

THE HOPE TO CHANGE A NEIGHBORHOOD:  
THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER, JACKSON PARK, AND THE  
PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

A Thesis

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by

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## ABSTRACT

Presidential libraries were formally established in the 1940s as a way to collect presidential records, provide a space for research, and found a museum for interpretation of the president's life and legacy. President Barack Obama, following two terms in office, decided to establish the fourteenth presidential library in a historic park on the South Side of Chicago. Changes in protocol and a pushback against the use of public land has considerably delayed construction and forced questions regarding the nature of presidential libraries and Chicago's outlook on their public parks. This thesis, written and researched while the issue remains ongoing, focuses on the decision to locate in a public park while the Obama Presidential Center, breaking from precedent, will be privately run by the Obama Foundation—as well as not following the traditional roles of a presidential library. This presents long-term problems for the continued protection of Chicago's parks and paves the way for further private investment in public spaces.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elizabeth Burns became interested in preservation while attending the College of Charleston in the South Carolina low country. There she learned the differences between Federal and Georgian architectural styles, that Wednesdays were for the beach, and how to tuck point a brick wall. After graduation, she spent a few years back in Virginia drifting between various jobs that included stints at an art museum and the state tax department. She decided to go the complete opposite direction of sunny, and humid Charleston and settled on attending graduate school in a rather cold, some could say gloomy, environment. It was a perfect choice.

While pursuing a degree in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell, Elizabeth spent the summer of 2018 in California, interning at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in the Cultural Resources Department. Weekdays surveying developed sites within the park turned into weekends romping through the backcountry. Turns out, hugging big trees is an excellent use of time. The following summer she headed to a closer locale, interning with the Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, Maryland. Surprisingly, Maryland is actually cool and HPTC is perhaps the best place to be fully immersed in preservation projects that range from the typical to the bewildering. 10 out of 10 would recommend.

Elizabeth will graduate from Cornell with a Master of Arts in Historic Preservation Planning in December 2019. She, as one could guess, has set her sights on Chicago.

To all those who told me I could do this (you left me no other choice)

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I've been looking forward to writing these acknowledgements from the moment I started this thesis. They're my favorite part of a book to read and of the many theses I read for research, I always, without fail, made sure to read the acknowledgements (sometimes it's all I read). Since I shall never be writing again, I plan to make it count. So, without further ado, my thanks.

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To Louf, I think after 23 years of friendship we're past the point of thanks (except you, make sure you regularly thank me for remaining your friend . . . you're welcome, by the way). But, in keeping with the point of acknowledgements, I shall deviate from the norm. Thanks for being, well, you. You have always been a steady source of strength and an unfailing friend. Things would have turned out much differently had I never met you in preschool and I will be forever glad they didn't. On that note, sorry for not picking you for show and tell that one time, it seems you're still bitter. Now let's work on getting that house—The Blueberry Patch—in Maine!

To Mom, thanks for tolerating all the times you tried to talk to me about my thesis, but I would just get upset and ask you to put dad on the phone who would then proceed to ask me about my thesis, questions I happily answered. Sorry for being a complicated child and thanks for loving me anyway.

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## INTRODUCTION

On a stage in Grant Park, amidst thousands of cheering Chicagoans, Barack Obama stood for the first time as President-elect of the United States of America. His words reverberated across the masses, against the stalwart buildings of Michigan Avenue and to the edges of Lake Michigan. His speech solidified his place in history as the first African American to be elected president, but the first two words he uttered were a simple acknowledgement of the city in which he stood. In that life altering moment, President-elect Barack Obama began his speech on the night of November 4, 2008 with: “Hello, Chicago.”<sup>1</sup>

It was inevitable, then, that when he finished his two terms in office and turned his sights to life post-presidency that he would remember the city. Nothing about his decision to establish a presidential library in Chicago was shocking. As the fourteenth consecutive president to establish such a facility and with federal laws regulating their formation, it was the traditional path to take post-presidency. That he chose Chicago reflects his rise in politics, first as a state congressman for a district in the city’s South Side and his move to the national scene as a senator from Illinois. That he chose to create a facility that would not follow the traditional model only after selecting a site raises questions about the legitimacy of the whole operation.

The idea for presidential libraries began with Franklin D. Roosevelt in the late 1930s when he determined a space would be needed to house his extensive collection of documents relating to his life, governorship, and presidency. He constructed a two-

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<sup>1</sup> Barack Obama, “Victory Speech at Rally in Chicago,” (speech, Chicago, IL, November 4, 2008), *CNN*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/11/04/obama.transcript/>

story structure on the land of his childhood home to hold the papers and since that time, the libraries have grown in size and complexity. Critiques regarding the spaces as monuments and temples to the legacy of one man have a measure of validity, but these spaces serve a purpose as a repository for presidential papers and, often, papers of those associated with the administration. They are educational even if they seek to validate and affirm the acts of a president.

Each president since FDR has selected a site pertaining to their personal history, often in a home state. As the buildings became grander, the trend towards associating the structure with a university or college grew. These associations assisted in fundraising efforts, provided the school with a nationally recognized museum, and allowed the president to formulate a living legacy. In the final selection process for the proposed Obama Presidential Center, each bid was connected with a university. These site selections have rarely been perfectly smooth, even FDR struggled in having his mother, who owned the land, deed the property to the United States government. Land disputes are some of the most common and controversial aspects of constructing presidential libraries, especially in a country where the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution deals specifically with property rights.

Obama's choice, however, is unique amongst previous examples. In deciding to build his center in a historic park on the edges of a disinvested community, Obama assumed the inherent difficulties that were to follow. That he decided to run the center solely through his foundation and not deed the space to the federal government complicated matters. With that decision, the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) was no longer the intended depository for the Obama White House presidential papers,

though negotiations with the National Archives and Records Administration granted the center access to the materials. In appearances, the OPC appears to be a continuation of the libraries instituted by FDR but the lack of federal oversight and regulations allow the space to conform to the sole wishes of the Obamas. It promotes the viewpoint that these spaces are intended as legacy monuments and devalues the previously established federal libraries. What had, after thirteen libraries, become a public institution suddenly becomes digitized and the physical structure privatized in a manner that allows it to retain many similar qualities with the federal libraries while allowing more freedom in interpretation. It is in many ways a presidential library without being a federal presidential library.

This shift in ownership compounds the issues regarding the selected site. A public park, nationally recognized for its historic value, was offered as the premiere site for the Obama Presidential Center, not by the Chicago Park District, who owns and operates the park, but by the University of Chicago, a private institution. Chicago's citizens have been stalwart defenders of their public spaces since the earliest days of the city. With the decision to build in Jackson Park, the Obama Presidential Center has raised questions regarding the validity of public space and whether private interest has a place within them.

### *Statement of Purpose*

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and analyze the Obama Presidential Center and its site selection within historic Jackson Park. Themes surrounding the OPC are expansive, ranging from gentrification to community-benefits agreements to

the use of public property. This thesis touches briefly upon many of these topics but focuses on the appropriation of public parkland for private use and the ensuing repercussions. It draws on the, namely the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, as a precedent for mitigating lengthy disputes over presidential library siting and the associated effects.

The purpose is to understand the changes occurring in the establishment of presidential libraries and how they play a role in the character of the spaces they occupy. The Obama Presidential Center is a large development with a big name which can lend itself to criticism. The unwillingness to locate outside of a public park and the fact that the buildings will be privately operated explains much of the antagonism the proposal has received. This work determines that the Obama Presidential Center will, in all likelihood, be constructed in Jackson Park and provide short-term economic and cultural benefits to the surrounding communities. This thesis will also seek to demonstrate that the project will be to the long term detriment of public park spaces in the city, especially in other lower-income neighborhoods seeking investment. As the rulings and decisions currently stand, the city of Chicago has the legal authority to allow the Obama Presidential Center to be built on land that is essentially irreplaceable, privatizing public space and paving the way for future decisions of a similar type.

### *Methodology*

Much of the research was conducted using published news articles from a variety of sources, mainly the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Atlanta*

*Constitution*, and the *New York Times*. Additional information was derived from video recordings of announcements, interviews, community meetings, and city council meetings. Development and design plans were gathered from various city and state government offices. Archivists from a number of presidential libraries, primarily the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Jimmy Carter libraries, directed the author towards valuable information. (The thirty-five-day federal government shutdown between December 22, 2018 and January 25, 2019 interfered with research and communication with the presidential library archivists as staff were furloughed for the duration.) Conversations with organizations via e-mail proved insightful into thoughts regarding the location choice of libraries and their perception.

The biographies of Jimmy Carter, Barack Obama and Michelle Obama inform portions of this thesis. A number of books, maps, and journal articles accessed through the Cornell University library system and the Library of Congress help frame the information regarding histories of Atlanta, Chicago, and presidential libraries.

### *Chapter Breakdown*

This thesis seeks to explain, through five chapters, the nature of the Obama Presidential Center, the history of such an establishment, and how the choice of location forces Chicago to evaluate its view on public spaces.

Chapter One provides a brief history of Presidential Libraries beginning with that constructed for Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1940s. It discusses the shifts in presidential prerogative and the accompanying changes to the implementation, design and siting of the thirteen presidential libraries. Acts passed by Congress and the role of the National Archives and Records Administration play a key part in the formation

and maintenance of these properties. The chapter sets the groundwork for understanding the methods employed in constructing the edifices and the public response once a site is chosen.

The second chapter delves into the history of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center in more depth. A short biography of Jimmy Carter opens the chapter in order to establish a connection to his choice of site. Its location within an urban residential neighborhood separates the Carter Center from its predecessors, traditionally placed in hometowns or on college campuses. The shift presented a series of issues, notably the backlash from surrounding neighborhood associations who rose in opposition to the roadway necessary for the construction of the center. This story presages issues faced in future presidential libraries located within an urban context and helps us reflect on present disputes regarding the Obama Presidential Center.

Chapter three moves into the biographies of Barack and Michelle Obama. Their experiences led to a historic presidency and the opportunity for a presidential center. The chapter connects that history with their decision to locate the Obama Presidential Center in the South Side of Chicago. It discusses the creation of the Obama Foundation, the prominent donors, the bids presented by various entities, and the winning proposal from the University of Chicago.

Chapter four focuses on the issues arising from the location selected for the. The chapter presents examples of previous privatization of park space in Chicago and how the issue is often overlooked for the convenience of private funding. It integrates the shifting interpretation surrounding presidential libraries and the decision by the

Obama Foundation to retain the Obama Presidential Center into the discussion recognizing the interplay of politics and money.

The Conclusion determines that locating the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park will negatively impact the future of parks in Chicago. While the center will likely be a successful institution due to name recognition and funding, its placement leaves much to be desired. The acquisition of land favors the political and monetary power of the developer over the importance of parks to residents of the neighboring communities.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A FOUR-TERM PRESIDENT’S LEGACY TO HIMSELF: A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES, 1942 TO PRESENT

#### *Where it all began*

With the donation of his personal and presidential papers to the Federal Government, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) initiated the system of Presidential Libraries that would continue for every succeeding president, and one preceding, to the present day.<sup>2</sup> He established a system that uses private funds to construct the library before bequeathing the structure and collections to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to oversee and maintain—which is not the system in place for the OPC.<sup>3</sup> He choose his family property in Hyde Park, New York as the location for the library and according to his wishes, the property became an asset of the United States government to be operated and interpreted by the National Park Service as an historic site after his death in 1945.<sup>4</sup>

Presidential Libraries do not function as libraries in the typical sense. Books do not line shelves for perusal, for example. Instead, the space is an archive for a president and his administration’s collected papers and artifacts where the public can access the material for research and discussion. Roosevelt understood the importance of his documents and how they allowed the public insight into the workings of the

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<sup>2</sup> “Presidential Library History,” *National Archives*, August 15, 2016, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/about/history.html>

<sup>3</sup> “Library History,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://fdrlibrary.org/library-history>

<sup>4</sup> “Roosevelt Homes,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://fdrlibrary.org/roosevelt-homes>

government. He strove to both preserve and provide access to his papers through the institution of a library.

Congress passed an act, signed by Roosevelt on June 19, 1934, forming the National Archives Establishment (as NARA was originally called) to be headed by an archivist to be appointed by the President of the United States with the consent of the Senate.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the National Archives was to act as a repository for “all archives or records belonging to the Government of the United States (legislative, executive, judicial, and other).” The agency was folded into the General Services Administration (GSA) in 1949 until Congress passed legislation in October 1984 once again granting the National Archives free agency. The legislation took effect on April 1, 1985 and the agency was rechristened the National Archives and Records Administration.<sup>6</sup>

NARA plays an essential role in the creation and ensuing tradition of presidential libraries. In a press conference held on December 10, 1938 in the President’s study at the White House, FDR read aloud his plan to consolidate his papers, correspondences, pamphlets, books, and other assorted material from his life “in one definite locality.”<sup>7</sup> He desired not to break up his voluminous collection of documents believing that, because the papers related to various periods of his life and not just his service in the Federal Government, future benefit would be derived from scholars, students, and the general public by keeping the material intact. With the

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<sup>5</sup> Act of June 19, 1934 (“National Archives Act”), Public Law 73-432, 48 STAT 1122

<sup>6</sup> James Worsham, “Our Story: How the National Archives Evolved Over 75 Years of Change and Challenges,” *Prologue Magazine* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2009), retrieved February 27, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/summer/history.html>

<sup>7</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Press Conference #508,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, Press Conferences of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945, December 10, 1938, 297.

formulation of a proposal for the first presidential library, FDR intended that if the building he suggested were “erected and the material . . . is placed there, the title to the building and all the material would be vested in the United States Government and placed under the primary responsibility of the Archivist of the United States.”<sup>8</sup>

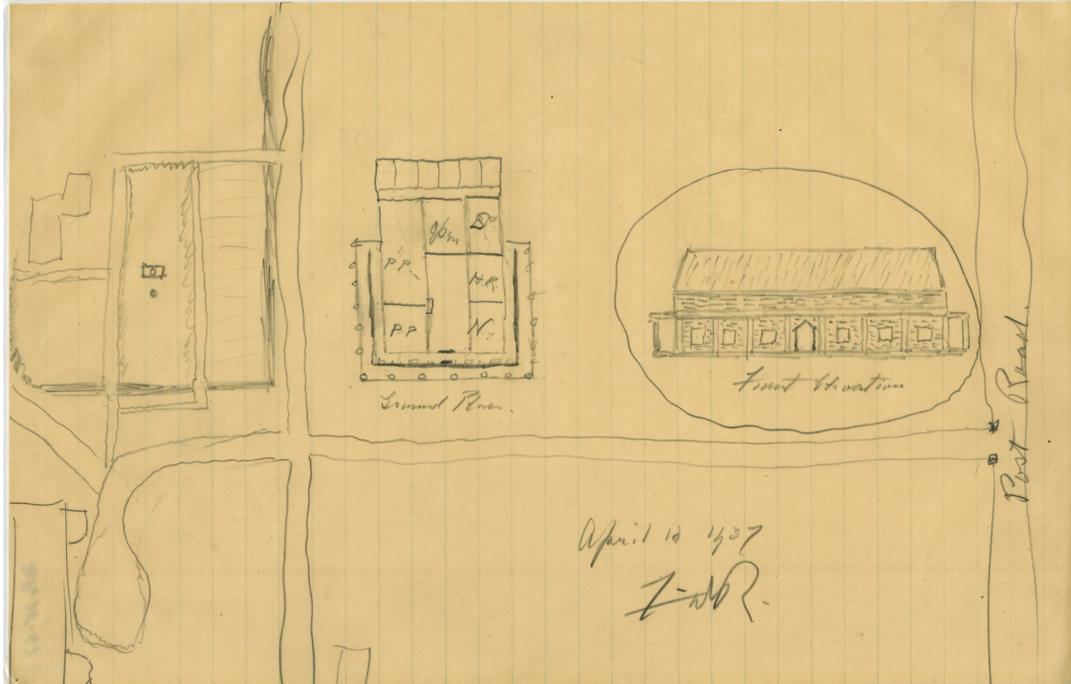
Roosevelt intended to raise the funds for the construction of the building before handing it over to the National Archives to ensure permanent care of the facility.

At the time of the press conference, FDR had been “considering more and more the final disposal of what amounts to probably the largest collection of source material of almost anybody over the last quarter of a century,” for upwards of four years.<sup>9</sup> He had sketched a preliminary drawing of the appearance of his library in April 1937. In designing this space, Roosevelt was aware of popular opinions on architectural design at the time. Critics berated the neoclassical style of the Jefferson Memorial, stating that feelings had long been against “dreary, costly, pretentious, inefficient, and dishonest buildings.” The Roosevelt library, in contrast, follows one of the local styles in the Hudson Valley and uses a Dutch vernacular to conceal the massive 40,000 square feet he intended to fill with his papers.

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<sup>8</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Press Conference #508,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, Press Conferences of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945, December 10, 1938, 297

<sup>9</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Press Conference #508,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, Press Conferences of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945, December 10, 1938, 298



**Figure 1.1.** FDR's original sketch of his presidential library including a floor plan and elevation. Drawn April 12, 1937. Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Library History, <https://fdrlibrary.org/library-history>



**Figure 1.2.** Exterior of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library as constructed. Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <https://fdr.blogs.archives.gov/2013/12/31/a-year-in-review/>

FDR recognized the importance of the public's perception of the library because it could affect attendance and tourism. The building was to be located on the grounds of his family home at Hyde Park in Dutchess County, New York with permission granted by his mother, who remained in control of the property during her lifetime. This decision rested on two reasons: FDR's plan to return to Hyde Park at the end of his presidency and help assist in the organization of material, and his certainty that his family home would be given to the Federal Government for the benefit of the public upon his death. Having both functions in one location helped to solidify FDR's physical legacy.

Roosevelt held the press conference after courting a number of historians and academics, gauging potential interest in the proposal and slowly building the support for it. Immediately prior to the press conference, Roosevelt hosted eighteen historians and publicists for a luncheon conference. The *New York Times* reported on December 11<sup>th</sup> that they all "endorsed the project enthusiastically."<sup>10</sup> With the backing of historians, FDR sought press approval to ease his way for gaining the support needed from Congress for the establishment of such an institution. A committee of archivists and professors was assembled to provide recommendations. It was this group that decided to call the space the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library instead of using the more accurate term "archive," believing it to be a more familiar term to the public. Many aspects of the Presidential Library system have shifted since these early days but referring to the institution as a library remains.

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<sup>10</sup> "Roosevelt Estate to House Archives, Go To Public Later," *The New York Times*, December 11, 1938

Shortly after the first meeting of the committee, a draft of the legislation establishing the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library as a subsidiary of the National Archives was submitted to Congress by the Justice Department. The proposal, as with anything associated with politics, had its fair share of critics. One Republican Congressman stated that “only an egocentric maniac would have the nerve to ask for such a measure.”<sup>11</sup> A Chicago resident, Clarence Boothby, wrote a letter to FDR almost immediately after the announcement of the proposal, that read:

Amid recent press reports that you plan to give your Hyde Park estate to the United States Government as a permanent memorial to yourself, provided the government and citizens will supply suitable endowment and moneys for perpetual upkeep, please accept the following humble opinion of the writer: Future generations should be allowed to forget class hatred, graft, crooked NLRB, waste, court packing, the social security fraud, communistic appointees, John Lewis, Bridges, Perkins, Earle, Guffey, Barry, Black, Murphy, Wagner, Etc., Etc.,— the TVA scandal and all the rest of your ridiculous and unworkable alphabet soup.<sup>12</sup>

This relayed the discontent of some citizens for whom the library was ultimately intended, while conveying the purpose of the library as a depository for research by archiving this letter to be used in future study.

The *Chicago Tribune* ran an editorial cartoon on December 13, 1938 showing a rotund President Roosevelt dressed as Santa turning away from a stocking hung on the fireplace mantle into which he had just placed a gift with a tag reading, “Hyde Park Memorial to Franklin D. Roosevelt, to be enlarged by public subscription and forever maintained at government expense—to be grander than Mount Vernon or Monticello.”<sup>13</sup> John T. Flynn, a journalist known for his opposition to the President,

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<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Hufbauer, “The Roosevelt Library,” in *The Library as an Agency of Culture*, ed. Thomas Augst and Wayne A. Weigand (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 182.

<sup>12</sup> Clarence Boothby to FDR, Dec. 13, 1938, President's Personal File, FDR Library File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

<sup>13</sup> “He Did His Shopping Early,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 13, 1938

referred to the library as a “Yankee Pyramid,” likening Roosevelt to an Ancient Egyptian pharaoh constructing a monument glorifying himself for posterity.<sup>14</sup> The tendency to critique Presidential Libraries as monuments and temples to the legacy of one man continues to be a central assessment, especially as they have grown in grandeur and cost. Roosevelt’s Dutch Colonial two story structure appears quaint by modern standards.



**Figure 1.3.** A political cartoon from the *Chicago Tribune* showing FDR as Santa delivering the gift of a presidential library to himself. Source: *Chicago Tribune* Archives, December 13, 1938

Congress finally passed the legislation in July 1939, during a period when a Democratic majority comprised both the House and Senate. The carefully worded bill promised that the federal government would provide the necessary funds to ensure that

<sup>14</sup> John T. Flynn as quoted in Benjamin Hufbauer, *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 32.

the library was maintained at all times.<sup>15</sup> Construction began later that year and the library was formally dedicated a year and half later on June 30, 1941. He is the only president to establish and have an operating library during his time in office.

In 1943 Roosevelt wrote a private memo to Fred Shipman, the first director of the Roosevelt Library, in which he expressed his desire to have a hand in organizing his personal and confidential files to “select those which are never to be made public.” FDR died from a cerebral hemorrhage on April 12, 1945, however, before having the opportunity to fulfill this desire. The issue was resolved by a New York judge in 1947 who ruled that his public declarations to make the materials within the library completely accessible were valid and would be upheld.<sup>16</sup> In addition, it was determined that the collections were officially government property in accordance with the late president’s wishes. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library became the first place to allow unprecedented access to sensitive government material decades earlier than they previously had been.

### *Presidential Papers Before Roosevelt’s Time*

Prior to FDR, presidential papers were viewed as private possessions. The presidents, upon leaving office, took the records with them to disperse or retain as they desired. In the same press conference in December 1938, a reporter asked if the decision to construct a library reflected “the recent developments in the past years with

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<sup>15</sup> Cynthia M. Koch and Lynn A. Bassanese, “Roosevelt and his Library,” *Prologue: Magazine of the National Archives* 33, no. 2, (Summer 2001), retrieved March 1, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/summer/roosevelt-and-his-library-1.html>

<sup>16</sup> FDR to Director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, July 16, 1943, FDR Case File, RG 44, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

respect to the Lincoln papers and the concern felt with respect to those of other Presidents.”<sup>17</sup> The interest in making presidential papers accessible, therefore, existed prior to the Roosevelt administration. George Washington set the standing precedent of private ownership over presidential papers when he brought all his documents to Mount Vernon following his second term as president. While he intended to construct a stone structure on his property to accommodate his various personal, military, and government papers, he failed to do so prior to his death and his papers were bequeathed to his nephew Bushrod Washington.<sup>18</sup> The Library of Congress purchased the remaining papers, and eventually many of those of his successors. The Library of Congress today holds part of the papers of twenty-three presidents. Even with accessions of papers in the Library of Congress, the public was given limited access. Papers of Abraham Lincoln remained sealed until 1947, twenty-one years after the death of Robert Todd Lincoln, who stipulated they remained closed until that year.<sup>19</sup>

The fate of presidential papers was haphazard at best with documents variously saved, lost, sold, swapped, given away or destroyed by the presidents or by their heirs. Martin Van Buren and Franklin Pierce burned portions of their papers after leaving office. Some of Andrew Jackson’s papers burned in a Washington DC warehouse while John Tyler’s papers were burned at the end of the Civil War. Robert Todd Lincoln removed material from his father’s documents he deemed useless before turning the rest over to the Library of Congress. The heirs of James Monroe sold his

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<sup>17</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Press Conference #508,” *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum*, Press Conferences of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945, December 10, 1938, 299

<sup>18</sup> Joseph F. Menez, “Papers and Presidential Libraries,” *Social Science* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 35-36.

<sup>19</sup> “About this Collection,” *Library of Congress*, retrieved March 1, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/abraham-lincoln-papers/about-this-collection/>

papers to the government in return for \$20,000 in 1849 and Dolly Madison sold James Madison's papers to Congress for money to pay off debts.<sup>20</sup>

Rutherford B. Hayes, 19<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, was the first to have a Presidential Library, although it is not formally in the scope of NARA. This institution provided FDR with a model for the development of his future archival space.<sup>21</sup> After Rutherford died in 1893, his son Colonel Webb C. Hayes planned a museum and library to act as a memorial to his father and as a place for researchers to study papers from his term in office. Col. Hayes deeded his father's estate, Spiegel Grove, to the Ohio State Historical Society with a stipulation that a fireproof building would be constructed on the grounds to house the library. The library opened on May 30, 1916 with the understanding that the private documents of President Hayes would be openly accessible to the public.

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph F. Menez, "Papers and Presidential Libraries," *Social Science* 47, No. 1, Winter 1972, 35-36.

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Hufbauer, *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 26.



**Figure 1.4.** 1916 image of the Rutherford B. Hayes Library. Source: Rutherford B. Hayes Library and Museum

The facility was enlarged in 1922, and Col. Hayes started a foundation to pay for the facility's upkeep and operations. Funding for the site remains the effort of the Rutherford B. Hayes-Lucy Webb Hayes Foundation in conjunction with an annual appropriation from the State of Ohio.<sup>22</sup> In 2015, the name of the building was changed from the Hayes Memorial to the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museums, aligning it closer to the federally funded group of institutions of similar designation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Our History," *Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museum*, 2019, retrieved March 1, 2019, <https://www.rbhayes.org/about-us/our-history/>

<sup>23</sup> "Our History," *Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museum*, 2019, retrieved March 1, 2019, <https://www.rbhayes.org/about-us/our-history/>

No other presidents followed the Hayes' example until FDR proposed his plans for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. The intervening years saw the office holders upholding the earlier tradition of private ownership over presidential records. Herbert Hoover did establish the Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace in 1919, ten years prior to his inauguration as President of the United States. He pledged \$50,000 to Stanford University, his alma mater, to build a repository for documents pertaining to Hoover's military and political careers.<sup>24</sup> His personal papers were also housed there until being transferred to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library built under the established Presidential Library system in 1964.

### *Legality*

Harry Truman followed in FDR's footsteps with regards to the preservation of his presidential papers. He oversaw the development of Harry S. Truman Library, Inc. in 1950, a corporation designed to fundraise for the eventual construction of his library. His intention to create an establishment based on the premise of Roosevelt's Presidential Library led to Congress passing the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955 (during Eisenhower's administration) in anticipation of future Presidential Libraries. The act gave the Administrator of the GSA, the agency in which NARA was run during this period, the authority to accept "land, buildings, and equipment offered as a gift to the United States for the purposes of creating a Presidential archival depository . . . and maintain, operate, and protect them . . . as part of the national archives system."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "About Library and Archives," *Stanford University Hoover Institute*, <https://www.hoover.org/library-archives/about>

<sup>25</sup> The Presidential Libraries Act of 1955, 44 U.S.C. 2112 §2108

The House Committee on Government Operations wrote a favorable report on the proposed bill, stating that the new law:

would enable our Presidents and former Presidents to plan for the preservation of their papers at the place of their choice with the knowledge that the Government has made provisions to receive them in the archives of the Nation with adequate provisions for their preservation, with proper safeguards for their administration, and with restrictions on their use that recognize and protect the President's rights.<sup>26</sup>

They detailed in the report the overarching need for presidential libraries as the lack of a systematic arrangement for the previous 166 years led to much disbursement and irreparable loss of documents important to the country's history.<sup>27</sup> The report went on to note the decentralization of material and allowing each president to determine where exactly to locate their archives.<sup>28</sup> It echoes the early sentiments of FDR who, speaking during a period when tensions in Europe were high, claimed that placing his library outside of Washington D.C. diminished the likelihood of destruction should anything happen to the Capital.

The new act was subject to strict Congressional approval, requiring the GSA Administrator submit a report disclosing the agreement, cost estimates for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the structure, and conditions placed on any of the materials. Congress had sixty days from the time of submission to review proposals and to object to the plan.<sup>29</sup> Disagreements on the costs associated with these spaces

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<sup>26</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on Government Operations, *Presidential Libraries*, report to accompany H.J. Res. 330, 84th Cong., 1st sess., June 29, 1955, H. Rept. 84-998 (Washington: GPO, 1955), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, "The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries," *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, "The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries," *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> The Presidential Libraries Act of 1955, 44 U.S.C. 2112 §2108

and the materials held by the depositories continued even after the enactment of the law, but it provided a legal framework for the continued creation of presidential libraries into the future.

As noted earlier, Herbert Hoover had established the Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford in 1919. In 1960, however, Hoover decided to form his own library under the recently passed Presidential Libraries Act, expanding a planned museum in his hometown of West Branch, Iowa to incorporate the archives. He pulled his personal papers from Stanford and transferred them to the federally operated facility. Hoover dedicated the library on August 10, 1962, his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. His birthplace, a two-room cottage located nearby, had already been preserved and opened as a public site.<sup>30</sup> The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum became the fourth established presidential library and the third under the auspices of the Presidential Libraries Act.

Hoover's presidential tenure occurred prior to any form of presidential library system and papers created by the President during his time in office were seen as his own personal property and could be taken when he left office. Not until the Presidential Records Act of 1978 (PRA) was this widely held belief changed and the decision made that "the United States shall reserve and retain complete ownership, possession, and control of Presidential records."<sup>31</sup> According to the act, the president's records immediately become property of the federal government and the Archivist of the United States takes control over them. They remain in a repository

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<sup>30</sup> Evan Phifer, "Establishing the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum," *The White House Historical Association*, April 22, 2016, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/establishing-the-herbert-hoover-presidential-library-and-museum>

<sup>31</sup> Presidential Records Act of 1978, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 22 §2202

until a presidential library facility has been deeded to the United States and the records can be deposited there.<sup>32</sup>

The PRA stems from the earlier Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974 (PRMPA). Passed as a consequence of the Watergate incident, the PRMPA applied only to Richard M. Nixon and assured the federal government custody over his presidential records.<sup>33</sup> The Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act invalidated an agreement made between Nixon and Arthur Sampson, administrator of the GSA, which stipulated that Nixon retained control over his presidential records after a review period of up to five years. After the review period ended, Nixon was granted the authority to remove or destroy any of the material he so chose, including the White House tapes on which Nixon recorded thousands of hours of conversations. Nixon challenged the PRMPA in court, and the Supreme Court upheld the legislation. The Supreme Court validation of this act paved the way for the institution of the Presidential Records Act of 1978 as constitutional.

In 1986, Congress enacted a substantially amended version of the 1955 Presidential Libraries Act due to a concern over the growing cost of the libraries. The new act shifted “the burden of on-going building operations costs of future libraries from the taxpayers to endowment funds.”<sup>34</sup> A Senate report on the Presidential Libraries Act noted the cost of maintaining the presidential libraries had increased from \$63,745 in 1955 to \$15,734,000 in 1985. Much of the increasing cost was

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<sup>32</sup> Presidential Records Act of 1978, 44 U.S.C. §2201-2209

<sup>33</sup> Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974, 44 U.S.C. §2111

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on Government Operations, *Reduction of Costs of Presidential Libraries*, to accompany H.R. 1349, 99th Cong., 1st sess., May 15, 1985, H.Rept. 99-125 (Washington: GPO, 1985), pp. 1-2.

considered “artificial” by the Government Operations Committee Report in 1982, resulting from large service charges on NARA from the General Services Administration and “inappropriate space rental.”<sup>35</sup> Bills to end the presidential library system and create one centrally located library were introduced in the 96<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> Congresses. No action was taken on either.

The 99<sup>th</sup> Congress introduced several bills regarding presidential libraries, but the Presidential Libraries Act of 1986 was the only one to pass and President Reagan signed it into law on May 27. The act applied to any president taking the oath of office for the first time on or after January 20, 1985, excluding Reagan from its limitations. The act requires private endowments that can cover a portion of the maintenance and operating cost of the facilities. It states that a library’s endowment must cover at least 20% of “the total cost of acquiring or constructing such facility and of acquiring and installing such equipment” in addition to either 20% of the “total cost of acquiring the land upon which such facility is located” (or another value for the land as agreed upon by the Archivist and the donor) or 20% of any improvements to the land if it is not given to the government.<sup>36</sup> An amendment added by the Senate limited the libraries to 70,000 square feet unless additional funding requirements were met. Some spaces within the facility may remain in control of the foundation and these are historically excluded from endowment calculations.

Since 1986, Congress has enacted two significant amendments to the bill. The first occurred in 2003 when Congress increased the required endowment from 20% to

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<sup>35</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, “The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 12.

<sup>36</sup> The Presidential Libraries Act of 1986, P.L. 99-323, H.R. 1349

40% for Presidents taking the oath of office after July 1, 2002. The amendment also granted the Archivist the authority to decrease the endowment should the facilities have sustainable features intended to reduce long-term operation costs. The endowment threshold was again increased to 60% by Congress in 2008 and applied to Presidents taking the oath of office after July 1, 2002.<sup>37</sup> The amendment further requested that the Archivist present alternatives to presidential libraries that would reduce government cost and increase efficiency in accessing records.<sup>38</sup>

### *Funding*

Private organizations, typically referred to as presidential library foundations, raised the funds necessary to construct the facility and provide for its future endowment. Foundations are separate legal entities from the libraries and all fourteen are 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profits.<sup>39</sup> These organizations are public charities, not private foundations as the name implies, receiving funding from a broad base of public support. At the outset of his proposal, FDR created a series of committees for handling the construction and organization of the depository. The Executive Committee determined their role was strictly advisory and they were to “have no responsibility for raising funds.”<sup>40</sup>

An operating agency, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc., was established and three members of the Executive committee became trustees of the corporation.

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<sup>37</sup> Presidential Historical Records Preservation Act of 2008, P.L. 110-404, §6, codified at 44 U.S.C. §2112(g)(5)(B)

<sup>38</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, “The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 15.

<sup>39</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, “The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Waldo Gifford Leland, “The Creation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: A Personal Narrative,” *The American Archivist* 18, no. 1 (January 1955): 15.

The corporation had the vested authority “to solicit, accept, borrow, and expend money, and to transfer property to the United States.”<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the corporation existed as a measure of safety should Congress fail to pass enabling legislation for the transfer of the property and materials to the United States.<sup>42</sup> The organization raised the \$367,000 needed for the construction of the library, receiving donations almost immediately after FDR announced the plan to the press in December 1938.<sup>43</sup> Truman followed suit, founding the Harry S. Truman Library, Inc. in 1950 in order to raise funds for his library, receiving money from more than 17,000 individuals and corporations.<sup>44</sup>

Some foundations predate the presidency. The Eisenhower Foundation was founded in 1945 after the victory in Europe in order to fund a memorial to General Eisenhower. Certain fundraising tactics enacted by the foundation irked Eisenhower who suspended the organization in September 1946, but the death of his mother, Ida Eisenhower, left his childhood home empty. An agreement was reached, deeding the home to the foundation while requiring they limit museum fundraising to Kansas.<sup>45</sup> In 1947, his boyhood home was open to the public and in 1954, the Foundation opened a museum. During his presidency, with restrictions remaining on the foundation, the

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<sup>41</sup> Waldo Gifford Leland, “The Creation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: A Personal Narrative,” *The American Archivist* 18, no. 1 (January 1955): 17-18.

<sup>42</sup> Waldo Gifford Leland, “The Creation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: A Personal Narrative,” *The American Archivist* 18, no. 1 (January 1955): 18.

<sup>43</sup> Waldo Gifford Leland, “The Creation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: A Personal Narrative,” *The American Archivist* 18, no. 1 (January 1955): 23.

<sup>44</sup> “History of the Truman Library & Museum,” *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum*, 2017, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/libhist.htm>

<sup>45</sup> Karl Weissenbach, “Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 47.

state of Kansas formed the Presidential Library Commission allowing donations from across the country. Eventually, \$3.5 million was raised for the presidential library.<sup>46</sup>

Other foundations engage in a number of other activities. They are not limited to the funding of presidential libraries as long as they continue to conform with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. The Clinton Presidential Center is only one of the many initiatives of the Clinton Foundation that works to improve lives “by creating economic opportunity, improving public health, and inspiring civic engagement and service.”<sup>47</sup> The foundation grew from the William J. Clinton Foundation, founded in 1997 specifically for the purpose of raising funds for a library. Most foundations, however, exist specifically, and almost solely, to preserve the legacy of the president through the creation of the archives and the continued educational opportunities presented in the museum spaces.

### *Growth of Presidential Libraries*

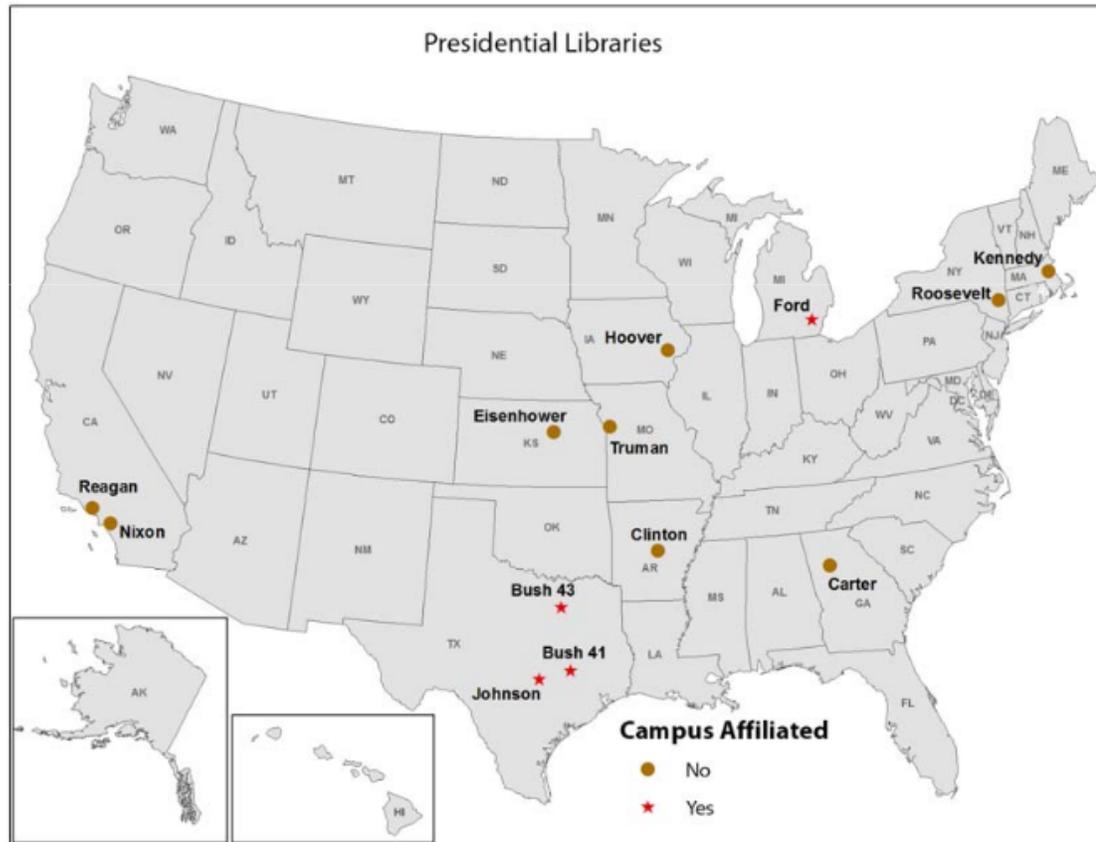
With the passage of enabling legislation and the formulation of presidential foundations, libraries have become the normal course of action for a president upon leaving office. Of the thirteen fully established sites, five are located on or in close proximity to the sites of the President’s birth or youth. These include FDR, Truman, Hoover, Eisenhower, and Nixon. Five of the sites are located on or adjacent to university campuses that donated the land for the construction of the centers. Johnson was the first to officially set this precedent, and Kennedy, Ford, George H.W. Bush,

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<sup>46</sup> “About the Foundation,” *Eisenhower Foundation*, retrieved March 4, 2019, <http://eisenhowerfoundation.net/160/About-Us>

<sup>47</sup> “Our Work,” *Clinton Foundation*, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.clintonfoundation.org/our-work>

and George W. Bush each followed suit. One library is sited rurally, and the last two sites are situated within an urban context. Reagan selected a 100-acre parcel in rural Ventura County, California, while Carter chose to site his library “in an area of Atlanta proposed as the site of a park” and Clinton selected an abandoned rail-switching yard in Little Rock, Arkansas.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 1.5.** Locations of the 13 established Presidential Libraries. Note that while the Kennedy Presidential Library is not officially affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Boston, the University did donate the land for the construction of the building with consent from the state legislature. Source: Congressional Research Study, February 6, 2015

Truman’s library became the first library constructed under the provisions set forth by the government in the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955. In a similar vein to FDR, Truman built his library in his hometown of Independence, Missouri, on land

<sup>48</sup> “Carter Wants His Library Built in a Park Area,” *Washington Post*, July 24, 1981.

donated by the city, within blocks of his childhood and former home.<sup>49</sup> The building cost \$1.75 million, a drastic increase from the cost of FDR's library building, and crowns a low knoll overlooking Highway 24.<sup>50</sup> Only one-story tall, the structure gains prominence from its slightly elevated location and the series of steps leading up to the entrance. Expansions of the space occurred in 1968 and 1980, and the building now totals 100,000 square feet. The library archives contain about 15,000,000 pages of documents, 6.5 million of those are directly tied to Truman's time in the White House. Still picture, audio recordings, motion pictures, tape recordings and books round out the material found in the archival collection and 32,000 objects are included in the museum collection.<sup>51</sup>

Eisenhower's library was the third piece in an already developing narrative. His boyhood home, a place of pilgrimage for soldiers at nearby Fort Riley during World War II, was opened to the public after being deeded to the Eisenhower Foundation on June 22, 1947. The home anchors the 22-acre site that now comprises the Eisenhower Library, Museum and Place of Meditation. The land sits on the edge of the small town of Abilene, Kansas, with vast fields extending out to the horizon within one block of the library. The complex of buildings forms a small campus-like atmosphere, with the library a low stone-faced edifice, its porticoed entrance mimicking the museum across the park. The library contains over 26 million pages of documents, including records from before and after Eisenhower's presidency. Over

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<sup>49</sup> "History of the Truman Library & Museum," *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum*, 2017, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/libhist.htm>

<sup>50</sup> "History of the Truman Library & Museum," *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum*, 2017, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/libhist.htm>

<sup>51</sup> "History of the Truman Library & Museum," *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum*, 2017, retrieved March 4, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/libhist.htm>

500 collections of Eisenhower's military and political associates reside within the archive and the museum collection contains more than 70,000 objects.<sup>52</sup>

John F. Kennedy's library, though chronologically next in the succession of presidents, was not dedicated until October 1979. In October 1963, Kennedy visited his alma mater, Harvard University, to discern a potential location for his future presidential library.<sup>53</sup> A site in Cambridge adjacent to the University was chosen by the president. Following his assassination in November 1963, members of the Kennedy family began making plans for the library as a suitable memorial to the president. The initial site was deemed to be too small, and opposition from Cambridge residents over fears regarding increased traffic congestion and tourism, led the Kennedy Library Corporation to abandon any potential location in the area, selecting, instead, a site along the Old Harbor waterfront next to the University of Massachusetts Boston.<sup>54</sup> Of the site, the architect for library, I.M. Pei, said:

The symbolic expressiveness of the Library gains enormously from the site on which it stands. A clear promontory, open to the sea and looking toward the busy shipping lane known as President Roads, Columbia Point is a spectacular setting for a memorial to a President who loved the sea and who is remembered for the breadth of his own horizons.<sup>55</sup>

Built principally as an archive, the building holds 8.4 million pages of Kennedy's papers and over 25 million pages of more than 300 individuals associated with the Kennedy administration or that period in history. The Kennedy Library was

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<sup>52</sup> Karl Weissenbach, "Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home," *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 49.

<sup>53</sup> "History Overview," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/about-us/about-the-jfk-library/history/history-overview>

<sup>54</sup> "History Overview," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/about-us/about-the-jfk-library/history/history-overview>

<sup>55</sup> I.M. Pei as cited in Mark Lamas, "Monumentality in Architecture and its Relation to the Design of a Presidential Library," (master's thesis, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1985), 45.

the first to begin digitizing the presidential archives, unveiling them in 2011 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of JFK's inauguration.<sup>56</sup>

Lyndon B. Johnson graduated from Texas State University but chose the University of Texas at Austin for the site of his library. It is the first presidential library to be built on a university campus. The library was established in connection with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, both of which were dedicated in May of 1971.<sup>57</sup> The colossal travertine structure, rising ten stories, was the largest of the libraries then built, almost over-scaled in comparison to its predecessors.



**Figure 1.6.** The Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Designed by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM. Source: Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum

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<sup>56</sup> Tom Putnam, "John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum," *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 53.

<sup>57</sup> "The LBJ Legacy," *University of Texas at Austin Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://lbj.utexas.edu/lbj-legacy>

Ada Louise Huxtable, architecture critic for *The New York Times*, wrote “This is the first unabashed bid for immortality using that curious new hybrid, the Presidential Library-museum.”<sup>58</sup> Designed by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, the structure sits on a rise at the end of the campus mall, across from the university’s main structure, “its setting crowns the main campus with opulent grandeur.”<sup>59</sup> Construction costs tallied about \$18 million for almost 140,000 square feet of space.<sup>60</sup> Holding 45 million pages of documents, 600,000 photographs, and many more materials, the interior space reveals the archives rising multiple floors behind a glass wall, the materials in red boxes showcasing the reason for such a building.<sup>61</sup>

Plans for a Nixon Presidential Library began early in his tenure as president. Potential sites included San Clemente, California (location of Nixon’s “western White House”), Whittier College (his alma mater in Los Angeles County) and California State University in Fullerton.<sup>62</sup> Nixon’s resignation from office of the President in the wake of the Watergate scandal derailed plans for any intended library. The PRMPA was validated by the Supreme Court but they required the government to return materials deemed personal to Nixon, including those that may be political in nature.

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<sup>58</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, “An Appraisal,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 1971, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/05/23/archives/a-success-as-architecture-and-as-monument-a-texasbig-library-houses.html>

<sup>59</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, “An Appraisal,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 1971, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/05/23/archives/a-success-as-architecture-and-as-monument-a-texasbig-library-houses.html>

<sup>60</sup> “History of LBJ Presidential Library,” *Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library*, retrieved March 4, 2019, <http://www.lbjlibrary.org/press/media-kit/history-of-lbj-presidential-library>

<sup>61</sup> Mark K. Updegrove, “Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 57.

<sup>62</sup> Michael D. Ellzey, “Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 63.

This provision increased the complexity of the situation, but Nixon once again began searching for a location for a library.

After considering several universities and a site in San Clemente, Nixon instead selected a recently vacated site in Yorba Linda across from his birthplace. The Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace was dedicated in July 1990, built and operated by his foundation. On July 11, 2007, after extended negotiations, the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum joined NARA, deeding over material previously returned to the Nixon estate as a result of the court ruling.<sup>63</sup> The library returns to a traditional design, more domestically scaled than previous libraries, comprised of three buildings with hipped tiled roof and sandstone walls centered around a reflecting pool.<sup>64</sup> In order to house the more than 46 million pages of archival material, an additional building was constructed on a portion of the parking lot. Beyond the documents, photographs, and film, the library also holds the White House tapes.

Gerald Ford attended the University of Michigan (UM) from 1931 to 1935, playing on the football team during his time there.<sup>65</sup> Plans for a library had been made by the university based on “a longstanding Ford promise to donate his Congressional papers to his alma mater.”<sup>66</sup> He began donating his records to the school in the mid-1960s, a decade before he rose to the presidency following Nixon’s resignation.

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<sup>63</sup> Michael D. Ellzey, “Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 65.

<sup>64</sup> Witold Rybczynski, “Presidential Libraries: Curious Shrines,” *The New York Times*, July 7, 1991, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/07/arts/architecture-view-presidential-libraries-curious-shrines.html>

<sup>65</sup> “Gerald R. Ford Biography,” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, April 12, 2012, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/grf/fordbiop.asp>; The Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan was a renaming of an extant Public Policy school that occurred in 2000. “The legacy lives on,” *Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan*, retrieved November 7, 2018, <http://fordschool.umich.edu/ford-legacy>

<sup>66</sup> Lou Cannon, “Ford Donates Papers to U.S., Sets Mich. Site,” *Washington Post*, December 5, 1976.

Placing his archives at UM, Ford became the only president to associate his presidential library with his alma mater. In another shift from tradition, Ford built the museum, often included in connection with the library, as a separate entity in Grand Rapids, his hometown. The decision to split the space was a compromise intended to please his original Congressional constituency in Grand Rapids and his longstanding association and interest in his alma mater. Robert Warner, director of the Brently Historical Library at UM, said that the library design was “modest yet dignified, straightforward and functional . . . designed to be unostentatious . . . and efficient, while fitting harmoniously with the surrounding landscape.”<sup>67</sup> The two-story brick building closely resembles the Bentley Historical Library, located immediately adjacent and built just prior the Ford Library construction. Its 50,760 square feet cost \$4.3 million and holds the 15 million pages of Ford’s papers.

Construction on the museum in Grand Rapids occurred concurrently and the spaces were formally dedicated within half a year of each other. Local leaders in Grand Rapids helped select the site that fit with their vision for revitalizing the downtown.<sup>68</sup> Locating the museum along the riverfront “was Jerry Ford’s idea, a river-front panoramic view of the city where he grew up.”<sup>69</sup> The space encompasses 55,200 square feet and cost \$7 million. More than 19,000 objects circulate through museum displays. During his dedication of the museum, Ford said that “unlike the pyramids, the function [of presidential libraries] is not to deify the dead but rather to

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<sup>67</sup> Robert Warner as cited in Elaine K. Didier, “Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 70.

<sup>68</sup> Elaine K. Didier, “Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 71.

<sup>69</sup> Donnie Radcliffe, “Ford’s Museum: A Chronicle of His Presidential Days,” *Washington Post*, September 17, 1981

distill from the past the essence of experience that may illuminate the dim path into the future.”<sup>70</sup>

Jimmy Carter “dreaded the prospect of raising the necessary funds” for his library, especially after losing a bid for reelection.<sup>71</sup> Carter selected a site at the crux of four inner-city neighborhoods to the northeast of downtown Atlanta, Georgia. Upon seeing initial drawings for a library, Carter was extremely reticent about even establishing a library. Rosalynn Carter recalled her husband’s response to the proposals, saying “One was like a temple, looming toward the sky, which, as the architect said, could be seen from anywhere in Atlanta . . . Jimmy was adamant in his opposition.”<sup>72</sup> Carter was the last of the presidents who owned his presidential papers. The Presidential Records Act of 1978, signed by Carter, did not officially take effect until the next presidency. The presidential center also included the Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, which is a non-profit, non-governmental organization governed by a Board of Trustees. The complex cost \$26 million and was dedicated in 1986. The 69,750 square foot building holds 27 million pages of documents and half a million photographs.<sup>73</sup>

Ronald Reagan selected a site in rural Ventura County, 40 miles north of Los Angeles, after a controversy arose about an initial decision to site his library at Stanford University. The Hoover Institution at Stanford housed Reagan’s

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<sup>70</sup> Gerald R. Ford, “Remarks of Gerald R. Ford at the Dedication of the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan,” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, September 18, 1981, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/speeches/810918.asp>

<sup>71</sup> Jimmy Carter, *Beyond the White House* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 3.

<sup>72</sup> Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter, *Everything to Gain* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 25.

<sup>73</sup> “About Us: General Information,” *The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved March 6, 2019, [https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about\\_us](https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about_us)

gubernatorial papers and it had been the frontrunner for his presidential library. In June 1985, Stanford trustees agreed to a library and small museum, but some discontent remained among faculty and students fearing that the library might “put a conservative stamp on the university that could, in the long run, be damaging to our reputation.”<sup>74</sup> The Faculty Senate urged the Board of Trustees to scale down the library or move it further from the center of campus. In response, the Reagan Presidential Foundation decided to relocate the library entirely.<sup>75</sup>



**Figure 1.7.** The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum is situated on crest of a hill providing dominate views of the surrounding landscape. Source: ZUMA Press, Inc./ALAMY

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<sup>74</sup> Gordon Craig, professor emeritus of history and former chairman of the Faculty Senate at Stanford University, as quoted in William Trombley, “Southland, Not Stanford, to Get Reagan Library,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1987, retrieved March 6, 2019, [http://articles.latimes.com/1987-04-24/news/mn-629\\_1\\_reagan-library](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-04-24/news/mn-629_1_reagan-library)

<sup>75</sup> William Trombley, “Southland, Not Stanford, to Get Reagan Library,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1987, retrieved March 6, 2019, [http://articles.latimes.com/1987-04-24/news/mn-629\\_1\\_reagan-library](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-04-24/news/mn-629_1_reagan-library)

Blakely-Swartz, a Los Angeles based development firm, offered the foundation 100-acres in Simi Valley. Situated on a hilltop surrounded by mountains, the land had views of the Pacific Ocean, and a ranch-like quality permeated the land due to the abundance of open space.<sup>76</sup> Its placement evokes Reagan's famous phrase describing America as a "shining city on a hill."<sup>77</sup> The development of 29-acres of the land into a campus like setting containing the library, museum, grave-site, and a new road cost about \$65 million. The buildings were designed in the Spanish Mission style. They contain more than 63 million documents and 1.6 million photographs. The site now encompasses more than 400 acres of land and the original 150,000 square foot building has since expanded to 275,000 square feet.<sup>78</sup>

George H.W. Bush, who had his library on the campus of Texas A&M in College Station, Texas, had no ties to the school until he was asked to deliver an award in 1977 and discuss his recent tenure as director of the CIA.<sup>79</sup> Houston had become the adopted home for Bush who represented the 7<sup>th</sup> District of Texas in the House of Representatives from 1967 to 1971.<sup>80</sup> Shortly after being elected to the presidency in 1988, oil tycoon, Michel Halbouty approached the president-elect asking if any thought had been given to the location of a presidential library. Bush was non-

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<sup>76</sup> Sam Enriquez, "Ventura Site Picked for Reagan Library," *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1987, retrieved November 7, 2018, [http://articles.latimes.com/1987-11-14/news/mn-5133\\_1\\_reagan-library](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-11-14/news/mn-5133_1_reagan-library)

<sup>77</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Dallas, Texas," (speech, Dallas, TX, August 23, 1984), Ronald Regan Presidential and Library and Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/82384f>

<sup>78</sup> R. Duke Blackwood, "Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum," *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 82.

<sup>79</sup> Kelly Brown, "A Match Made in Aggieland: Longtime ties, Michel Halbouty's efforts brought Bush Library to Texas," *Eagle*, October 21, 2017, retrieved November 7, 2018, [https://www.theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/longtime-ties-michel-halbouty-s-efforts-brought-bush-library-to/article\\_b51aa472-b66f-11e7-9793-c7d77a0cac96.html](https://www.theeagle.com/news/a_m/longtime-ties-michel-halbouty-s-efforts-brought-bush-library-to/article_b51aa472-b66f-11e7-9793-c7d77a0cac96.html)

<sup>80</sup> "George H.W. Bush Biography," *George H.W. Bush Center*, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://www.bush41.org/bush/biography>

committal but allowed Halbouty to talk with Texas A&M officials who established a committee of university and civic leaders to lobby for the future presidential library.

In May 1989, Bush traveled to Texas A & M to deliver the spring commencement address. While there, Bush was shown a 3-D rendering of the proposed library and the potential location. Midway through his term, Bush announced his decision to locate his presidential library at the university. Construction began in 1993 on the \$43 million facility and was dedicated in November 1997. The library collection contains 40 million pages of documents, a million photographs, letters from Bush's time in World War II, and more than 100 personal scrapbooks donated by the First Lady Barbara Bush.<sup>81</sup>

Bill Clinton selected an abandoned rail-switching yard in Little Rock, Arkansas as the site of the future William J. Clinton Presidential Center. When deciding where to house his papers, Clinton "wanted to ensure that the center would bring both social and economic benefit to the location."<sup>82</sup> Born in Hope, Arkansas, Clinton would eventually serve as the state's attorney general before going on to be elected governor, twice.

The center acted as a catalyst for economic revitalization in this portion of the downtown. The adjacent River Market district, a commercial area filled with dining and retail, benefitted greatly from the construction of the library. During 2014, in preparation for the ten-year anniversary of the opening of the Clinton Presidential Center, the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce commissioned an impact

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<sup>81</sup> Warren Finch, "George Bush Presidential Library and Museum," *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 88-89.

<sup>82</sup> "Clinton Center Impact Analysis," *Boyette*, 2017, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://www.boyette-sa.com/portfolio/clinton-center-impact-analysis/>

evaluation and analysis to quantify the effects of the Center on the surrounding area. The study determined the establishment of the Center accelerated redevelopment in the downtown, increased tourism, and enhanced the state's perception at the national and international level. At least \$2.46 billion has been invested in the downtown of Little Rock and North Little Rock by 2014, with \$1.2 billion of that invested within a 1-mile radius of the Center.<sup>83</sup>

Situated on 17 acres along the waterfront, the Presidential Center is comprised of three parts: the five-story main building, an archive building with most of the holdings placed underground, and a Beaux-Arts railroad station housing the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service. The 68,698 square foot main building cantilevers over the Arkansas River evoking the image of a glass and steel bridge. The building received a Silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification upon completion in 2004 and later in 2007, a Platinum certification for existing buildings. At that point, the building was the only federally maintained structure to receive such certification.<sup>84</sup> The archive contains 80 million pages of documents and over 2 million photographs. It was the first to include digital records containing more the 700,000 pages of archival documents.<sup>85</sup>

The train station opened in 1901 and the rehabilitation of the space received a Gold LEED certification for existing buildings. A railroad bridge leading to the station was converted into a pedestrian bridge in 2011, marking the eastern terminus

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<sup>83</sup> Boyette, "Clinton Presidential Center Impact Evaluation and Analysis," Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, October 2014, retrieved May 14, 2019, <http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/public/Clinton-Center-Impact-Analysis.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> Terri Garner, "William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library and Museum," *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 93.

<sup>85</sup> "About," *Clinton Digital Library*, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/about>

of the seventeen-mile Arkansas River Trail.<sup>86</sup> The Clinton Foundation raised \$165 million dollars to construct their center, receiving the land, valued at \$11 million, as a donation from the city.<sup>87</sup>

George W. Bush considered a variety of locations throughout Texas for the site of his Presidential Center before eventually deciding upon the campus of Southern Methodist University. Although this is not his alma mater (Bush graduated from Yale), his wife, Laura, is an alumna. Being former residents of Dallas, where the university is located, and “given [the campus’s] beauty and location in an exciting urban setting,” President Bush believed the school to be “an excellent site for the Library and related facilities.”<sup>88</sup> The firm of Robert A. M. Stern designed the structure, half of which contains the library and museum holdings and the other half dedicated to the spaces for the Bush Foundation.

The electronic archives far exceeded any previous president, containing more than 200 million e-mails that, if printed, would total more than 1 billion pages. The physical collection contains 70 million pages of documents, and four million photographs. The Bush Administration began to use digital photography in 2005.<sup>89</sup> In the first week that researchers were allowed to make Freedom of Information Act requests, more requests were received than the Reagan Library processed in twenty-

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<sup>86</sup> Terri Garner, “William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 95.

<sup>87</sup> Blair Kamin, “A new chapter,” *Daily Press*, November 14, 2004, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.dailypress.com/chi-041114clintonlibrary-story-story.html>

<sup>88</sup> Ariel Alexovich, “Bush Picks S.M.U. for Presidential Library,” *The New York Times*, February 22, 2008, retrieved November 7, 2018, <https://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/22/bush-picks-smu-for-presidential-library/>

<sup>89</sup> Alan Lowe, “George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 99-100.

five years.<sup>90</sup> The Bush Foundation raised \$300 million for the construction of the 226,565 square foot facility.<sup>91</sup>

The continued increase in presidential materials, and the new forms of electronic records have slowly changed the size and use of the library spaces. Building expansion and evolving museum programs reflect the shift. Johnson shifted the typical paradigm of presidential libraries, choosing a site not “historically and sentimentally important” to him as Roosevelt, Hoover, Truman, and Eisenhower did.<sup>92</sup> His library is the first located on a major university campus in a larger population center. Carter continued the evolution of the presidential library system with the institution of the Carter Center, a non-partisan policy center that resembles a nongovernmental agency. Many of the presidential centers now have an associated policy school.

Presidential libraries are unique in that they are constructed privately, with presidents intimately involved in the design process in many cases, to hold the archival material of the president’s term in office for public utilization. The architecture becomes a reflection of how a president wants to present himself and his legacy. James Polshek, the architect for the Clinton Presidential Library, said that “each Presidential Library takes on certain characteristics of the President.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Alan Lowe, “George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum,” *White House History: The Journal of the White House Historical Association*, no. 40 (2016): 100.

<sup>91</sup> Catalina Camia, “George W. Bush library set for May 1 opening,” *USA Today*, January 16, 2013, retrieved March 6, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/16/george-w-bush-presidential-library-opening/1839687/>; “SMU is Home to the George W. Bush Library and Museum and the George W. Bush Presidential Center,” *Southern Methodist University*, retrieved March 6, 2019, [https://www.smu.edu/BushCenter\\_old](https://www.smu.edu/BushCenter_old)

<sup>92</sup> Jack R. Maguire to Lyndon B. Johnson, October 26, 1959, Special Collections Related to Site, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, TX

<sup>93</sup> James Polshek, interview by Peter Jennings, November 18, 2004, Primetime Special Edition: A Place in History, transcript in *Congressional Record* 150, no. 135 (November 20, 2004)

### *Visitation*

While the number of presidential libraries slowly increases over time the average number of visitors each year remains relatively stagnant. Between Fiscal Year 1975 and Fiscal Year 2012, the total number of visitors to the libraries ranged between 1.1 and 2 million. Yearly attendance averaged 1.46 million people, increasing to 1.6 million in the years a new library opened. Visitation, however, did not consistently reach over 1.5 million people until 2005. In the thirty years prior, visitor numbers only reached 1.5 million five times. Five libraries were in operation in 1975, and the visitor numbers showed no drastic increase over the ensuing years until the uptick in 2005, at which point another five libraries had already opened.<sup>94</sup>

This reflects a decline in attendance at individual libraries.

Individual libraries attract an average of 300,000 individuals in their first year, a number that typically declines in the years following. Visitation numbers drop more than 36% in the first five years at the average library, and over a ten-year period the decline reaches 43%. The Ronald Regan Presidential Library and Museum had the highest recorded attendance in 2012 with 380,570 visitors while the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum failed to reach 50,000 and five other libraries fell under 100,000.

The geographic location of the presidential libraries presents no consistent pattern regarding increased or decreased visitorship. Many facilities in densely populated areas, including the Carter and Nixon libraries, attract few visitors. In 2012,

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<sup>94</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, "The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries," *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 27.

just under 52,000 people visited the Carter library even though six million people lived within sixty miles of the facility. The Eisenhower library, conversely, had 200,000 visitors that year with the surrounding population totaling just over 300,000 inhabitants.<sup>95</sup> A study conducted for the Obama Foundation estimates annual visitation to fall between 625,000 to 760,000 after a period of higher visitation in the first few years.<sup>96</sup> The assessment states that its location in a populated urban area is one reason for the large estimate. Nine million people lived within sixty miles of Chicago in 2018. Comparatively, seven million people lived within sixty miles of the John F. Kennedy library in 2012 but only 208,000 visited.

The Ronald Reagan library experienced a surge in visitor numbers in the early 2000s after a decade of relatively little change. This upswing corresponds with the completion of the Air Force One Pavilion in 2005 that houses the Boeing 707 that served as Air Force One during the Reagan Administration. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum observed a recent uptick in visitation after decades of general decline after a three-year renovation of the space that included new interactive museum exhibits.<sup>97</sup> Changing exhibitions, new expansions and revamped spaces draw visitors seeking to learn about a presidency in new and relevant ways.

While new additions increase visitation, newer presidential libraries do not always attract larger crowds than previously established facilities. The Gerald R. Ford

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<sup>95</sup> Wendy Ginsberg, Erika Lunder, and Daniel Richardson, "The Presidential Libraries Act and the Establishment of Presidential Libraries," *Congressional Research Service*, February 6, 2015, 28.

<sup>96</sup> Kate Berner, "Obama Presidential Center Economic Impact Assessment Key Findings," *Obama Foundation*, May 11, 2017, retrieved May 13, 2019, [https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet\\_\\_OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf](https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet__OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> Nausheen Husain and Alex Bordens, "10 ways to keep up attendance at a presidential library," *Chicago Tribune*, August 26, 2015, retrieved May 13, 2019, <http://apps.chicagotribune.com/graphics/presidential-libraries-attendance/>

Library and Museum has consistently maintained higher visitation rates than the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum despite being constructed five years earlier. In the past decade, more people have visited the Ronald Regan Presidential Library and Museum than the more recently opened George Bush and William Clinton Presidential Libraries.

### *Property Values Around Presidential Libraries*

Many presidential libraries are not located in highly populated residential areas and therefore have little effect on surrounding home values. A neighborhood of Dallas, Texas abuts the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum property on its northern edge, but the center is a part of the larger Southern Methodist University campus, not a stand-alone facility. This diminishes any substantive effects the facility may have had on home values. High home values preceded the construction of the presidential library though prices declined during the Great Recession. In 2019, the Park Cities neighborhood which encompasses the library and surrounding residences had the most expensive homes in the entire state and the median cost of homes in 2018 was \$1.2 million.<sup>98</sup>

Clinton located his library specifically to assist in the redevelopment of a depressed neighborhood in Little Rock, Arkansas. The derelict warehouse district began seeing investment in the years before Clinton announced his presidential library location. Developer Jimmy Moses was already working to open the River Market, an

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<sup>98</sup> Steve Brown, "The priciest homes in Texas are in a Dallas-area ZIP code with a \$16.75 million house on the market," *Dallas News*, March 8, 2019, retrieved May 13, 2019, <https://www.dallasnews.com/business/real-estate/2019/03/08/not-really-surprise-park-cities-texas-top-priced-homes>

indoor/outdoor food market in a renovated building. It opened in 1996 and has become a central feature of the River Market District.<sup>99</sup> Central Arkansas Library System Director Bobby Roberts planned to relocate the Main Library to the sixty-five-year-old Fones Brothers warehouse and renovations were completed for the library opening in 1997.<sup>100</sup>

The area was seeing some investment prior to groundbreaking for the Clinton Center and it would likely have continued slowly for some time. Rett Tucker, a partner of Jimmy Moses in the development firm Newmark Moses Tucker Partners, believes that “the Clinton library was the 50-yard pass [that] moved us way down the field.”<sup>101</sup> Development increased dramatically during and after the construction of the Clinton Center. A new Marriot Courtyard hotel opened in time for the Center’s dedication in 2004. Multiple high-rise condos, smaller scale apartment buildings, three additional hotels, and the Arkansas Studies Institute were all built shortly after the presidential library.<sup>102</sup>

These developments are mainly located to the west of the center but the area to the south has recently experienced a resurgence in activity. The area has been rebranded since the construction of the Clinton Presidential Center. Now called the East Village, the area began as small farmsteads in the early 1800s before drawing

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<sup>99</sup> Knowles Adkisson, “20 candles for River Market,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, July 7, 2016, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2016/jul/07/20-candles-for-river-market-20160707/?f=entertainment-events#/>

<sup>100</sup> “Main Library,” *Central Arkansas Library System*, 2019, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://cals.org/cals-main-library/>

<sup>101</sup> Leslie Newell Peacock, “Ten years after the Clinton library opened: There’s been much cultural and economic change,” *Arkansas Times*, November 13, 2014, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://arktimes.com/news/arkansas-reporter/2014/11/13/ten-years-after-the-clinton-library-opened>

<sup>102</sup> Leslie Newell Peacock, “Ten years after the Clinton library opened: There’s been much cultural and economic change,” *Arkansas Times*, November 13, 2014, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://arktimes.com/news/arkansas-reporter/2014/11/13/ten-years-after-the-clinton-library-opened>

industrial uses due to the proximity of the river. With the construction of Heifer International in 2006, development slowly made its way into this neighborhood. Rock Town Distillery, which opened in 2010 (although it has since moved), paved the way for Lost Forty Brewing and Rebel Kettle Brewing Co., both of which anchor the new district. eStem, a public charter school, purchased and renovated a warehouse to establish an elementary school in the neighborhood which opened the summer of 2018.<sup>103</sup>

The area surrounding the Clinton Center contained few residential units. To the east of the center is a small section of single-family dwellings that gain next to no attention in discussions regarding the economic impact of the presidential center on Little Rock. Though further from the center than East Village or the River Market District, these homes will likely undergo an increase in value due to their proximity to the new charter school and the increased interest in residential investment in the neighborhood.<sup>104</sup> Plans for the Rock City Yacht Club, a private-public development to the east of the Clinton Presidential Center and Heifer International, features boat slips, a dock, and a restaurant in the first phase which is expected to open in the summer of 2019. Phase II includes a residential development that is comprised of 168 market rate apartments.<sup>105</sup> As more residences are constructed, existing housing and property values adjacent to the Harbor Town development will likely experience an increase in

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<sup>103</sup> Cynthia Howell, "Little Rock warehouse, businesses now new eSTEM schools," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, July 4, 2018, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/jul/04/lr-warehouse-businesses-now-new-estem-s/>

<sup>104</sup> Becca Bona, "Little Rock's East Village on the rise," *Daily Record* (Little Rock, AR), February 4, 2018, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://www.dailyrecord.us/little-rock-s-east-village-on-the-rise>

<sup>105</sup> "Present and Future Plans," *Rock City Yacht Club*, retrieved May 14, 2019, <https://www.rockcityyachtclub.com/future-plans-1>

value. The Clinton Presidential Center has directly and indirectly impacted property values in its immediate vicinity. Development continues to spur more development.

The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum's location in an urban residential neighborhood separate from a campus or historic site made the setting a unique choice for a library in the early 1980s. Its distance from downtown and other cultural institutions allows the library to act as an anchor within the neighborhood, granting it a level of prominence. The neighborhoods surrounding the library experienced upheaval in the 1960s and 70s with the condemnation of properties and clearing of land for an intended interstate.

In 1970, fourteen years before the construction of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center, 46.7% of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the future presidential library property were valued between \$70,000 and \$98,349 (dollars adjusted for inflation to match 2010 value). Of the 5,132 occupied housing units, 21.9% were owner-occupied and the rest were rentals. 26.7% of renters in the area used 35% or more of their income to pay rent.<sup>106</sup>

The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum was dedicated in 1986 and the 1990 Census shows an increase in home values but not a significant increase in owner-occupied units. 46.2% of the owner-occupied units were valued between \$150,000 and \$299,999 and 26.1% were valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999. Renters who used more than 35% of their income to pay for housing increased as well during this time to 31%.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> United States Decennial Census 1970

<sup>107</sup> United States Decennial Census 1990

In 1990, four years after the completion but before the decision regarding a controversial parkway adjacent to the library, 16% of owner-occupied housing was valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999. The number of housing units increased to 5,181 from 5,132 in 1970. Owner-occupied units increased to 26.3% but the vast majority of units in the neighborhoods remain rented.

The number of housing units increased substantially in the decade following, reaching almost 6,000. Owner occupancy continued to increase as well, accounting for 30.9% of the housing. Housing values continued to rise with 35.7% of homes valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999. 24.1% were valued between \$500,000 and \$749,999. 5% were valued over \$750,000. 26.3% were valued between \$150,000 and \$299,999.<sup>108</sup> These increases reflect an investment in the inner-city neighborhoods surrounding the presidential library but do not point to an increased valuation because of the proximity of a property to the presidential center.

### *Future Libraries*

The currently proposed Obama Presidential Center, the fourteenth presidential library, is planned to be sited within a park on Chicago's South Side as a complex of three buildings. The institution draws from many of its predecessors and in many ways reflects the presidential libraries that already exist. Barack Obama intends for the OPC to act as a catalyst for development in an economically depressed portion of Chicago much like Clinton utilized his library to serve Little Rock. His site selection in a park on the edge of an urban residential neighborhood is reminiscent of Jimmy

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<sup>108</sup> United States Decennial Census 2000

Carter's location. That they both have faced serious criticism and push back from opponents serves to further link the two libraries and provides a frame of reference for understanding the path the Obama Presidential Center may take.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ESTABLISHING A CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER AMIDST CONFLICT: THE JIMMY CARTER PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

#### *The 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States*

From the beginning of his term, Jimmy Carter ascertained that his presidential library would be built “someplace in Georgia.”<sup>109</sup> A native Georgian, James Earl Carter, Jr. was born on October 1, 1924 in Plains, a small town that grew around the railroad. Rural Georgia, long dependent on cotton, began focusing on peanuts in the 1920s. When Carter was four, the family moved to Archery, a predominately African American community three miles outside of Plains. Here Carter’s father, James Earl Carter, Sr., owned a farm growing cotton and peanuts, as well as sugar cane, sweet potatoes, and corn.<sup>110</sup> After graduating high school in 1941, Carter wished to attend the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, but he needed the support of his Congressional Representative who already had a candidate for that year. Instead, he enrolled in Georgia Southwestern College in nearby Americus transferring the next year to Georgia Tech in Atlanta in order to fulfill requirements stipulated by the Naval Academy.

Carter entered the Naval Academy in the summer of 1943. Under the Navy’s wartime accelerated program, he would graduate the four-year program in three years. He returned home to Plains every Christmas and during other breaks from school. On

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<sup>109</sup> “About the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library,” *The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved January 10, 2019, [https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about\\_us](https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about_us)

<sup>110</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 24.

one break in July 1945, he met his little sister Ruth's friend Rosalynn whom he would marry shortly after his graduation in 1946.<sup>111</sup> Carter served in the Navy from 1946 until October 9, 1953 when he left active duty. He remained in the Naval Reserve for another eight years before leaving the service with the rank of lieutenant.<sup>112</sup> Jimmy, Rosalynn, and their three sons returned to Plains, Georgia in order for Jimmy to take over the family peanut-growing business after his father's death in 1953. The family lived in public housing their first year back, making Jimmy the only president to live in subsidized housing.<sup>113</sup>

During his time at home he actively supported the growing civil rights movement and worked to oppose the racial segregation so predominant in the deep southern states. Carter was a prominent member of the Plains community, joining the only civic club in the town, and was a respected leader in the Baptist church.<sup>114</sup> When a state senate seat opened up in 1962 as a result of the dissolution of Georgia's county unit system Carter decided to run for it, making the decision fifteen days prior to the election.<sup>115</sup> He lost in a rigged election but after challenging the results, the fraud was confirmed and a new election was held which he won.<sup>116</sup> While the senate was in session, Carter lived in the Piedmont Hotel in downtown Atlanta while Rosalynn maintained the business back in Plains.

After winning reelection in 1964, Carter set his sights on the election for the Third Congressional District. He officially declared his candidacy in March 1966,

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 24.

<sup>112</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 77-81.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 83-91.

<sup>114</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 90, 100.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 113, 114, 131.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 128-129.

formulating a campaign to beat the incumbent congressman, Republican Bo Calloway. In May, Calloway choose not to run for reelection, deciding instead to run for governor of Georgia.<sup>117</sup> Georgia Democrats feared the state going Republican leading Carter to change plans and join the gubernatorial race as a candidate. He lost the Democratic primary in September but gained enough votes to force a runoff election between the leading candidates, Ellis Arnall and Lester Maddox.<sup>118</sup> He returned to Plains, having lost the almost guaranteed Congressional seat and the governorship.

Carter contemplated his next campaign over the next four years. He ran a conservative Democratic campaign against opponent Carl Sanders, a former liberal governor of the state. He aimed to gain both the black vote and the segregationist vote, changing his tune depending on the audience.<sup>119</sup> In the September primary, Carter earned 49 percent of the vote to Sanders' 38 percent and a runoff election followed. Carter won with 60 percent of the vote and easily beat Republican Hal Suit in the general election that November. After being sworn into office in January 1971, Carter returned to his promotion of civil rights and began pushing back racist policies.<sup>120</sup> Without the possibility of running for re-election due to the Georgia constitution, Carter considered a potential presidential campaign in 1976.

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<sup>117</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 150.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 164-165.

<sup>119</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 180-199.

<sup>120</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997) 198-199.



**Figure 2.1.** Jimmy Carter Presidential Photo. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, 558522

Carter formally announced his candidacy for President of the United States on December 12, 1974 at National Press Club in Washington D.C. With low name recognition, he was viewed as a long shot. The freshness of the Watergate scandal made Carter's position as an outsider, someone distant from the politics of the country's capital, an asset. He won the Iowa caucuses, setting himself up as a frontrunner early in the primary season. A victory in the New Hampshire primaries bolstered his campaign and after winning the Ohio primary his nomination was virtually assured.<sup>121</sup> Carter faced Gerald Ford in three televised presidential debates during the run for office, the first since the Nixon-Kennedy debates in 1960. Carter had the lead over Ford and though he carried fewer states than the incumbent, he won

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<sup>121</sup> Peter Bourne, *Jimmy Carter* (Lisa Drew Book/Scribner: New York, 1997), 328.

the popular vote and received 297 electoral votes to Ford's 240, ensuring his victory. Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as the 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States on January 20, 1977.

### *Presidential Library Site Selection*

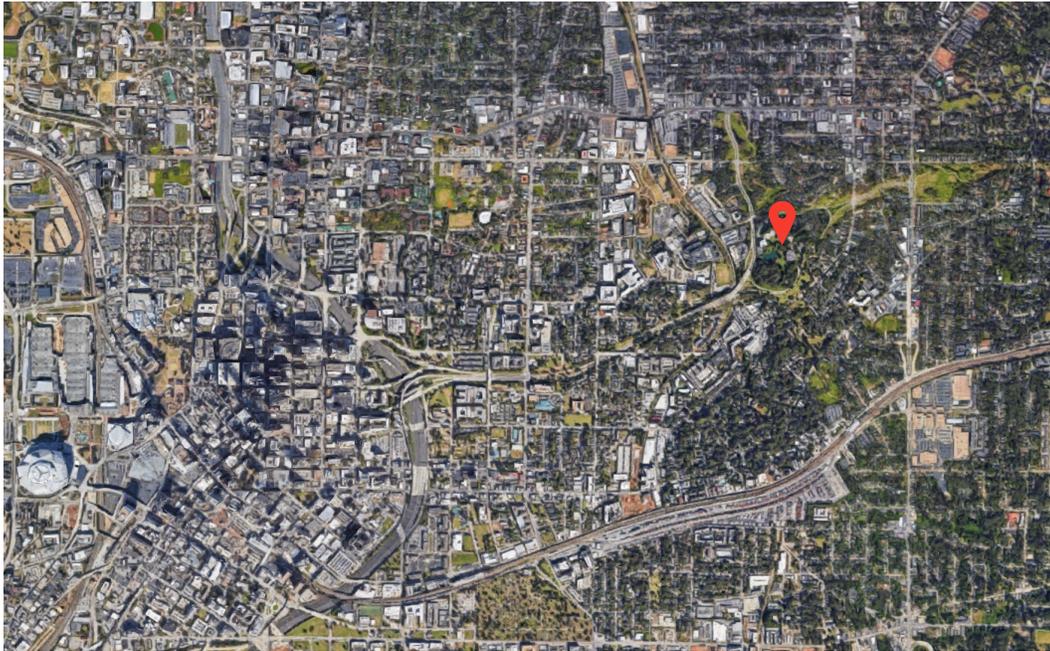
In 1981, Jimmy Carter returned to Georgia to begin looking for a possible site for his future presidential library. People in Georgia had been presenting options to him during his last few years in office, including representatives of several universities in Atlanta and towns of his youth. The top three contenders included Plains, his hometown; Americus, where he spent his first year of college; and Atlanta, where he spent most of his political career.<sup>122</sup>

With the assistance of Atlanta mayor, and former member of his presidential cabinet, Andrew Young, Carter considered a 219 acres site northeast of downtown Atlanta in an inner-city residential neighborhood. A plan for the site, designed by John Portman in 1979, placed a potential presidential library along the edges of the open space, but Carter rejected the proffered site, instead selecting a location in the center of the empty acreage on the ridge of a knoll suggested by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Commissioner, Tom Moreland. The slight hill, where General Sherman once watched the raging Battle of Atlanta during the Civil War, still

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<sup>122</sup> Theo Lippman, Jr. "Carter ponders a site for library," *Baltimore Sun*, February 15, 1981.

afforded a spectacular view, now of downtown Atlanta's ever evolving skyline.

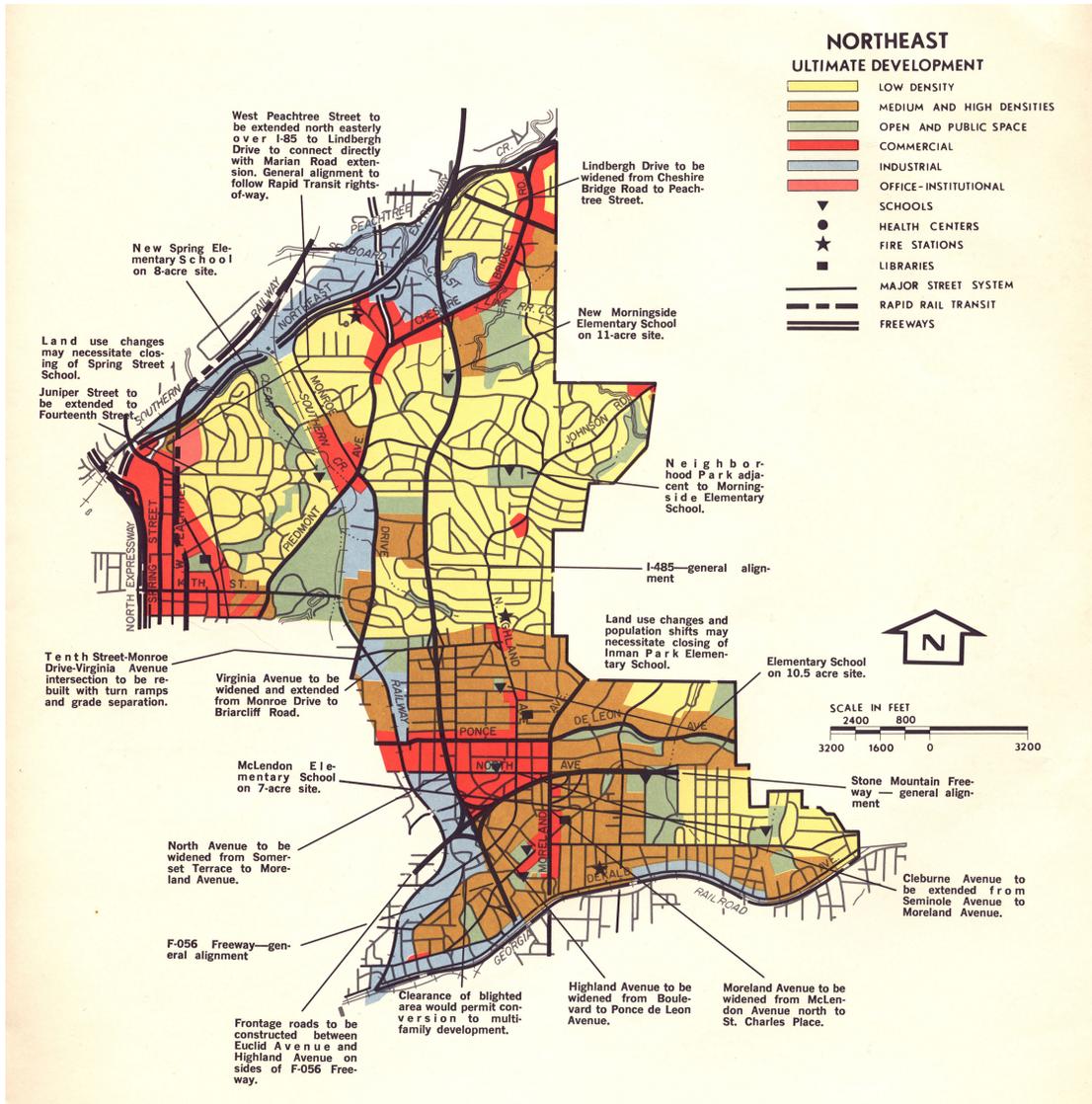


**Figure 2.2.** A map showing the location of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center (marked in red) in relation to downtown Atlanta (on the lower left portion of the image). Source: Google Maps

### *History of the Site*

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) owned the land, having acquired the property beginning in 1961 to form the right-of-way necessary for a substantial highway project. GDOT, in concert with the Atlanta Regional Commission, developed plans for the construction of two highways east of Atlanta's downtown. As plans progressed, GDOT, at that time known as the Georgia Highway Department, designed these roadways to Interstate highway standards with controlled access and intended them as a method to ease congestion on the extant road system. The north-south highway, Interstate Route I-485, would run parallel to Interstate I-85 and begin south of Ponce de Leon Avenue at an interchange with the proposed east-

west route, the Stone Mountain Tollway. The land cleared for this interchange is where Carter chose to site his library.



**Figure 2.3.** A map of the proposed I-485. The interchange at the bottom of the map between the thick black lines denotes the location where Carter eventually constructed his library. Source: Georgia Department of Transportation

In February 1966, protests began in the Morningside neighborhood, located north of the current presidential center, over the proposed plan by the Georgia Highway Department to place the Interstate 485 right-of-way through the center of the

neighborhood. Many of the residents of this older, middle-class neighborhood lived in the houses in which they grew up, creating a deep sense of community. The 900-acre area contained brick and stone houses ranging in age between 30 and 50 years of age. When the decision to build directly through the neighborhood became apparent, protests forced then Governor Carl Sanders to call for further study of potential interstate sites.

The Highway Department's decision stood firm, citing the displacement of fewer people, disruption of less thoroughfares, and a cost \$7.5 million dollars less than the next best alternative.<sup>123</sup> The Morningside-Lenox Park Association disagreed with all points and took their argument first to the United States Bureau of Public Roads, which approved the route. Failing there, they filed suit in October 1966 in state court. A reduction in federal funding, however, provided a reprieve for the area as no funds were allocated to this portion of the route and the Highway Department gave the project a low priority.<sup>124</sup> Association president Al Kuettner stated that the group had not "been fighting this just as a little neighborhood obstruction thing but as a means of saving close-in communities in general."<sup>125</sup>

While the land purchase, design, and implementation of these projects predated much social and environmental legislation regarding highway construction, they were eventually required to conform with the laws as passed. Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969 after these plans for highway expansion

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<sup>123</sup> "Atlanta Groups Fight Road Route: Interstate Highway Would Cut Through Home Area," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1967.

<sup>124</sup> "Atlanta Groups Fight Road Route: Interstate Highway Would Cut Through Home Area," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1967.

<sup>125</sup> "Atlanta Groups Fight Road Route: Interstate Highway Would Cut Through Home Area," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1967.

were already underway in Atlanta, but a court decision in 1971 stopped action on the I-485 project until due diligence on the proposal could be given with regards to the recently passed act, specifically the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

NEPA succinctly summarizes the growing importance of curbing adverse effects of man on the natural world:

The Congress, recognizing the profound impact of man's activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization, industrial expansion, resource exploitation, and new and expanding technological advances and recognizing further the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and development of man, declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government . . . to use all practicable means and measures . . . to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony . . . <sup>126</sup>

The Act continues on to further elucidate the components encompassed in its protective reach including "important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage."<sup>127</sup> In an attempt to make sure that due consideration is given when planning a project, an Environmental Impact Statement is required that details the potential impact of the proposed action on the environment, any adverse effects that cannot be avoided, alternatives, short-term and long-term uses and productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources.<sup>128</sup>

During this time, the proposed Stone Mountain Tollway also received a tremendous amount of backlash. A commission, appointed by then Governor Jimmy Carter in 1972, examined the issues being raised by the public and recommended

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<sup>126</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. § 4331

<sup>127</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. § 4331

<sup>128</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. § 102

further actions to be taken. The group eventually determined that the tollway should not be built, citing that “while the decision to build would be irreversible, the decision not to build is reversible.”<sup>129</sup> The construction of a rapid transit line was underway at this time and part of the commission’s reasoning was to first assess the effects this transit system would have on traffic congestion before determining the necessity of an additional highway. In December 1972, Governor Carter accepted this recommendation, effectively ending the proposed Stone Mountain Freeway.

In 1973, the City of Atlanta revoked its approval of I-485 and the project was officially deleted from regional plans by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) in 1974. That year, the State Transportation Board removed I-485 from the Interstate Highway System and in 1975, the Federal Highway Administration approved the decision. Land north of St. Charles Avenue intended for the proposed I-485 route was disposed of beginning in 1977. To provide a better north-south traffic service, the Atlanta Regional Commission focused efforts on improving the downtown connector, Interstate Routes I-75/I-85. The State Transportation Board maintained the 219 acres of rights-of-way south of St. Charles Avenue and Ponce de Leon Avenue for future transportation purposes, recognizing a need for major improvements along the east-west corridor.<sup>130</sup> The land, cleared in the 60s, remained vacant and the subject of much contention for another decade.

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<sup>129</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 218.

<sup>130</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 219.

### *Proposed Plans*

Multiple plans for the use of the cleared interchange site were developed in the mid 1970s in both the public and private sector. With the halt to both road systems, the land remained vacant under the ownership of GDOT. A plan called “The Great Park, A Proposal by The City of Atlanta,” produced through the combined efforts of local residents, Arkhora Associates, Inc., and the city presented the space as a mix of parkland and housing uses. Improvements to local and regional transportation systems were also included although they called for further rights-of-ways through existing residential and industrial areas. In the opinion of GDOT, the plan did not adequately address east-west traffic concerns and without a central transportation component, they could not legally transfer the land to the city to implement the plan.<sup>131</sup>

Building upon this initial concept, a group called the Atlanta Great Park Planning, Inc. (AGPP) that represented the interests of the neighborhoods, the City of Atlanta, the City of Decatur, DeKalb County and the State of Georgia, published a report in 1977 that stated “the Great Park could serve not only as a major recreation area for the Atlanta Metro Area, but can also provide a stimulus for industrial and economic development, neighborhood and housing restoration and a general revitalization of in-town communities.”<sup>132</sup> The report, “Great Park II: Opportunities for Residential, Recreation and Economic Development,” further elaborated on the

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<sup>131</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 219; State laws specifically state the legal ways to purchase land for highways and how to dispose of these parcels when the Georgia DOT no longer needs them for transportation purposes: “The department shall have the authority to exercise the right and power of eminent domain and to purchase, exchange, sell, lease, or otherwise acquire or dispose of any property or any rights or interests therein for public road and other transportation purposes or for any activities incident thereto, subject to such express limitations as are provided by law.” Georgia State Law 32-2-2 (8).

<sup>132</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 219.

ideas presented in the first report but the report concluded that further study was required.

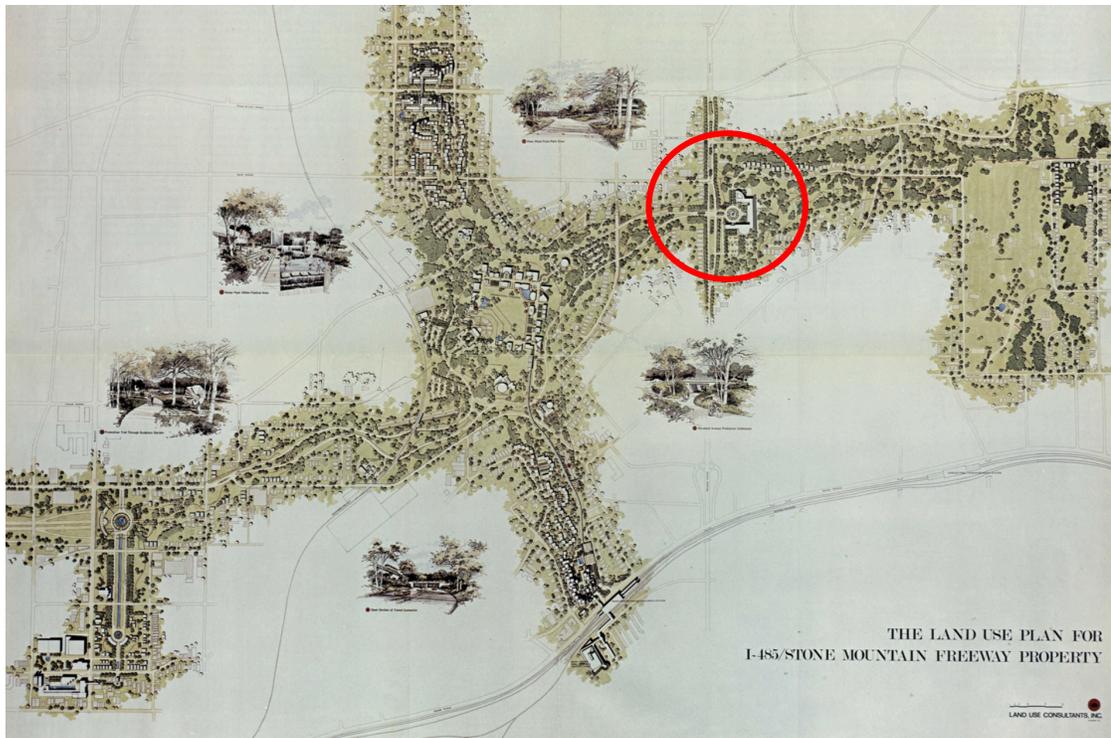
GDOT proposed their own solution for the space in 1978. Two four-lane roadways, one directed east-west and the other north-south, would occupy 80 acres of the site while the remaining 139 would be developed as parkland. The city and AGPP opposed the plan as being excessively oriented towards transportation.

“The Great Park III—Housing Study” was published in October 1979 and marked the final report in this particular series. Through a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts with matching funds from the City of Atlanta, H. Randal Roark prepared the report for AGPP, focusing mainly on housing. The report acknowledged the need to include “a solution for providing adequate east-west through traffic movement,” however, no substantial solutions were presented, and legal restrictions continued to prevent GDOT from transferring the land.<sup>133</sup>

That year, Governor Busbee requested Land Use Consultants, Inc. and John C. Portman Jr. to develop a land use plan for the I-485/Stone Mountain Freeway property that contained a transportation element. Dubbed the Portman Plan, the design called for a parkway through the rights-of-way that would connect the downtown connector to DeKalb Avenue near the Inman Park-Reynoldstown MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) Station. A notable inclusion by Portman was an area east of Moreland Avenue that would be suitable for a Presidential Library.

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<sup>133</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 220.



**Figure 2.4.** The plan proposed by Land Use Consultants and John C. Portman, Jr. It includes a presidential library (circled in red). Source: The Land Use Plan For I-485/Stone Mountain Freeway Property

At the time of the plan's design, Carter had been president for almost three years but he had not announced the intended site for his library and no formal decision would be made until July 1981. Including a presidential library in a plan presented to the governor was omniscient, to a point. Georgians had been discussing potential sites for the library shortly after Carter's inauguration, and major universities in Atlanta joined together to promote the city as the premiere option.<sup>134</sup> The intention in these ideas signaled a desire in Atlanta to locate the future presidential library on a relatively controversial piece of property in an attempt to make the plan more acceptable to the public.

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<sup>134</sup> "Carter Picks Library Site," *The New York Times*, July 24, 1981; "Scrambling To Get the Site for the Carter Library," *Washington Post*, February 20, 1978.

The Portman Plan, like its predecessors, failed to adequately address east-west transportation issues. The Georgia General Assembly created the Great Park Authority in 1980 in hopes that the group could synthesize the best components of the previous plans while meeting legal requirements for land use. The design included a park, housing, and alternative ride alignments and the cost ranged from \$34 to \$57 million. The plan required the displacement of 69-97 additional residences and 36-78 businesses, however, as no action was taken to move forward the land continued to remain vacant.<sup>135</sup>

#### *Establishment of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library*

With Carter in agreement over the chosen site, Mayor Young worked to develop a plan that would serve the broadest public interest centered around the Presidential Center and a parkway. The inclusion of the parkway, a pair of two-lane roadways, heading east and west respectively, allowed GDOT to broker a deal with the Carter Foundation allowing them to purchase only the land physically occupied by the Center's buildings. The Carter Foundation purchased other highway rights-of-way in the state and transferred them to GDOT in form of payment on the library site. The remaining land unoccupied by the roadway became designated parkland and available to the use of the Carter Center at no additional cost.<sup>136</sup>

For a one-term president, having left office with low approval ratings and struggling to raise money for the library, these benefits proved auspicious and integral to the future viability of the center. As the former Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan

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<sup>135</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 222.

<sup>136</sup> Paul H. Wright, *Introduction to Engineering* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 222.

iterated to *The New York Times* after the failed 1980 reelection campaign, “The people who gave money to President Carter the winner were not interested in ex-President Carter, the loser.”<sup>137</sup> In 1982, the largest contribution to the Presidential Library came from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund who donated \$50,000. For a project estimated to cost \$26 million this was a small drop in the bucket but within a year the contributions were up to \$10 million. Major contributions came from Atlanta area businesses, including Turner Broadcasting, Delta Airlines, Coca-Cola and Home Depot, each of which gave between \$500,000 and \$1 million dollars.<sup>138</sup>

Construction on the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center began on October 2, 1984.<sup>139</sup> The architecture firm of Lawton/Umemura/Yamamoto, based in Hawaii, designed the four interlocking, round forms that comprise the complex, and the Atlanta firm of Jova/Daniels/Busby actively constructed the building.<sup>140</sup> The complex encompasses the Presidential Library/Archive, the museum, and the Carter Center. While the library would be donated to the federal government, the buildings contained spaces that remain privately owned by the foundation for office space.

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<sup>137</sup> John Gizzi, “Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center: A Mini State Department in Downtown Atlanta,” *Capital Research Center*, January 2012, retrieved March 13, 2019, <https://capitalresearch.org/app/uploads/2013/06/OT0112.pdf>

<sup>138</sup> Dudley Clendinen, “Carter Library Rises Despite Problems with Money and Road,” *The New York Times*, October 10, 1985, retrieved March 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/10/10/us/carter-library-rises-despite-problems-with-money-and-road.html>; John Gizzi, “Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center: A Mini State Department in Downtown Atlanta,” *Capital Research Center*, January 2012, retrieved March 13, 2019, <https://capitalresearch.org/app/uploads/2013/06/OT0112.pdf>

<sup>139</sup> “About the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library,” *The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved January 10, 2019, [https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about\\_us](https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about_us)

<sup>140</sup> “About the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library,” *The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, retrieved January 10, 2019, [https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about\\_us](https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about_us)



**Figure 2.5.** View of the Carter Presidential Library. Source: David Dobbs/Alamy

As this construction commenced, contention over the proposed parkway continued. The parkway was an integral component of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center, it provided access to the site, a connection to the greater metropolitan region, and was the reason the Carter Foundation received the land for next-to-nothing. GDOT designated the intended roadway an arterial parkway. An arterial roadway anticipates high-capacity use, to shuttle cars between feeder roads, or typical urban streets, to freeways and, as such, tend to be limited access. The parkway, as originally designed in connection to the Presidential Center, extended 2.4 miles from the downtown connector and ended abruptly at Ponce de Leon Avenue in the neighborhood of Druid Hills. Each lane of the intended parkway measured 12 feet

wide with a central median ranging from 8 to 20 feet wide. The roads diverged around the centrally placed Carter Presidential Center and provided the complex with necessary vehicular access.<sup>141</sup>

To comply with federal laws, an environmental impact statement was required for the proposed roadway project. The EIS listed the adverse effects that the surrounding neighborhoods would likely experience with the project's implementation. Land from four parks, a National Register Historic District, and one eligible historic district would be used and impacted by the implementation of the plan with one residence displaced and several with no vehicular access. Two notable sentences in the statement recognized the potential destruction of neighborhood cohesion stating that "several neighborhoods would be divided by the parkway and cohesion between the north and south portions would be reduced" and "the parkway would unavoidably create a barrier between neighborhoods and would divide several of them."<sup>142</sup> A "no build" scenario would provide the highest level of neighborhood continuity as the space was zoned residential, commercial, and industrial.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the study determined there were "no disproportionate adverse impacts on any particular segment of the community."<sup>143</sup> While the Carter Center sits within the arbitrary boundaries of the Poncey Highland neighborhood and immediately adjacent to the Inman Park

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<sup>141</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Georgia Department of Transportation, *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Presidential Parkway*, Atlanta, GA, May 22, 1984

<sup>142</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Georgia Department of Transportation, *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Presidential Parkway*, Atlanta, GA, May 22, 1984

<sup>143</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Georgia Department of Transportation, *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Presidential Parkway*, Atlanta, GA, May 22, 1984

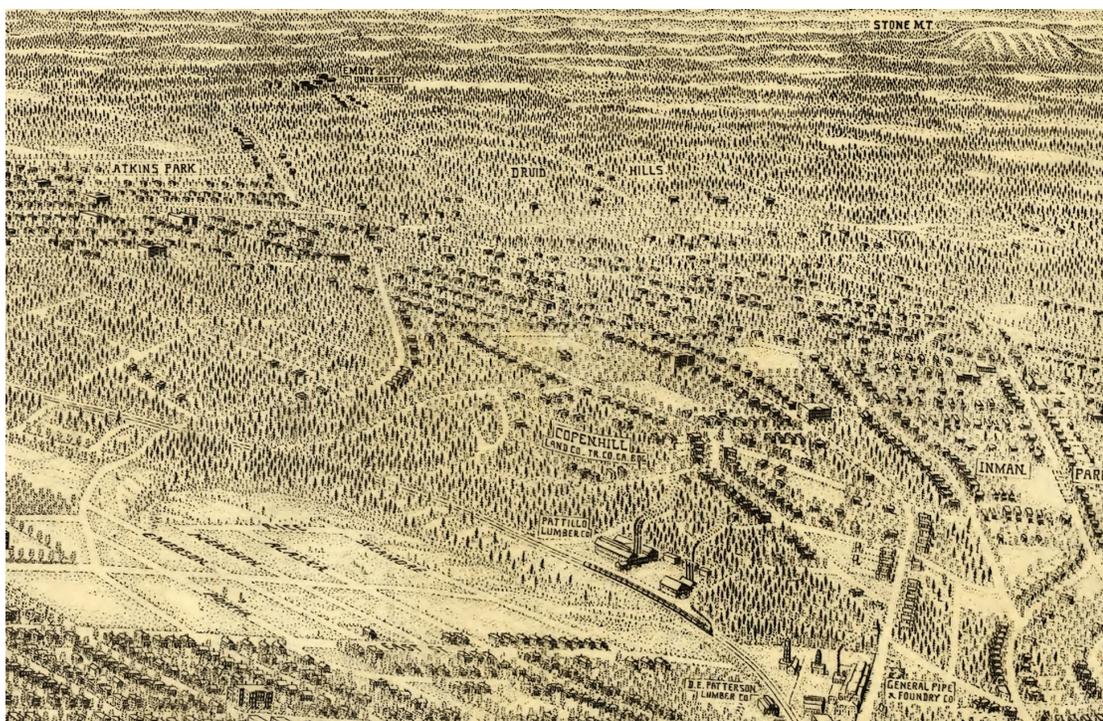
neighborhood, the parkway impacted three additional neighborhoods: Old Fourth Ward, Candler Park and Druid Hills. Collectively, the neighborhoods contained a diverse grouping of residents with varied socio-economic characteristics.

### *Neighborhood History and Opposition*

Poncey-Highland, located to the immediate north of the Carter Presidential Library, gets its name from the intersection of North Highland Avenue and Ponce de Leon Avenue, which marks the northern boundary of the community. A portion of Poncey-Highland was once a part of Highland Park, a streetcar suburb established on land owned previously by Richard Todd. The property was parceled into 50-by-200-foot lots and sold for \$1,000 in 1893. The streetcar, operated by the Fulton County Street Railroad Company, ran along Highland Avenue before turning west at Virginia Avenue and was known as the “Nine-Mile Circuit.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Linda Merrill, “History of Virginia-Highland Part II,” *Virginia-Highland Civic Association*, February 2012, retrieved March 13, 2019, <https://vahi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/HistoryVaHi2.pdf>



**Figure 2.6.** Close up of the 1919 Atlanta Birds-Eye Map showing Copenhill (center), which is a part of the present Poncey-Highland neighborhood and where the Carter Presidential Center now sits. Inman Park can be seen on the far right of the image. Source: Foote and Davies Company (Atlanta, GA), Library of Congress

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an industrial and commercial expansion along Ponce de Leon Avenue. The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, the southeast regional headquarters for the Ford Motor Company, opened in 1915. The neighborhood began to decline in the 1950s and 60s, as most intown communities saw a decrease in population as residents moved out of the city to suburbs. During this period, the majority of residents were white and middle class with a slight increase in the black population occurring in 1980 (from 2% in 1970 to 9.2% in 1980). Housing occupancy dropped in those years from 94.7% to 85%, reflecting the shift away from city living occurring at the time.<sup>145</sup>

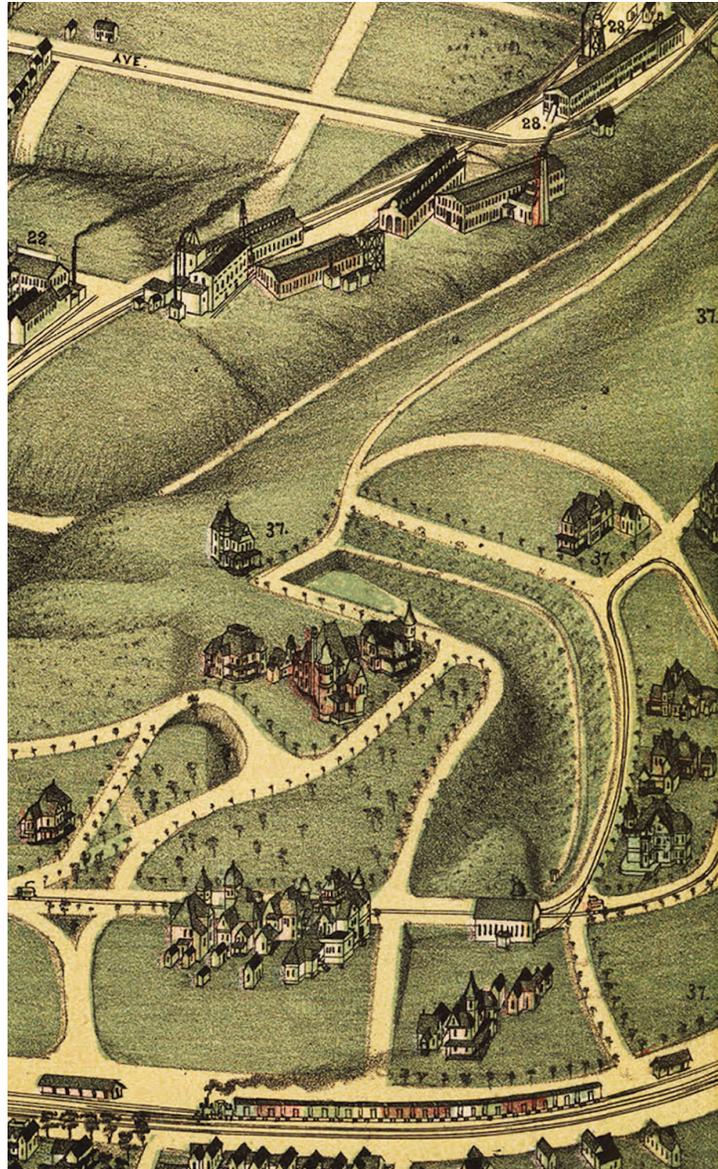
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<sup>145</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 1960, 1970, and 1980

Inman Park, located immediately south of the Carter Presidential Library, was Atlanta's first planned residential suburb. Designed in the late 1880s by Joel Hurt, the first lot auction by Hurt's East Atlanta Land Company occurred in 1889. The neighborhood linked to downtown Atlanta via the city's first electric streetcar, also planned and engineered by Hurt. The streetcar ran two miles along Edgewood Avenue and terminated at the Equitable Trust Company of Georgia Building, the South's first skyscraper and also a product of Hurt's plan. The neighborhood derives its name from Samuel Inman, a major project financier. Restrictions set by the Land Company required lots be used for residential purposes and instituted set-backs. These lapsed, however, in 1910 and smaller homes, apartment buildings, and businesses began to crop up. Even with the influx of less affluent residents, the area maintained its overall character until 1961 when a connector between two sections of Euclid Avenue began funneling traffic through the middle of the community.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Elizabeth A. Lyon, "National Register of Historic Places--Inman Park Historic District Nomination Form," *U.S. Department of the Interior*, May 24, 1973.



**Figure 2.7.** A close up of the 1892 Birds Eye View of Atlanta showing the beginnings of the Inman Park suburb. The streetcar line can be seen making a loop. Source: Saunders and Kline, Library of Congress

In 1960, Inman Park was characterized by white, lower-middle class residents. The majority of households had a median income falling below \$4,000 (in 1960 dollars).<sup>147</sup> The mainly blue-collar neighborhood was comprised of community members working in the operational field or as craftsmen of some variety. A large

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<sup>147</sup> According to the U.S. Census for 1960, 59.8%

percentage also worked as clerks or in a like position. At least 90% of housing units were occupied and of these 70.2% were rented. The Atlanta Community Improvement Program described the combined communities of Inman Park and Candler Park as upper-middle class with more white-collar workers (62%) as compared to skilled laborers.<sup>148</sup> The number of renters continued to be a large portion of the community at around two-thirds and the report noted that the density in the neighborhoods at 21 persons per residential acres was higher than normal. For a neighborhood that developed as spacious, large single-family homes, the increase in densely inhabited, rented properties points to structures that have been subdivided into smaller apartments.

Older residents and younger, professional newcomers characterized Poncey-Highland and Inman Park. A portion of Inman Park became Atlanta's first historic district in 1973, a push by the neighborhood leaders to enhance the legal protection of the community during a period of intense debate over land development. Parts of Poncey-Highland and Candler Park were determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register in the draft EIS for the Presidential Parkway. Voluntary neighborhood associations are well represented in these communities. The Virginia-Highland Civic Association was established in 1971 for the express purpose of defeating the construction of I-485.<sup>149</sup> These groups, such as the Inman Park Neighborhood Association formed in 1970, were established as a means of gathering the community to work towards the goal of protecting and bettering the neighborhood.

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<sup>148</sup> Atlanta Community Improvement Program, "Final Report: Social Report on Neighborhood Analysis," Prepared for the City of Atlanta, 1967, pg. A-7. B-22.

<sup>149</sup> "VAHI," *Virginia-Highland Civic Association*, 2019, retrieved March 13, 2019, <https://vahi.org/inside-vhca/>

The Atlanta Community Improvement Program dictated that “only through active and intimate involvement of the citizens from a neighborhood can we obtain the needed information on the effects that proposed treatment actions have on the way of life and other problems in the neighborhood.”<sup>150</sup> Former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell stated that “the neighborhood killed the road, and they may kill the library too” but if the library came at the cost of something considered by the affected neighborhoods to be a catastrophic detriment to their communities, chances are it would not have been worth it.<sup>151</sup>

With opposition mounting, neighborhood groups were concerned that their opinions would not be taken into account, especially with such powerful parkway proponents including Thomas Moreland, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation; Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States; and Emory University, affiliated with the proposed Carter Center. Moreland felt the land should best serve the community which he “defined as the whole state, the region and the immediate area.”<sup>152</sup> He was arguing for a four lane road that would facilitate east-west traffic but insisting that 219 acres of land placed strictly within the confines of intown neighborhoods, ones that had been severely castrated when buying the rights-of-ways initially, should service the entire state disregarded the palpable effects a thoroughfare has on the surrounding areas. Neighborhoods and community

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<sup>150</sup> Atlanta Community Improvement Program, “Final Report: Social Report on Neighborhood Analysis,” Prepared for the City of Atlanta, 1967, pg. A-7.

<sup>151</sup> Maria Saporta, “Neighborhoods Seek Role in Park Drama,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 26, 1981, pg. 4.

<sup>152</sup> Maria Saporta, “Neighborhoods Seek Role in Park Drama,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 26, 1981, pg. 4.

organizations felt that the governing bodies deciding the fate of this land left them out of the changing scheme involving the presidential library and parkway.

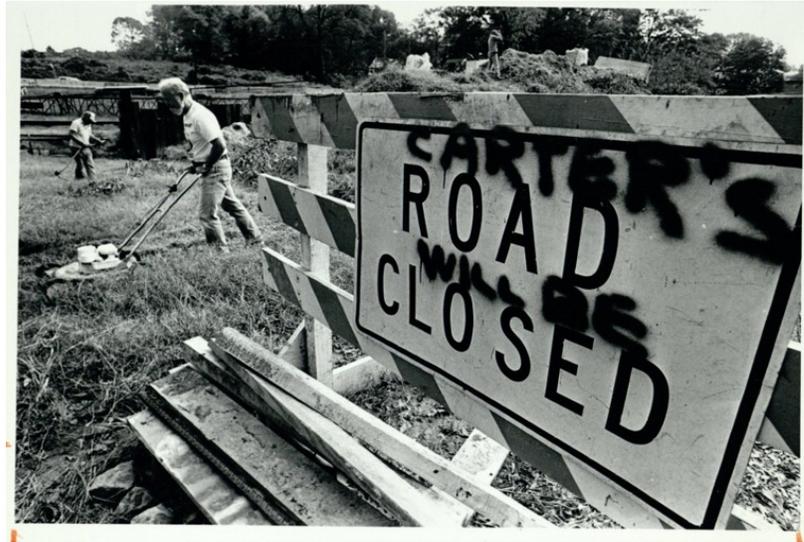
It should be noted that construction of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center began in 1984 and was completed in 1986, years before the parkway would even be started. The contention surrounding the presidential library centered on the damage the parkway would have on the surrounding neighborhoods, which had already dealt with the destruction involved when initially clearing the land. The two components, the Presidential Center and the Parkway, are interrelated. The site for the library and the minimal cost could only happen because the space contained the necessary transportation accommodations required by GDOT. Robert Lipshutz, former special counsel to President Carter said, regarding the issues with implementing the parkway, that they obviously “couldn’t get tied up for years and years to get that site. If that was the case, then we would have to look for another site.”<sup>153</sup>



**Figure 2.8.** Jimmy Carter, second from left in the dark suit, walking the proposed route for the Presidential Parkway with other officials in February 1984. Source: Nick Arroyo/*Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

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<sup>153</sup> Maria Saporta, “Neighborhoods Seek Role in Park Drama,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 26, 1981, pg. 1.



**Figure 2.9.** A vandalized sign in October 1985 at the site of parkway construction shows the inherent connection between the road and the Presidential Library. Source: *Atlanta Journal Constitution*

Citizens Against Unnecessary Thoroughfares in Older Neighborhoods, C.A.U.T.I.O.N., Inc, was established by residents of Inman Park, Poncey-Highlands, and surrounding neighborhoods in September 1982 as a means of combatting the proposed Presidential Parkway. The president of the organization, R. A. Nixon, made a point in an editorial to the *Atlanta Constitution* of separating the nature of the opposition. “Neither CAUTION nor its member neighborhood organizations oppose the plan for the Great Park. We do not oppose the Carter Library and Policy Center . . . We oppose the highway because of the principle involved in the preservation of history and parklands.”<sup>154</sup> CAUTION and community leaders recognized the importance of political power in the conflict, noting that the majority of parkway supporters held a position in local, state, or federal government. In reaction,

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<sup>154</sup> R. A. Nixon, “Letters to the Editor: Great Park stumbling block: Stone Mountain freeway,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, May 16, 1983, pg. 7.

CAUTION promoted and pushed for neighborhood advocates running for various political positions. It managed to assist in electing 64 pro-neighborhood candidates to office.



**Figure 2.10.** An image from January 1982 of parkway protesters marching between the World Congress Center and the State Capital. Note the sign in the center background that says: ‘Carter Library or Busbee Road no no no.’ Source: Bud Skinner/*Atlanta Journal Constitution*

CAUTION rallied the community but also acted as the legal arm of the opposition. Over the course of the controversial stand against the parkway, CAUTION spent more than \$600,000 in legal fees, receiving almost that same amount in pro bono service.<sup>155</sup> The group lobbied and coordinated litigation, working to

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<sup>155</sup> “History of Freedom Park,” *Freedom Park Conservancy*, retrieved January 21, 2019, <http://www.freedompark.org/fpc/about/history-2/>

organize large numbers of supporters to their cause. Challenging the proposals in court became a key tactic for delaying the proceedings, forcing continued changes to the plan and federal reviews. The National Trust for Historic Preservation filed suit with CAUTION in 1984 challenging the bid process for the road construction contract and the condemnation of public parkland.<sup>156</sup>

The group used word of mouth, fliers, phone trees, and block captains to quickly mobilize large numbers of people. At a public meeting held by GDOT after the release of the EIS, three thousand opponents showed up. CAUTION members attended all DOT commission meetings, even those held outside of Atlanta. The group maintained close ties with elected officials, notably Congressman John Lewis. When he was a member of Atlanta's City Council, Lewis spoke at a rally held in opposition to the roadway, saying "We will use our votes, we will use our money, we will use the courts, we will use non-violent protest to stop this road."<sup>157</sup>

While politics and law were the mainstays of CAUTION, a group called Roadbusters used protesting and non-violent civil disobedience as their method of combatting the construction of the roadway. Working in tandem with CAUTION, these two groups covered all fronts of possible pushback against the parkway. Members of this group climbed trees about to be cut down and stood in the way of bulldozers. They came ready to be arrested and many were.

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<sup>156</sup> Dan Carlson, Lisa Wormser, and Carl Ulberg, *At Road's End: Transportation and Land Use Choices for Communities* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1995), 46.

<sup>157</sup> John Lewis as quoted in Dan Carlson, Lisa Wormser, and Carl Ulberg, *At Road's End: Transportation and Land Use Choices for Communities* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1995), 47.



**Figure 2.11.** Roadbusters surrounding a crane in March 1985 to impede construction.  
Source: Steve Deal/*Atlanta Journal Constitution*

*Implementation*

When Maynard Jackson was elected mayor in 1989, he encouraged the passage of an ordinance that would prevent the construction of the Presidential Parkway. This led to a lawsuit in which DeKalb Superior Court Judge Clarence Seeliger directed the major players, including GDOT and CAUTION, to use conflict mediation to resolve the issue. The Settlement Agreement was reached after 54 hours of negotiation and officially signed in June of 1992. This final agreed upon plan, called for an at-grade, low-speed roadway conforming more closely with historic parkways than previous iterations. The parkway would not allow truck traffic and forbid the bridging of any city streets in order to access the Carter Presidential Library.<sup>158</sup> The Corporation for

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<sup>158</sup> Cathy Bradshaw, "We Stopped the Road," *Inman Park Neighborhood Association*, May 22, 2016, retrieved January 21, 2016,

Olympic Development in Atlanta commissioned the Atlanta office of EDAW, a landscape architecture firm, to design the park space and the first phase opened just prior to the 1996 Summer Olympics.<sup>159</sup>



**Figure 2.12** A map of the current Freedom Park. Source: Freedom Park Conservancy

The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum had been completed and formally dedicated in October 1986, but the pending construction of the parkway left the surrounding area in a state of limbo. Of the Carter Library, the *New York Times* noted in 1993 the inadequate road access, and the continued construction on the site. The paper summed up the feeling of some residents who seemed to say that “if Jimmy Carter’s Presidency sometimes seems like a work still in progress . . . his Presidential

[https://www.inmanpark.org/index.php?option=com\\_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&year=2016&month=05&day=21&id=13:we-stopped-the-road](https://www.inmanpark.org/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&year=2016&month=05&day=21&id=13:we-stopped-the-road)

<sup>159</sup> “History of Freedom Park,” *Freedom Park Conservancy*, retrieved January 21, 2019, <http://www.freedompark.org/fpc/about/history-2/>

library in Atlanta has much the same feel.”<sup>160</sup> Between the clearing of the land in the late 60s and the beginning of construction on the Carter Presidential Center in 1982, the property remained vacant, a visible scar in the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. The parkway fight had been a decades long battle between bitterly opposed factions, lasting between the early 1970s until the agreement was reached in 1991.



**Figure 2.13.** The remnants of an old foundation and stoop amongst the overgrowth that characterized the vacant land. Source: Atlanta Constitution, January 22, 1981.

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<sup>160</sup> Peter Applebome, “Carter Center: More Than the Past,” *The New York Times*, May 30, 1993, retrieved January 22, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/30/travel/carter-center-more-than-the-past.html>

*Carter Presidential Center Today*

When planning the BeltLine, a rail-trail encircling Atlanta, Ryan Gravel received an e-mail from Poncey-Highland Neighborhood Association. It began, at the depths of the e-mail chain, as trepidatious about what the BeltLine would do to the neighborhood but when forwarded to Gravel simply asked a question: “Can we rename the station from ‘Copenhill’ to ‘Copenhill/Carter Center?’”<sup>161</sup> This request to include the Carter Center in the name is the recognition by the community of an asset and defining feature of their neighborhood. That the neighborhood association choose Carter Center over Freedom Park, which they had so long advocated for, speaks to the importance of the Center and the esteem with which it is held. The change honors the history of the neighborhood while including the present.

What was a central part of a decades long debate has become an irrefutable neighborhood landmark. Freedom Park ensconces the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and provides the community with a public space that serves as a recreational space and a connector between surrounding neighborhoods. Parks reflect the quality of life in the adjacent communities and the vibrant Freedom Park with the Carter Presidential Library displays Poncey Highland and Inman Park as lively, healthy places to live. Before its transformation, the vacant land acted as a deterrent and the uncertainty of its future imposed itself on the adjoining spaces.

Today Freedom Park Conservancy, once CAUTION, Inc., actively works to recognize the places that once occupied the parkland. The organization has been actively working on a project called Dwelling, a site-specific art installation that

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<sup>161</sup> Ryan Gravel, *Where We Want to Live: Reclaiming Infrastructure for a New Generation of Cities* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016), pg. 99.

explores lost landscapes and “adds to a layered understanding of the history of Freedom Park.”<sup>162</sup> While the park and presidential library have become an identity for these inner-city neighborhoods, they exist at the expense of condemned and razed dwellings. The neighborhoods now boast access to one of the largest parks in the city, an amenity that is actively sought by residents. Once signs were posted along the vast, vacant field reading “State Owned Property. No trespassing or dumping,” and now walking paths crisscross, beckoning residents into the broad expanse of public space.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> “Dwelling,” *Freedom Park Conservancy*, 2019, retrieved June 29, 2019, <https://opentour.emory.edu/dwelling/dwelling>

<sup>163</sup> Emma Edmunds, “Finger of Beauty,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 12, 1977.

CHAPTER THREE  
HISTORY MADE AND TRADITION UPHELD:  
THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

Since Barack Obama was first inaugurated as the 44<sup>th</sup> president in January 2009, a presidential library was inevitable. Towards the end of his second term, decisions regarding the library were being made and the question at the forefront was where would it be located? Obama's story spans the country: from his youth spent in Hawaii, to college in Los Angeles then New York City, law school in Boston, and his working years in Chicago. The cities and states vying for the potential to host the historic library for the nation's first black president each had substantial ties to the man.

With a little under two years left in his presidency, Barack announced Chicago as the intended location for his presidential center. The winning bid belonged to the University of Chicago which offered plans for three potential locations, all in the South Side area of the city. Chicago appeared to be the frontrunner even before qualifications were submitted.<sup>164</sup> The University of Hawai'i went as far as presenting a partnership vision, specifically modeling an instance in which it worked with a competing bidder in Chicago.<sup>165</sup> After all, Obama got his political start on the city's South Side. He represented the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District which spanned from the

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<sup>164</sup> Dahleen Glanton, "Obama library officials allow parties to make their bid," *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 2014, retrieved February 11, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2014-03-20-chi-obama-library-officials-allow-parties-to-make-their-bid-20140320-story.html>

<sup>165</sup> University of Hawai'i, "Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Center," *Obama Foundation*, 2014, p. 120.

diverse and affluent Hyde Park to the bungalows of South Shore, where he lived with Michelle, west through Woodlawn to the poverty ridden neighborhood of Englewood.<sup>166</sup> The same place he plans to return with his presidential library in tow. He gave his victory and farewell addresses as president in Chicago. His presidential farewell speech started in much the same way as his victory speech eight years prior: “Hello, Chicago. It’s good to be home!”<sup>167</sup>

### *Barack Hussein Obama II*

Barack Obama once stated, “that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.”<sup>168</sup> The son of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya, Barack spent his life living and visiting different places, experiencing the diametric cultures that were his heritage. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii on August 4, 1961, Barack spent most of his childhood and teenage years on that island in the Pacific Ocean. His maternal grandparents, Stanley and Madelyn Dunham, raised him until he left for college on the mainland at eighteen. “Toot and Gramps”, as Barack called them, hailed from Kansas, and often told Barack stories about their youth that evoked a “small-town, Depression-era America in all its innocent glory.”<sup>169</sup> They became a fixture in his life, eventually finding their stories interwoven into presidential campaign speeches as a way for Obama to connect with the masses of Americans who

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<sup>166</sup> David Jackson and Ray Long, “Obama knows his way around a ballot,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 3, 2007, retrieved February 11, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081011054057/http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/obama/chi-070403obama-ballot-archive%2C0%2C5693903.story>

<sup>167</sup> Global News, “President Barack Obama’s farewell address (full speech),” YouTube video, 1:01:53, January 10, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paHYyQHmTus>

<sup>168</sup> Barack Obama, “Democratic National Convention Keynote Speech” (speech, Boston, MA, July 27, 2004), *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html>

<sup>169</sup> Barack Obama, *Dreams From My Father* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004), 13.

looked different than him. He spoke of his grandparents in some of the most important speeches he gave in politics, including the 2004 Democratic Convention Speech that propelled him to the national stage, his speech accepting the Democratic nomination in August 2008 and his famous speech on race given in March 2008.



**Figure 3.1.** Barack Obama (center) with his grandparents, Stanley and Madelyn Dunham, in NYC in the 1980s. Source: Obama for America

After attending high school in Hawaii, Obama left for Occidental College in Los Angeles. He transferred to Columbia University for his final two years of undergraduate study. At Columbia, Barack studied political science, concentrating in international relations.<sup>170</sup> He “figured that if there weren’t any more black students at Columbia than there were at Oxy, [he’d] at least be in the heart of a true city, with

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<sup>170</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 421.

black neighborhoods in close proximity.”<sup>171</sup> Obama remained in New York City after graduating in 1983, landing his first organizer job with the New York Public Interest Research Group.<sup>172</sup>

By this time, he had set his sights on Chicago. The election of Harold Washington as the first black mayor of the city in 1983 had propelled the city to the forefront of Obama’s mind, his initial goal post-graduation involved landing a job in Washington’s administration.<sup>173</sup> During a trip to the New York Public Library, where Obama scoured employment listings in publications, he discovered a community organizer position for the “Developing Communities Project” based in the Roseland neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago.

Gerald Kellman, the project supervisor, interviewed Obama and eventually hired him on for a salary of \$10,000 a year. When he drove into Chicago in July 1985, it was only the second time he had ever been to that city. His first three nights there he slept on the floor of a friend’s apartment in Hyde Park before finding his own place nearby.<sup>174</sup> The headquarters for the Developing Communities project was located on the far South Side, eleven miles further south than Obama’s apartment. The church-based community organization aimed to help low-income residents in the Roseland, West Pullman, and Riverdale neighborhoods.

His time as an organizer, working to enfold pastors into the organization’s goals, assisting residents of public housing and working to keep steel mills open, allowed him to discover the underlying current of history and politics embedded in the

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<sup>171</sup> Barack Obama, *Dreams From My Father*, 115.

<sup>172</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 483-484, 503.

<sup>173</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 507.

<sup>174</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 516.

South Side. Here he took steps towards a potential political future, establishing credentials in the black world.<sup>175</sup> He became involved with a number of projects, including working with residents of public housing to bring issues to the Chicago Housing Authority. He spent time in the pews of South Side churches listening to the orations of the pastors which directly influenced the style of his public speaking.<sup>176</sup> It was Chicago where Obama fully rooted himself in his blackness within black communities. It was where he established a home base, and it was where early, shapeless political notions began to take root.

He left the city after three years to begin classes at Harvard Law School in the fall of 1988. He returned to Chicago after his first year to work as a summer associate at the law firm of Sidley & Austin. It was here that he first met Michelle Robinson, a first-year associate at the firm and his assigned mentor. As the relationship between the two developed, Obama's roots in Chicago grew deeper. He returned the next summer as an associate at Hopkins & Sutter, living with Michelle in her apartment on Euclid Avenue in the South Shore neighborhood, three miles south of his original apartment in Hyde Park. Following his graduation from Harvard in 1991, Barack once again returned to the City of Big Shoulders.<sup>177</sup>

He accepted a position as a Visiting Law and Governmental Fellow at the University of Chicago. This position quickly evolved into teaching Constitutional law at the University's law school, a position he retained from 1992 until his election to

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<sup>175</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 512.

<sup>176</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 555.

<sup>177</sup> David Maraniss, *Barack Obama: The Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 573.

the United States Senate in 2004.<sup>178</sup> He accepted a position as a civil rights attorney with the firm of Miner, Barnhill & Galland, a small firm that specialized in political, civil rights, and neighborhood development cases.<sup>179</sup> He worked for the firm until his election to the Illinois State Senate in 1996, though he remained of counsel there until 2004.

In 1992, Barack and Michelle married at Trinity United Church, then located in the Roseland neighborhood on the far South Side. They held their reception at the South Shore Cultural Center along the shore of Lake Michigan, close to where Michelle had grown up as a child. They moved shortly thereafter from the second-floor apartment in Michelle's parents' house to a first-floor condominium unit in Hyde Park where they resided until 2005 when they moved to a home in Kenwood, directly adjacent to Hyde Park, which they still own.<sup>180</sup> Both of their daughters, Malia and Sasha, were born at the University of Chicago Medical Center on the South Side of Chicago.

Barack Obama's first foray into Illinois politics was in 1996 when he won the election for the open 13<sup>th</sup> District seat. He served three terms in the Illinois Senate, winning reelection in 1998 and 2002. During his period in office, the 13<sup>th</sup> District covered a swathe of the South Side very familiar to Obama, encompassing places he lived, worked, and interacted with daily for almost a decade of his life.

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<sup>178</sup> "Statement Regarding Barack Obama," *University of Chicago Law School*, March 28, 2008, archived on June 8, 2008, retrieved March 23, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080608225931/http://www.law.uchicago.edu/media/index.html>

<sup>179</sup> Angie Drobnic Holan, "Obama's 20 years of experience," *PolitiFact*, March 7, 2008, retrieved March 23, 2019, <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2008/mar/07/obamas-20-years-experience/>

<sup>180</sup> Krissah Thompson, Kathy Orton, and Emily Heil, "Obamas buy their rental home in Washington, keep home in Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 2017, retrieved March 23, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-obamas-buy-washington-home-20170601-story.html>

*Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama*

Michelle Obama only further emphasizes the strong connection the couple holds to the South Side of Chicago saying in the video announcing the future of the OPC that “Every value, every memory, every important relationship to me exists in Chicago. I consider myself a South Sider.”<sup>181</sup> For the first eighteen months of her life, Michelle lived with her family in an apartment in Parkway Gardens, located on the western edge of the Woodlawn neighborhood. Woodlawn’s decline began during the 1950s and 60s when the neighborhood experienced an increase in population, a shift from white residents to black, and became poorer. These changes led the Robinson family to move to the upstairs apartment of a brick bungalow on Euclid Avenue in the South Shore neighborhood, a middle-class neighborhood also experiencing a demographic shift.<sup>182</sup>

South Shore, which was predominately white in 1950, was almost 96% black in 1981 when Michelle left the South Side to attend Princeton University. Michelle wrote in her memoir about the changes occurring in the neighborhood:

Craig and I were raised squarely in the crosscurrents of that flux. The blocks surrounding us were home to Jewish families, immigrant families, white and black families, folks who were thriving and some who were not. In general, people tended to their lawns and kept track of their children . . . My family, in fact, was probably on the poor side of the neighborhood spectrum. We were among the few that didn’t own their own home . . . South Shore hadn’t yet tilted the way other neighborhoods had—with the better-off people long departed for the suburbs, the neighborhood businesses closing one by one, the blight setting in—but the tilt was clearly beginning.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Obama Foundation, “Obama Foundation Announces South Side as Home for Library,” YouTube video, 2:49, May 12, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=169&v=d2Q3xFpf-KE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=169&v=d2Q3xFpf-KE)

<sup>182</sup> Peter Slevin, *Michelle Obama: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 32.

<sup>183</sup> Michelle Obama, *Becoming* (New York: Crown, 2018), 20.

Her narrative started in Chicago, as did her father's and her mother's but her grandparents originally hailed from the South.<sup>184</sup> They joined the diaspora of blacks leaving the Jim Crow South for Northern cities in what became known as the Great Migration.<sup>185</sup> Michelle's mother, Marian Shields Robinson, had only ever lived on the South Side of Chicago, leaving only once for eight years to join her daughter in the White House. Michelle spent her youth in the city, only leaving for college and law school. When asked where she came from while attending college, she would reply, "Chicago," and add, as she put it, "with a touch of pride or maybe defiance, 'the South Side.'"<sup>186</sup> It was important to her to make that distinction. "I belonged at Princeton, as much as anybody, and I came from the South Side of Chicago. It felt important to say [this] out loud."<sup>187</sup>

After receiving her law degree from Harvard University, she returned to her family's home in South Shore and began working at Sidley and Austin, a prominent law firm in Chicago's loop.<sup>188</sup> From her office on the 47<sup>th</sup> floor, she saw the expanse of Lake Michigan and could glimpse a narrow tract of the low-rise roofs and stands of trees that characterized the South Side. She switched career tracts in 1991, entering the public sector and working as an assistant to the Mayor under David Mosena and Valerie Jarrett in Mayor Richard Daley's administration. She left city government

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<sup>184</sup> Aside from her paternal grandmother, LaVaughn Johnson who grew up in the South Side of Chicago. Michelle is a descendant of slaves on both sides of her family.

<sup>185</sup> Peter Slevin, *Michelle Obama: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 12.

<sup>186</sup> Michelle Obama, *Becoming* (New York: Crown, 2018), 85.

<sup>187</sup> Michelle Obama, *Becoming* (New York: Crown, 2018), 85.

<sup>188</sup> Michelle Obama, *Becoming* (New York: Crown, 2018), 94.

shortly after to launch the Chicago chapter of Public Allies, a non-profit organization that seeks to help youth interested in pursuing careers in public service.<sup>189</sup>

After four years with Public Allies, Michelle Obama took a job with the University of Chicago in 1996, becoming Associate Dean of Student Services. Here she worked to bring a wide range of service opportunities in the nearby communities and throughout the city to the students.<sup>190</sup> In 2002, she moved to the University of Chicago Hospitals as Executive Director for Community Affairs before being appointed vice president for community in external affairs in 2005. In these positions, Michelle worked on the relationship between the hospital and neighboring community.<sup>191</sup>



**Figure 3.2.** President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama looking at the Chicago skyline from the south on June 15, 2012. Source: Pete Souza/White House

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<sup>189</sup> Cassandra West, “Her plan went awry, but Michelle Obama doesn’t mind,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 1, 2004, retrieved June 21, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-09-01-0408310383-story.html>

<sup>190</sup> “Obama named first Associate Dean of Student Services,” *The University of Chicago Chronicle* 15, no. 19 (June 1996), retrieved July 13, 2019, <http://chronicle.uchicago.edu/960606/obama.shtml>

<sup>191</sup> “Michelle Obama appointed vice president for community affair at the University of Chicago Hospitals,” *UChicago Medicine*, May 9, 2005, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/news/2005/may/michelle-obama-appointed-vice-president-for-community-and-external-affairs-at-the-university-of-chic>

### *Becoming a President*

Chicago politics prepared Obama for future political battles and gained him credibility amongst supporters. Michelle's ties to the inside of Chicago politics were fruitful for the advancement of Obama's career. Valerie Jarrett, who first hired Michelle at the Mayor's office, became the senior advisor to Obama during his time as president.<sup>192</sup> Aside from the political connections, Michelle "being from Chicago, from the Southside of Chicago," claims Jarrett, "was an asset to Barack in terms of enhancing his ties to the community."<sup>193</sup>

After an unsuccessful campaign for a seat in the United States House of Representatives in 2000, Obama set his sights on a U.S. senatorial run in 2004. He won the Democratic primary and John Kerry invited him to give the keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention held in Boston, generally considered his debut in national-level politics. Obama won 70 percent of the vote that November, the largest electoral victory in Illinois history.

By October 2006, Obama was considering running for the presidency.<sup>194</sup> He formally announced his candidacy for president from the grounds of the Old State Capital in Springfield, Illinois on February 10, 2007.<sup>195</sup> He clinched the Democratic

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<sup>192</sup> Jay Newton-Small, "Michelle Obama's Savvy Sacrifice," *Time*, August 25, 2008, retrieved July 3, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1835686,00.html>

<sup>193</sup> Jay Newton-Small, "Michelle Obama's Savvy Sacrifice," *Time*, August 25, 2008, retrieved July 3, 2019, <http://content.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1835686,00.html>

<sup>194</sup> Adam Nagourney and Jeff Zeleny, "Obama Considers White House Run," *The New York Times*, October 23, 2006, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/23/us/politics/23obama.html>

<sup>195</sup> Barack Obama, "Announcing Presidential Candidacy," (speech, Springfield, IL, February 10, 2007), *C-SPAN*, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4610672/barack-obama-announces-presidential-candidacy-february-2007>

Party nomination in early June 2008 after securing enough delegates from the Montana and South Dakota primaries.<sup>196</sup>

Barack Obama was elected President of the United States on November 4, 2008 after receiving 52.9% of the votes, winning both the electoral college and popular vote. The *Chicago Tribune*, whose endorsement of Obama was the first time the newspaper endorsed the Democratic Party's nominee for president, ran an article following his election that read: "He is the first president elected from Chicago and the first to rise from a career in Illinois politics since Abraham Lincoln."<sup>197</sup> It solidified his place as a son of Chicago. He used what he learned in Chicago politics, during his time as a community organizer, and from early state offices to leverage himself along his political path to eventually land himself in the White House.

### *The Obama Foundation*

Towards the end of Barack Obama's second term in office, thoughts turned to post-presidential life and he established the Obama Foundation (the Foundation) in January 2014 to oversee the future of his presidential library and the physical embodiment of his legacy.<sup>198</sup> The intent of the Foundation was, and remains, the raising "of private funds, [to] convene partners who share in the President's goals and vision, [to] serve as a repository of information, and otherwise marshal resources to

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<sup>196</sup> Jeff Zeleny, "Obama Clinches Nomination: First Black Candidate to Lead a Major Party Ticket," *The New York Times*, June 4, 2008, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/us/politics/04elect.html>

<sup>197</sup> Editorial Board, "Tribune 2008 presidential endorsement," *Chicago Tribune*, October 19, 2008, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2008-10-19-chi-tribune-2008-presidential-endorsement-story.html>; Mike Dorning and Jim Tankersley, "Barack Obama, our next president," *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 2008, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-barack-obama-president-archive-story.html>

<sup>198</sup> Obama Foundation, "A Shared Destiny: A Request for Qualifications for Hosting the Barack Obama Presidential Library," *Obama Foundation*, March 2014

address present and future global and domestic challenges of interest to the President.”<sup>199</sup> The Foundation meets legal obligations as set forth in the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955.

The breadth of the Foundation’s responsibilities, like those of other presidential foundations, extends beyond the confines of constructing the Presidential Library. The organization manages programming that promotes the former president’s goals and works towards fulfilling the mission of the Foundation. As Obama said, “That mission is simple. We want to inspire and empower people to change the world.”<sup>200</sup> Much like Jimmy Carter established the Carter Center for Conflict Resolution to further Carter’s goal for peace, Obama aims to develop the leaders of tomorrow. My Brother’s Keeper Alliance, launched while president in 2014, has become an initiative of the Foundation, continuing the work of mentoring at-risk colored, male youth to become future leaders.<sup>201</sup> The Foundation also provides support for Global Girls Alliance, an adaption of Michelle Obama’s work as First Lady to empower girls through education.<sup>202</sup>

Perhaps the main initiative for the Foundation, aside from fundraising for the OPC, is the Obama Foundation Fellowship, a program intended to support “outstanding civic innovators-leaders who are working with their communities to create transformational change.”<sup>203</sup> The two-year, non-residential fellowship draws

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<sup>199</sup> Obama Foundation, “A Shared Destiny: A Request for Qualifications for Hosting the Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, March 2014, 7.

<sup>200</sup> Obama Foundation, “President Obama Announces the Obama Foundation Summit,” YouTube video, 2:28, September 13, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEVJmtWi--Q>

<sup>201</sup> “MBK Alliance,” *Obama Foundation*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/mbka/>

<sup>202</sup> “Our Mission,” *Obama Foundation*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/mission/>

<sup>203</sup> “Obama Foundation Fellowship,” *Obama Foundation*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/fellowship/>

from the main themes of the Foundation’s mission: leadership and community. The first class of fellows began in 2018, twenty individuals from eleven different countries were chosen from over 20,000 applications. The Foundation also works to create training programs for rising community leaders and provides a Scholar Program in conjunction with the University of Chicago and Columbia University to provide those already working in their communities the chance to grow.

The Foundation hosts a yearly Leadership Summit, beginning in the fall of 2017, that brings together community organizers and social justice workers to discuss their ideas, strategies, and techniques.<sup>204</sup> The first summit gathered more than 500 people together, inviting speakers such as Prince Harry, local artist Theaster Gates, performer and lyricist Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Chobani founder Hamdi Ulukaya to the city’s South Side.<sup>205</sup> The summit allowed the Foundation to showcase its standing by leveraging its name and connections to bring people to the city, inspiring a vote of confidence in the organization that could further its fundraising goals.

To fund these programs, as well as the Obama Presidential Center, the Foundation works daily to raise the necessary finances to advance their goals and mission. Their 2017 Financial Statement indicates they raised \$232,592,542, of which 94.9% was provided by individual donors and the rest from Corporate and Foundation donors. Operating expenses for the year totaled \$22,108,294, over \$12 million of that going to programming.<sup>206</sup> As a non-profit organization, the Foundation is required to

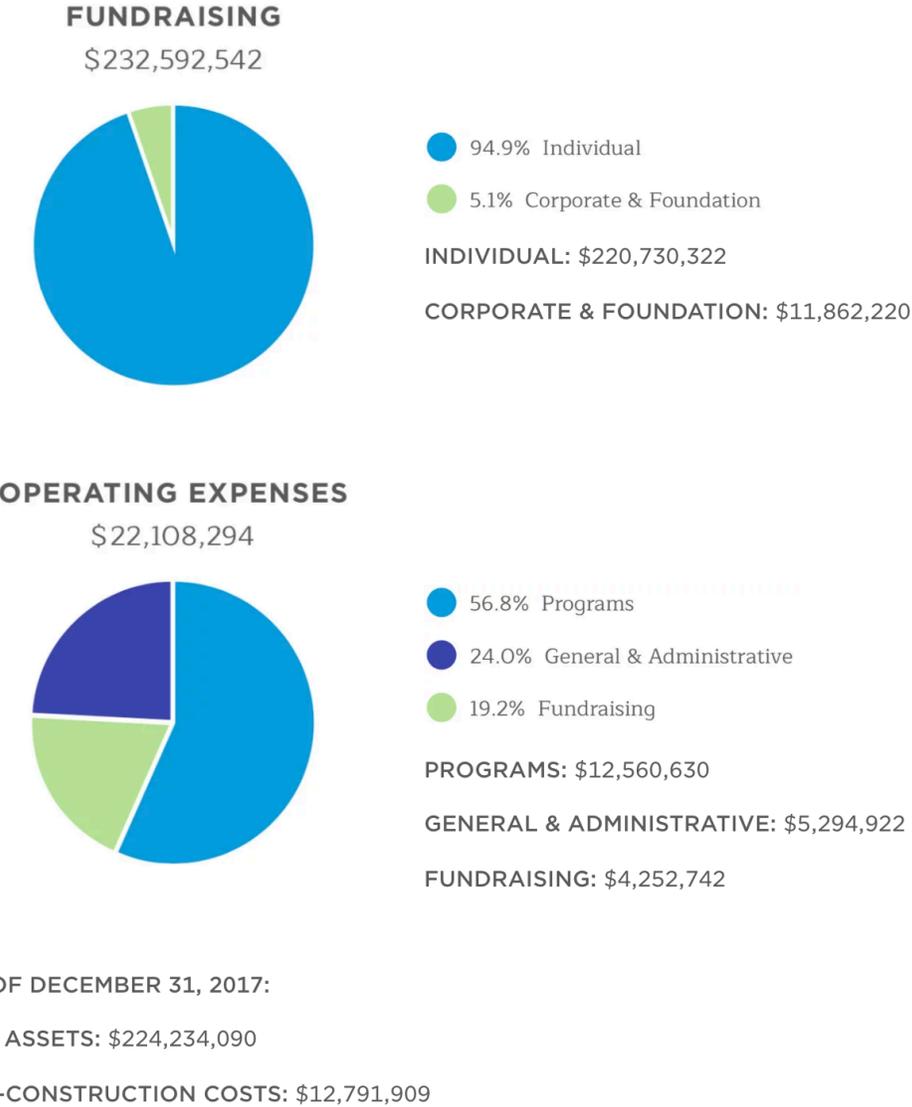
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<sup>204</sup> Lolly Bowean, “Barack Obama set to attend second foundation summit,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 14, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/obamacenter/ct-met-obama-foundation-second-summit-20181114-story.html>

<sup>205</sup> “Obama Foundation Summit Speakers,” *Obama Foundation*, 2017, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/summit/speakers/>

<sup>206</sup> “Obama Foundation Annual Report: 2017 Financial Highlights,” *Obama Foundation*, 2017, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/annualreport/y2017/financials/>

spend money and report operating expenses to the IRS. The cost for the construction of the Obama Presidential Center is estimated at \$350 million, with additional funds needed for the continued upkeep of the center and its programming.<sup>207</sup>



**Figure 3.3.** Charts displaying the Obama Foundation’s 2017 fiscal reports. Source: Obama Foundation

<sup>207</sup> Lisa Betagnoli, “Obama Foundation puts a price tag on Presidential Center,” *Crain’s Chicago Business*, January 10, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20180110/NEWS07/180119995/obama-foundation-says-presidential-center-to-cost-375-million>

## *Donors*

While the Foundation relies heavily on wealthy individuals, a large portion of donors giving \$1,000,000 or more include Funds, Foundations, and Corporations. With the Foundation's central focus on domestic civic engagement, the organization lacks the draw of large global health donors that gave to the Carter and Clinton foundations.<sup>208</sup> An interest in local civic engagement, however, opens the Foundation to other potential donors, including Democratic donors hoping to advance their causes.

Many of the large ticket donors include those who have a personal connection to Obama, his administration, or the Democratic Party. Of the fourteen Obama Foundation board members, seven contributed \$1,000,000 or more to the Obama Foundation. They include John Doerr, J. Kevin Poorman (JKP Family Foundation), John Rogers, Michael Sacks, Robert Wolf (Robert & Carol Wolf Family Foundation), Penny Pritzker (Pritzker Traubert Foundation), and Glenn Hutchins (Hutchins Family Foundation). In addition, Pritzker, Wolf, Rogers, and Doerr served the Obama Administration in some form during the president's two terms in office.<sup>209</sup> Martin Nesbitt, Board Chair, gave between \$10,000 and \$100,000 and is also closely linked to the Obama Administration, serving as national treasurer for Obama's two presidential campaigns.

Other notable donors connected to Obama's Administration include Mary and Jeffrey Zients. Jeffrey Zients was "the businessman's businessman in the Obama

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<sup>208</sup> Caitlin Reilly, "Hope's Next Act: Who's Giving Big to the Obama Foundation—And Why," *Inside Philanthropy*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2018/9/14/hopes-next-act-whos-giving-big-to-the-obama-foundationand-why>

<sup>209</sup> "The Board," *Obama Foundation*, retrieved June 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/whats-next/leadership/the-board/>

White House,” working with corporate leaders and heading the National Economic Council during his eight years there.<sup>210</sup> Former ambassador to the Netherlands during the Obama administration, Fay Hartog-Levin, also donated \$1,000,000 or more. Major democratic supporters including Tim Gill, a major donor to LGBTQ equality, Marilyn and Jim Simons, Eli Broad (Eli & Edythe Broad Foundation), and Fred Eychaner, all major donors to Democratic causes or PACS, top the donor list for giving more than a million dollars.

Given the importance of place to the OPC, many contributors have strong connections to the city of Chicago, whether personal or business. The Crown Family, a top donor with a net worth of \$8.8 billion in 2015, has deep roots in Chicago.<sup>211</sup> Joe and Rika Mansueto donated \$25 million to the University of Chicago for the construction of the library that bears their name and more recently donated \$35 million for the establishment of the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation at the University, also topped the list of Obama Foundation donors.<sup>212</sup> Both Joe and Rika received their undergraduate degrees from the University of Chicago, which stands to benefit from its affiliation with the Obama Presidential Center. The Kenneth C. Griffin Charitable Fund derives its wealth from Citadel LLC, a global investment firm company based in Chicago founded by Griffin. Kenneth Griffin, a major Republican donor who gave

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<sup>210</sup> Thomas Heath, “Jeff Zients was with Obama for the long haul—and now he’s going long in investing,” *Washington Post*, May 11, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/jeff-zients-was-with-obama-for-the-long-haul--and-now-hes-going-long-in-investing/2018/05/11/baadblaa-5312-11e8-9c91-7dab596e8252\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.561cc1aeb45](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/jeff-zients-was-with-obama-for-the-long-haul--and-now-hes-going-long-in-investing/2018/05/11/baadblaa-5312-11e8-9c91-7dab596e8252_story.html?utm_term=.561cc1aeb45)

<sup>211</sup> “#27 Crown Family,” *Forbes*, July 1, 2015, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/profile/crown/#424364686044>

<sup>212</sup> Dawn Rhodes, “University of Chicago gets \$35 million gift for new urban institute,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 9, 2016, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-university-of-chicago-urban-institute-20160309-story.html>

\$20 million to the Illinois Republican governor's campaign in 2017, said in a statement that "President Obama has been an important part of the civic community in Chicago. It is a great honor to have his presidential library in our city."<sup>213</sup>

The connections continue through the list of million-dollar donors. The Lucas Family Foundation has donated several times. Melody Hobson, George Lucas' wife, hails from Chicago and currently serves as president of Ariel Investments, a firm founded by Obama Foundation board member, John Rogers.<sup>214</sup> Oprah Winfrey, who got her start in Chicago and was an early supporter of Barack Obama, donated to the Obama Foundation. Additionally, Obama served on the boards of directors from 1994 to 2002 for the Joyce Foundation, which has also donated more than \$1 million.<sup>215</sup>

### *Bids*

The Foundation did not actively solicit funds while Obama was still in office, though they accepted donations which they capped at \$1 million. Instead they focused on the search for a potential location for the future presidential library.<sup>216</sup> Shortly after its establishment, the Foundation issued a "Request for Qualifications" to interested

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<sup>213</sup> Lynn Sweet, "Republican mega donor Ken Griffin gives \$1 million to Obama Foundation," *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 23, 2017, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/republican-mega-donor-ken-griffin-gives-1-million-to-obama-foundation/>; Katherine Skiba, "Obama Foundation releases its latest list of new big donors," *Chicago Tribune*, October 13, 2017, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-met-obama-foundation-donors-20171013-story.html>

<sup>214</sup> Katherine Skiba, "New \$1 million Obama Foundation donors include 'Scandal,' 'Grey's Anatomy' creator Shonda Rhimes," *Chicago Tribune*, January 17, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-met-obama-foundation-donors-20180116-story.html>

<sup>215</sup> Kenneth P. Vogel, "Obama linked to gun control efforts," *Politico*, April 19, 2008, retrieved March 23, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/story/2008/04/obama-linked-to-gun-control-efforts-009722>

<sup>216</sup> Lolly Bowean, "Obama Foundation spent nearly \$12 million on programming, \$5 million on architects," *Chicago Tribune*, September 25, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/obamacenter/ct-met-obama-foundation-2017taxdocuments-20180925-story.html>

universities, non-profits, private developers or municipalities asking applicants to describe their project funding, potential economic impact on the community, facility site and accessibility, community engagement, and how it reflects the president's vision.<sup>217</sup> Martin Nesbitt, chair of the Obama Foundation, stated that the

. . . goal is to build a library of which the whole country, and hopefully the whole world, can be proud. Our vision is to create a space that reflects President Obama's values and priorities throughout his career in public service and serves as force for good in the surrounding community and throughout the world.<sup>218</sup>

The RFQ made clear that the project must consider the community, talk with key stakeholders and become part of the neighborhood fabric. The Foundation required all RFQs to be submitted in June of 2014 after which it could begin the process of narrowing down the selection.

In September 2014, the Foundation issued a "Request for Proposals" to four host institutions—Columbia University, University of Hawai'i, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Chicago—to present proposals and qualifications regarding the Presidential Library and Museum. The RFP was not a formal solicitation of the organizations and the Foundation was not committed to any of the respondent groups. Responses were due by December 11<sup>th</sup> to allow time for a careful review of the materials before President Barack Obama and the First Lady formally announced their decision in May 2015.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Dahleen Glanton, "Obama library officials allow parties to make their bid," *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 2014, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2014-03-20-chi-obama-library-officials-allow-parties-to-make-their-bid-20140320-story.html>

<sup>218</sup> "The Barack Obama Foundation Releases Request for Qualifications," *Obama Foundation*, March 20, 2014, retrieved February 11, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/updates/barack-obama-foundation-releases-request-qualifications/>

<sup>219</sup> "Request for Proposals: The Barack Obama Foundation," *Obama Foundation*, September 2014

The University of Chicago’s proposal beat another Chicago institution, the University of Illinois at Chicago, to become the host organization for the library and the city ultimately beat other municipalities contending for the center. Columbia University in New York City, where Obama completed his undergraduate degree, presented a proposal as did his hometown of Honolulu, Hawaii in conjunction with the University of Hawaii.

Columbia presented their Manhattanville Campus in West Harlem as the intended location for the proposed library, declaring it would be “an integral part of an historic urban community rich in political, intellectual, and cultural assets.”<sup>220</sup> As President Bollinger stated to a crowd of gathered students waiting to watch the inauguration of the President in 2009:

Every now and then in life, you get the opportunity to be part of something you can be certain will be remembered for ages to come. Today the entire world, it seems, is convening to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama . . . Of all the people in the world who have the best of reasons to celebrate the inauguration of President Obama, none has more than Columbia University. President Obama is an alumnus, a 1983 graduate of Columbia College. It is a pleasure to listen to the new President, whose thoughts and demeanor manifest what this University stands for—the virtue of a life committed to understanding and undaunted by the complexity of life.<sup>221</sup>

Columbia already owned the site, government approvals for development had already been acquired, and a space that could house a temporary headquarters would be ready by 2017. The University obtained approval for the Manhattanville campus, with

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<sup>220</sup> Columbia University, “Request for Qualifications: The Barack Obama Presidential Library at Columbia University in the City of New York,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014

<sup>221</sup> Lee Bollinger, “Introductory Remarks at Presidential Inauguration Viewing on Low Plaza,” Office of the President, *Columbia University*, January 20, 2009, retrieved February 11, 2019, <https://president.columbia.edu/content/introductory-remarks-presidential-inauguration-viewing-low-plaza>

“nearly unanimous support from Harlem’s elected officials,” and the New York City Council which voted overwhelmingly in the development’s favor.<sup>222</sup>



**Figure 3.4.** Rendering of Columbia’s Manhattanville Campus as presented in their RFQ. Source: Columbia University Request for Qualification

Columbia’s President Bollinger signed a Community Benefits Agreement in 2009 with West Harlem Development Corporation providing an investment in the community of \$150 million dollars over the ensuing years and community outreach and engagement remains a vital component of the University’s growth. The Columbia proposal asserts that, if located at their university, the library “could draw more than 800,000 visitors per year, far more than other Presidential Libraries.”<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Columbia University, “Request for Qualifications: The Barack Obama Presidential Library at Columbia University in the City of New York,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, 24.

<sup>223</sup> Columbia University, “Request for Qualifications: The Barack Obama Presidential Library at Columbia University in the City of New York,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, 8.

Obama once wrote, in a magazine for his former high school, that “the opportunity that Hawai’i offered—to experience a variety of cultures in a climate of mutual respect—became an integral part of my worldview, and a basis for the values that I hold most dear.”<sup>224</sup> The University of Hawai’i, working closely with the City of Honolulu and the State legislature, led the bid to bring the Obama Presidential Library to Kaka’ako Waterfront Park, a city owned public park.

The proposed oceanfront, nine-acre site would assist in creating an iconic presidential library. Additionally, the site sits on the edge of the Kaka’ako neighborhood which, at the time, was in the midst of transforming from a declining industrial center to an economically and ethnically diverse commercial and residential hub. Community involvement and engagement was a staple of the process from the outset. Forums were held that brought together community leaders, experts, and stakeholders beginning as early as 2010. Plans for future engagement included maintaining and further developing relationships with stakeholders, including the public, while “engaging in constructive dialogue with any opponents.”<sup>225</sup> The report estimated 330,000 museum visitors annually, making the library “a top-five cultural attraction in Honolulu” and one of the most visited of the presidential libraries.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> University of Hawai’i, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Center,” *Obama Foundation*, 2014, p. 4

<sup>225</sup> University of Hawai’i, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Center,” *Obama Foundation*, 2014, p. 114

<sup>226</sup> University of Hawai’i, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Center,” *Obama Foundation*, 2014, p. 97



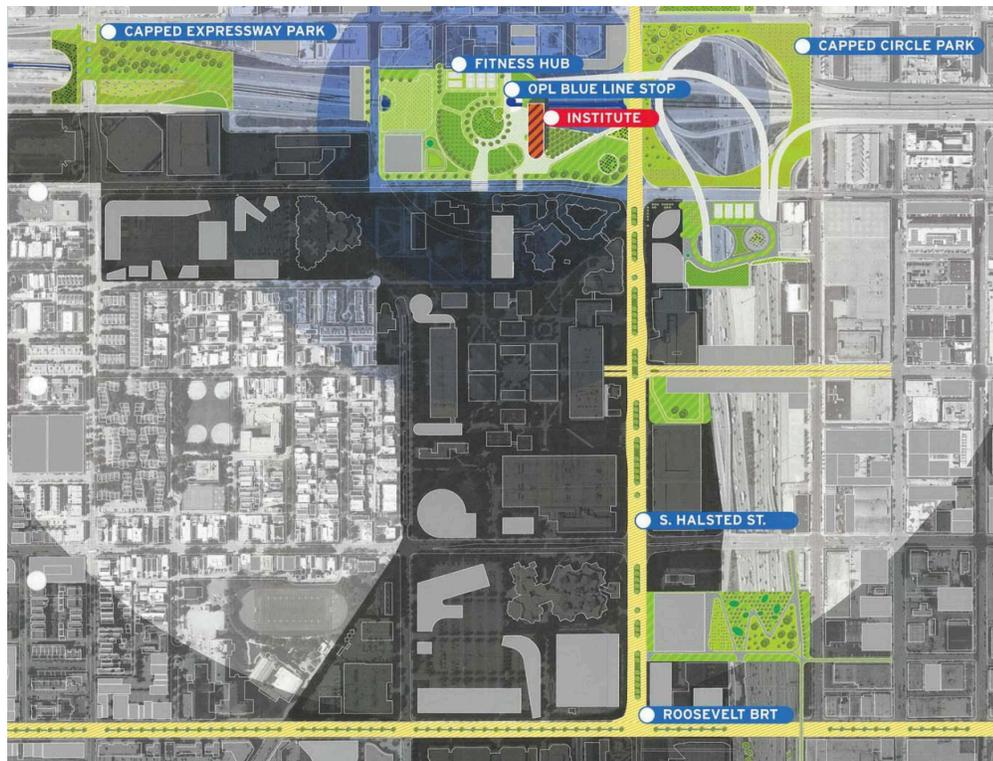
**Figure 3.5.** A view of the site proposed by the University of Hawai'i for the Obama Presidential Center. Source: University of Hawai'i RFQ

The University of Illinois at Chicago posed in its response: “The primary question for this Library is not simply where it should go?, but rather what can it do?”<sup>227</sup> The library was to be more than a physical presence. The intent was to enliven “its site, unfolding its activities across a wide territory of reclamation and reinvestment.”<sup>228</sup> In this proposal, the library “introduces the chance to reimagine

<sup>227</sup> University of Illinois, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 118.

<sup>228</sup> University of Illinois, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 118.

what a site is and what a library can become.”<sup>229</sup> This proposal relies heavily on history of place and a visionary future.



**Figure 3.6.** A general plan for one of the three sites proposed by the University of Illinois Chicago that required the capping of highways. Source: University of Chicago Illinois Request for Proposals

The 1909 Burnham Plan placed a civic center at the intersection that now marks the northeastern corner of UIC’s campus. With Jane Addams Hull-House located tangentially to the campus, UIC connects the city beautiful and social settlement movements to their proposed sites for the Obama Presidential Library. Obama’s legacy is taken as an extension of the progression of politics found in this area of Chicago. “From rational planning to social reform,” the neighborhood, UIC

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<sup>229</sup> University of Illinois, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 99.

claims, “establishes an important genealogy for the contemporary extension.”<sup>230</sup>

Though the proposal talks little of community involvement in the process, with two of the three sites situated firmly in a campus setting—UIC’s main campus or their Medical District—a focus is placed on utilizing the library to connect neighborhoods that highway construction divided. UIC moved away from the formal organization of the other proposals, choosing instead to present the conceptualization behind their ideas and thoughts. The proposal ended with a quote taken from Obama prior to his ascension to the presidency: “I’m enamored of people who change the framework, who don’t take something as given, but scramble it.”<sup>231</sup>

The University of Chicago had the upper hand. It had a location adjacent to the spaces that the Obamas’ called their home, their neighborhood, and their history and the university had a personal connection to both Barack and Michelle. Each held a job at the University at one point. The University presented itself as “the presidential family’s homecoming.”<sup>232</sup>

The University of Chicago indicated it had a longstanding association with the communities of which they are a part, providing volunteer services, legal aid and clinics. It asserted that placing the presidential library of the nation’s first African American president in the South Side would have “an outsized impact” on the social fabric, culture, and economy of the neighborhood.<sup>233</sup> The University established a

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<sup>230</sup> University of Illinois, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 6.

<sup>231</sup> Barack Obama from Meet the Press interview with Tim Russert on October 22 October 2006 as cited in University of Illinois, “Request for Qualifications: Barack Obama Presidential Library,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014.

<sup>232</sup> University of Chicago, “Request for Proposals: A Vision for the Barack Obama Presidential Library on the South Side of Chicago,” *Obama Foundation*, December 2014, p. 2.

<sup>233</sup> University of Chicago, “Request for Qualifications,” *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 8.

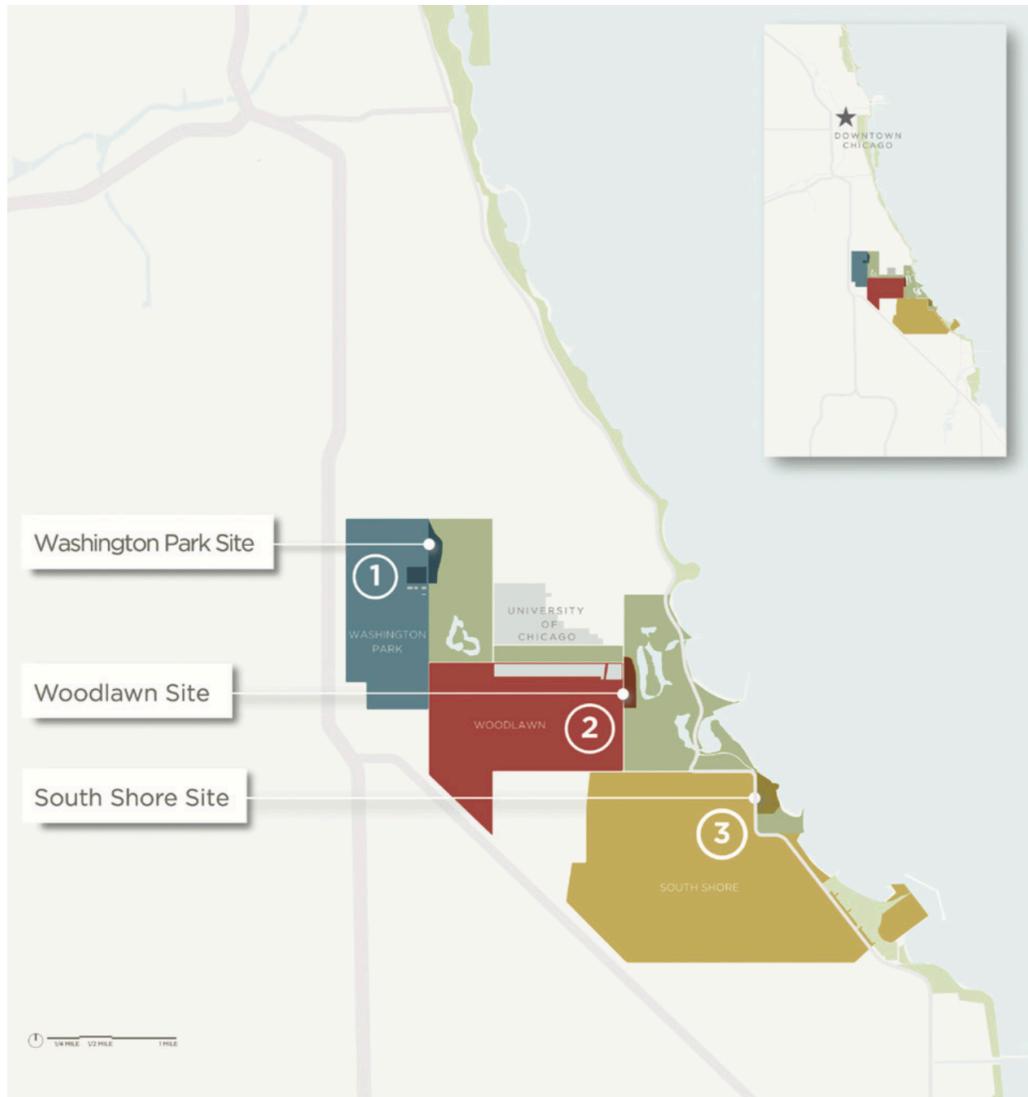
Community Advisory Board (CAB) comprised of prominent community leaders such as Carol L. Adams, president of the DuSable Museum of African American History, historian Timuel Black, and Apostolic Church of God pastor Byron T. Brazier.

The first goal was to inform the community about presidential libraries, the proposed project, and answer the question: how does this benefit the community? The University decided the location should anchor a larger effort to rebuild and revitalize one of three possible locations: Washington Park, Woodlawn, or South Shore. The University of Chicago commissioned an economic impact assessment by the Anderson Economic Group that estimated an annual visitation rate of 800,000 people, 350,000 of that from outside the Chicago metro region.<sup>234</sup> The attendance at the nearby Museum of Science and Industry exceeded 1.5 million in 2018 and levels for the library could reach a similar level. Chicago has placed a concerted effort in the past few years of increasing tourism, and in 2018, the city welcomed a record 57 million visitors.<sup>235</sup> Additionally, the South Shore location marks the end of the 18.5-mile Lakefront Trail that extends south from Lincoln Park on the North Side of the city providing bike and pedestrian access.

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<sup>234</sup> University of Chicago, "Request for Qualifications," *Obama Foundation*, June 2014, p. 84.

<sup>235</sup> "Museum Facts," *Museum of Science and Industry Chicago*, 2019, retrieved May 12, 2019, <https://www.msichicago.org/explore/about-us/museum-facts/>



**Figure 3.7.** The three sites proposed by the University of Chicago and the neighborhoods adjacent to them. Source: University of Chicago Response to Request for Qualifications.

The Obama Foundation had serious concerns regarding the sites in Chicago. A major issue with the three sites proposed by the University of Chicago was the institution did not own them and a system needed to be in place for a land transfer before selection. This challenge was faced by the proposed Lucas Museum of

Narrative Art and was among the reasons that George Lucas abandoned Chicago as the site for his museum.<sup>236</sup>

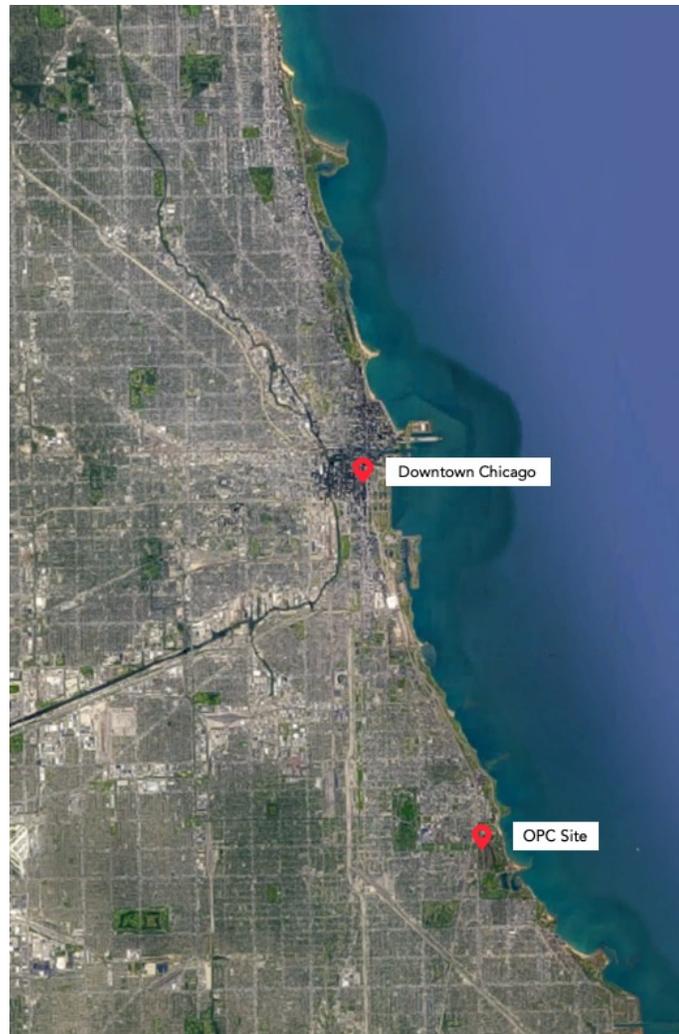
### *The Project Now*

The University of Chicago presented the winning proposal. In May 2015, the Obamas announced their site selection as the South Side of Chicago, and stated there were plans to acquire the land, who to select as architect, and how to include the community in the design phases. Of the three choices for site location presented by the University of Chicago, the Obamas chose the location on the western edge of Jackson Park, immediately adjacent to the neighborhood of Woodlawn and just south of Hyde Park. Many viewed the potential Washington Park site as the less conventional choice. Jackson Park evoked a more traditionally formal, civic waterfront than the city entrenched Washington Park location.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Editorial Board, "Editorial: The Lucas Museum debacle: Blame the law, not Friends of the Parks," *Chicago Tribune*, May 4, 2016, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-lucas-museum-emanuel-friends-parks-edit-0505-md-20160504-story.html>

<sup>237</sup> Martin E. Penderson, "Paul Goldberger's Great Side Job: Consultant to the Obama Foundation," *Common Edge*, February 3, 2016, retrieved November 20, 2018, <http://commonedge.org/paul-goldbergers-great-side-job-consultant-to-the-obamas/>



**Figure 3.8.** A map showing the proposed location of the OPC in Jackson Park in relation to downtown Chicago. Source: Google Maps

The Obama Foundation requested proposals from architects, intending to allow the chosen designer a stake in the decision regarding the final location. The Foundation narrowed the architectural firms to seven, only one of which was based in Chicago, and the Obama’s selected Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects as the firm.<sup>238</sup> The selection valued “craft over iconicity” and the plan as proposed calls for three separate buildings placed to form an open plaza in the center with the fourth wall

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<sup>238</sup> “The Center,” *Obama Foundation*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/the-center/>

opening to the expanse of the surrounding neighborhood. The placement reflects a desire to engage with the urban west side of the center as opposed to the park setting on the eastern side of the complex.<sup>239</sup>



**Figure 3.9.** The most recent masterplan for the OPC site in Jackson Park. Note the three-building complex opening onto a plaza facing the Woodlawn neighborhood. Source: The Obama Foundation

The most notable building of the proposal is the museum, a tower rising about 225 feet above the surrounding landscape. The eight-floor structure will have portions of the outer wall covered with screens made of stone letters, with tall expanses of glass

<sup>239</sup> Blair Kamin, “Obama Center design: a promising, populist start,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 4, 2018, retrieved December 5, 2018, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-obama-library-design-review-kamin-0503-20170503-column.html>

allowing for views of the South Side and downtown Chicago in the distance.<sup>240</sup> The other two structures—a library and meeting space called the forum—rise to modest heights of one or two stories. Billie Tsien, a lead architect on the project stated that they are “not interested in making a building that is an object. By making separate buildings, it becomes more of a place than a thing.”<sup>241</sup> An athletic center hugs the southern edge of the campus and an underground parking garage, originally envisioned as an above ground facility on the adjacent Midway Plaisance, comprise the remainder of the built attributes of the center. The physical footprints of the buildings, as proposed, will take up less than three acres of the 20 acres campus.



**Figure 3.10.** A rendering of the OPC campus looking north. The museum tower is the most notable aspect of the built structures. Source: The Obama Foundation

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<sup>240</sup> Blair Kamin, “Revised Obama Center design seeks better fit with park and answers critics,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 2018, retrieved December 5, 2018, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/kamin/ct-met-obama-center-kamin-1010-story.html>

<sup>241</sup> Blair Kamin, “Lucas, Obama and lessons for city-building,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 1, 2016, retrieved November 26, 2018, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-obama-lucas-kamin-met-0703-20160701-column.html>

The landscape architects have worked to blend the buildings into the historic parkland in the proposal. Green roofs on the forum and library connect directly to the surrounding topography with slopes and raised ground elevation to create a continuous park space. Winding paths connect all aspects of the site, and the rectilinear plaza stands in contrast to the organic landscaping and hardscaping elements. Plans call for the closure of Cornell Drive, a six-lane roadway that cuts through the western section of Jackson Park, along the section adjacent to the OPC. The return of this land to pedestrian parks and greenspace connects the OPC campus better with the neighboring Museum of Science and Industry, promoting the idea of a Museum Campus South to match the Museum Campus just outside of Grant Park. The Foundation asserts that the closure and creation of additional parkland offsets the land taken for buildings, resulting in a net gain of 3.7 acres of park space.<sup>242</sup>

The Foundation has held a number of community meetings since the announcement of the Obama Presidential Center. Public input has led the revision process for the OPC, changing the design of the tower, removing the above ground parking garage, and presenting community issues to be addressed as the work continues. Prior to the May 17, 2018 Chicago Plan Commission meeting where a vote on the future of the OPC was planned, the Foundation held a total of 56 community events with a total attendance over 6,000 people.<sup>243</sup> The general consensus has been

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<sup>242</sup> Lynn Sweet, "Showdown: How far will Obama Foundation push to get Obama Center road closures," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 10, 2018, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/showdown-how-far-will-obama-foundation-push-to-get-obama-center-road-closures/>; "About the Obama Presidential Center," *Obama Foundation*, retrieved March 26, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/chicago/opc-faq/>

<sup>243</sup> Obama Foundation, "Chicago Plan Commission: Obama Presidential Center," (presentation, Chicago, IL, May 17, 2018), retrieved June 1, 2019, [https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/jackson/opc-presentation.pdf](https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp_info/jackson/opc-presentation.pdf)

positive with regards to the OPC and its location in Chicago. The Editorial Board of the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote, “We’re big on the Obama Presidential Center. Honestly. Even in Jackson Park.”<sup>244</sup> The issues presented in the face of the proposal stem from the choice of location in a historically designated park on the edge of a low-income residential neighborhood.

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<sup>244</sup> Sun-Times Editorial Board, “Editorial: Rahm’s last big favor for the Obama Presidential Center,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 19, 2019, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/opinion/rahm-emanuel-obama-presidential-center/>

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NO WALK IN THE PARK

#### THE PROBLEM WITH USING PARKLAND FOR POLITICS

The chosen site for the Obama Presidential Center has a long history that portends the reactions of community groups and individuals at the potential construction of a newsworthy building. Personal links and connections to Jackson Park and the surrounding neighborhood have made some, but certainly not all, people wary of the decision to locate the center in a historic public park on the edge of a low-income neighborhood. Numerous organizations and individuals have voiced their discontent with the site selection, each tending to focus on a particular problem associated with the construction of the OPC. Some “neighborhood activists are wary of the seizure of parkland and gentrification,” while “preservation advocates object to altering Jackson Park so heavily . . . for fear of losing its sense of pastoral isolation.”<sup>245</sup>

That Jackson Park is a historic site cannot be disputed. It was designed by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead not one but three separate times. The park gained fame in 1893 as the site of the World’s Columbian Exposition, one of the most influential fairs in city planning history, and since then, its development has influenced the growth of the adjacent neighborhoods. When the University of Chicago offered up this site in their bid for the presidential center, they offered to a

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<sup>245</sup> Zach Mortice, “After Rahm, What Comes Next for the Obama Library,” *CityLab*, September 25, 2018, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2018/09/after-rahm-what-comes-next-obama-library/571075/>



## *Historic Parkland*

Chicago adopted the motto “Urbs in Horto” on its incorporation as a city in March 1837. The Latin phrase, meaning “City in a Garden,” reflects the early interest the citizens of the new city had in maintaining green space for the enjoyment of the public. Prior to the formal establishment of the city, land sale maps prepared to assist in generating revenue for the proposed Illinois and Michigan Canal blocked a portion of the lakefront and labeled the space: “Public Ground—A Common to remain forever Open, Clear, & free of any buildings or other Obstructions Whatever.”<sup>246</sup> This inscription set the precedent for the future of the Chicago Park System and legal protection for these waterfront spaces.



**Figure 4.2.** Illinois and Michigan Canal Commissioners, Map of Chicago and Additions, July 2, 1836. The lakefront land that became Grant Park is labeled “Public Ground.” Source: Chicago History Museum.

Aaron Montgomery Ward, after purchasing property on the westside of Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago, fought against the construction of various

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<sup>246</sup> Illinois and Michigan Canal Commissioners, Map of Chicago and Additions, July 2, 1836, Chicago History Museum

structures in the public land adjacent to his property and abutting Lake Michigan. Ward's arguments stemmed from the language used on this plat map which showed the original subdivision of land on which his property was located. Ward managed to show that the language created a public dedication of the land, and as an abutting property owner, he "had standing to secure an injunction against violations of this dedication."<sup>247</sup> The Supreme Court of Illinois ruled in favor of Ward and the public dedication doctrine four times, thwarting the construction of loading platforms, a National Guard Armory, and the Field Museum of Natural History.<sup>248</sup> These decisions stipulated the importance of language on maps and in establishing ordinances for the future protection of spaces dedicated to public use.

As Chicagoans began to establish small parks throughout the city, John S. Wright, a real estate speculator, proposed the idea for a unified park and boulevard system. With increased interest from residents, the Illinois State Legislature established the South, West and Lincoln Park Commissions in 1869.<sup>249</sup> South Park Commissioners approved an act on February 24, 1869 that established the right of the Commission to "provide for the location and maintenance of a Park for the Towns of South Chicago, Hyde Park and Lake."<sup>250</sup> The act provided the South Park Commission with the authority over the establishment of a South Park System,

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<sup>247</sup> Joseph D. Kearney, and Thomas W. Merrill, "Private Rights in Public Lands: The Chicago Lakefront, Montgomery Ward, and the Public Dedication Doctrine," *Northwestern University Law Review* 105, no. 4 (2011): 1419.

<sup>248</sup> Joseph D. Kearney, and Thomas W. Merrill, "Private Rights in Public Lands: The Chicago Lakefront, Montgomery Ward, and the Public Dedication Doctrine," *Northwestern University Law Review* 105, no. 4 (2011), 1419.

<sup>249</sup> Julia Sniderman Bachrach, "Park Districts," *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 2004)

<sup>250</sup> South Park Commissioners, *Charter, Ordinances and Resolutions of the South Park Commissioners* (Chicago: Authority of the South Park Commissioners, 1887), 3.

suggesting an area from which to begin creating the parkland that included present Jackson Park. The act further elucidated that, once the land was acquired, it “shall be held, managed and controlled by them [South Park Commissioners] and their successors, as a public park, for the recreation, health and benefit of the public, free to all persons forever.”<sup>251</sup> While the language does not specifically refer to the maintained clearance of buildings or structures on the land, it does dedicate the space for the sole purpose of public benefit.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Illinois Central Railroad Company v. Illinois* (1892) furthered the idea of public ownership of land. Beginning in the late 1860s, who controlled the bed of Lake Michigan east of downtown Chicago was in dispute with the Illinois Central Railroad Company, the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the United States government all claiming ownership. The Court deemed the State of Illinois the owners of the lakebed but Illinois Central argued that the Lake Front Act passed in 1869 had conveyed to the company property rights to a portion of the lakeshore and over one thousand acres of submerged land. Though the act was repealed in 1873, Illinois Central contended that the legislature lacked the power to repeal.<sup>252</sup> Justice Stephen Field, writing for the majority, declared that the State never held the authority to convey the property in the first place and continued on to write:

The State can no more abdicate its trust over property in which the whole people are interested, like navigable waters and soils under them, so as to leave them entirely under the use and control of private

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<sup>251</sup> South Park Commissioners, *Charter, Ordinances and Resolutions of the South Park Commissioners* (Chicago: Authority of the South Park Commissioners, 1887), 6.

<sup>252</sup> Joseph D. Kearney, and Thomas W. Merrill, “The Origins of the American Public Trust Doctrine: What Really Happened in *Illinois Central*,” *The University of Chicago Law Review* 71, 799 (2004): 800-802.

properties, . . . than it can abdicate its police powers in the administration of government and the preservation of peace.<sup>253</sup>

Illinois held the land in trust for the benefit of the people and from this case the public trust doctrine emerged.

Both the public trust and public dedication doctrines aim to protect certain resources by holding them in restrictive title and preventing transfer to private owners. The public dedication doctrine recognizes the right of property owners affected by public spaces to enjoin actions that depart from the dedicated use.<sup>254</sup> While the public trust doctrine is confined to land connected with navigable waters, the dedication doctrine covers streets, parks, and public squares, ascertained by recorded maps and plats. The public trust doctrine can be invoked by either the state or any citizen of the state, no matter how remote the connection to the resource. The public dedication doctrine limits those who can sue to enforce the act to either the public authority that holds title to the land or the abutting landowners. These doctrines have been integral to the development of the Chicago lakefront over the centuries.

While Chicagoans actively advocate for the protection of park space, a mix of cultural institutions have made their way to these public areas. In Ward's original complaint against the construction of buildings in Grant Park he omitted the Art Institute of Chicago, built on the footprint of a previous building with the consent of adjacent landowners, and this exception has fostered the argument that museums can

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<sup>253</sup> *Illinois Central Rail Road Company v Illinois*, 146 US 453 (1892)

<sup>254</sup> Joseph D. Kearney, and Thomas W. Merrill, "Private Rights in Public Lands: The Chicago Lakefront, Montgomery Ward, and the Public Dedication Doctrine," *Northwestern University Law Review* 105, no. 4 (2011): 1420.

be built in parks. Eleven museums currently operate on Chicago Park District property: Adler Planetarium, the Field Museum of Natural History, and John G. Shedd Aquarium (Burnham Park); Art Institute of Chicago (Grant Park); The Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and Chicago History Museum (Lincoln Park); DuSable Museum of African American History (Washington Park); Museum of Contemporary Art (Lake Shore Park); National Museum of Mexican Art (Harrison Park); National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (Humboldt Park); and Museum of Science and Industry (Jackson Park).<sup>255</sup> These museums were established, at least in part, on public parkland belonging to the city of Chicago under various arrangements, including use agreements with the Chicago Park District.<sup>256</sup> The methods onto these public lands, however, do not match the proposed OPC as the museums either took over existing buildings, remodeling or restoring them in part; were built on the existing footprints of prior buildings demolished for the construction of the museum; or built outside of already existing parkland in spaces that became new parks.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Brief for the Eleven Park Museums as Amicus Curiae, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

<sup>256</sup> Brief for the Eleven Park Museums as Amicus Curiae, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

<sup>257</sup> Brief for Preservation Chicago and Jackson Park Watch as Amici Curiae, p. 2-3, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424



**Figure 4.3.** The Interstate Industrial Exposition Building ca. 1885 was built in 1872 (left) and the Art Institute of Chicago (right) was eventually built on the footprint of the previous building after its demolition.

The tradition of cultural institutions in public spaces extends back to the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 when famed architect Daniel Burnham and landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmsted turned the unfinished parkland into a temporary Beaux Arts urban fantasy. Marshall Field, a Chicago businessman, donated a large sum of money to the creation of a museum for the 1893 World’s Fair. The museum first opened in the Palace of Fines Arts Building (now the location of the Museum of Science and Industry) in Jackson Park.<sup>258</sup> As the collection grew, the museum attempted to relocate to Grant Park in 1907 but Ward prevented the construction and was construed “as a tyrant denying the ‘rights of the people.’”<sup>259</sup> The museum eventually moved in 1921 to its current location on the lakefront just south of Grant Park following plans drawn by Daniel Burnham in 1909. Burnham designed the park, named Burnham Park in 1927, as a way to connect Grant Park with Jackson Park to the south. He advocated for the construction of cultural institutions in park spaces

<sup>258</sup> “Field Museum History,” *Field Museum*, 2019, retrieved June 4, 2019, <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about/history>

<sup>259</sup> Gene Morgan, “How Grant Park Was Saved for People; Ward’s Great Fight Waged 20 Years,” *Chicago Daily News*, June 8, 1935.

and the erection of the Field Museum in the park he conceived fits with the ideals and intentions of his designs.

An ordinance passed by the Chicago City Council on October 31, 2018 in favor of locating the OPC in Jackson Park cited the Burnham Plan, saying it “advocated building great institutions, such as the Field Museum, in parks along Chicago’s lakefront.”<sup>260</sup> Burnham wrote in the Plan, regarding the placement of a number of museums in the southern portion of Grant Park:

When Chicago realizes all the advantages of the location in Grant Park of three great groups of buildings devoted to intellectual and aesthetic cravings of man, it must be apparent that the city will have a great asset in the gifts of those public-spirited citizens who have found satisfaction in leaving to the public useful memorials of the successful lives of the givers.<sup>261</sup>

The city continued this endorsement of museums in parks in the Lakefront Plan of Chicago, adopted in 1972. The plan acknowledged the evolution of the lakefront space, how it shifted over time “from frontier, to a hub of commercial and industrial activity, to a cultural and recreational center of world significance.”<sup>262</sup>

In 1999, the Chicago Park District commissioned a framework plan for Jackson and South Shore Parks in an effort to enhance each parks’ connection to their communities and preserve the historic character. The plan acknowledges the importance of the Olmsted design to Jackson Park, stating that:

Historic Context is an important consideration as one looks at upgrading present conditions and weighing future improvements. The original Olmsted design has served the park well over time and should not be compromised by future plans.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> “Amendment of Intergovernmental Use Agreement with Chicago Park District For Use of Property as Obama Presidential Center,” Committee on Housing and Real Estate, *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago, Illinois*, October 31, 2018, 85878.

<sup>261</sup> Daniel Burnham, *Plan of Chicago* (Chicago: Commercial Club of Chicago, 1909), 112.

<sup>262</sup> “Lakefront Plan of Chicago,” *City of Chicago*, December 1972

<sup>263</sup> “South Lakefront Framework Plan, Phase 2,” *Chicago Park District*, 1999, 13.

Outside of the Museum of Science and Industry, no museums or cultural sites were proposed or incorporated into the plan.

The plan was revised and updated in 2018 to address “new needs and opportunities for these cherished community resources,” most notably the inclusion of the Obama Presidential Center which was regarded as a “key impetus for updating the plan.”<sup>264</sup> The design called for input from neighborhood residents and stakeholders as well as the Obama Foundation, noted in the acknowledgements more prominently than the existing Museum of Science and Industry. The language shifts when referring to the history of Jackson Park. The revised plan recognizes the historic nature of the space but concedes that as a living landscape, the plan seeks to balance the history with forward-looking strategies.<sup>265</sup> That the strategies include the OPC can be inferred. The first item listed under the Culture and History Recommendations is “Welcome the Obama Presidential Center.”<sup>266</sup>

Recently, Chicago has dealt with pushback against the encroachment of museums in public spaces. The Chicago Children’s Museum planned a move from its location on the Navy Pier to a site in Grant Park in 2006 with intentions to construct a partially underground structure.<sup>267</sup> Former mayor Richard M. Daley put his political support behind the move but opponents of the museum plan cited lawsuits and court rulings that have protected Grant Park for over a century. Ultimately, the decision not

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<sup>264</sup> “South Lakefront Framework Plan,” *Chicago Park District*, April 2018, 5.

<sup>265</sup> South Lakefront Framework Plan,” *Chicago Park District*, April 2018, 41.

<sup>266</sup> South Lakefront Framework Plan,” *Chicago Park District*, April 2018, 51.

<sup>267</sup> Blair Kamin, “The Bean to get new neighbors,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 2009, retrieved April 12, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2009-04-08-0904070414-story.html>

to construct the museum in the park came down to stalled fundraising in light of the 2008 recession.<sup>268</sup>

George Lucas decided in 2014 to build a museum dedicated to narrative arts along the Chicago lakefront. Mayor Rahm Emanuel and a site-selection committee offered Lucas a seventeen-acre parcel occupied by parking lots between Soldier Field and McCormick Place Lakeside Convention Center.<sup>269</sup> Lucas originally intended for his museum to be in San Francisco. The chosen location, Crissy Field, was on Presidio Trust land and overseen by a federal trust. The proposal garnered support from the city's mayor and the state governor but the seven-member board for the trust unanimously voted to reject it.<sup>270</sup> Emanuel stepped in and enthusiastically offered Chicago as an ideal location for the museum. Not all Chicagoans, however, appreciated the gift of Park District land for the construction of the museum.

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<sup>268</sup> Blair Kamin and Ryan Haggerty, "Children's Museum's move to Grant Park scuttled," *Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 2011, retrieved May 11, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2011-10-27-ct-met-childrens-museum-20111027-story.html>

<sup>269</sup> Paul Goldberger, "George Lucas Strikes Back: Inside the Fight to Build the Lucas Museum," *Vanity Fair*, August 2018, retrieved April 12, 2019, <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/07/george-lucas-museum-los-angeles>

<sup>270</sup> John King, "Presidio Trust shoots down George Lucas' plan, 2 others," *SF Gate*, February 3, 2014, retrieved June 8, 2019, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/place/article/Presidio-Trust-shoots-down-George-Lucas-plan-2-5201301.php>



**Figure 4.4.** The proposed site for the Lucas Museum was on lakefront land occupied by a parking lot. The left image shows the current state of the site and the right image portrays what the Lucas Museum would have looked like. Source: Chicago Reader.

Friends of the Parks filed a federal lawsuit to enjoin the transfer of land for the construction of the museum claiming the site selection violated the public trust doctrine and the city had no legal standing on which to offer the site to Lucas. Similar to the transfer intended for the OPC, the Chicago Park District owned the land and intended to lease the property for 99 years at the cost of ten dollars.<sup>271</sup> A federal judge maintained that the lawsuit had standing, allowing it to proceed, while the city of Chicago filed a motion asking for a panel of judges to toss out the lawsuit. The

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<sup>271</sup> Patrick M. O’Connell and Bill Ruthhart, “Lucas Museum drops plan to build in Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 2016, retrieved April 12, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-lucas-museum-california-20160624-story.html>

lawsuit was never formally resolved as George Lucas pulled his museum from Chicago in June 2016, announcing that

. . . the actions initiated by Friends of (the) Parks and their recent attempts to extract concessions from the city have effectively overridden approvals received from numerous democratically elected bodies of government.<sup>272</sup>

This assertion blames a single organization with the legal right and standing to question the authority of the local government in allowing the construction of the museum. It harkens back to the institution of the Public Trust Doctrine and foreshadows the issues to be faced by the Obama Foundation.

When writing about how the Lucas Museum was no longer planned for Chicago, Neil Steinberg of the *Chicago Sun-Times* said,

We don't have the museum, but we do have our pride. We stood up for the idea that you can't just build anything anywhere in Chicago just because you're rich and you want a spot to erect your personal tomb . . . The only reason we have available lakefront land to be coveted. . . is because our forbearers took their duty to the city a little more seriously than does the current crop of just-spell-my-name-right-on-the-check leaders.<sup>273</sup>

Without context, this paragraph could easily refer to the Obama Presidential Center and the opposition over its location choice that could potentially derail its own construction.

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<sup>272</sup> Blair Kamin, "Lucas reaps bitter fruits of arrogance as Chicago museum plan collapses," *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 2016, retrieved June 8, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/ct-lucas-museum-opinion-kamin-met-0624-20160624-column.html>

<sup>273</sup> Neil Steinberg, "Good news: Lucas Museum breaks ground somewhere other than Chicago," *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 14, 2018, retrieved June 8, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2018/3/14/18348693/good-news-lucas-museum-breaks-ground-somewhere-other-than-chicago>

### *The Millennium Park Effect*

This reticence to allow museums, typically private spaces constructed for the benefit of the public, acknowledges the concern for the privatization of public space and the loss of open areas in cities. Millennium Park, completed in 2004, subverts the glaringly obvious privatization of parkland through museum construction by instead keeping the space open but using private donations to pay for the landscape, architectural, and art features prominent throughout. Referred to as “arguably Chicago’s most expansive outdoor cultural project since the Columbian Exposition of 1893” and regularly likened in its grand design and city-like feel to that event, Millennium Park is a 24.5-acre park abutting the northwest corner of Grant Park.<sup>274</sup> Prior to its construction, a surface parking lot and rail yard occupied the land. The park now covers a sunken two-story parking garage and commuter rail line, making it into “what may be the world’s largest green roof.”<sup>275</sup>

In March 1998, then mayor Richard M. Daley announced his intention to create a new park along the lakefront in celebration of the upcoming millennium. The land belonged to the larger parcel of land declared “Public Ground” by the Board of Canal Commissioners in 1836 and prior to that, belonged to Fort Dearborn until it was deeded to the city by the Federal Government.<sup>276</sup> At one point, the Illinois Central Railroad (ICR) was granted an easement over a portion of the park in exchange for

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<sup>274</sup> Chris Jones, “At last,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 2004, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-07-15-0407150424-story.html>; Blair Kamin, “The Millennium Park effect,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 26, 2005, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/chi-0506260439jun26-story.html>

<sup>275</sup> Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation* (Cambridge: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 89.

<sup>276</sup> Illinois and Michigan Canal Commissioners, Map of Chicago and Additions, July 2, 1836, *Chicago History Museum*; Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation* (Cambridge: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 89.

constructing a breakwater in Lake Michigan. In 1997, the ICR donated their rights, title and interest in the lakefront property to the City of Chicago for use in developing Millennium Park. This easement, however, lacked legal backing because of the Supreme Court decision in 1892.



**Figure 4.5.** The area that is now Millennium Park was previously occupied by parking lots and railroad tracks. Source: Crain's Chicago Business.

Daley estimated the original cost for the park at \$150 million with \$30 million coming from private donations. He affirmed that no taxpayer money would be used.<sup>277</sup> By June, the city had raised \$137 million by selling parking revenue bonds. As construction of the park commenced the price began rising. Over the ensuing years, the cost went from \$200 million in February 1999 to \$270 million in June 2000. By the end of 2002, the cost for the park reached \$410 million and by completion in

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<sup>277</sup> Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation* (Cambridge: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 90.

June 2004 the total came to \$490 million.<sup>278</sup> More than \$95 million came from Tax Increment Financing, falsifying Daly's assertion.<sup>279</sup>

A private, not-for-profit committee called Millennium Park, Inc., led by John H. Bryan, raised the money for the Park's above-ground amenities. Bryan aimed to raise more than the \$30 million requested from the private sector and in doing so, influenced the growth and design of the park. The Public Building Commission replaced the Transportation Department as the public overseer for the project. This shift reflected the increase in private funding for the project and the need to be increasingly flexible regarding responsiveness to the requirements of these donors. This led to press criticism over the privatization of the project and loss of public control.<sup>280</sup>

John Bryan recognized that big donors were more likely to give if the park were clearly separated from the city. The Pritzker family, an important benefactor to the Obama Foundation, only donated money for the pavilion with the understanding that a world-class architect would design the feature. Bryan stated he "had visions of Cindy Pritzker being a sponsor of the pavilion and getting Frank Gehry to design it . . . Those two things went together."

Edward Uhlir, the project director for Millennium Park and the former head of planning at the Chicago Park District, declared the project "a cultural park as opposed

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<sup>278</sup> Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation* (Cambridge: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 90.

<sup>279</sup> Hal Dardick, "Millennium Park built 'the Chicago Way,'" *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 2014, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-millennium-park-costs-met-20140714-story.html>

<sup>280</sup> Jay Farbstein, Emily Axelrod, Robert Shibley, and Richard Wener, *Urban Transformation* (Cambridge: Bruner Foundation, 2009), 98.

to a recreational park.”<sup>281</sup> Designed as a collection of ‘rooms’ delineated by architectural elements and landscape features, each space is unique to the work or design of internationally recognizable artists and architects using an array of mediums from glass to metal to plants. While city and public funds paid for the required work belowground, including the necessary supports and parking garage, private donations paid for basically every major component of the Park above ground. As such, the “plan of Millennium Park reads like a section of Who’s Who in American Business: Wrigley Square, McCormick Tribune Plaza, Crown Fountain, Boeing Galleries North and South, AT&T Plaza, Chase Promenade.”<sup>282</sup> Others have likened it to “a quilt of corporate sponsorships.”<sup>283</sup> Even the bike station has a corporate sponsor. After McDonalds donated \$5 million to the Park to help support the bike station’s operational and maintenance expenditures for the next 50 years the station was renamed The McDonald’s Cycle Center.<sup>284</sup>

The Park staff opened sections as they finished, as a way to garner public support and mitigate concerns raised over construction delays, escalating cost, the lawsuit brought by the builders, and the issues of privatization. The Park formally opened in the summer of 2004 and a year later in September, a majority of the space was closed to the public for a private event hosted by Toyota. The company paid \$800,000 for use of the Park, \$500,000 of the which was designated to help pay for

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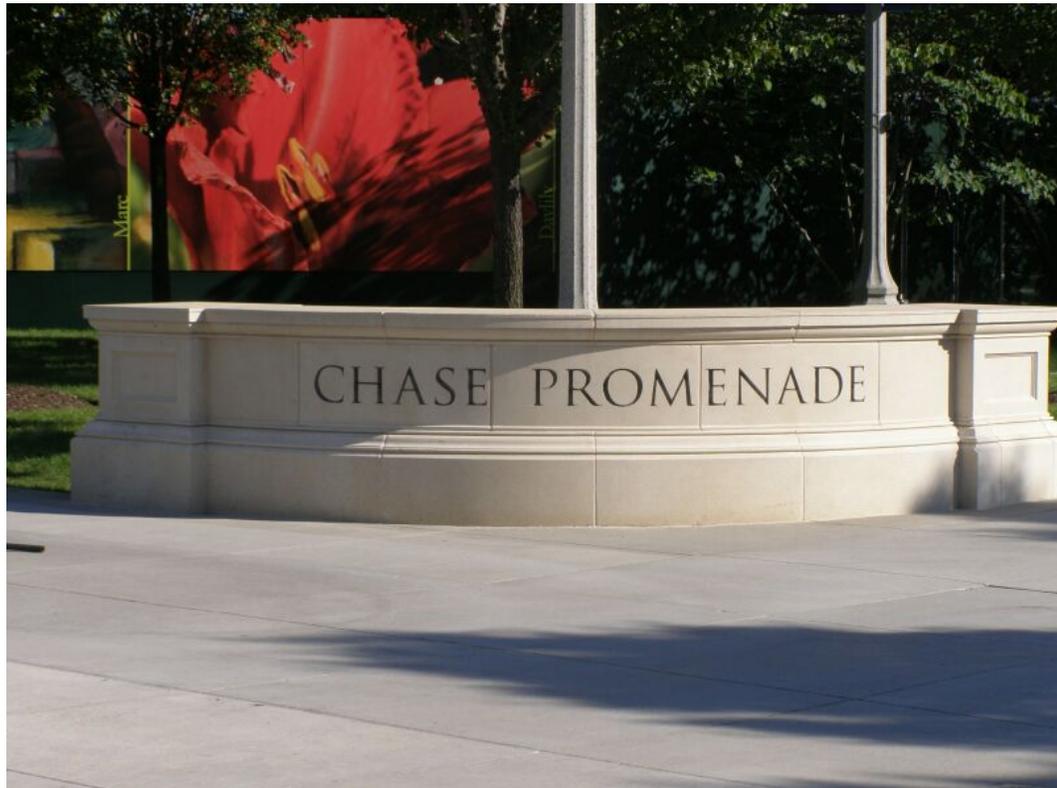
<sup>281</sup> Chris Jones, “At last,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 2004, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-07-15-0407150424-story.html>

<sup>282</sup> Sarah Williams Goldhagen, “Park Here,” *The New Republic*, October 7, 2010, retrieved May 17, 2019, <https://newrepublic.com/article/76951/city-parks-urban-planning>

<sup>283</sup> Chris Jones, “At last,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 2004, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2004-07-15-0407150424-story.html>

<sup>284</sup> Julie Deardoff, “If McDonald’s is serious, menu needs a makeover,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 18, 2006, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2006-06-18-0606180349-story.html>

future free programs, including the summer concert series. The event, starting in the early evening, closed the Park from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m., preventing commuters from walking through the location, and tourists from viewing Cloud Gate or the Gehry designed Pritzker Pavilion.



**Figure 4.6.** The corporate sponsors are prominently displayed throughout the park in place names as seen here with the Chase Promenade. Source: By Chris Light at English Wikipedia

Bob O’Neill, president of the Grant Park Advisory Board in 2005, acknowledged the nature of this relationship, stating:

Millennium Park is a public-private partnership by definition . . . In this case, they bring in \$800,000 in one event. That’s a substantial amount of money. That means there will be a lot more programming in Millennium Park, and it will be a much better maintained park.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Hal Dardick, “This Sept. 8, No Bean For You,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 2005, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2005-05-06-0505060356-story.html>

Those whose names permeate the park have a stake in the ongoing maintenance of the space as it reflects back on them as individuals and corporations. Rentals are an important source of income for the park but Lois Weisberg, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner from 1989 to 2011, recognized that “if park users are going to be inconvenienced by a partial closure, there must be a compensatory benefit to the public.”<sup>286</sup> This raises questions regarding public input on appropriate trade-offs and who determines if the benefits outweigh the inconvenience. Many portions of Millennium Park are available for rent including the Harris Theater rooftop terrace, the Pritzker Pavilion, and Chase Promenades.<sup>287</sup> In 2013, private events brought in more than \$637,000.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Hal Dardick, “This Sept. 8, No Bean For You,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 2005, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2005-05-06-0505060356-story.html>

<sup>287</sup> “Millennium Park: Your Guide to Hosting a One-Of-A-Kind Event,” *City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events*, 2018.

<sup>288</sup> Hal Dardick, “Millennium Park built ‘the Chicago Way,’” *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 2014, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-millennium-park-costs-met-20140714-story.html>



**Figure 4.7.** The finished Millennium Park with the Gehry designed Pritzker Pavilion and Cloud Gate. Source: SOM.

A visitor from New York commented to the *Chicago Tribune* that he “was sort of taken aback” and could not “imagine Central Park being closed for a Toyota convention.”<sup>289</sup> While closing the entirety of Central Park’s 843 acres seems unimaginable, portions of the park are regularly closed for private events. The Central Park Conservancy, a non-profit managing the park under a contract with the City of New York, listed the events held in 2015 to include: “600 weddings; 95 running, walking, and biking races; 360 film, television, and photo shoots; 60 corporate and school events; 10 parades; and 180 concerts and festivals.”<sup>290</sup> The concerts include the Global Citizen Festival, a ticketed event held annually on the Great Lawn.

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<sup>289</sup> Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, “No Walk in the Park,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 9, 2005, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2005-09-09-0509090139-story.html>

<sup>290</sup> “Managing Special Events: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),” *Central Park Conservancy Institute For Urban Parks*, 2016.

Even Grant Park plays host to a large music festival. Lollapalooza is a multi-day music festival held annually in Grant Park since 2005. In 2006, the Chicago Park District and Capital Sports & Entertainment (now C3), the planners of the event, agreed to a five-year, \$5 million deal to keep the festival in Grant Park through 2011 and was extended to 2021 for an additional \$15 million.<sup>291</sup> This base rate does not include the percentage of ticket and food sales that the CPD receives. The festival began running for four-days in 2016. In addition to the period of the event, set-up and post-festival clean-up prevent public use of the park. In 2011, two months of repair work to Grant Park followed the festival due to heavy rains and a record number of people which limited access to portions of the park during that time, arguably the best part of the year to enjoy Chicago's outdoor spaces.<sup>292</sup> A one-day general admission ticket for the 2019 festival costs \$130.

Other parks in Chicago host music festivals and concerns have been growing in the surrounding communities over the use of neighborhood parks for events intended less for local community members and more for the population at large, especially when privately run. Juanita Irizarry, executive director of Friends of the Parks, notes that there “exists serious tension between parks as revenue generators and tourist attractors versus parks as places of recreation and relaxation for local residents.”<sup>293</sup> The problem that arises is whether locals feel welcome or if they have

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<sup>291</sup> Chicago Park District and C3 Presents, LLC, “Seconded Amended Multi-year Festival Permit Agreement,” March 27, 2012.

<sup>292</sup> Greg Kot, “Lollapalooza restructures Grant Park deal, ticket prices to rise,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 14, 2012, retrieved June 6, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-xpm-2012-03-14-chi-lollapalooza-deal-changed-lollapalooza-and-city-restructure-deal-20120314-story.html>

<sup>293</sup> John Greenfield, “Are music festivals a sound use of Chicago's public parks,” *Chicago Reader*, May 18, 2016, retrieved June 8, 2019, <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/music-festivals-public-space-riot-fest-douglas-park/Content?oid=22142940>

the means to attend these events if they wanted. When public parks are closed for a ticketed or private event those who regularly use the park for its intended purpose as a recreational space are momentarily displaced from their routine. As parks are commodified and the potential for monetary gain increases, local citizens begin to lose their right to the space. The need for funding in order to maintain the parks and provide for programming winning out over the central function of the area.

### *Politics and Lawsuits regarding OPC*

When the University of Chicago presented location options to the Obama Foundation, the choices were all on Chicago Park District land. That the University felt they had the authority to present public land to a private entity speaks to the influence the university has within the community and, more importantly, with the city government. The decision to ultimately locate in Jackson Park required the commitment of the Chicago city government and the Chicago Park District in establishing a land transfer that would allow the Obama Presidential Center to be constructed in the historic public park.

Chicago politics has long been associated with corruption and machine politics.<sup>294</sup> The mayor-council system Chicago operates under concentrates power in the mayoral office rather than City Council.<sup>295</sup> Support of the mayor in the efforts to develop large scale projects is, in essence, a requirement for proposals to proceed.

When the Obama Presidential Center was first announced, Rahm Emanuel was mayor.

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<sup>294</sup> Maureen A. Flanagan, "Politics," *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 2004)

<sup>295</sup> Pranathi Posa, "What Does the Mayor of Chicago Do," *The Chicago Maroon*, February 7, 2019, retrieved March 1, 2019, <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/article/2019/2/7/mayor-chicago/>

Emanuel has been on the political scene for decades, from fund-raising for Bill Clinton in 1991 to an appointment as White House Chief of Staff in 2009 by President Barack Obama.<sup>296</sup> He left that position upon his election as Chicago's mayor in February 2011. His position as mayor proved beneficial to President Obama and his legacy, serving as the necessary political backing in Obama's pursuit of a Chicago location for his presidential library.

Once bidding started for the OPC in 2014, Emanuel became a forceful and necessary supporter of getting the center to Chicago. Once the Obama's announced the University of Chicago and the South Side as the winning bid, he steered the project through Plan Commission meetings and gained City Council approvals dealing with land transfers. His backing proved a stable foundation while concerns arose, and complaints were filed.

The OPC required extensive municipal approval in order for construction to commence. In January 2015, even before Obama had chosen the University of Chicago bid, the Foundation expressed their concern over the City's lack of control over the Jackson and Washington Park sites. Within a month the Chicago Park District's Board of Commissioners voted to transfer roughly 20 acres of parkland in either park to the city if the University of Chicago was selected to host the OPC.<sup>297</sup>

Early in September 2018, Emanuel announced that he would not be seeking a third term as mayor, leaving a potential lurch in the future plans for the Obama

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<sup>296</sup> Rick Perlstein, "The Sudden but Well-deserved Fall of Rahm Emanuel," *The New Yorker*, December 31, 2015, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-sudden-but-well-deserved-fall-of-rahm-emanuel>

<sup>297</sup> Dahleen Glanton, "Chicago Park District approves transfer of parkland for Obama library," *Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 2015, retrieved June 13, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-obama-library-parkland-transfer-met-20150211-story.html>

Presidential Center.<sup>298</sup> Before leaving office, Emanuel extended the contracts for many of the agency heads he appointed, including Michael P. Kelly, CEO of the Chicago Park District. The contract stretches until the end of 2022 and was approved at the park board meeting.<sup>299</sup> Kelly is a strong ally of the proposed Obama Presidential Center and by removing the potential for a new mayor to replace him, Emmanuel strengthened the Foundation's position in their efforts to move forward while other political offices transition. The Chicago Park District acts autonomously from the mayor's office but mayoral appointments, such as Michael Kelly, grant the mayor some power in the workings of the agency.

Obama refrained from endorsing a candidate in the 2019 Chicago mayoral election.<sup>300</sup> An incoming mayor has the potential to derail the OPC as the mayor has substantial political clout and authority in matters dealing with the ongoing legal battles and bureaucratic red tape that could impede the center's construction.<sup>301</sup> An endorsement to the losing candidate could lead to unforeseen issues. A runoff election on April 12, 2019 resulted in the election of Lori Lightfoot, the first African American woman to be elected to the office. Lightfoot showed support for the Obama Presidential Center during her campaign but has made it clear that she backs the idea

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<sup>298</sup> Camila Domonoske and David Schaper, "Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel Not Seeking Re-Election," *NPR*, September 4, 2018, retrieved April 14, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/04/644553271/chicago-mayor-rahm-emanuel-not-seeking-reelection>

<sup>299</sup> Sun-Times Editorial Board, "Editorial: Rahm's last big favor for the Obama Presidential Center," *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 19, 2019, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/opinion/rahm-emanuel-obama-presidential-center/>

<sup>300</sup> He did not formally endorse Emanuel in his 2011 bid for the office but did so in his efforts for reelection in 2015.

<sup>301</sup> Dahleen Glanton, "Column: Barack Obama hasn't endorsed a Chicago mayoral candidate, but who cares," *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 2019, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/glanton/ct-met-dahleen-glanton-obama-mayor-endorsement-20190322-story.html>

of a community benefits agreement, saying “there is a lot more that needs to be done to make sure that the Jackson Park neighborhood is not adversely affected by situating the Center in that area.”<sup>302</sup> The statement connotes further efforts on the city’s part to interreact with citizens and the Foundation to determine the best possible course of action but not that the selected site is the reason to preclude construction.

A feeling of opportunity pervaded amongst the advocates arguing against the Jackson Park location. Juanita Irizarry believed there would “be more room for dissent, and more people in Chicago generally willing to speak their mind without fearing the Emmanuel administration.”<sup>303</sup> The Executive Director of Preservation Chicago, Ward Miller, hoped that a change in leadership would “encourage a more robust conversation to occur.”<sup>304</sup> It speaks to the tight-lipped actions of both City Council and the Foundation that groups believe shifting power will allow them the opportunity to press their points while the other side takes them into consideration.

In one instance, a group pursued legal recourse for the siting of the presidential center on public park land. A federal judge ruled in February 2019 that a lawsuit filed by Protect Our Parks had the legal precedent to move forward.<sup>305</sup> The environmental

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<sup>302</sup> William Trlak, “Lightfoot, Enyia, and Ford Talk Obama Center and ICE,” *The Chicago Maroon*, December 11, 2018, retrieved March 20, 2019, <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/article/2018/12/12/lightfoot-enyia-ford-talk-obama-center-ice/>; Editorial Board, “Lori Lightfoot, Toni Preckwinkle and the Obama center: Locking in benefits for the South Side makes sense,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 2019, retrieved March 20, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-obama-center-cba-lightfoot-preckwinkle-20190227-story.html>

<sup>303</sup> Zach Mortice, “After Rahm, What Comes Next for the Obama Library,” *CityLab*, September 25, 2018, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2018/09/after-rahm-what-comes-next-obama-library/571075/>

<sup>304</sup> Ward Miller as quoted in Zach Mortice, “After Rahm, What Comes Next for the Obama Library,” *CityLab*, September 25, 2018, retrieved April 14, 2019, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2018/09/after-rahm-what-comes-next-obama-library/571075/>

<sup>305</sup> Lolly Bowean, “In blow to Obama Presidential Center backers, judge allows lawsuit challenging Chicago’s Jackson Park location to proceed,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 2019, retrieved March 30,

group was established in 2007 in response to the potential degradation of a natural grass field in Lincoln Park by the private Latin School for use as their athletic space. After a story leaked of a deal between the private entity and the Chicago Park District, a group of neighbors began meeting and formed the non-profit Protect Our Parks.

The founder of POP, Herbert Caplan, stated that the organization is “not opposing the constriction of the Obama Presidential Center, as long as it’s not in historic Jackson Park.”<sup>306</sup> The Cultural Landscape Foundation backed the lawsuit and in a written statement, President and CEO Charles A. Birnbaum criticized the plans, saying, “The Obama Foundation and the University of Chicago created this controversy by insisting on the confiscation of public parkland.” They argue that the Obama Foundation could easily avoid the issue by moving the OPC to vacant land, much of which is owned by the city in the surrounding neighborhoods, or to land owned by the University of Chicago.<sup>307</sup>

POP filed the lawsuit with the intention to enjoin the actions of the Chicago Park District and City of Chicago regarding the transfer of public park land in Jackson Park to the City of Chicago for the token payment of one dollar. From there, the City of Chicago has the authority to reconvey the land to the Obama Foundation. The plaintiffs assert that the publicized information regarding the reasons for the transfer

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2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/obamacenter/ct-met-obama-center-presidential-library-chicago-lawsuit-20190219-story.html>

<sup>306</sup> Lolly Bowean, “In blow to Obama Presidential Center backers, judge allows lawsuit challenging Chicago’s Jackson Park location to proceed,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 2019, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/obamacenter/ct-met-obama-center-presidential-library-chicago-lawsuit-20190219-story.html>

<sup>307</sup> Cultural Landscape Foundation Press Releases, “A statement from the Cultural Landscape Foundation following U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey’s ruling in favor of the Protect Our Parks, Inc. lawsuit concerning the Obama Presidential Center,” *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, February 19, 2019, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://tclf.org/statement-cultural-landscape-foundation-following-us-district-judge-john-robert-blakeys-ruling-favor>

focused on the construction of an official federal Presidential Library, one that would eventually, in accordance with The Presidential Libraries Act, be transferred to the control of a federal institution.<sup>308</sup> They cited Park District Code regarding land transfers that reads, in part:

Any park district owning or holding any real estate is authorized to convey such property to a nongovernmental entity in exchange for other real property of substantially equal or greater value as determined by 2 appraisals of the property and of substantially the same or greater suitability for park purposes without additional cost to such district.<sup>309</sup>

They deem this “institutional bait and switch” does not comply with these regulations.<sup>310</sup> The City of Chicago passed an ordinance on October 31, 2018 that enters the City into a use agreement with the Obama Foundation for a lease of the parkland for a term of 99 years.<sup>311</sup> This agreement requires the Obama Foundation to cede the ownership of the buildings and grounds to the City of Chicago while retaining the responsibility for maintaining and upkeeping both.<sup>312</sup>

United States District Court Judge John Robert Blakey ruled in a preliminary hearing in February 2019 that POP had standing to sue under the Public Trust Doctrine but not based on “aesthetic and environmental harm” as the plaintiffs did not adequately detail how the OPC would cause individual harm.<sup>313</sup> Other parts of the suit were dismissed, including the part focused on claims of First Amendment violation.

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<sup>308</sup> *Protect our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

<sup>309</sup> Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/10-7

<sup>310</sup> *Protect our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

<sup>311</sup> “Amendment of Intergovernmental Use Agreement with Chicago Park District For Use of Property as Obama Presidential Center,” Committee on Housing and Real Estate, *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago, Illinois*, October 31, 2018, 85878

<sup>312</sup> “Amendment of Intergovernmental Use Agreement with Chicago Park District For Use of Property as Obama Presidential Center,” Committee on Housing and Real Estate, *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago, Illinois*, October 31, 2018, 85883

<sup>313</sup> Judge John Robert Blakey, Memorandum Opinion and Order, February 19, 2019, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

The legal issues facing the OPC read much like previous court battles that invoked the public trust doctrine, assuming “the form of a classical cautionary tale” where “a corrupt, or at least exceedingly short-sighted, legislature transferred invaluable natural resources to a small but influential interest group, with no identifiable benefit to the public at large.”<sup>314</sup> Lawsuits have the ability to either completely stop the construction of the center or delay the proceedings long enough that the Foundation decides to move elsewhere in order to move forward becoming, in essence, a war of attrition.

Since Lightfoot took office on May 20, 2019, she has actively worked with her administration to defend the city in this lawsuit.<sup>315</sup> The push to counter this lawsuit shows the administration’s willingness to continue on the path set by Emanuel in his efforts to get construction of the OPC underway. Mayor Lori Lightfoot released a statement on the court ruling in favor of the City and Obama Presidential Center, that reads in part:

The court today made it unequivocally clear that this project may be located in Jackson Park, marking a significant step forward in this historic project and for our entire city.<sup>316</sup>

Lightfoot’s main issue remains the negotiation of a community benefits agreement, which the Foundation continues to oppose.

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<sup>314</sup> Joseph D. Kearney & Thomas W. Merrill, “The Origins of the American Public Trust Doctrine: What Really Happened in *Illinois Central*,” *The University of Chicago Law Review* 71, 799 (2004): 803.

<sup>315</sup> Lynn Sweet, “Lightfoot to continue to defend city in Obama Presidential Center legal fight while still pressing for benefits deal,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 10, 2019, retrieved June 10, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2019/6/10/18660385/lightfoot-city-obama-center-legal-fight-while-still-pressing-benefits-deal>

<sup>316</sup> Mayor’s Press Office, “Statement from Mayor Lori Lightfoot on Obama Presidential Center Court Ruling Today,” *Office of the Mayor*, June 11, 2019, retrieved June 13, 2019, <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2019/June/StatementObamaCenterRuling.pdf>

*Not Actually a Presidential Library*

The Obama Presidential Center plans to break with the tradition of the past thirteen presidents and create a complex to be solely administered by their foundation, a private entity rather than the National Archives and Records Administration. None of the presidential archival material will be physically onsite so the need for NARA to administer the space becomes a moot point. It also saves the Obama Foundation from having to raise extra funds to cover the maintenance and operation cost of the center prior to transferring the property to the U.S. government but it complicates the construction of the OPC on public land.

The Presidential Historical Records Preservation Act, signed in October 2008 during the waning months of the George W. Bush administration, raised the necessary endowment for Presidential Libraries from forty percent of construction costs to sixty. The act only applied after the close of the Bush administration.<sup>317</sup> Obama would have been the first required to raise that level of endowment—an additional \$300 million—while his predecessors, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and W. Bush, were only required to raise an endowment equal to twenty percent of construction costs.<sup>318</sup> That level of additional funding would serve the Obama Foundation better being used towards their intended programming instead of waiting to be used for maintenance and potential alterations at a future date. Future questions regarding funding once the Obama era passes, museum attendance levels out, and donors become less fruitful are issues to be

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<sup>317</sup> Presidential Historical Records Preservation Act of 2008, 44 USC 101

<sup>318</sup> The Presidential Libraries Act was amended in 2003 to raise the endowment to 40% but did not affect George W. Bush as he had already been elected to office. In essence, the increase to 40% affects none of the presidents as Bush increased the amount to 60% during his tenure.

addressed with this shift in administrative duties. The short-term financial benefits may not outweigh long term effects.

The Obama Foundation intends to work with NARA to digitize the 30 million pages of records from the Obama administration and make the resources available online.<sup>319</sup> Discussion regarding the digitization of records began in earnest in the spring of 2017. Since then, the Foundation has been working with NARA to establish a satisfactory method for digitizing and making the records accessible while allowing the Foundation to operate its own museum as part of the Obama Presidential Center.<sup>320</sup> The Foundation, in a letter of intent written to the Archivist of the United States, agreed to digitize records compatible to NARA's standards of the unclassified records no later than August 31, 2021. Additionally, the Foundation agreed to pay up to \$3.3 million dollars for the move of Obama Presidential records from their current holding place at a storage facility in Hoffman Estates, Illinois to NARA-controlled facilities for the continued preservation of the materials. The agreement also makes provisions for the ongoing use of archival records and materials for museum exhibitions, establishing a loan procedure between NARA and the Foundation.<sup>321</sup> While the space will be owned and operated by the Obama Foundation, legally the records belong to

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<sup>319</sup> Jennifer Schuessler, "The Obama Presidential Library That Isn't," *The New York Times*, February 20, 2019, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/arts/obama-presidential-center-library-national-archives-and-records-administration.html?action=click&module=inline&pgtype=Homepage>

<sup>320</sup> Robin Cohen, Executive Director Obama Foundation to David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, September 11, 2018, in *National Archives and Record Administration*, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/files/foia/letter-of-intent-re-obama-digitization-project.signed.2.pdf>

<sup>321</sup> Robin Cohen, Executive Director Obama Foundation to David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, September 11, 2018, in *National Archives and Record Administration*, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/files/foia/letter-of-intent-re-obama-digitization-project.signed.2.pdf>

NARA, and by establishing the written agreement, the Foundation assures their independence while maintaining access to the materials necessary to run their spaces.

Most people are drawn to Presidential Libraries for the museums that display artifacts and present special exhibitions related specifically to that president and their administration, but historians and researchers view the libraries as important archival depositories. Some historians argue that these spaces act as collecting points for material related to but not belonging to the president's term in office, such as papers donated by family members, members of the administration, and pre-presidential personal papers, and digitizing the material may limit the material that is collected. Others see the lack of specialized archivists to assist in finding specific research materials as a detriment, leaving the digitized files in a hard-to-navigate data dump.<sup>322</sup>

Timothy Naftali, former director of the Richard Nixon library, believes that "President Obama's decision to have his private foundation (and not the nonpartisan National Archives) run the Obama presidential museum opens the door to a truly terrible Trump Library."<sup>323</sup> He called the decision "a huge mistake."<sup>324</sup> The decision to break with precedent was not disclosed at the unveiling of the conceptual design for the center in May 2017, which included a library structure that the Foundation was

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<sup>322</sup> Jennifer Schuessler, "The Obama Presidential Library That Isn't," *The New York Times*, February 20, 2019, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/arts/obama-presidential-center-library-national-archives-and-records-administration.html?action=click&module=inline&pgtype=Homepage>

<sup>323</sup> Tim Naftali, Twitter Post, February 20, 2019, 9:15 PM, retrieved March 31, 2019, <https://twitter.com/timnaftali/status/1098451126381359104?lang=en>

<sup>324</sup> Tim Natali as quoted in Jennifer Schuessler, "The Obama Presidential Library That Isn't," *The New York Times*, February 20, 2019, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/arts/obama-presidential-center-library-national-archives-and-records-administration.html?action=click&module=inline&pgtype=Homepage>

contemplating using as a branch of the Chicago Public Library.<sup>325</sup> Fifty-five minutes after the initial press release discussing the vision for the center, the Foundation released a statement regarding the plans for the operational structure of the OPC, writing that “at the request of the Obama Foundation, and with the agreement of NARA, the Obama Foundation will build, own and operate the museum portion of the Obama Presidential Center as a private museum.”<sup>326</sup>

The Foundation viewed the decision as a way of to prioritize “providing NARA with digital archives to serve historians and scholars, instead of building a Presidential Library to hold the paper records.”<sup>327</sup> At the same time, the main function of the Foundation currently is the raising of funds for the construction of a center that intends to act in much the same way as other presidential libraries, as a space to educate and inform viewers on the history of the Obama Administration. The Foundation plans to engage in other pursuits which will become the main focus once the edifice is completed, but this is similar to previous presidential libraries and foundations that transferred parts (or all) of their buildings to NARA.

In 2015, shortly after Barack Obama’s announcement regarding the Center’s location, David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, wrote that the construction of the Obama Library in Chicago would expand NARA’s presence on the South Side

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<sup>325</sup> “President and Mrs. Obama Announce Conceptual Vision for Design of Obama Presidential Center,” *Obama Foundation*, May 3, 2017, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/updates/president-mrs-obama-announce-conceptual-vision-design-obama-presidential-center/>

<sup>326</sup> Kate Berner, “The Obama Foundation and NARA Announce New Details on Obama Presidential Center Structure and Operations,” *Obama Foundation*, May 3, 2017, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/updates/obama-foundation-nara-announce-new-details-obama-presidential-center-structure-operations/>

<sup>327</sup> Kate Berner, “The Obama Foundation and NARA Announce New Details on Obama Presidential Center Structure and Operations,” *Obama Foundation*, May 3, 2017, retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.obama.org/updates/obama-foundation-nara-announce-new-details-obama-presidential-center-structure-operations/>

as once “complete, it will be turned over to the National Archive and become the 14<sup>th</sup> in our system of presidential libraries.”<sup>328</sup> The understanding, then, was that the library would house the archives and be ultimately operated by NARA under the auspices of federal archivist. NARA began recruiting for a library director, though the job title excluded responsibilities associated from the presidential museum. Typically, a library director runs the operations of both the archives and museum, and when the Foundation began their own recruitment for a museum director it became evident that there would be two competing authorities.<sup>329</sup>

Robert Clark, a former supervisory archivist for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, had hoped “that at least one of the truly genius aspects of the presidential library system would be preserved: the presence of impartial government archivists, archival records, and museum objects paired with a more public-facing museum.”<sup>330</sup> With this shift in administration, he believes that “our democracy, the Obama legacy, and the legacy of all future presidents will be worse for it.”<sup>331</sup> It sets a precedent for future libraries to move away from bipartisan oversight and allows the legacy of a president to be shaped mainly by their own hand. From an interpretive and academic perspective, this change in oversight opens doors for a future Trump Presidential Library to manage the image of the Trump Administration as the current president sees fit. The Nixon Library was privately

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<sup>328</sup> David S. Ferriero, “Assembling the Obama Library,” *Prologue Magazine* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2015), retrieved March 31, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/fall/archivist.html>

<sup>329</sup> Bob Clark, “In Defense of Presidential Libraries: Why the Failure to Build an Obama Library Is Bad for Democracy,” *The Public Historian* 40, no. 2 (May 2018): 97.

<sup>330</sup> Bob Clark, “In Defense of Presidential Libraries: Why the Failure to Build an Obama Library Is Bad for Democracy,” *The Public Historian* 40, no. 2 (May 2018): 97.

<sup>331</sup> Bob Clark, “In Defense of Presidential Libraries: Why the Failure to Build an Obama Library Is Bad for Democracy,” *The Public Historian* 40, no. 2 (May 2018): 97.

funded but when the foundation failed to manage the site, negotiations were entered into with NARA. Avid Nixon-supporters, however, made these negotiations difficult, wanting instead a library and museum that presented Nixon in the best possible light.<sup>332</sup> The current president, Donald Trump, has a strong base of passionate support, a current administration strife with scandal, and the continuous propagation of fake news belies any potential for a balanced historical view on Trump's presidential term should the oversight of the future library remain in his hands.

The shift in intended ownership presents additional issues with the site selection. Now, not only is a historic public park being used, but a historic public park for a private entity. It is the cornerstone of the lawsuit Protect Our Parks, Inc. has filed and the potential derailing of the OPC in Jackson Park. While still viewed as a public entity, the location choice on public land was more palatable even though A. Montgomery Ward fought at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to prevent "the invasion of the lake front playground by public structures" as well as private.<sup>333</sup> Park space was to remain open space.

### *The OPC and Jackson Park*

Preservation Chicago placed Jackson Park, the Midway Plaisance, and the South Shore Cultural Center on their list of seven most endangered historic sites in Chicago in 2017, 2018, and 2019. They purport that the construction of the OPC in an Olmsted and Vaux designed park "will significantly and adversely impact the historic

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<sup>332</sup> Bob Clark, "In Defense of Presidential Libraries: Why the Failure to Build an Obama Library Is Bad for Democracy," *The Public Historian* 40, no. 2 (May 2018): 97.

<sup>333</sup> Gene Morgan, "How Grant Park Was Saved for People; Ward's Great Fight Waged 20 Years," *Chicago Daily News*, June 8, 1935.

features and the overall design, quality, appearance and the spirit of these world-renowned parks.”<sup>334</sup> Vicky Post Ranney, an Olmsted scholar and parkland activist, believes the park’s redevelopment

... could be done as a hodgepodge or it could be a really great restoration, not only of the bushes and trees, but of the spirit of what a park was really supposed to be like, which is a pleasure ground for all kinds of people to be together.

Olmsted’s philosophy about park design did not merely contend with the aesthetic but the social. They were spaces for all classes of people to interact and draw respite from the bustle of the city. On a visit to Birkenhead Park in England in 1850, Olmsted enthused that “the poorest British peasant is free to enjoy it in all its parts as the British queen” and, more than that, they all had “the pride of an owner in it.”<sup>335</sup> Access to parks was meant for all and he often planned parks with the poor in mind, even going as far in the 1870s to post notices in tenement houses in New York City regarding Central Park and Prospect Park.<sup>336</sup>

Furthermore, in redesigning Jackson Park in 1895, Olmsted made clear that the Arts Building, now the Museum of Science and Industry, was the exception to his firm’s design. It was “to be on different footing” than the remainder of the park and the landscape designed “with a view to making the Building a dominating object of interest.”<sup>337</sup> Otherwise:

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<sup>334</sup> “Jackson Park, South Shore Cultural Center & Midway Plaisance,” *Preservation Chicago*, 2019, retrieved April 10, 2019, <https://preservationchicago.org/chicago07/jackson-park-south-shore-cultural-center-midway-plaisance/>

<sup>335</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (Columbus, Ohio: Jos. H. Riley, 1859), 64.

<sup>336</sup> Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 48.

<sup>337</sup> Olmsted to Donnersberger, May 7, 1894, Library of Congress, A34:152

All other buildings and structures within the park boundaries are to be placed and planned exclusively with a view to advancing the ruling purpose of the park. They are to be auxiliary to and subordinate to the scenery of the park.<sup>338</sup>

The 1895 design has undergone only a few changes since its development, notably the addition of a golf course in 1899. The 1999 Framework Plan for Jackson Park recognized the importance of maintaining the historic integrity of the park. A 2012 correspondence from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reiterated this claim. In compliance with Section 106, the State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the proposed plan for an ecosystem restoration project in Jackson Park and determined that

As currently designed, the park retains a great deal of its integrity. While some of the original features have been modified, or removed, the remaining defining characteristics such as the overall plan developed by Olmsted, Olmsted, and Elliot as depicted on the 1905 map must be respected.<sup>339</sup>

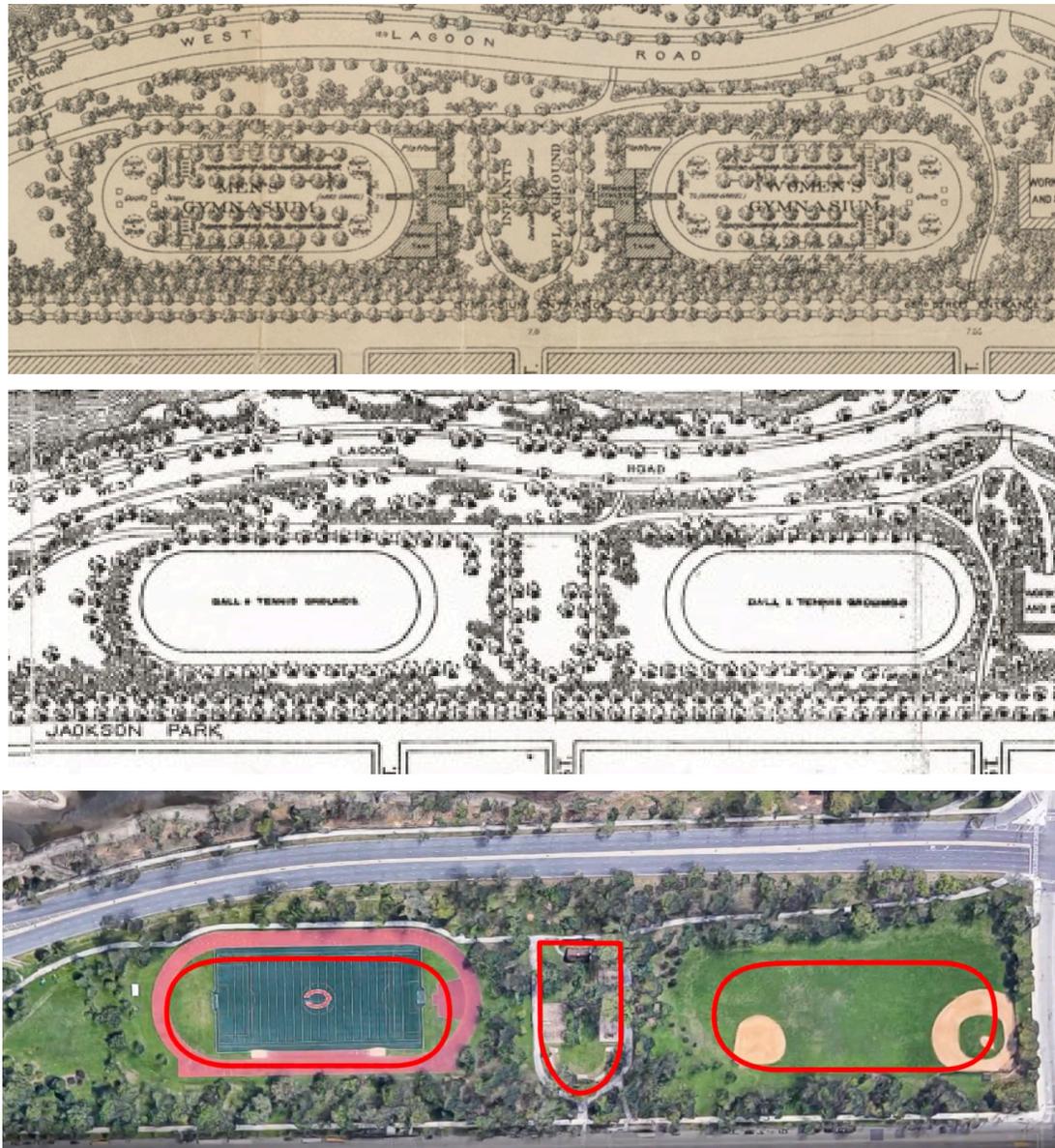
The 1905 Plan is a near replica of the 1895 Revised Plan with the addition of golf courses in 1899 and 1900, paths on the wooded isle and other minor edits. The land between Cornell Drive and Stony Island Avenue where the Foundation plans to erect the OPC maintains much of the original design intent. The Men's Gymnasium, from the 1895 Plan, is expressed through the outline of the current track and field, the pathways surrounding the Infants' Playground are still extant today, the oval footprint of the baseball fields mimic that of the Women's Gymnasium. The gymnasia were

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<sup>338</sup> Olmsted to Donnersberger, May 7, 1894, Library of Congress, A34:152

<sup>339</sup> Anne E. Haker, Deputy State Historic Preservation officer, to Peter Bullock, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, December 10, 2012, In Brief for the Cultural Landscape Foundation as Amicus Curiae, Appendix 2-1, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

one of the first portions to be improved following the adoption of the 1895 Revised Plan making it one of the earliest sections of the modern park.<sup>340</sup>



**Figure 4.8.** The evolution from the 1895 Plan to the 1905 Plan to the appearance of the park today.

<sup>340</sup> Julia Sniderman Bachrach, "Jackson Park Design Evolution," Chicago Park District, September 1995, retrieved May 14, 2019, [https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/TCLF\\_CPD\\_1995\\_Jackson%20Park\\_Assessment.pdf](https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/TCLF_CPD_1995_Jackson%20Park_Assessment.pdf)



**Figure 4.9.** The 1895 Plan for Jackson Park as designed by Olmsted, Olmsted, and Elliot following the World's Columbian Exposition. Source: New York Public Library.



Proponents of constructing the OPC in Jackson Park believe that parks need to evolve with the ever-shifting needs of the community which uses them. To strive to keep a park to the ideals of the original design is seen by some as “imposing a narrow aesthetic perspective.”<sup>341</sup> The architecture critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, Blair Kamin, has expressed differing views over the attempt to build the Lucas Museum and the push for the OPC. In writing about the court case regarding the Lucas Museum, Kamin sided with Friends of the Parks, writing that had they taken the deal to allow the museum to be built anywhere along the lakefront:

. . . that would have opened the gates for future billionaires to erect vanity museums of their own. In rejecting the deal, Friends of the Parks did right by both the lakefront and the legal principles that protect it. If Lucas bolts, so be it.<sup>342</sup>

In contrast, his articles involving the Obama Presidential Center take a tone of reproach to opponents and point to the benefits of such a museum:

Destroy Olmsted’s legacy? Please . . . opponents of the Jackson Park site . . . are ignoring how the Obama plans would *improve* a scruffy landscape that is poorly maintained, brutally interrupted by a wide road, and seriously underutilized as a result.

Though the sites are not identical--the Lucas Museum proposed site was immediately adjacent to the lakefront on formally submerged lands and, as such, the public trust doctrine held a higher level of scrutiny while the OPC is more inland in a lakefront park on land that was never submerged--both deal with public space. Kamin noted that once the Lucas Museum was built, even if on a former parking lot, “you can’t go

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<sup>341</sup> Blair Kamin, “Obama center plans won’t destroy Olmsted’s park—they should be improved, not rejected,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, 2018, retrieved June 20, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/blair-kamin/ct-met-obama-center-kamin-0119-story.html>

<sup>342</sup> Blair Kamin, “Kamin: Hobson’s argument on Lucas museum rings false,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 2016, retrieved June 21, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/ct-lucas-museum-kamin-met-0505-20160504-story.html>

back and convert it to what it ultimately should be—a green plain of open space that’s accessible to everyone.”<sup>343</sup> A statement that also describes the OPC and Jackson Park. That there is a disconnect between two very similar cases displays the power Obama has as an icon in Chicago. Lucas was not a son of Chicago, Obama is. The decision to build in an underdeveloped, economically depressed section of the city also bolsters his choice as the city—and community—is more receptive to private investment.

The Chicago Park District developed a plan for Jackson Park, designed in part with Project 120, a non-profit that aims to raise funds from private donors for projects within the park. Funds have already paid for the commission and installation of a twelve-foot lotus flower sculpture by Yoko Ono on Wooded Island and the planting of 120 cherry trees. Additional plans call for a visitor’s pavilion with café, event room, outdoor concert venue, and a 40-acre great lawn for informal recreation. Plans to combine the Jackson Park and South Shore golf courses into a larger, championship-level course are in the works.<sup>344</sup> The Jackson Park Advisory Council welcomes private investment, noting that “the North Side has had people with money to plant trees . . . but the South Side hasn’t had that . . . We are 50 years behind on maintenance and upkeep.”<sup>345</sup>

In this way, Jackson Park is following the methods used to construct and maintain Millennium Park. The differences between these two parks is that

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<sup>343</sup> Blair Kamin, “Kamin: Hobson’s argument on Lucas museum rings false,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 2016, retrieved June 21, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/ct-lucas-museum-kamin-met-0505-20160504-story.html>

<sup>344</sup> Kathy Bergen, “In Jackson Park, private money begins to reshape public jewel,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 29, 2016, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-obama-library-jackson-park-changes-met-20161117-story.html>

<sup>345</sup> Kathy Bergen, “In Jackson Park, private money begins to reshape public jewel,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 29, 2016, retrieved May 22, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-obama-library-jackson-park-changes-met-20161117-story.html>

Millennium Park was built over an eyesore while Jackson Park is already considered a premiere park. Jackson Park is not a blank canvas and unlike Millennium Park, the area is primarily residential, and the park needs to function as a space for local residents who use the park for fitness, fishing, birding, and picnics. A fear is that privatization will carve the space up and cater to tourists with money for museums and concerts making the space inaccessible for periods of time to the many residents who live in the lower income neighborhoods adjacent to the park.

The private money donated to the Foundation further complicates the matter of privatization. Just as with Millennium Park, donors have requests that need to be met in order to obtain the hundreds of thousands in funding they provide. The former director of the Harry S. Truman Library acknowledged trouble of private investment:

The fatal continuing flaw are those private foundations. They will tell you they are a great deal because of all the nonfederal money they are bringing in. In my opinion, there are hidden and in some cases there are some odious strings that come with that money that keep library directors, no matter how well intentioned they are, from developing certain exhibitions or programs.<sup>346</sup>

Since the OPC will not be administered by NARA, this not only privatizes the space but politicizes it. It opens control of programming to be presented how the Foundation deems desirable. Presidential libraries are deeply ideological spaces containing the vestiges of a former president's time in political office even with the bipartisan oversight of NARA.<sup>347</sup> Obama may be an adopted son of Chicago, and an icon through the city but the goal of the museum is to present the political ideology of

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<sup>346</sup> Adam Nagourney, "What's a Presidential Library to Do," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2011, retrieved June 23, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/us/13libraries.html>

<sup>347</sup> Brief for the Cultural Landscape Foundation as Amicus Curiae, Appendix 2-1, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

his time in public office and many Chicagoans may wish to avoid it. Parks are intrinsically apolitical spaces, further propelled, in this case, by Olmsted who viewed parks as democratic spaces intended for all. This only continues to limit access to the site and as for public benefit, some people may see it as a detriment.

The suit brought by Protect Our Parks aimed to prevent this issue from arising but on June 11, 2019, U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey ruled on the pending court case. He affirmed that approving the plans to build the Obama Presidential Center on public land was within the authority held by the city.<sup>348</sup> He concluded that the court serves only as a means of “determining legislative intent evidenced by existing legislation measured against constitutional limitations,” based on a similar challenge presented to the Illinois Supreme Court in *Paepcke v. Public Building Commission of Chicago*.<sup>349</sup> He summarily ruled that “construction should commence without delay. This case is terminated.”<sup>350</sup>

In determining public trust cases, courts apply three differing levels of scrutiny that depend on the property’s proximity to navigable waterways. The portion of Jackson Park the Obama Foundation intends to use was never-submerged and constitutes the lowest level of scrutiny. Since Illinois legislators retain control over

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<sup>348</sup> Lolly Bowean, “Federal judge tosses suit seeking to stop Obama center in Jackson Park, compares project to Soldier Field,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 11, 2019, retrieved June 11, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-met-obama-library-decision-20190611-story.html>

<sup>349</sup> *Paepcke v. Public Building Commission of Chicago*, Illinois Supreme Court, 263 N.E.2d 11 (Ill. 1970); In the case, the Chicago Park District planned to convey 3.8 acres of Washington Park to the Public Building Commission for construction of a school. The court’s ruling stated: “ Let it be said that this court is fully aware of the face that the issues presented in this case illustrate the classic struggle between those member of the public who would preserve our parks and open lands in their pristine purity and those charged with administrative responsibilities who, under the pressures of the changing needs of an increasingly complex society, find it necessary, in good faith and for the public good, to encroach to some extent upon lands heretofore considered inviolate to change.”

<sup>350</sup> *Protect Our Parks v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

never-submerged land they choose to designate as public trust, if sufficient legislative intent exists for the repurpose or diversion of land then there is no violation of the public trust doctrine. The Court determined the relevant legislation to be the Park District Aquarium and Museum Act (Museum Act) which grants municipalities and park districts the authority to:

Purchase, erect, and maintain within any such public park or parks edifices to be used as aquariums or as museums of art, industry, science, or natural or other history, including presidential libraries, centers, and museums. . . .<sup>351</sup>

The Museum Act continues on to permit cities and park districts to contract with private entities in the construction, maintenance, operation, rehabilitation, and ownership of the museum. The Illinois legislature amended the Museum Act on April 23, 2015 to specifically allow the inclusion of presidential libraries, centers, and museums.<sup>352</sup> The Museum Act reflects the legislatures intent to consider presidential centers a use consistent with the property’s designation as public parkland.<sup>353</sup>

Judge Blakely further cited two other court cases to back the ruling. The ruling in the 1926 case *Furlong v. South Park Commissioners* resulted in the court declining to enjoin the South Park Commissioners’ efforts to raise funds for the renovation of the Palace of Fine Arts Building in Jackson Park to include a museum. The court established that a park’s purpose is “not confined to a tract of land with trees, grass, and seats, but mean[s] a tract of land ornamented and improved as a place of resort for

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<sup>351</sup> 70 ILCS 1290/1, Park District Aquarium and Museum Act

<sup>352</sup> Mayor’s Press Office, “Mayor Emanuel Commends Illinois General Assembly On Passage Of Amendment To The Park District Aquarium And Museum Act,” *Office of the Mayor*, April 23, 2015, retrieved June 17, 2019,

[https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press\\_room/press\\_releases/2015/april/mayor-emanuel-commends-illinois-general-assembly--on-passage-of-.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2015/april/mayor-emanuel-commends-illinois-general-assembly--on-passage-of-.html)

<sup>353</sup> *Protect Our Parks v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424, 26.

the public.”<sup>354</sup> *Fairbanks v. Stratton* in 1958 allowed for the construction of a convention center on previously submerged lands. Both these issues, however, differ from the Obama Presidential Center in two significant ways. The Palace of Fine Arts Building already occupied its lot in Jackson Park and had housed the Field Museum in the early twentieth century before sitting vacant for almost a decade. The McCormick Convention Center was built in Burnham Park, designed by Daniel Burnham decades after the establishment of the public trust with the understanding that cultural centers belonged in park space.

Protect Our Parks argued that while the Museum Act allows the transaction it does not supersede the restriction set in the 1869 “Act to Provide for the Location and Maintenance of a Park for the Towns of South Chicago, Hyde Park and Lake” that stipulates a public park must remain “free to all persons forever.”<sup>355</sup> As the Foundation intends to charge admittance fees for portions of the OPC, POP asserts this restricts the use as it will no longer be an open and free space. The Court cited *Clement v. O’Malley* which approved the construction of a golf course in Jackson Park in 1981 and stated that the

mere fact that a fee is charged for the use of a special facilities does not as such render the facility closed to the public, provided such fees are reasonable for the population of the community.<sup>356</sup>

Golf courses, however, have been included in Jackson Park since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and once again differentiate this court case from the one filed by POP. The construction of a school building in Washington Park, upheld in

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<sup>354</sup> *Furlong v. South Park Commissioners*, 151 N.E. 510, 511 (Ill. 1926)

<sup>355</sup> South Park Commissioners, *Charter, Ordinances and Resolutions of the South Park Commissioners* (Chicago: Authority of the South Park Commissioners, 1887), 3.

<sup>356</sup> *Clement v. O’Malley*, 420 N.E.2d 533 (Ill. App. Ct. 1981)

*Paepcke v. Chicago Building Commissioners*, displayed that a building not open “to all persons forever” could be constructed in a park because the state legislature created the parkland and could therefore reallocate its use. The Museums of Science and Industry also charges an entry fee, subject to the same terms set by the Museum Act to which the OPC is subject. It did not charge admission until June 1991, when plans for a renovation were in the works.<sup>357</sup>

Admittance fees are not atypical across the museums located on Park District property but charging admission, especially to a museum on public property, does raise questions regarding social equity and access. While the Museum Act requires the OPC to institute 52 days of free admission for Illinois residents each year, this restricts the use of the space for people who cannot afford the regular admission fee.<sup>358</sup> The OPC is located along the eastern edge of a low-income neighborhood. For many of the nearby residents, the cost of the museum may hinder their desire to visit, if not the first time then on a more regular basis. A 1995 study from Germany determined that people in the lowest income bracket viewed entrance fees as a barrier five times more often than people in the highest income bracket.<sup>359</sup>

The South Side of Chicago, including Woodlawn, is a predominately poor and black portion of the city. The area has undergone significant disinvestment during the

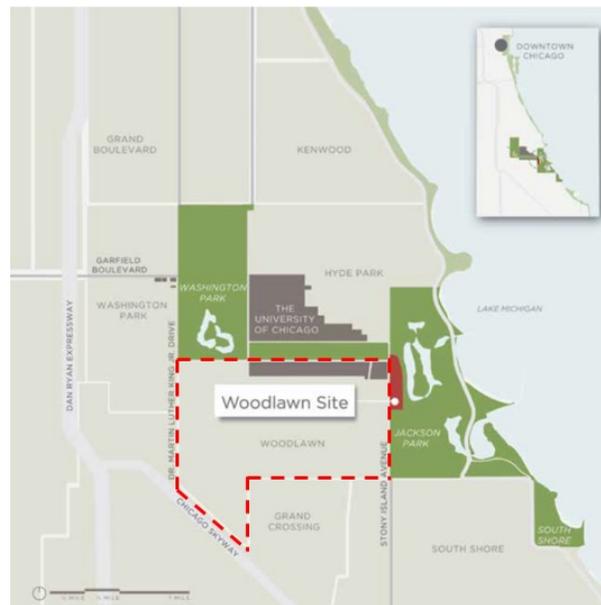
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<sup>357</sup> Jodi Wilgoren, “How to enter Museum of Science and Industry: Pay \$5,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 11, 1991, retrieved June 17, 2019, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/docview/1615976581/7560CBB326F14BC0PQ/7?accountid=10267>

<sup>358</sup> 70 ILCS 1290/1, Park District Aquarium and Museum Act

<sup>359</sup> Smithsonian Institution Office of Policy and Analysis, “The Smithsonian Institution and General Admission Fees,” *Smithsonian Institute*, May 2008, 7.

post-war period as wealthier residents, mainly white, left the inner-city neighborhoods for the suburbs. Since then, these neighborhoods have experienced a lack of amenities that other, wealthier communities, enjoy and ones that act as a draw for new residents. This perpetuates the neighborhood's decline. Revitalization requires an economic investment in a neighborhood that, for an extended period in history, was seen as a place to avoid. A mindset aided by enacted public policies.



**Figure 4.11.** The neighborhood of Woodlawn (outlined in red dashed line) in relation to the OPC proposed site (red fill). Source: University of Chicago RFP.

A strong desire exists within these communities for development and the OPC presents an unparalleled opportunity for the neighborhoods. A world-class institution in a neighborhood of the city that receives investment primarily from the neighboring university is an opportunity not to be missed. It reflects a sense of desperation within the community. The South Side wants development so badly that they will take it any which way they can get it, fearing that a missed opportunity will result in another long wait before another chance comes around.

Central to the placement of the OPC was its potential to serve as a catalyst for economic growth in the South Side. The Obama Foundation funded an Economic Impact Assessment to estimate the potential impact the proposed Obama Presidential Center would have on the South Side of Chicago, Cook County, and the State of Illinois. The assessment expects the annual visitation to the OPC to fall between 625,000 to 760,000 visitors, not including the first few years when visitorship is likely to be higher.<sup>360</sup> This estimate is significantly higher than the actual attendances observed at other presidential centers. The highest visitation recorded occurred at the Eisenhower Library and Museum in 1970—the year after his death—at 630,779 people.<sup>361</sup>

The report assessed economic impact for businesses in this portion of Chicago at \$2.1 billion after ten years, and an overall impact for Cook County businesses at \$3.1 billion.<sup>362</sup> This accounts for the construction phase and the estimated continuing annual impact of \$177 million locally.<sup>363</sup> From the offset, the Obamas intended for the presidential center to act as an economic boost to the community.

The Center’s campus is planned to cover 19.3 acres, with only about 2.5 acres of those needed for the construction of the physical structures. The surrounding

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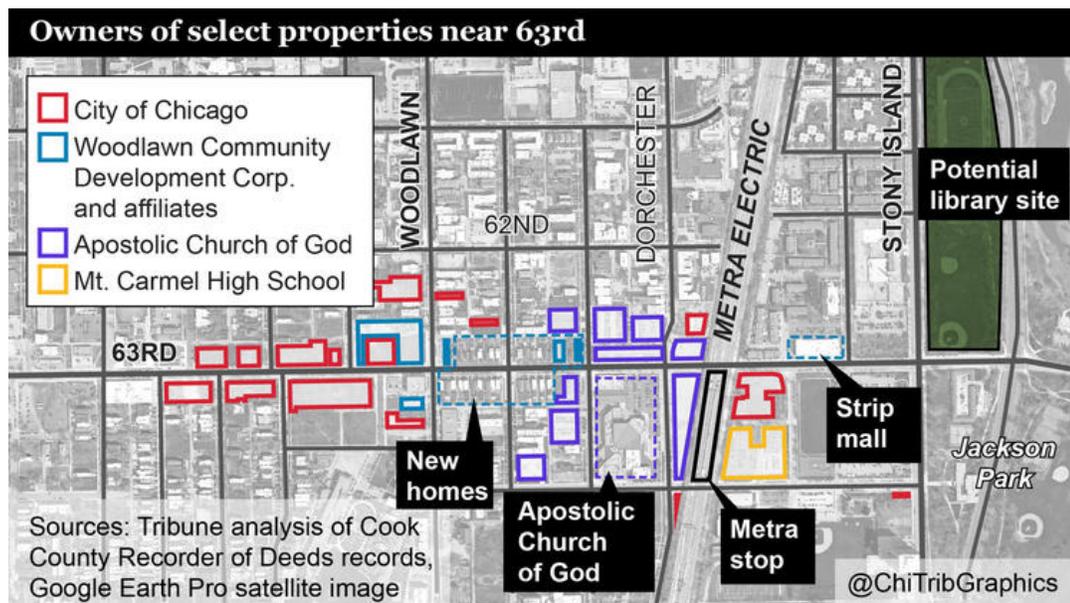
<sup>360</sup> “Obama Presidential Center Economic Impact Assessment Key Findings,” *Obama Foundation*, May 11, 2017, retrieved May 10, 2019, [https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet\\_\\_OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf](https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet__OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf)

<sup>361</sup> Nausheen Husain and Alex Bordens, “10 ways to keep up attendance at a presidential library,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 26, 2015, retrieved May 13, 2019, <http://apps.chicagotribune.com/graphics/presidential-libraries-attendance/>

<sup>362</sup> “Obama Presidential Center Economic Impact Assessment Key Findings,” *Obama Foundation*, May 11, 2017, retrieved May 10, 2019, [https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet\\_\\_OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf](https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet__OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf)

<sup>363</sup> “Obama Presidential Center Economic Impact Assessment Key Findings,” *Obama Foundation*, May 11, 2017, retrieved May 10, 2019, [https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet\\_\\_OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf](https://www.obama.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet__OPC-Economic-Impact.pdf)

communities contain a host of vacant lots amounting to almost 300 tracts of undeveloped land and parking lots, with one third clustered along the commercial corridor of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, under a mile from the currently proposed site. The 20 acres of undeveloped land along this street are owned mainly by the City of Chicago, the Apostolic Church of God, and the non-profit Woodlawn Community Development Corporation.<sup>364</sup>



**Figure 4.12.** Areas of vacant land in Woodlawn, the neighborhood immediately adjacent to the proposed Obama Presidential Center. Source: Chicago Tribune.

If the OPC had utilized some of the 60 acres of vacant land in Woodlawn, or the nearly 80 acres of vacant land in Washington Park to construct their edifice, the improvement to the neighborhood could have been far more notable. Aside from the addition of prominent architecture and landscaping to the streetscape, the location would have effectively worked to change the immediate surroundings, the desire of

<sup>364</sup> Angela Caputo and Dahleen Green, “Obama library could seed a turnaround on Woodlawn’s open land,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 2016, retrieved November 8, 2018, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/obamacenter/ct-obama-library-woodlawn-met-20160502-story.html>

the OPC to succeed would require they focus on the vitality of the neighborhood into which they have integrated themselves. The location in the park, on the edge of the neighborhood still requires some of this focus, but their success does not solely rely on the uplift of the surrounding community.

Though the Obama Foundation pushed the economic benefits of the proposed OPC, when selecting their location their main focus, and that of the University of Chicago, was on choosing a site that maintained a sense of formality and grandeur. It is why Washington Park was not selected even though it technically ranked higher in evaluations than the Jackson Park location when the Foundation analyzed the potential sites.<sup>365</sup> Perception has also influenced the debate over site location, especially with regards to the safety of the South Side. The push for Jackson Park over Washington Park fell victim to the perception that Washington Park sits amidst an isolated community “where many Chicagoans are often too afraid to venture.”<sup>366</sup> Jackson Park on the other hand is immediately adjacent to the dominate University of Chicago and contains the Museum of Science and Industry, which draws more than a million visitors a year. It has already established, successful enterprises that continue to attract visitors and it is an environment that is a win-win for the Foundation. They have the prestige of a historic, landscaped park as their backdrop and the philanthropically aura

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<sup>365</sup> The bids were analyzed based on four criteria: Project Site and Access, Project Execution, Community Engagement, and Indications of Support. Washington Park received an evaluation of 122 out of 150, Jackson Park received 121, and the UIC locations received 120. Judge John Robert Blakey, Memorandum Opinion and Order, *Protect Our Parks, Inc. v. Chicago Park District and City of Chicago*, Case No. 18-cv-3424

<sup>366</sup> Dahleen Glanton, “Column: The one unspoken issue at the heart of the Obama center opposition – race,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 20, 2019, retrieved March 27, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/glanton/ct-met-dahleen-glanton-obama-library-lawsuit-20190220-story.html>

of giving back to an oft-neglected community. They are civically minded but not grassroots.

The court ruling only solidifies the deal and lessens the chances of their selecting another location. Protect Our Parks plans to appeal the decision, taking matters to the 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Court of Appeals, and federal reviews must still be completed prior to the commencement of construction.<sup>367</sup> Based upon the outcome of the court case and the reading of the memorandum, it would technically be legal to construct and operate the OPC on the last 20 acres of open space in Jackson Park as it would still be considered park space and an appropriate use as determined by legislation. Whether the Park District or City would allow such an extreme to happen cannot be stated with any definitiveness.

Preventing the construction of the OPC through legal recourse and maintaining the open quality of Jackson Park is only one step in the narrative. Understanding the beneficial qualities that Jackson Park, as it exists now, brings to those who use it and advocating for its continued protection in the neighboring communities based on these merits adds another layer to the complex issue at hand. Retaining the current nature of Jackson Park at the expense of the OPC would anger many advocating for the center's construction and could potentially fuel the continued sense of disinvestment and neglect within the lower-income communities surrounding the park. To take away an identifiable source of monetary investment requires not just the legal backing but a

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<sup>367</sup> John Seidel and Lynn Sweet, "Federal Judge tosses Obama Presidential Center lawsuit," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 11, 2019, retrieved June 12, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/2019/6/11/18661422/obama-presidential-center-lawsuit-john-blakely-jackson-park-barack-michelle>

push to show what a park is designed to accomplish, a reinvigoration of the dream that lead to the creation of the park in the first place.

Parks have been referred to as “lungs of the city” for over a century. The phrase, adopted heavily during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as industrialization in cities increased, paints the image of parks as spaces to breath fresh air, a reprieve from the smog laden air hovering throughout the rest of the city.<sup>368</sup> The tree canopy in parks actively removes pollutants from the air. Research in Chicago determined that the trees in parks remove about 1,600 tons of carbon and 64 tons of air pollutants each year which cuts the city’s cost of mitigating pollution and increases air quality.<sup>369</sup> Parks actively clean the air while acting as a place where people can breathe freely, unencumbered by stress brought on by a city.

Beyond air quality, parks have a quantifiable effect on the mental and physical health of residents who have access to the open space. Access to biking and walking trails is a step towards increasing activity in local communities which leads to better health.<sup>370</sup> While the landscape design for the OPC campus includes a number of pathways for leisure activities, it relocates a track and field to another section of park and places buildings within the sightlines of the walkways. A campus is not a park, even if it is a park-like setting. Man-made structures, even well hidden, change the

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<sup>368</sup> John L. Crompton, “Evolution of the “parks as lungs” metaphor: Is it still relevant?,” *World Leisure Journal* 59, no. 2 (2017), 1.

<sup>369</sup> David J. Nowak, Robert E. Hoehn III, Daniel E. Crane, Jack C. Stevens, and Cherie Leblanc Fischer, “Assessing Urban Forest Effects and Values: Chicago’s Urban Forest,” Research Bulletin NRS-37, *United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service*, February 2010.

<sup>370</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Increasing physical activity: A report on recommendations of the task force on community preventive services,” *United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (Atlanta, GA, 2001); Andrew T. Kaczynski, and Karla A. Henderson, “Environmental Correlates of Physical Activity: A Review of Evidence about Parks and Recreation,” *Leisure Sciences* 29, no. 4 (2007): 320.

dynamic and psychological aspects of a space. Parks also act as soundscapes, absorbing city noises such as road, rail or air traffic, construction, and industry. Introducing new plazas, buildings, and venues could have detrimental effects on the acoustic comfort of a park.

Should the OPC be built in Jackson Park it will no doubt be a beautifully constructed edifice with meticulously landscaped grounds. It will welcome the masses and become a place of interaction and introspection, a landmark to the South Side but at what cost? Parkland seems an expendable entity. It can be viewed as empty, perhaps underutilized space but they exist for a reason. They provide respite from the sensory deluge of the city, a place of congregation for every person from the bike rider to the bench sitter, rich and poor alike. These amenities are not easily returned once taken, and often not missed until gone. The argument that parks need to evolve to meet the needs of the community is akin to man deciding to civilize nature by building cities. Once parks begin to evolve to meet needs through the construction of buildings, parks cease to exist.

## CONCLUSION

Presidential libraries deal with push back each time a former president seeks to establish his own. At a national level, the critiques —monuments, legacy, government funding, and impartiality—remain similar over the years, but backlash and arguments become more particular at the local level, especially for libraries located in more populous areas. These arguments tend to revolve around land use or economics, often both. For the proposed Obama Presidential Center, strong arguments regarding economic impact, gentrification, and community benefits agreements do not deter the majority of South Side community members from wanting the center in their neighborhood. Even the issue with using Jackson Park, a public park, for a private benefit fails to dissuade most. It is this issue, however, that could set further precedents for public open space in the city.

The controversy that surrounded the Carter Presidential Library was the strong desire of nearby residents to turn an empty, desolate field into a public park, allowing for the construction of the library within its boundaries, whereas the residents near the proposed OPC are willing to give up public land that already exists. Atlantians fought tooth and nail over decades for the right to open space. Chicagoans are willingly parting with a city-wide asset for a new, shiny, big-name building. It is a stark contrast to the Chicago citizens throughout history who actively worked to protect the lakefront and create a park system to rival any in the nation.

Obama has a clear connection with the South Side of Chicago. He built his home here in the 1980s and began his political rise from the streets surrounding

Jackson Park. His decision to build a presidential library in a predominately black neighborhood reflects who he is: a black man who has worked and lived in the predominately black neighborhoods of the South Side of Chicago. His plan to have the Obama Foundation retain control over the center after constructed and leaving NARA to establish an archival depository for Obama's presidential records breaks the precedent set by the thirteen institutes preceding him.

His desire to create a world-class institute, containing a museum and facilities for the training of tomorrow's leaders, derives directly from the first presidential library as fashioned by Franklin D. Roosevelt in the early 1940s. The plans call for a complex of structures, in the same vein as Eisenhower, but Obama plans a shift away from the government oversight and archival depository that characterizes the other establishments. This added change in the organizational structure of a concept that has rigid federal laws detailing the funding, the method of transferring the facility to the government, and the architectural standards has raised questions on the interpretation of these places and their future. For Obama, it has added another level of scrutiny to the choices he has already made regarding the site.

Obama, on selecting a site situated within the confines of an urban residential neighborhood, has intensified the scrutiny the construction of his center will receive. Jimmy Carter was the first of the presidents to situate his library and museum on an urban site not owned by a university. His efforts to construct his library were met with resistance, less for the library itself and more for the construction of a roadway that the library facilitated. Similarly, those resisting the construction of the Obama Presidential Center have made it clear that they do not oppose the center being built in

Chicago. They oppose its location choice, the lack of transparency, the disregard for community sentiment, and the obscured transactions taking place.

The roadway associated with the Carter Library faced lawsuits intended to stall the completion of the project before entering into negotiations between the parties to determine a course forward. Today, the Carter Center, situated in Freedom Park and encircled by the John Lewis Freedom Parkway is the pride of the surrounding neighborhoods. The Carter Presidential Library served as a catalyst for the reuse of empty land that had remained a scar on the communities for decades and a point of contention for even longer. The amount of effort put forth in implementing the plans reflects the need for community involvement and the possibility for a middle ground to be reached. While Carter and the government sought to satisfy themselves with their vision, they were forced by the neighborhood residents to understand that they were the ones who would be living with these changes.

The history of Jackson Park as an Olmsted-designed landscape and the site of the World Columbian Exposition establishes the space as a historic asset. Its service as a public recreational space enforces the importance to the community, making it not only a historically significant space but a living one. Its inscription on the National Register of Historic Places and the protection granted public land in Chicago allows preservationists and park advocates to use this issue as the legal recourse for dealing with the myriad of issues facing the center. Unlike in most cases of gentrification or some large-scale development, there are laws, regulations, and ordinances to mitigate damages to historic, public parks.

Parks are a reflection of their neighborhoods. Many Woodlawn and Hyde Park residents respond positively to the Obama Presidential Center being built in Jackson Park and that mirrors their hopes for the future of their communities. Large-scale developments, like the proposed Obama Presidential Center, require large amounts of funding and their creation is, perforce, an investment into the spaces they occupy. It is understandable that disinvested communities would see an opportunity such as this and jump on the chance to have it. After all, what are twenty acres of parkland when compared to the opportunity of anchoring a positive change in impoverished communities?

People over things. That is how it should be but in this instance it seems shortsighted. The privatization of this corner of Jackson Park will affect the surrounding Woodlawn community economically and culturally. Woodlawn may already be feeling the effects of economic investment and gentrification driven by the combination of the continued expansion of the University of Chicago, unaffordable housing in Hyde Park, the affordability of living in Woodlawn, the proximity to amenities such as parks and the lake, easily accessible public transportation, and the proposed Obama Presidential Center.

The Obama Presidential Center is just one of many factors impacting the changing landscape of the South Side. Short term, the OPC will benefit the community, the long-term impacts are decidedly less clear. Public parks are intended as havens from city streets. Typically, poorer communities lack access to parks and the inequitable distribution of park space is harmful, continuing a cycle of

disinvestment. This cannot be said of Chicago where 98% of residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park.<sup>371</sup>

In Jackson Park, the loss of twenty acres seems negligible. It accounts for only 4% of the 500-acre park but park land is not easy to replace, and other low-income neighborhoods presented with the opportunity for investment may willingly part with park space they can ill afford to lose for the chance at change. Only 10% of Chicago's land is used for parks which falls 5% below the national median.<sup>372</sup> With museums considered an appropriate use of park space according to Illinois legislation, the percentage is not likely to decrease even as the amount of open land is reduced. The land containing the Obama Presidential Center will, for all intents and purposes, be called park space though it has been politicized and privatized.

The University of Chicago only presented site options in public parks. The institution had never infringed upon their surrounding public parks before, effectively hopping the Midway Plaisance to build university facilities in Woodlawn. The proposal to place the above-ground parking garage for the OPC campus on the Midway Plaisance was met with such disdain that the Foundation eventually agreed to move the facility belowground in Jackson Park. The issue raised is the same for both parks: a large development on historic public land. The use of Jackson Park is easier to accept because it contains the center and not a parking deck.

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<sup>371</sup> "Chicago, IL 2019 ParkScore ranking: #10," *The Trust for Public Land*, 2019, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.tpl.org/city/chicago-illinois>

<sup>372</sup> "Chicago, IL 2019 ParkScore ranking: #10," *The Trust for Public Land*, 2019, retrieved July 13, 2019, <https://www.tpl.org/city/chicago-illinois>

Limitations abound in the research and writing of this work, most notably the ongoing nature of the issue. That the work aims to take a more proactive interest in preservation matters limits the availability of information and understanding that only hindsight can provide. Time becomes another issue. Over the course of a year, research must respond to the continued evolution of the case and conclusions must shift to accommodate these changes. With that understanding, the conclusions drawn based on current events and similar past examples may not read true as time passes but hopefully, they will offer future researchers a starting point when dealing with the transitioning character of presidential libraries and city open space.

Questions continue to arise regarding the establishment of this library in Jackson Park, ranging from how involved the city was in the bidding process to how long the Obama Foundation had planned to retain control of the library before announcing their plans to the public? As the plans for construction solidify, and obstacles are passed, how will the Foundation recognize the historic land they occupy? Will they provide interpretation of their Jackson Park site? Their social media feed sounded the praises of the court ruling, an Instagram post from June 12, 2019, the day after the ruling, read: “The Obama Presidential Center Coming to Historic Jackson Park on Chicago’s South Side.”<sup>373</sup> The importance of history is clear but how likely is it that they will recognize the adverse effect they have on the historic landscape? As the facilitators of the museum and library, the Foundation is more likely to present the biased opinion that the OPC is an improvement to the landscape, not a detriment.

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<sup>373</sup> Obama Foundation, Instagram Post, June 12, 2019. [https://www.instagram.com/p/ByoGBXDg\\_54/](https://www.instagram.com/p/ByoGBXDg_54/)

Though it seems like a done deal, the OPC faces continued litigation, federal reviews, changes in city leadership, and the continued pushback from vocal opponents to certain aspects of the plan. Chicago has managed to turn away one major museum already, the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, and it could be claimed that more people enjoy Star Wars than politics. It only takes a few diligent opponents to bring about change—as seen when A. Montgomery Ward effectively halted the construction of buildings in Grant Park during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the U.S. District Court of Illinois, the city of Chicago has the legal authority to grant park land to the Obama Foundation for the purpose of a presidential center. Building the center in Jackson Park adversely impacts the nature of the historic resource while closing off valuable open space from the surrounding community as a recreational area and a reprieve from the city. The question remains and may never truly be answered: why does the Obama Presidential Center *have to be* built in Jackson Park?

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