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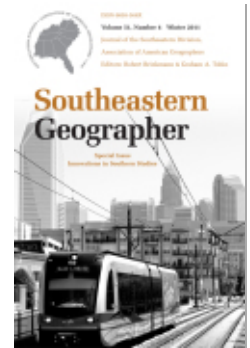
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Jim Crow, Civil Defense, and the Hydrogen Bomb

Race, Evacuation Planning, and the Geopolitics of Fear in 1950s Savannah, Georgia

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In 1950, in the beginning phases of the Cold War, the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Civil Defense Act with the goal of protecting civilian populations in case of nuclear conflict. By the mid-1950s civil defense officials were busy developing detailed mass evacuation plans for American cities seen as targets of potential Soviet hydrogen bomb attacks. The 1950s was also the height of Jim Crow racial segregation in the American South. Using these important historical contingencies as a political, social, and cultural backdrop, we explore the geographical implications of Cold War civil defense planning efforts in a 1950s Southern segregated city, Savannah, Georgia, through the dual lenses of race and the geopolitics of fear. We do this by scrutinizing Savannah's 1955 Hydrogen Bomb Evacuation Plan, particularly as it pertained to the evacuation of the city's schoolchildren. Overall, the plan detailing local civil defense planners' strategy for evacuating Savannah residents makes no specific mention of racial segregation. But upon closer examination, the plan suggests that the maintenance of Jim Crow racial segregation, as well as larger Cold War geopolitical fears playing out at the local level, were key concerns in carrying out evacuation strategies in Savannah.

En 1950, en las fases iniciales de la Guerra Fría, el Congreso de los EE.UU. pasó la Ley Federal de Defensa Civil con la meta de proteger la población civil en caso de un conflicto nuclear. Para mediados de los 1950s, los oficiales de defensa civil estaban ocupados desarrollando planes detallados de evacuación masiva para las ciudades estadounidenses que eran vistas como potenciales blancos de ataques con bombas de hidrogeno soviéticas. Los 1950s fueron también el clímax de la segregación racial de Jim Crow en el sur de los EE.UU. Utilizando estas importantes contingencias históricas como contexto político, social, y cultural, exponemos las implicaciones geográficas de los esfuerzos en planificación para la defensa civil de la Guerra Fría en la ciudad sureña segregada de los 1950s, Savannah, Georgia, a través de las visiones duales de raza y las geopolíticas del miedo. Hacemos esto al examinar el Plan de Evacuación de Bombas de Hidrogeno de 1955 de Savannah, particularmente en lo que se refería a la evacuación de los niños en las escuelas de la ciudad. En general, el plan que detalla la estrategia de los planificadores locales de defensa civil para evacuar los residentes de Savannah no hace mención específica a la segregación racial. Sin embargo, al examinarlo detenidamente, el plan sugiere que la

preservación de la segregación racial de Jim Crow, como también la preservación de los mayores miedos geopolíticos de la Guerra Fría actuando a nivel local, eran preocupaciones claves en la ejecución de las estrategias de evacuación en Savannah.

KEY WORDS: Race, Evacuation planning, Cold War, Geopolitics of Fear, American South

INTRODUCTION

The 1950s are viewed by many as a nostalgic time, a decade that tended to “focus on the good things while overlooking the bad . . . a happy, simple, placid time” (Oakley 1990, ix–x). However, the decade was not necessarily ‘happy, simple, [and] placid’ for those Americans worried about growing international tensions or for those African Americans living in the American South. The 1950s was the era of the emerging Cold War, where increased diplomatic tensions and the accelerating nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union left most Americans uncertain about their future survival. As a result, there was much concern at all levels of government as to how to protect Americans should World War III break out. In 1950, Congress passed the Federal Civil Defense Act with the goal of protecting civilian populations in case of nuclear conflict, and by the mid-1950s civil defense officials were busy developing detailed mass evacuation plans for American cities seen as targets of potential Soviet hydrogen bomb attacks (Winkler 1984; Zeigler 1985). In addition, the 1950s was anything but ‘happy, simple, [and] placid’ for millions of African Americans living in the American South, as this decade marked the height of Jim Crow ra-

cial segregation within the region (Woodward 1974; Kennedy 1990 [1959]; Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

Utilizing these twin historical contingencies as a political, social, and cultural backdrop, we explore the geographical implications of Cold War civil defense planning efforts in a 1950s Southern segregated city, Savannah, Georgia, by scrutinizing that city’s 1955 Hydrogen Bomb Evacuation Plan, particularly as it pertained to the evacuation of Savannah’s schoolchildren. Overall, the plan detailing local civil defense planners’ strategy for evacuating Savannah residents in case of a hydrogen bomb attack makes no specific mention of maintaining racial segregation. But a closer examination suggests that maintaining many of the aspects of Jim Crow segregation was of paramount importance in carrying out the evacuation plan, particularly the spatial implications of evacuating Savannah’s schoolchildren to the countryside. Notwithstanding the absurdity of enforcing Jim Crow in the face of all out nuclear war and evacuation, we examine contemporary statewide and local accounts of Cold War evacuation planning efforts to reveal clues about how the dual roles of race and the geopolitics of fear played out at the local level in this segregated Southern city.

In this article, we seek to contribute to the recent reinvigoration of Southern Studies both inside and outside the discipline of geography. Geographers have long been interested in and conducted research on the region, whether as evidenced over the past fifty years in the pages of the *Southeastern Geographer* or recent summaries of the insights about the American South collected by geographers and others

(e.g., Wilson and Pillsbury 2006). However, recent work on the American South has taken on a decidedly more 'critical turn' applying concepts and theories from critical human geography to the study of the region. Recent examples of how the 'critical turn' is being applied to the study of the American South include geographers' recent work on how and where the politics of memory and heritage are being leveraged to both reinforce and challenge the region's long-standing racial relations (e.g., Webster and Leib 2001, Leib 2002, Hoelscher 2003, Dwyer and Alderman 2008), and how marginalized populations are challenging the region's status quo and (re)making the South's spaces and places (e.g., Chapman et al. 2007, Webster et al. 2010, Cravey and Valdivia 2011, Winders 2011). In this article, we contribute to this reinvigoration of Southern Studies by bringing together recent work in critical geopolitics with critical race studies to show how Cold War fears were used to reinforce the South's Jim Crow segregation system.

RACE, THE COLD WAR, AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF FEAR IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Joanne Sharp (1996, p 557) argues that a critical reading of geopolitics "demands a geographical praxis—a refusal to accept the abstract logic of geopolitics but instead embody it in historically and culturally specific interests." Certainly Cold War attitudes at the national level, as well as Jim Crow segregation strategies in the American South, were rooted in such interests, many of which tended to overlap at multiple geographical scales. Indeed, these narratives are similar to today's 'terrorist' fears, in

that public discourse is entrenched in a culture of fear and otherness that invoke various aspects of territory, security, and otherness (Pain and Smith 2008; Koskela 2009). Nationally, Cold War insecurities and fears about a 'Soviet attack' were based upon xenophobic reactions to discursive constructions of global external threats of 'the other' invading the territory. Alongside these fears, angst among the white population towards African Americans during Jim Crow also played out as a racialized fear of 'the other' that 'threatened' the 'security' of the territory, albeit the 'threat' was internal and regionalized. Both historical narratives underlie a longstanding and diversifying interest by geographers in examining multi-scalar socio-spatial phenomena that are intimately connected to identity, place-making, and political questions about power and the role of the state (Marston 2004; Pain and Smith 2008). Hence the psycho-social manifestations of anxiety, insecurity, and uncertainty that were so much a part of the Cold War era were also deeply implicated with racial segregation in the American South, becoming powerful tools of the cultural politics of control that saturated every aspect of southern life (Hopkins and Smith 2008).

These so-called 'fears' also manifested themselves through 'moral panics,' particularly the white Southern outrage in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared segregated schools unconstitutional (Bartley 1990; Grant 1993; Leib 1995). Indeed, opposition to the *Brown* decision and a desire to maintain the Jim Crow system was expressed by many in the white southern public. Reed and Black (1993) note that in 1956, two years after the *Brown* decision, only 14

percent of white southerners approved of integrating schools. As well, Rindfuss, St. John and Reed (1978) attribute a sharp decline in white birthrates in the South twelve to eighteen months after the *Brown* decision to white Southerners' fear of bringing new children into an uncertain future in a post-Jim Crow South. Of course racial segregation is not simply a physical separation of the races, but is also a socio-spatial manifestation of power. Delaney (1998, p 95) reminds us that "segregation was socially constructed in order to reinforce relations of racial domination and subordination."

Given this challenge to white southern hegemony, white politicians in Georgia not only "responded predictably" to the *Brown* ruling (Bartley 1990, p 207), but led the way in resisting *Brown* (Grant 1993). Indeed, public statements by prominent Georgia politicians in the mid-1950s made it clear that schools would not be integrated no matter what the Supreme Court had decided. For example, in 1955, Herman Talmadge, a member of Georgia's leading political family, who had just completed two terms as governor and was about to embark on a long career in the U.S. Senate, codified his views on segregation in general and the *Brown* decision in particular in his book, *You and Segregation*. In his book, Talmadge (1955, p viii) argued that eliminating segregation would "destroy the Bill of Rights and our American way of life." The religious rhetoric surrounding the Cold War (with Soviets depicted as 'godless Communists') was also very much part of Talmadge's rationale about maintaining Jim Crow. Segregation was, according to Talmadge, 'divinely inspired'. Indeed, Talmadge linked the Civil Rights Movement with the Cold War by

suggesting that desegregation efforts were a sign of Soviet ideological success vis-a-vis the United States (see Dudziak 2000). As quoted in a 1956 issue of *Life* (Wallace 1956, p 119), one of the most popular magazines of the era:

"God advocates segregation," Governor Talmadge maintains. "There are five different races and God created them all different. He did not intend them to be mixed or He would not have separated or segregated them. Certainly history shows that nations composed of a mongrel race lose their strength and become weak, lazy and indifferent. They become easy prey to outside nations. And isn't that just exactly what the Communists want to happen in the United States?"

The city of Savannah, the then second largest city in Georgia after Atlanta, had its own complicated history of race relations (Grant 1993, Tuck 2001, Fraser 2003, Alderman 2010). Compared to other parts of the state, Savannah "had a history of slightly more enlightened racial attitudes than the rest of Georgia" (Mayer and Abramson 1995, p 35–36; see Tuck 2001). Savannah was home to the state's "strongest free Negro community before the Civil War," and during the post-bellum period had a "large, educated, and respectable black middle class" (Grant 1993, p 416). The local chapter of the NAACP was also very active, organizing a concerted post-World War II voter registration effort that greatly increased the size of Savannah's black electorate (Bolster 1972). In 1947, Savannah hired its first black police officers, becoming the first city in the 'Deep South' to integrate its police force (Mayer and Abramson 1995), and by the 1950s

Savannah's black community had successfully pressured the city to provide swimming pools, recreation centers, and new schools for African Americans (Grant 1993). Having said this, however, the city was hardly a beacon for civil rights. As W.W. Law, a prominent Savannah civil rights activist, noted about the state of race relations in Savannah at that time:

The white and the black [in Savannah] were two separate worlds . . . Blacks had no participation in the city hall and very little participation in public life—they were only allowed in as messengers, custodians . . . When a black had to go into the white world, he knew how to conduct himself—he'd have to be careful when going into a bank or a store not even to brush up against a white person (quoted in Mayer and Abramson 1995, p 36).

Hence race relations in the city, though a bit more 'civilized' than in many other places in the 'Deep South,' were still firmly embedded in Jim Crow.

These twin themes of Cold War fears and challenges to white hegemony merge from the beginning of federal efforts to create a national civil defense strategy. Of particular note is a 1950 report issued by the National Security Resources Board (the immediate predecessor to the Federal Civil Defense Administration) on the *sociological problems of civil defense from the field of morale*. The report concluded that "social disorganization" would occur following an atomic bomb attack on the U.S.. The report emphasized that an attack on multi-ethnic cities would result in violence between members of different ethnic groups or religions, resulting in race riots in the event of an atomic bomb attack. As

the report noted, "It is awesome to reflect on what would happen in one of these cities if colored people and white people were forced into close association in shelters, in homes, and even in evacuation reception centers" (quoted in Oakes 1994, p 38–39).

This begs the question of whether the Federal Government was actually interested in protecting African Americans, in the North as well as the South, in the case of a nuclear attack. As Grossman (2000) has found, there was deep suspicion within black communities over whether the Federal Civil Defense Administration was really interested in protecting black Americans, especially after President Truman appointed a staunchly pro-Jim Crow Southern ex-Governor, Florida's Millard Caldwell, as the first head of the Federal Civil Defense Administration in 1950. The NAACP attempted to block Caldwell's confirmation, an effort that was ultimately unsuccessful. Once appointed, the NAACP considered calling for African Americans to boycott civil defense activities to protest Caldwell's leadership and their belief that the Federal Government would be more interested in protecting white communities, in the North and the South, rather than black communities in case of attack.

"ESCAPE FROM THE H-BOMB":
EVACUATING SEGREGATED
SAVANNAH IN CASE OF ATTACK

Against this backdrop, Georgia politicians in the 1950s took civil defense planning very seriously. In 1951, the state legislature passed an act setting up a state civil defense agency, and in 1955 a comprehensive plan was designed and adopted in order to coordinate civil defense activities

across the state in case of attack (Hearn 1956). Following the federal government's aspiration for a mass evacuation of large cities as the primary method for protecting citizens in case of hydrogen bomb attack, the statewide plan emphasized mass evacuation of the population from probable target areas, set up evacuation quotas for communities, and prescribed traffic routes and emergency measures that "were to be used in the event of any bombing" (Diehl 1954). Since evacuation measures were built upon the assumption that urban populations would be likely targets of nuclear attack, dispersing urban populations to the countryside was deemed the most effective means of civil defense. Accordingly, five cities in Georgia were designated as potential targets: Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, and Savannah. The state was then divided into evacuation regions surrounding these urban sites (Figure 1). Georgia officials then left it up to these five cities to create their own specific evacuation plan.

Local officials in Savannah also took civil defense seriously, becoming one of the first U.S. cities to put a detailed evacuation plan in place (*Savannah Morning News* 1955c,e; Hearn 1956). An evacuation manual titled *Escape from the H-Bomb* was published and mailed to all Savannah and Chatham County residents (Figure 2).¹ The plan divided Savannah and Chatham County into four evacuation zones, where residents in each zone were instructed to drive their cars to a designated "escape-way," which were main thoroughfares that would eventually lead them out of the city (Figure 3). Civil defense officials would then receive motorists at "reception centers" scattered throughout the countryside. According to the manual, the goal was "to get away [from Savannah] as fast

as possible and as far as away as twenty miles" (Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955).

While the plan urged Savannahians to evacuate using their automobiles, this left the question of how to evacuate Savannah's schoolchildren in the case of an attack during a school day. The answer was to incorporate within the plan a detailed description of how students from each of Savannah's schools would be evacuated, and to which community in the evacuation area school children would be sent (Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955, Hearn 1956). Most schools would evacuate children en masse by either marching them or bussing them to a predetermined railroad site, and then whisking them away to their evacuation destination. The use of railroad cars for evacuation purposes was considered quite innovative, and Savannah's civil defense agency made arrangements with major railroads in the Savannah area to have railroad cars ready as needed for evacuation purposes (*Savannah Morning News* 1955b,d; 1956a,b). In 1955 and 1956, practice evacuations were even carried out in the Chatham County schools (*Savannah Morning News* 1955b, 1956b; *Georgia Alert* 1955).²

Since Savannah was similar to most other southern cities in that the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown* was promptly ignored, and both public and private schools were still segregated, how did the hydrogen bomb evacuation plan address this fact? Although the Savannah school evacuation plan did not specifically mention racial segregation, it does appear that planning officials took the institutional barriers of Jim Crow into consideration when creating the spatiality of the evacuation plan. The plan called for the evacuation of 32,240 Savannah-Chatham County



Figure 1. Civil Defense Regions of Georgia. Source: General Order Number Thirteen, Revised (Operational Plan No. 1). Atlanta, GA: State of Georgia, Department of Defense, Civil Defense Division (Issued 1 January 1955, Revised 1 January 1956).

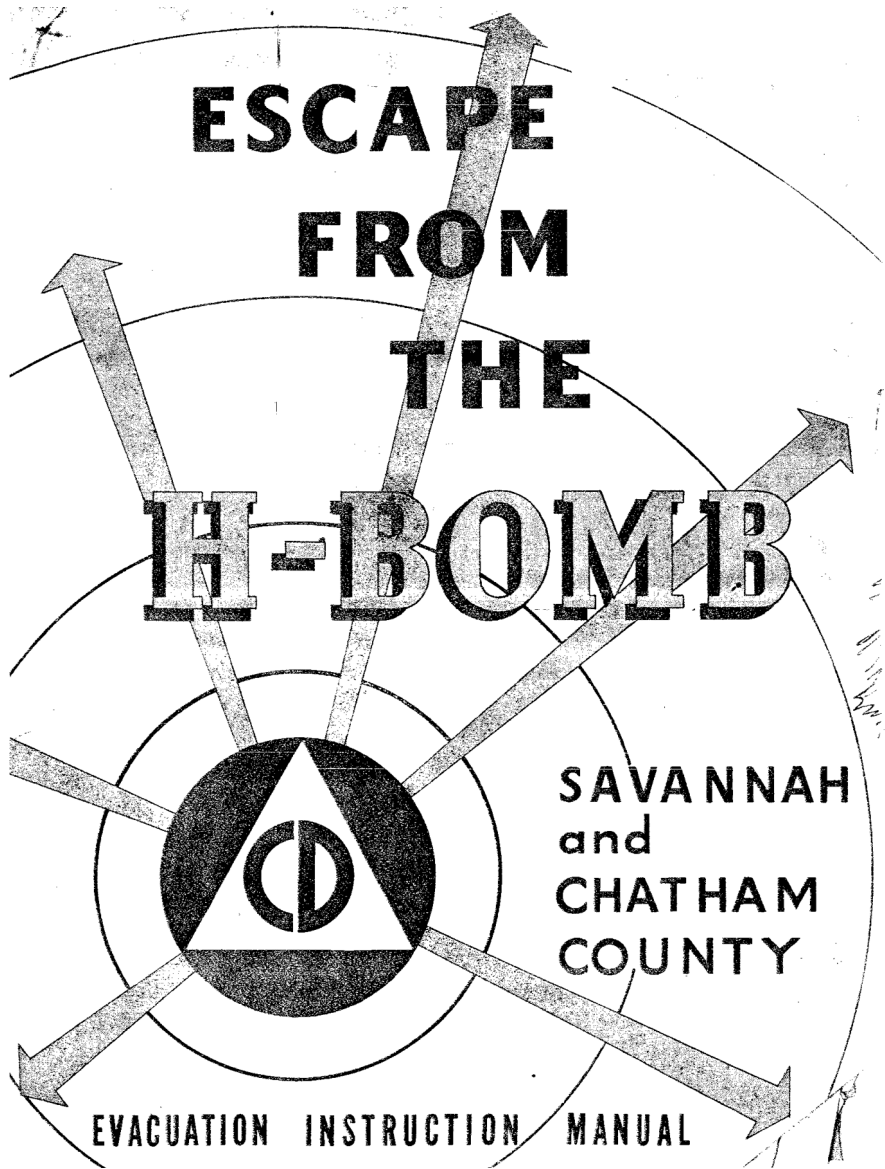


Figure 2. Escape from the H-BOMB.

Title cover of the evacuation instruction manual for Savannah and Chatham County (1955).

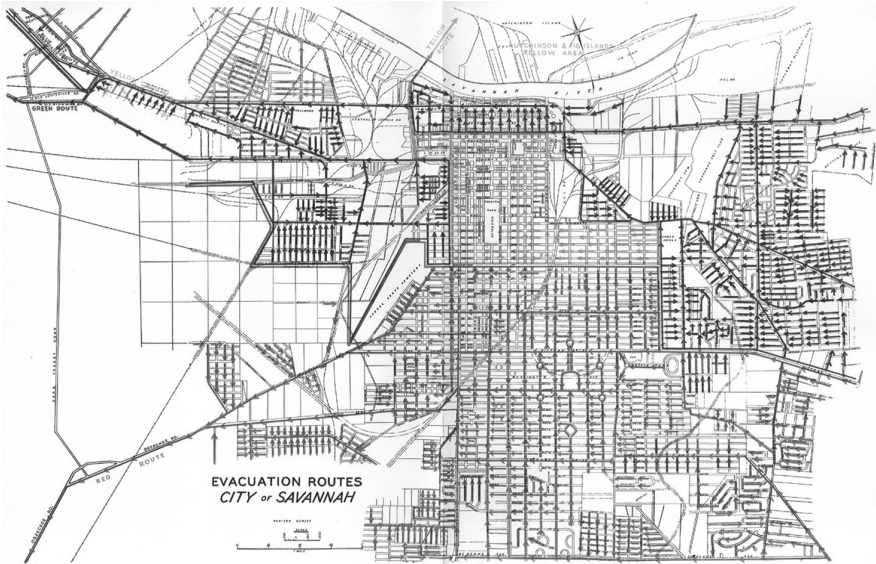


Figure 3: Evacuation Routes for Savannah-Chatham County.

Source: Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955.

schoolchildren to one of 42 outlying communities throughout southeastern Georgia (one additional community lay across the Savannah River in South Carolina). The vast majority of these evacuation destinations were to be racially segregated, with outlying communities receiving only white students or African American students. Between 82.3 percent and 86.4 percent of students were to be sent to communities that received either only white students or only African American students.³ The numbers of schoolchildren sent to each community ranged from 38 white students to be sent to Ridgeland, South Carolina, to 2,219 black students to be sent to McIntosh, Georgia, and 3,124 white students to be sent to Statesboro, Georgia. Of the 43 'receiving' sites, 39 were to receive either only white students or only black students, while only 4 sites were to receive school-

children of both races.⁴ Thirty-one of the thirty-nine segregated sites were designated for white schoolchildren, while eight were designated for black schoolchildren (Figure 4).

The socio-spatial pattern of the plan was not solely an artifact of residential segregation (that is, blacks living in close proximity to one railroad line, while whites lived in close proximity to another). Though both black and white schoolchildren were to be evacuated together along the major railroad lines, the tenets of Jim Crow would have made it unlikely that students would have mixed on the trains once they were aboard. Indeed, the evacuation plan detailed the number of railroad cars necessary to evacuate each segregated school, suggesting that racially sorted schoolchildren were to be assigned to specific railroad cars by school (Hearn 1956, p 101–109).

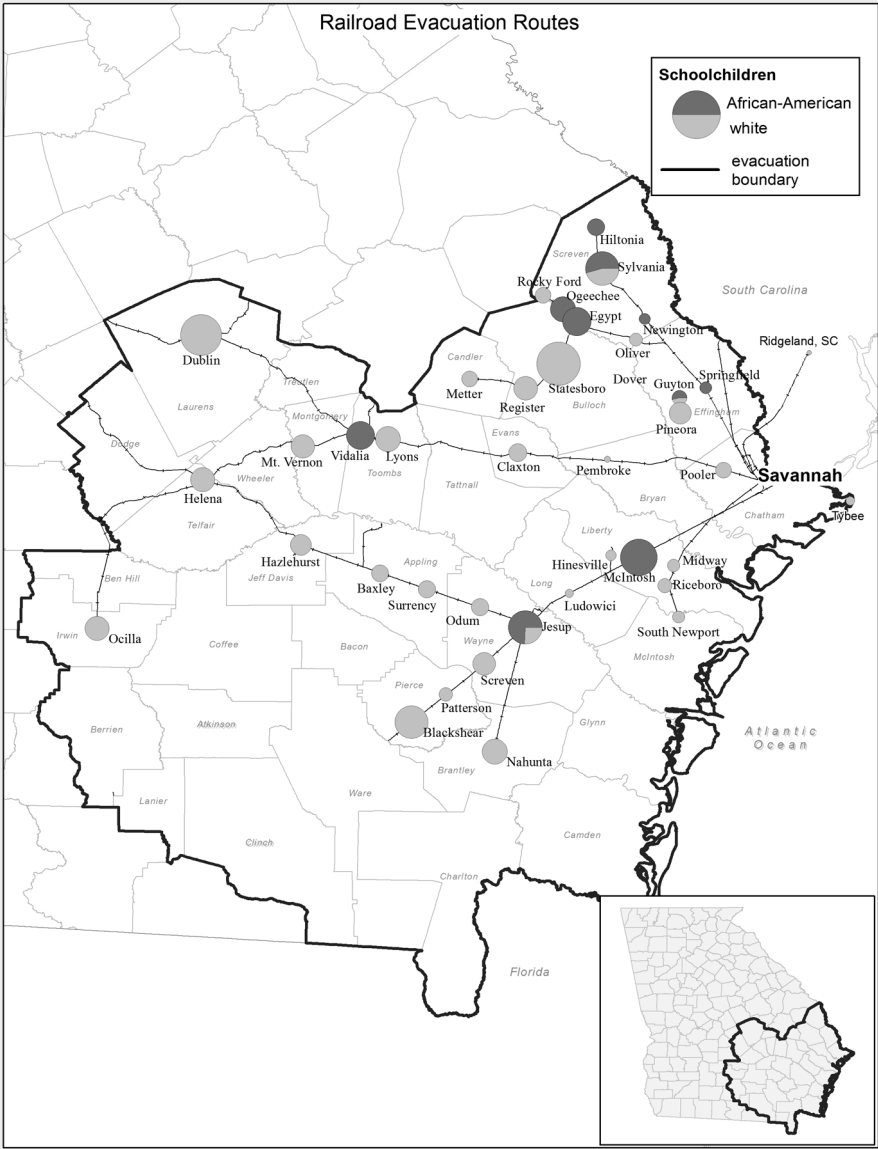


Figure 4. Map of evacuation plan by railroad for Savannah-Chatham County schoolchildren.
Source: Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955, Hearn 1956. Cartography by authors.

Table 1. Population of communities receiving either only white or only black students.

	Total population greater than 1,000	Total population less than 1,000
Communities receiving only white schoolchildren	18	10
Communities receiving only black schoolchildren	1	6

Calculated from Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955, Hearn 1956, and Bureau of the Census 1961a, 1961b.

While Platt et al. (1986) convincingly demonstrate that it would have been impossible to successfully evacuate tens or hundreds of thousands of urban residents and house them in rural host communities in case of a nuclear attack, the scalar differences between the communities that were supposed to receive either only white students or only black students suggests that white students may have benefitted from being sent to larger communities, based on the assumption that larger communities have more capacity and emergency infrastructure in place in order to provide the services needed to meet the needs of dislocated populations. It is interesting that approximately two-thirds of those communities receiving only white students had populations of more than 1,000, while only one community receiving only black children had a population larger than 1,000 (Table 1). While there were issues involving accurate population counts with the U.S. Census in small rural communities, the numbers do suggest that many more white schoolchildren were to be sent to larger communities than were black schoolchildren. For example, Dublin, Georgia, with a total population of nearly 14,000, was to receive 2,781 white schoolchildren, while the town of McIntosh, Georgia, with a population of less than 1,000, was to re-

ceive 2,219 black schoolchildren. In the Jim Crow South, a safe assumption can be made that racial segregation influenced the provision of services in the host communities. Comparisons between numbers of schoolchildren evacuated to receiving sites with total population by race in host communities suggest that white schoolchildren might have been more easily sheltered than black schoolchildren. For example, fifteen of twenty-four communities receiving only white schoolchildren had larger white populations than the number of students they were receiving, while only one of five communities receiving only black students had a larger black population than the number of black students they were to receive.⁵ These geographical disparities suggest that communities receiving only white students were better situated to handle schoolchildren evacuees than communities receiving only black students.

JIM CROW AND CIVIL DEFENSE

While the socio-spatial pattern resulting from the school evacuation plan suggests an implied but systematic maintenance of Jim Crow segregation, the strategy may have also been a conscious decision on the part of evacuation planners, particularly in light

of the recently decided *Brown* decision. Though the printed record does not expressly mention racial segregation, other social elements suggest that racial segregation may have been on the minds of many southern whites.⁶ Racist intent of activities by white officials in the 1950s South was often-times not a matter of public record. But the implications were there, partly because the Jim Crow system was a hegemonic social institution where the motives of those seeking to perpetuate segregation did not have to be explicitly stated for them to be understood (Leib 1995; George and Webster 1997). Thus an empirical inquiry into the meaning behind 'official' communications from evacuation planning officials is appropriate. This is especially fitting in this case, since a small item in the *Savannah Morning News* (1955a) noted that C.B. Bryant, a local teacher, was named to Savannah's civil defense council as a committee representative in charge of evacuation planning for all "Negro public schools,"⁷ suggesting that evacuation planners were assigned to create school evacuation plans of students in segregated schools based on the race of the students.

To delve into this possibility further, we examined contemporary accounts of civil defense planning in Georgia in general by scrutinizing eight years of content (1951–1958) in *Georgia Alert*, the state's Civil Defense Division's monthly newsletter/magazine, and Savannah in particular by examining reports on evacuation planning efforts printed in Savannah's main morning newspaper, the *Savannah Morning News*.

The *Georgia Alert* was an official state government organ of public communication for Georgia residents, reporting on civil defense activities throughout the

state, as well as providing suggestions and tips on civil defense planning and training. In the hundreds of pages that were disseminated to the public over the years, we found no mention of civil defense activities among the state's African American citizens (though *Georgia Alert* did, however, contain a patronizing and condescending article about the civil defense efforts of Seminole Indians in Florida [*Georgia Alert* 1953], along with numerous jokes, some printed at the expense of women, that were used as filler material). There are two possible explanations for this omission. The first is that the magazine's authors did not feel compelled to differentiate between whites and African Americans in their stories on state and local civil defense events and activities. The second possibility is that African Americans were invisible to the magazine's authors.

To explore this issue further, we analyzed the 209 photographs printed in *Georgia Alert* from 1951 to 1958. While recognizing the inherent irony in seeking visual evidence of socially constructed racial categories, our analysis found no photos of African Americans. Furthermore, two of these photos suggest that the lack of African Americans in the pages of *Georgia Alert* may not have been a mere coincidence. The first photo (Figure 5) depicts the all white staff of the Georgia Civil Defense Division in 1951 proudly displaying the racially divisive Confederate battle flag (see Leib and Webster 2007). A second photo from 1952 shows members of the Civil Defense agency's Religious Advisory Committee (Figure 6). The purpose of the six member committee was to transmit information to other religious leaders and congregations throughout the state in



Figure 5. Georgia's Civil Defense Staff in 1951.

Source: Georgia Alert, November 1951:p.6.



Figure 6. Civil Defense Agency's Religious Advisory Committee.

Source: Georgia Alert, February 1952:p.5.

case of nuclear attack. Given the importance of religion in southern life in general (Manis 2002; Silk and Walsh 2008) and Georgia in particular (Webster 1997, 2000; Chapman et al. 2007), it was imperative that civil defense officials had the full cooperation of church leaders in order to impress upon the general public the importance of civil defense planning. But despite the strength, number and cultural importance of black churches during Jim Crow in the South, the committee had no African American representation (though one Rabbi served on the committee despite the state's small Jewish community)⁸

In addition to examining contemporary accounts of civil defense planning at the statewide level, we also reviewed contemporary newspaper accounts within Savannah itself. The *Savannah Morning News*, the city's main morning newspaper, provided extensive coverage of the 1955 and 1956 practice drills of the evacuation plan in Savannah's schools (1955b, 1956a, 1956b). Of the eleven schools mentioned in the stories in the *Savannah Morning News* about the practice drills, only three were African American, two of which were labeled as having "problems" with their evacuation drills that "marred" the otherwise outstanding evacuation drills in other schools. One such "problem" school was Savannah State College, a historically black college that at the time was the city's only four-year college. The *Savannah Morning News* (1956b) account of the Savannah State College practice drill emphasized the speed in which students were evacuated from their buildings. According to the newspaper report, students and faculty at Savannah State organized their evacuation "motorcade" as requested, but "protocol" resulted in a considerable time

lag. While three black schools were discussed in the *Savannah Morning News*'s stories about evacuation drills, black students were not depicted in any of the photos that accompanied these stories. All six photos accompanying these articles did, however, depict white students being evacuated (*Savannah Morning News* 1955b, 1956b).

CONCLUSION

Facing the total destruction of Savannah and the surrounding region, it is both absurd and unremarkable that evacuation planners would be concerned enough to create an evacuation plan that sought to preserve Jim Crow racial segregation. It is absurd because a hydrogen bomb dropped on the city would likely result in a massive number of deaths that would not discriminate based upon one's race. However, the tenets of the plan are also unremarkable in that it did not appear to have escaped the long fingers of the Jim Crow system of institutional segregation. In our readings of public documents and newspaper accounts, the overriding questions about the spatiality of the evacuation plan revolved around the discovery of issues related to racial segregation or inclusion. Given the sensitive nature of race relations during the time, it would be difficult to establish direct cause and effect between public policy and Jim Crow segregation. Indeed, those in the white hegemonic power structure that were behind planning efforts would have been foolish to incorporate such explicit discrimination. But what is notable here is that what is omitted often-times reveals more about social power than what is 'officially' included. In this case, it is the African American population in places like Savannah that appear to have come up

short in terms of evacuation planning. Of course this is not much of a surprise, considering the cultural and political climate of the American South during the period. The mid to late 1950s was a time of massive resistance among whites, in part because of the then-recent *Brown* decision striking down segregation in the region's schools. Attempts to ignore Jim Crow as an anachronistic artifact that might hinder the evacuation process would have been unthinkable to most whites at the time.

Since Jim Crow was about institutionalizing power relationships that manifested themselves spatially, there is no reason to think that it would not have applied to 'on the ground' evacuation planning, especially at a time when the hegemonic order was being openly questioned by the courts and southern white politicians were fighting back. The system of racial segregation was the hegemonic order of the day, so it was more than likely that the systemic social and physical barriers of the plan were taken for granted in the minds of evacuation planners in Savannah. For Savannah's schoolchildren at least, the socio-spatial strategy of the evacuation plan appears to have ensured that the "close association" between blacks and whites warned about in the 1950 National Security Resources Board report would not be allowed to occur in case of a hydrogen bomb attack.

NOTES

1. The evacuation manual for Savannah and Chatham County was first published and distributed to the public in 1955. The copy of the manual in our possession (*Escape from the H-Bomb*) is undated, except for the map showing evacuation routes from Savannah, which is dated 1955. Data on the school evacuation plan

for Savannah and Chatham County have been taken from the copy of the Savannah plan reproduced in the statewide evacuation manual issued on January 1, 1956 (Hearn 1956, 93–110). This data was then cross-checked with Chatham-Savannah Defense Council (1955). The lead author would like to thank Terri Harper who first brought the existence of the Savannah hydrogen bomb evacuation manual to his attention.

2. Reporting on a May 1956 practice drill, the *Savannah Morning News* (1956b) noted that "Savannah reportedly is the only city in the country to have a rail evacuation system planned for schoolchildren, and several state and federal civil defense officials were on hand to witness the plan in action."

3. A range of percentages are given because the evacuation manual is not clear about the exact numbers of African American schoolchildren that were to be evacuated to the community of Oliver, Georgia.

4. One possible explanation for the towns of Jesup and Sylvania receiving both black and white students may come from the fact that they were the largest communities to be used for student evacuations on their respective railroad lines (calculated from Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955, Hearn 1956, Bureau of the Census 1961a). Given their relatively large sizes, students may have been shuttled from their trains to evacuation centers within both white and black communities in these towns. This would be significant, since between 65 percent and 91 percent of students destined for the four communities receiving both white and black school children were being sent to either Jesup or Sylvania.

5. School evacuation data was compared with race and population data for communities from the 1960 Census. Unfortunately, exact population counts by race were reported for only some communities with populations less

than 1,000. Hence not every small community could be analyzed in terms of population by race.

6. No mention of race (other than identifying which schools are "colored") appears in either the Savannah evacuation manual (Chatham-Savannah Defense Council 1955) or in the state-wide evacuation plan (Hearn 1956).

7. It is interesting that the *Savannah Morning News* index for 1955 felt compelled to list the race of Mr. Bryant. The entry in the index for this article reads: "Civil defense aides named: The Rev F J Donahue and C B Bryant (Negro)" (p 181). One can only speculate as to why the person compiling the index felt so compelled.

8. The inclusion of a Rabbi on the board is noteworthy, given that Jewish communities in Georgia and throughout the South were the victims of discrimination and violence in the 1950s from elements within the region's white Christian communities (see Sheskin 2000, Greene 1996).

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