Denton County and were either closer to or had easier access to the high school in Dallas.

³⁶⁵ Jay Melugin, *Pilot Point*, Images of America Series (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 90; Gary Bruce, oral history interview by Chelsea Stallings, UNT OH no. 1794, August 6, 2013, 33, 39.

³⁶⁶ Carrollton: Toyia Pointer, *Carrollton*, Images of America Series (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 86; “‘I’ll Go First’: School Desegregation in Carrollton Began with a Mother’s Quiet Determination,” *DMN*, February 27, 2000. Lewisville: Robin Cole-Jett, *Lewisville*, Images of America Series (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 77-79.

³⁶⁷ This second reason is probably the more likely of the two and is evidenced in the lack of documentation on the black Denton County schools (and other black commemorations) available today.

concrete sensual experience and susceptible to the most abstract elaboration.”³⁶⁸ Further, to be sites of memory they must also be “material, symbolic, and functional.”³⁶⁹

A physical site can meet these requirements and still cease to be a site of memory unless two things occur. First, imagination must invest in it “with a symbolic aura.”³⁷⁰ Succinctly, this means that a person must be willing to remember and interact with the site.³⁷¹ Second, sites of memory only exist “because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning.”³⁷² When one interacts with a site of memory, an experience will occur that will result in an “unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications”; i.e., both the experience and the result will be specific to that individual.³⁷³

Although it is by no means an exhaustive number, three main sites exist today that overwhelmingly invoke Quakertown’s memory. First is a collection of novels written specifically about Quakertown; second is the Denton County African American Museum, which resides in a preserved house from Quakertown that largely focuses on the story of the forced removal; and third is Quakertown Park itself. Looking at these sites in depth reveals that the supremacist vision still trumps the emancipationist vision of Quakertown’s historical memory today.

The first site of Quakertown’s memory is a collection of two fictional novels that feature levels of misappropriation regarding the story of the black community’s relocation. The supremacist vision is evident in these books because they both aim to present an altered image about the black and white communities in 1920s Denton. The first book is the young adult novel

³⁶⁸ Nora, “Between History and Memory,” 18-19.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

White Lilacs, published in 1993, two years after TWU student Michele Glaze's manuscript was picked up by the Denton County Historical Commission. The book was written by white author Caroline Meyer that features a fictionalized version of the Quakertown story. In the book, Meyer changes Denton to Dillon, Quakertown to Freedomtown, Solomon Hill to The Flats, and creates a host of fictional characters based on former Quakertown community members.³⁷⁴

The story of the neighborhood's removal is told from the first person point of view of Rose Lee, an adolescent who is the granddaughter of the fictionalized counterpart of Quakertown resident Henry Taylor, owner of "the park of Quakertown."³⁷⁵ *White Lilacs* is a site of Quakertown's memory because it introduces the Quakertown relocation to readers. Further, because it is written in a first person point-of-view, it becomes a place of interaction for readers. By interjecting a personal and emotional component to the story, the experiences of the black community are relatable to the reader, an element that is typically lost during Nora's distance-memory historic metamorphic phase.

Chronologically, *White Lilacs* begins just before the decision is made that the black community will be moved, and concludes once the move is complete and the community has been dis- and re-assembled in The Flats. The book is structured in a dramatic fashion, with a conflict and resolution occurring in each chapter that lends to the overarching conflict of the book, which is whether the black families of Freedomtown can fight to save their community. *White Lilacs* is a young adult novel, so the conflict-and-resolution dramatic style is utilized for an adolescent audience instead of reading as a survey book for older readers. The book highlights an interpretation of the motives behind the forced removal of the African American community in a way that is easily deducted without being implicitly stated. As a required book for seventh

³⁷⁴ Meyer, *White Lilacs*.

³⁷⁵ Glaze, "The Quakertown Story," 11.

grade levels in Denton Independent School District today, *White Lilacs* deserves praise for introducing and making relatable the story of a racist removal of a neighborhood to students who otherwise might not learn about the relocation.

Although *White Lilacs* is fictional, it features many scenarios that reaffirm the emancipationist vision. One such reaffirmation is personified in the character Henry, Rose Lee's brother, who voices opposition to the relocation. Henry, a follower of the Back-to-Africa movement who fought for democracy in The Great War in France, has returned home to face segregation and white supremacy in 1920. During a Juneteenth celebration, Henry stands up in the middle of a church service, decries the white community for forcing them to move, and argues that the residents need to stand together and fight back:

No! We can't let this happen! We can't let the white man take away our homes to build his parks, to protect his women from the filthy presence of a colored child! We must say no to anyone who tries to take away what is ours. We must say no in a way the white man understands, so that he can make no mistake about it. We have a choice, brothers and sisters. We stand and fight, or we leave, all of us together.³⁷⁶

Henry's speech infers the minute ways in which real Quakertown residents showed resistance to the city's actions. As in real life, Freedomtown residents ultimately had no ground to stand on to oppose their forced relocation. The April 1921 letter is briefly mentioned in *White Lilacs*, yet the other small instances of Quakertown's resistance to either the white coalition or against the city's decision were omitted from the novel.

The message of *White Lilacs* explores emancipationist themes and does not attempt to mitigate or justify the racist motives behind the removal of the black community. Meyer's artistic license in the book, however, reveals a level of white privilege used to exploit the black

³⁷⁶ Meyer, *White Lilacs*, 93.

story.³⁷⁷ In a 1993 interview, Meyer stated that she did not use any sources other than Glaze's manuscript when writing her novel and admitted she rushed to write a fictionalized version of the narrative she had just read.³⁷⁸ This selective inclusion was noticed by lifelong Solomon Hill resident and local activist Ruby Cole, who in the 1940s lived in the house that is now the Denton County African American Museum. When Glaze was conducting research for her manuscript, she visited Cole and used many of Cole's personal records as primary sources for her article.³⁷⁹ Meyer, however, did not use that same approach. Cole recalls an encounter with Meyer after *White Lilacs* was published, during which Meyer admitted she never spoke with Glaze or any of the descendants of Quakertown victims about their experiences or thoughts:

I was so disappointed, I went to this book review of *White Lilacs* at North Texas [UNT], and this lady came from Philadelphia and she wrote this book on *White Lilacs*. It's based on that flower that Mr. Taylor moved from Quakertown and moved over [to] Solomon Hill, and it's fictitious. I asked her during that review, "Well, did you talk to Michele Glaze about this?" "Well, I heard about Michele but I haven't had the occasion to meet her." But she had used Michele's material but Michele could not sue her because she made the book fictitious.³⁸⁰

Cole's statements about Meyer suggest disappointment. It is likely that Cole was also voicing her neighbors' opinions as well, as her lifelong residency in Solomon Hill arguably makes her representative of her community.

White Lilacs interjected an emotional component and the black experience into the Quakertown memory, and Meyer made it readily accessible to a large demographic. Meyer's limited use of the black voice, however, and her urgency to publish the material suggest personal

³⁷⁷ Maggie Kennedy, "Author Gives History Novel Approach." *DRC*, November 17, 1993. In this interview, Meyer stated "I've never met Michele but her research on Quakertown was phenomenal... I knew I had to write a book about it, not a docu-drama but a fictionalized book for older children. I had to do this my way."

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Cole, UNT OH no. 1643, 56-57.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

glorification was a strong motive. Further, Cole's disappointment suggests the respect Glaze had for her subjects was not present during Meyer's writing process.

Quakertown is the second novel published in the wake of Glaze's manuscript. It was published in 2001 by Lee Martin, also a white author, and a former English professor at UNT. Whereas *White Lilacs* positions the story of the black community's removal front-and-center, *Quakertown* instead uses it as a backdrop and focuses on dramatized relationships between black and white characters. *Quakertown* also features a fictionalized version of Henry Taylor, this time renamed Little Washington Jones. Little's daughter, Camellia, is engaged to a black man named Ike. However, she has a complicated pregnancy because she is unsure whether the father is Ike or Kizer Bell, one of the white men in town who is also the son of Little's employers, the Bell family. The novel, which spans ten months, begins just before Camellia gives birth, and it ends after the Quakertown residents have been relocated to Rhodie Hill. Like *White Lilacs*, *Quakertown* is a site of Quakertown's memory because it introduces the forced relocation to a wide audience of readers. Further, Martin chose not to change several names in his novel, as evidenced by the title—his story takes place in Quakertown, Denton, Texas, not far from Oak Street, just as it really occurred in the 1920s.

Unlike *White Lilacs*, Martin wrote his book for a much older audience and it explores adult themes and uses adult language. It is written in a third-person omnipresent format in which the experiences of all characters are explored, such as both Kizer's and Ike's reactions to Camellia's pregnancy and birth. The novel also uses much more poetic language than its young adult counterpart. Yet, the novel elevates the complicated love story and relegates the story of Quakertown to background status. It is as though the Quakertown removal was included only to set the historical context of the time so the complexity of a pregnant light-skinned mulatto

woman who had sexual relationships with both a white and a black man could be implied without explicit discussion.

Jim Crow society– the setting for *Quakertown*–had very strict rules for sexuality, not in the sense that sexuality had strict moral guidelines, but in the sense that all forms of sexuality needed to be controlled by white men. White society did not look upon black female sexuality as pure or virginal, as evidenced by Camellia’s two sexual partners. Whites felt they could exploit black females whenever they desired, and they viewed black male sexuality as savage and lustful, as represented by Ike, and when it pertained to interactions with white women, worthy of death.

Quakertown also features several historical inaccuracies, one being the inclusion of a ceremony in Quakertown Park in 1943 remembering the former residents. Quakertown was long forgotten in Denton by the 1940s, a time when all of Texas, much like the entire southern region, was still overwhelmingly pro-Jim Crow. The lasting implication of *Quakertown* –as well as of the memory of Quakertown from the novel–is ironically uttered by one of its own characters: “‘It tells the facts,’ Daddy Little says. ‘But it doesn’t tell the whole truth. You need people for that, and even then you can’t trust they’ll get it right.’”³⁸¹

Quakertown as a site of memory is diluted. The events of the story barely relate directly to the actual history of Quakertown, and the only thing that really makes it a part of the memory is the setting. It is probable that if the setting of the novel had been anywhere else it would most likely not be a site of Quakertown’s memory. Further, the main conflict of the novel does have a symbolic parallel to the real removal of Quakertown. Even though Camellia is black, the complications surrounding her pregnancy suggest hers was a sexuality that would be deemed inappropriate by the white society around her. The scandal surrounding Camellia, who is a

³⁸¹ Ibid., 285.

representative of the Quakertown community in the novel, seems to give weight to justification behind the actual removal by implying unchecked sexual relationships lead to various levels of societal breakdown.

Quakertown does not hide the story of the forced relocation in Denton, yet like Meyer's use of artistic license in *White Lilacs*, Martin exploits the memory and story of Quakertown in his novel by borrowing references and titles from the historical event, relegates it to the background, and hints at symbolic justifications behind the actual removal. Taken together, these two novels reveal a level of exploited white privilege, and also reveal the overwhelmingly dominant supremacist vision of the memory.

The second site that features a dominant supremacist vision of Quakertown's memory is the Denton County African American Museum (the Museum), operated under the Denton County Office of History and Culture.³⁸² The Museum had once been a house that was built in Quakertown in 1904, and because of its beginnings is arguably the most visible face of Quakertown's historical memory today.³⁸³ As a home, it was owned by resident Ross Hembry at the time of the Park Bond Issue verdict in 1921 and was relocated to Solomon Hill the following year.³⁸⁴ Like the rest of Quakertown's history, the house's humble beginnings in a different part of town were forgotten over time.

By the early 2000s, many houses in Solomon Hill were dilapidated, and in an effort to reinvigorate the neighborhood, the city of Denton collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to demolish and rebuild many of the outdated homes.³⁸⁵ The Museum house was scheduled to be destroyed in the early 2000s, and although it is unclear how its Quakertown origins were

³⁸² Denton County, Texas, "Office of History and Culture: Museum and Historical Park," accessed January 24, 2015, <http://dentoncounty.com/Departments/History-and-Culture/Office-of-History-and-Culture.aspx>.

³⁸³ Denton County Historical Commission Marker, Quakertown House (2008).

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ "Journey from Quakertown," *DRC*, August 29, 2002.

discovered, a contractor nonetheless was able to date the house as pre-1920.³⁸⁶ The Denton County Historical Commission, familiar with the story of Quakertown by this time, researched the house and identified it as originating in Quakertown.³⁸⁷ DCHC member Mildred Hawk purchased the house from the city and donated it to Denton County for preservation.³⁸⁸ After years of renovations, the Museum opened to the public in 2008 as the third museum in the Denton County museum system.³⁸⁹ The Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum, which as the name suggests is the former county courthouse of Denton County, is the first museum. The Bayless-Selby House Museum is the second, which is a two-story Victorian home that was renovated into an early twentieth-century house museum.

The African American Museum is a three-room shotgun-style house. The entrance opens into what appears to be a former living room area, with a door directly across on the opposite wall leading back outside. A heavy oak mantle fireplace is on the left wall. Next to the fireplace is a framed partition of the original interior that reveals thin paneling, cardboard-covered holes, and ripped wallpaper. An interactive touch-screen video exhibit about the families of 1920s Quakertown is directly to the right of the fireplace. To the right of the entrance are two doorframes, each leading into separate rooms that are also connected by another doorframe. Each of these rooms features didactic panels explaining various stages of race relations in Denton over time, such as race riots during the first decade of the twentieth century as well as integration at both Denton universities in the 1960s. The only substantial artifacts in either of the rooms is a collection of personal items once belonging to Dr. Edwin Moten, who left Denton upon learning

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

that the referendum to relocate his community had passed.³⁹⁰ Although the Museum performs the important function of keeping Quakertown's memory alive, the dominating supremacist vision is evident in both the physical infrastructure of the Museum and in numerous omissions presented as history about the black community's legacy in Denton.

The renovations of the house into a museum—instead of preserving the house as a historical artifact—reflect the first instance in which the dominant supremacist vision is visible in the physical infrastructure. Much like the two novels' authors, Denton County officials appear to have leveraged a modicum of white privilege in the restoration of the home into a museum. Upon first glance, it appears to be a house museum, which differs from a traditional museum in that the structure is itself an artifact, not a newly constructed building, which has been restored with the objective of displaying how a family of a certain economic background lived during a specific time period. The restored wood paneling exterior of the museum suggests this is how the house was preserved, as do the updated hardwood floors and the addition of a sliding-door closet on the inside. This appearance as a house museum is further evidenced by the fact that directly next door is a fully-furnished Victorian era house museum, another in the Office of History and Culture's museum system.

However, the bare, plastered walls and track lighting inside reveal that the Museum was restored in a gallery style instead of as a house museum. There are no furnishings inside that suggest how its residents might have lived; instead, cases with labeled artifacts occupy the rooms. The doorframes were also restored, yet the frames with no doors serve as entryways only. It is unknown why Denton County altered the infrastructure in such a manner, as the renovations and furnishings of the Museum do not reflect the lived experience of Quakertown or Solomon

³⁹⁰ "Texas Towns: Denton," *Dallas Express*, December 2, 1922.

Hill residents. The house was not preserved as a historical artifact, yet its white Victorian counterpart next door was.

The Bayless-Selby House Museum debuted as a museum in 2001. Instead of featuring panels and cases of artifacts like the African American Museum, it displays furnishings and appliances from the 1910s, such as washboards and wood-burning stoves, exactly as they would have been used and in the rooms in which they would have been used. In short, it accurately reflects the lived experience of a white family at the beginning of the twentieth century. Further, decorative items such as delicate china, a Victrola, and a heavy tiger oak fireplace suggest a wealthy family would have lived in this home.

A similar oak mantle fireplace is in the African American Museum as well; its presence in the Victorian home is correct, but it is not in the black home. Photographs of the house throughout the decades—several that are displayed in the museum—show a large bay window where the fireplace is today. The window was replaced by county officials during renovations, and it is also unknown why they did this.³⁹¹ Fireplaces, hearths, and stoves have been staple heat sources in American homes since colonial times.³⁹² However, the oak mantle fireplace as a representation of a Quakertown resident's access to heat is incorrect for two reasons. First, fireplaces in most homes built in the early twentieth century were much simpler than the elaborate one in the Museum. Bungalow style houses, like those built in Quakertown, represented minimalism as a response to the more ornate preceding Victorian style. Most homes in Quakertown probably did not have this style of fireplace.³⁹³ The same photographs that show the large bay window also reveal a thin gas pipe in the background, in what is today the farthest

³⁹¹ "Denton County African American Museum History of the House," Denton County African American Museum, Denton County Office of History and Culture, Denton, TX, visited September 20, 2013.

³⁹² "The History of the Fireplace," Old Houses Online, <http://www.oldhouseonline.com/history-of-the-fireplace/>, accessed January 31, 2015.

³⁹³ Ibid.

back room of the Museum.³⁹⁴ This would have been the heat source for the families that lived in the home.

Second, families with homes that had such fireplaces were more often than not upper-class.³⁹⁵ These types of fireplaces were most likely in the Victorian homes of the wealthy white families along Oak Street. When Denton County officials replaced the bay window with the oak fireplace, they altered the socioeconomic status of Quakertown and Solomon Hill residents perceived by museum visitors. These changes on behalf of white Denton seem to have been done solely to create a specific image of the town's black communities. Altering the image of the black communities justifies the forced relocation by suggesting they had better accommodations in Solomon Hill than they did in Quakertown, when in fact they did not. Extending off this, the alterations also mitigate Denton's racist motives behind the forced relocation.

The second way in which the supremacist vision dominates the emancipationist vision in Quakertown's memory at the Museum is in omissions presented as historical information on the exhibit panels. One such panel entitled "Race Riots & Violence" details many of the national 1919 race riots as well as various early twentieth-century KKK activity across the South. As discussed earlier three race riots occurred in Texas during the Red Summer, and there was a high level of Denton KKK activity around the same time. However, the "Race Riots & Violence" panel does not discuss either of these. It is unknown why the county officials and museum curators chose to omit known information of white-on-black violence at both the city and state level and instead divert attention to national events, but it appears to serve the purpose of

³⁹⁴ "Denton County African American Museum History of the House," Denton County African American Museum.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

actively forgetting events as a means of mitigating Denton's racist past. By extension, these omissions also diminish white Denton's racist motives behind Quakertown's demise.³⁹⁶

Further, as the name suggests, the African American Museum is purported to be representative of all of the county's black communities, yet it is the smallest of all of Denton County's museums. Also, a disproportionate majority of the museum focuses on the Quakertown removal, and since the house itself is from Quakertown, it can be argued that this should be the main focus of the museum. However, with such limited visibility of other black communities in such a small "representative" space, the African American Museum offers very little to its visitors about overall contributions, experiences, and even the very existence of other African Americans in Denton County.

A final way in which the Denton County African American Museum reveals the supremacist vision still dominates in Quakertown's historical memory is in its segregated nature. The third museum in the Office of History and Culture's museum system is the Courthouse-on-the-Square museum (the Courthouse Museum), formerly the Denton County courthouse. Today the museum focuses on Denton's founding days, featuring prominent families that settled and created both the town and county. The Courthouse Museum is the most public of all Denton County's museums, as it was the center of the county for decades and was also the site of many public events as previously discussed. Yet the many black communities of Denton, which have existed since the late 1800s, are not represented among other pioneers in the Courthouse Museum. They are instead relegated to a restored house museum away from the center of town. Prior to the creation of the African American Museum in 2008, the Courthouse Museum's only inclusion of blacks in Denton was a temporary exhibit focusing solely on Quakertown, including

³⁹⁶ The other omissions of correct historical information on panels at the African American Museum are from different periods of history, such as desegregation in the 1960s. Because these other time periods are outside the scope of this thesis, they will not be discussed here.

none of the other black communities in the county.³⁹⁷ Denton, which has a long history of consciously segregating these communities, has also chosen to ignore those same communities in its historical museums. Although the African American Museum is a site of Quakertown's memory, it is still overwhelmingly dominated by the supremacist vision today.

The third and perhaps most important site of Quakertown's memory that reveals a dominant supremacist vision is Quakertown Park, which replaced the bygone neighborhood. Today, it is a thirty-two acre public park just north of the county square in Denton.³⁹⁸ The same streets that contained the black neighborhood in 1920 still border the park today—Withers Street on the north, Bell Avenue on the east, McKinney Street on the south, and Oakland Avenue on the west. The park boasts many features: an amphitheater, stage, and event center; a playground and swing set; picnic tables, benches, a pavilion, and a grill area; a garden walking area, a fountain, and bridges crossing Pecan Creek; and public facilities including restrooms.³⁹⁹ Besides these offerings, the Quakertown Park area is also the location of the Denton Civic Center, the Emily Fowler Library, the Women's Club Building, Denton Senior Center, Civic Center Pool, and Denton City Hall.

Annually the park holds multiple community-wide festivals such as the Arts & Jazz Festival, the Denton Blues Festival, and Dog Days of Denton that draw thousands of visitors. Quakertown Park is the largest and most central of Denton's park system, and because of its centrality as a public community area, it is not a stretch to assume that the park today is what white Denton in 1920 most likely envisioned. Ironically, the park does not include county

³⁹⁷ "Museum Piecing Together Family Tales, Starting with Quakertown," *DRC*, July 24, 2002.

³⁹⁸ "Quakertown Park," City of Denton, Parks and Recreation, accessed January 13, 2015, <http://www.cityofdenton.com/departments-services/departments-g-p/parks-recreation/parks-and-trails/parks-and-trails-listing/quakertown-park>.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

fairgrounds or buildings for Texas Woman's University, two major selling points that secured the passage of the Park Bond Issue in 1921.⁴⁰⁰

There is no doubt that the park today is a site of Quakertown's memory. Besides meeting all of Nora's qualifications, it is where the former community once stood and is also where many of the instances of racism against Denton's black citizens occurred. It is the only site out of the three that was not created with the intention of becoming a site of memory; in fact, it was created with the intention of erasing Quakertown and its memory altogether. The park originated as a site of the supremacist vision and has only recently begun making space to include the emancipationist vision, as the installation of plaques and markers dedicated to Quakertown since the 1989 cistern discovery suggest. Because of this, the park has competing memories in the same space and is therefore perhaps the most complicated of the three sites.

The identity of the park prior to 1989 was no doubt one of white dominance. White Denton effectively removed the middle-class black neighborhood and then omitted the community completely from the historical record in various ways. The building for the Woman's Club, whose members were instrumental in the passage of the Park Bond Issue, proudly boasts that it has stood in that same location since 1928.⁴⁰¹ For over eighty years the park was known as Civic Center Park, a title that gave no reference to the families that were relocated for its existence.⁴⁰² The Emily Fowler Library building, which sits approximately where Crawford's Grocery Store used to be, was granted a Texas State Historical Marker in 2008 for being designed by nationally renowned architect O'Neill Ford.⁴⁰³ Individually these incidences show

⁴⁰⁰ Editorial, *DRC*, April 4, 1921; "Chamber of Commerce Notes," *DRC*, October 25, 1920.

⁴⁰¹ "The Denton Woman's Club Building," Denton Woman's Club, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://dentonwomansclub.org/>.

⁴⁰² Park Proposal Aims to Make Amends," *DRC*, October 9, 2006; "Site of Quakertown, razed in the 1920s, Now Has State Historical Designation," *DRC*, February 17, 2013.

⁴⁰³ Denton 1921 Sheet 16, Texas Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Pre-1923); "Life in Quakertown," Denton County African American Museum.

no overt harm to the black communities in Denton, but together they suggest to the casual observer that the park originated in its central location.

After city workers discovered the cistern in the park and Glaze's manuscript was reprinted by the DCHC, interest in the former community grew so much that the city formally included the history of Quakertown into the park in 1991. That year, the city, with the help of the DCHC, erected a City of Denton historical marker in the park marking the former neighborhood, seventy years after the verdict to relocate the black community passed.⁴⁰⁴ Since then, other additions of Quakertown's memory have been included in the park. As described earlier, the park was renamed Quakertown Park in 2007, due to the efforts of local historian Mike Cochran and the DCHC.⁴⁰⁵ A mural by artist Paula Blincoe Collins was commissioned by the city in 2008 in the Civic Center entitled "Historic Quakertown" which features numerous carvings that serve as symbolic representations of the familial and communal nature of the neighborhood.⁴⁰⁶ Finally, in 2013 the Texas Historical Commission designated the park a historical location with a Texas State Historical Marker, also due to the efforts of the DCHC.⁴⁰⁷

Although Denton city leaders and officials strove to include the history and memory of Quakertown into the park's setting over the last several decades, inconsistencies reveal a struggle between the white and black memories. The white vision of 2015 differs from that of a century earlier. Today, the white vision includes African American contributions and experiences, yet it does not accept blame or offer to apologize for centuries of racial mistreatment. This shift in the contemporary white vision is evident in Quakertown Park.

⁴⁰⁴ City of Denton Historic Landmark, Quakertown (1991).

⁴⁰⁵ "Park Proposal Aims to Make Amends," *DRC*, October 9, 2006; "Site of Quakertown, razed in the 1920s, Now Has State Historical Designation," *DRC*, February 17, 2013.

⁴⁰⁶ Paula Blincoe Collins, *Historic Quakertown*, sculpted mural, 2008 (Denton Civic Center, Denton, Texas).

⁴⁰⁷ The Texas State Historical Marker program is one of many under the Texas Historical Commission, which oversees the majority of Texas historical preservation efforts.

First, the City of Denton historical marker incorrectly states that fifty-eight families were removed from Quakertown, when the U.S. Census for 1920 reveals eighty families occupied the neighborhood.⁴⁰⁸ It is unknown how those who did the research for the city of Denton marker, most likely members of the DCHC, arrived at the smaller number of families in the neighborhood.⁴⁰⁹ It is known, however, that they did not use the 1920 census records, which gives the most accurate count of 1920s Quakertown residents. Because of the U.S. Census's seventy-two-year rule regarding personal census data, when the marker was unveiled in 1991, the 1920 census was not publicly available for another year.⁴¹⁰

Second, the most recent addition of Quakertown's memory to the park, the 2013 Texas State Historical Marker, glosses over the true intentions behind the removal of the black community. The inscription states it was for the "civic-minded interests of Denton's white residents" and "that it was in the best interest of the college and the Denton community to transform Quakertown into a city park."⁴¹¹ The word "transform" elicits images of a metamorphic process, an upgrade from bad to good, and simultaneously omits the black experience of the relocation, which was "devastating" instead of transformative.⁴¹² While it was no doubt in white Denton's best interest to remove the black community, it was not due to "civic-minded interests."⁴¹³ Because Quakertown residents were socially thriving, economically independent, and centrally located, they violated the supremacist vision white Denton had

⁴⁰⁸ Per 1920 census records, eighty families were removed from Quakertown. City of Denton Historic Landmark, Quakertown (1991).

⁴⁰⁹ "Marker," DRC, February 27, 1991; "Historical Marker Sought for Quakertown Relocation Site," DRC, March 11, 2003.

⁴¹⁰ "The '72-Year Rule,'" U. S. Census Office: History, https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/the_72_year_rule_1.html, accessed January 31, 2015.

⁴¹¹ Texas Historic Marker Designation, Quakertown, Denton County (2010), ref. no. 16681.

⁴¹² Clark, UNT OH no. 1636, 25.

⁴¹³ Texas Historic Marker Designation, Quakertown.

created around town. Like countless other instances of Jim Crow racism across the South, Quakertown residents were removed for being black and for existing.

With the different markers and buildings across the park, differing histories and memories are presented both consciously and subconsciously. The markers and sculptures imply that the black memory of the former community is embraced, but all of the buildings and structures paying homage to white citizens show that white Denton is still in charge of the historical memory of this particular site. Ultimately this reveals, along with the other sites of Quakertown's memory that the supremacist vision in Denton still triumphs, just as it did nearly a century ago.

CONCLUSION

Quakertown was a middle-class African American community that achieved a social status whites in the 1910s and 1920s did not want blacks to have. Such thriving black communities were minimal during the Jim Crow era. Older works in New South historiography have suggested homogenous African American poverty across the South during Jim Crow. However, contemporary studies such as Michelle Mears' *And Grace Will Lead Me Home: African American Freedmen Communities of Austin, Texas, 1865-1928* and Glenda Gilmore's *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* are emerging that reveal enclaves of self-sufficient black communities not only existed and thrived, but also were dismantled and removed precisely for not looking and behaving the way whites wanted them to act—as subservient second-class citizens. The study of Quakertown, both its history and memory, contributes to this burgeoning subgenre in New South studies.

By looking at how whites treated the black community in Denton—up to and including modern efforts to shed light on the topic via memory embodiment—one can see how easy it is for a community or group to manipulate history for its own purposes. This was not done solely in the past; it occurs in the present as well. The white vision is still alive in Denton but in a different way than it was a century ago. Although the overt racism the city of Denton displayed to Quakertown residents in the 1920s would most likely not be tolerated today, the various inaccuracies and omissions in many sites of Quakertown's memory reveal varying levels of white exploitation. The white vision today has limited room for African Americans as illustrated by the lack of acknowledgement or acceptance of centuries of racial violence and mistreatment. This is what is evident in Quakertown's public memory in Denton today.

One can easily assume that Denton's black citizens became worse off when they were exiled from Quakertown, but it is hard to prove. Their relocation to Solomon Hill in the 1920s certainly came with unjust challenges, such as its taxing distance from the center of town compared to Quakertown's centrality and instances when relocated citizens were offered low-ball prices on their old homes. Their original community had been disassembled, and as a result many neighbors and extended family members left Denton altogether; they were farther away from employment and business opportunities, as they were relegated to the outskirts of town, and it was clear that Denton society—a white society—refused to acknowledge black cultural and societal contributions and achievements by writing them out of local history.

The residents of the same neighborhood in the twenty-first century might disagree, however, as the consecration of their history since the 1920s, the resulting cohesiveness from decades of shared experiences, and the revival and celebration of the Quakertown story—a black story—all suggest. Yet Solomon Hill, which is still largely African American, is still a segregated neighborhood east of the railroad tracks. It will never be known how Denton's black citizens would have fared during the twentieth century if they had been allowed to continue thriving in Quakertown.

There is no question that Denton's 1920s white vision was wrong, especially since it grew at the expense of the black community. Many questions about Quakertown's history and memory have been answered, albeit with gaps and omissions. Yet, many more remain. How does a community right this sort of historical wrong? How does Denton rectify its treatment of the Quakertown citizens nearly a century ago? Further, who gets the final word on what this process entails and when is the community recompensed? Are multiple historical markers and a separate

museum enough? And is it up to Denton city and county leaders and officials—who have historically been overwhelmingly white—or the black residents to make that decision?

There is not one right answer for these questions, but discussing questions such as these encourages increasing dialogue about collective memories and how they are treated. Each iteration of Quakertown's memory, beginning with Michelle Glaze's 1991 manuscript, is richer and more multi-faceted than its predecessor. If anything, studying the sites of Quakertown's memory reveals that memory is constantly fluctuating, and will continue to do so.

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