

ANTOINE GRAVES HOMES
126 Hilliard Street
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

HABS GA-2425

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
100 Alabama Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ANTOINE GRAVES HOMES

HABS GA-2425

Location: 126 Hilliard Street, Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Located on the east side of Hilliard Street, and bounded by William Holmes Borders Sr., Drive on the east, Pittman Place on the north, and a medical center building on the south.

USGS Northwest Atlanta Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16S 743061 3737637.

Present Owner: Atlanta Housing Authority
230 John Wesley Dobbs Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Present Occupants: Vacant

Present Use: Public housing project area to be redeveloped

Significance: Built in 1964-65, Antoine Graves Homes holds significance as architect John Portman's first atrium building design, an architectural concept that became popular after Portman's Hyatt Regency Hotel was built in Atlanta just two years later. Additionally, Antoine Graves Homes holds significance for its association with the Civil Rights era in Atlanta. The construction of Antoine Graves Homes occurred in the midst of a transformative period in Atlanta race relations and politics, as its location on a designated urban renewal site shifted public housing policy in Atlanta at a time when the city was resisting desegregation.

Antoine Graves Homes was named after Antoine Graves, an important African American community leader in the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1964-65. The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta and the U.S. Public Housing Administration signed the contract for the federal loan for the construction in 1961. The Atlanta City Urban Renewal Committee awarded the construction contract in early April 1964. The groundbreaking ceremony was held April 27, 1964, with construction complete in December 1965. The building was fully occupied by the time of the dedication ceremony, held on May 8, 1966.
2. Architects: The firm of Edwards and Portman of Atlanta, with associate architect Henry D. Norris, were responsible for the design of the building. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) award of merit was given to Norris for the Antoine Graves Homes in 1966.¹ The landscape architect was Edward L. Daugherty, also of Atlanta.

Edwards and Portman was formed as a partnership between Atlanta architects John Portman and H. Griffith Edwards from 1956 to 1968. H. Griffith Edwards was born in Columbia, South Carolina in 1907, and graduated in 1930 from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He later became a professor in the Georgia Institute of Technology's College of Architecture from 1946 to 1969. From 1940 to 1941, Edwards was partner in the firm Edwards & Goodwyne of Atlanta, and from 1941 to 1955, he was principal of the firm, H. Griffith Edwards. After retiring from Edwards and Portman, in which he was partner from 1956 to 1968, he continued as a consulting architect at John Portman and Associates. Edwards died in 1972.²

Born in Walhalla, South Carolina in 1924, John Portman received his Bachelors of Architecture degree from the

¹ American Institute of Architects (AIA), *1970 American Architects Directory*, (R.R. Bowker, LLC), 671.

² *Ibid.*, 248.

Georgia Institute of Technology in 1950. Following Edwards' retirement in 1968, Portman became president of John Portman and Associates. Portman gained notoriety for acting as both the developer and the architect on his projects, as well as for popularizing the atrium concept in large-scale hotel developments. Portman has been a prominent figure in Atlanta development beginning with the construction of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in 1967, his first hotel designed with an atrium in his Peachtree Center downtown complex.

Henry D. Norris was born in Brookline, Massachusetts on August 14, 1913. After attending the University of Miami, Norris served as partner in the firm Locatelli-Norris & Co. from 1947 to 1950. Starting in 1950, Norris served as the president of his own firm, Henry D. Norris, based in Atlanta.³ Norris gained notoriety for designing traditional, contemporary, and modern style residences in Atlanta during the 1960s.⁴

Landscape architect Edward Daugherty was born on October 20, 1926 in Summerville, South Carolina, but was raised in Atlanta, Georgia. Daugherty studied architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology and landscape architecture at the University of Georgia.⁵ He graduated from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in the early 1950s. Daugherty is credited as one of the first landscape architects in the southeast to practice landscape design as part of the Modern movement. Daugherty worked with noted landscape architects Thomas Church, Garrett Eckbo, and James Rose. Daugherty's practice has been located in Atlanta since the 1950s.

³ American Institute of Architects (AIA), *1970 American Architects Directory*, (R.R. Bowker, LLC), 671.

⁴ Burns, Leigh, Staci Catron-Sullivan, Jennifer Holcombe, Amie Spinks, Scott Thompson, Amy Waite, Matt Watts-Edwards, and Diana Welling, "Atlanta Housing 1944 to 1965, Case Studies in Historic Preservation, Georgia State University, Spring 2001," 63.

⁵ Tunnell, Spencer, "Edward Daugherty (b. 1926)," *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, article published March 31, 2006. Electronic document, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org>, accessed July 26, 2010.

3. Original and subsequent owners: Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, 1965 to present.
4. Original and subsequent uses: Public housing for the elderly for the Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta.
5. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Contractor: H.A. Lott, Inc., Houston, Texas
Mechanical Engineer: Britt Alderman, Jr.
Electrical Engineer: Morris E. Harrison
6. Original Plans and construction: The architectural plans, dated September 24, 1963 and titled "Atlanta Housing Authority Project GA-6-11," include elevations, longitudinal cross-sections, landscape construction plan, floor plans, stair and elevator details, door schedule, door and window details, reflected ceiling plans and details, roof plan, and wall sections and details.⁶ The building has a rectangular form, with eight stories and narrow projections on its east and west ends. The brick and concrete façade is characterized by rows of evenly spaced balconies that indicate each floor from the exterior. The entrance is located on the west side, while the large expanse of balconies face north and south. Besides the architectural drawings, structural, mechanical, and electrical drawings are archived at the Portman and Associates offices in Atlanta.
7. Alterations and additions: No additions or other significant alterations were implemented to modify Antoine Graves Homes. At the time the project team photographed the building, it was being prepared for demolition. Windows and doors had already been removed; it is likely these had been replaced over the years, which are common alterations for public housing buildings. The Atlanta Housing Authority constructed the Antoine Graves Annex building in 1974 to the

⁶ Portman and Edwards with Henry D. Norris, "Apartment for the Elderly, for Atlanta Housing Authority, Project GA-6-11, Antoine Graves Homes." Building plans on file with the Atlanta Housing Authority. Plans dated September 24, 1963; correlated with as-built prints December 8, 1965.

immediate north of Antoine Graves Homes, eliminating the need to construct additions on the earlier building.

B. Historical Context:

Antoine Graves Homes is an eight-story mid-rise constructed in Atlanta over the course of 1964 and 1965 for housing low-income seniors. The building features John Portman's first atrium building design, an architectural concept that became hugely popular after Portman's Hyatt Regency hotel was built in Atlanta just two years later. Additionally, the construction of Antoine Graves Homes occurred in the midst of a transformative period in Atlanta race relations and politics. The building's location on a designated urban renewal site near the historically black Auburn Avenue neighborhood, just east of the central business district, signaled a shift in the official planning policies adopted by the city's white political and business leadership after World War II that had previously disallowed construction of public housing on urban renewal property and sought to remove black residents from the downtown central business district to residential areas on the west side of Atlanta.⁷ Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Antoine Graves Homes and its white counterpart, the John O. Chiles Homes, were opened to senior residents as segregated housing.

Early Advocates for Housing Reform in the United States

As immigrants and rural residents flooded into American cities searching for employment during the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, development of low-income housing was primarily left to real estate entrepreneurs. Although religious-based institutions and local philanthropic organizations, such as Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, sought to alleviate the overcrowded slum conditions of the urban poor, politicians and social reformers alike remained largely deferential to private interests. Aside from the minimum standard housing codes passed by the City of New York in 1867, 1879, and 1901, government efforts at the state or federal

⁷ Ronald H. Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*. (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1996), 71.

levels to address problems with substandard housing were largely absent.⁸

By the 1920s, a waning of private investment in low-income residential construction, coupled with the limited success of an emergency housing program at the end of World War I had prompted a new generation of American housing activists to call for a larger role for the federal government.⁹ One of the most prominent early reformers was Edith Elmer Wood, who gained international recognition with her thesis *The Housing of The Unskilled Wage Earner*, published in 1919. Wood was one of the first to argue against restrictive housing codes that had a correlation with higher rental rates for poor tenants. She also declared that the country's reliance on private enterprise, as a sole provider of low-cost housing, was inadequate and appealed for a government subsidized housing program to be instituted as a permanent policy goal in the United States.¹⁰

The Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), founded in 1923 by New York architect Clarence Stein, joined Wood in her petition for a public housing program. Although loosely organized and small in number, the RPAA proved to be a highly influential voice in planning and housing matters. The group counted among its members: critic and journalist Lewis Mumford, planner Catherine Bauer, architect Henry Wright, conservationist Benton McKaye, and Edith Wood herself.¹¹

Wood and those in the RPAA looked to Europe as a guide for developing a comprehensive, low-cost housing plan in the United States. The Social Housing Act of 1901 in the Netherlands was one of the first initiatives on the continent that provided for subsidized housing to be built by municipal governments and non-profit organizations in cities with populations exceeding 10,000 residents.¹² The British Parliament passed the 1919 Housing Act

⁸ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 219.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁰ Edith Elmer Wood, *The Housing of The Unskilled Wage Earner* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), 257-260.

¹¹ Richard Pommer, "The Architecture of Urban Housing in the United States during the Early 1930s," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (December, 1987), 236.

¹² Anthony M. Tung, *Preserving the World's Great Cities* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 200), 225.

as part of an effort to address a crippling housing shortage and lack of affordable housing for returning veterans after World War I. Along with the subsequent 1923 Housing Act, the two programs accounted for construction of approximately 760,000 rent-subsidized units in the United Kingdom prior to 1927.¹³

Even more influential were the large-scale German housing settlements, known as "Siedlung," built on public land at the outskirts of cities during the Weimar Republic in the mid-to late 1920s. Seeking to fulfill both a functional and social need, German architects and planners forged a synthesis of the modernist emphasis on prefabrication and standardized residential plans (coined "Existenzminimum") with the utopian tenets of the English planner Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, which espoused the creation of decentralized and self-sufficient, suburban edge cities. Following her travels to Germany and Europe in the early 1930s, Catherine Bauer wrote *Modern Housing* in 1934, which chronicled contemporary developments such as Ernst May's Römerstadt estates (1925-30) in Frankfurt, the Dammerstock project (1928) in Karlsruhe by Walter Gropius and Otto Haesler, and Martin Wagner and Bruno Taut's Horseshoe housing development (1925) in Berlin. These German housing projects were generally characterized by uniform rows of apartment houses and community buildings reaching no more than four or five stories in height. The buildings were oriented toward the sun, interspersed with landscaped areas, and surrounded by large greenbelt tracts of publicly owned land.¹⁴

The New Deal and Public Works Administration Housing Division

With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and collapse of the real estate market a greater sense of urgency was felt among housing reformers and the public at large about the need for a federal housing program. The motivation came with the presidential election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 and the implementation of his New Deal program. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) was passed in June 1933 as part of Roosevelt's First One Hundred Days in office. Designed to create jobs and provide low-income housing, the legislation authorized the Public Works Administration (PWA) Housing

¹³ A.E. Holmans, *Housing Policy in Britain* (London: Wolfeboro, N.H., 1987), 83.

¹⁴ H. Peter Oberlander and Eva Newbrun, *Houser: The Life and Work of Catherine Bauer* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 64-66.

Division under Interior Secretary Harold Ickes to lend money to private limited-dividend corporations for slum clearance and housing development or, if need be, to buy, condemn, and build subsidized housing itself. Some limited-dividend projects were built between 1933 and 1935 before the program was abandoned in February 1934 and the PWA assumed direct control of federal housing development and slum clearance became a secondary objective.¹⁵ On November 29, 1935, Techwood Homes, a segregated whites-only complex located in Atlanta, Georgia, had the distinction of being the first PWA housing project in the country to be dedicated by President Roosevelt (however the complex was not ready for occupancy until January 1936).¹⁶

Two years after the start of the program, Harold Ickes and the Housing Division of the PWA were subjected to criticism from both sides of the federally subsidized housing debate. Advocates were unhappy with Ickes' centralization of power within the PWA, the glacial pace of the administration's funding and construction schedules, and high minimum rent rates charged to tenants. Opponents such as the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) and the Chamber of Commerce viewed subsidized housing as socialistic and feared the PWA's power of eminent domain and role as a direct builder, which had become the primary vehicle for creating low income housing development and slum clearance following the collapse of the limited-dividend project plan.¹⁷

Creation of the U.S. Housing Authority

In January 1935, the Federal Sixth Circuit Court handed down a decision in the case *United States v. Certain Lands in the City of Louisville* that effectively restricted the PWA by declaring its condemnation powers for the construction of public housing to be unconstitutional.¹⁸ Housing advocates, many of whom had anticipated potential legal problems with the hastily written legislation authorizing the PWA, had tried and failed to craft a

¹⁵ Paul R. Lusignan, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949, " *Cultural Resource Management (CRM)* 25 (2002): 36.

¹⁶ Florence Fleming Corley, "Atlanta's Techwood and University Homes Projects," *Atlanta Historical Society. Atlanta History*, 31(Winter 1987-88):26.

¹⁷ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 69.

¹⁸ Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 103.

permanent public housing policy bill as early as 1934. Following Franklin Roosevelt's landslide re-election in the fall of 1936, proponents redoubled their efforts. The result was the 1937 U.S. Housing Act (also popularly known as the Wagner-Steagall Act after the bill's two sponsors Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York and Representative Henry B. Steagall of Alabama), which led to the creation of the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA).¹⁹

The new legislation was greatly influenced by the input of housing reformer and urban planner Catherine Bauer and sought to rectify many of the shortcomings that critics felt had hampered the work of the PWA. The USHA was created as an independent agency outside the authority of Harold Ickes and the Interior Department with Nathan Straus, former head of the New York City Housing Authority, appointed as the first administrator.²⁰ The 1937 Housing Act also offered a more decentralized approach to federal housing than its predecessor. Under the USHA, the federal government provided financial, technical, and design assistance to local housing authorities, which were charged with the responsibility of initiating, building, and operating their own projects. Between 1937 and 1940, the USHA was responsible for the development of over 370 housing projects at a cost of about \$540 million.²¹

By 1938, thirty-three states had passed enabling legislation that allowed for the establishment of local authorities.²² The Georgia General Assembly passed the Housing Authorities Law during the 1937 session and Governor Eurith D. Rivers signed it into law on March 30 of that year. The law provided for the creation of the State Housing Authority Board, which was composed of the State Treasurer, the State School Superintendent, the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the State Planning Board and the Governor. The State Housing Authority Board was responsible for allocating federal funds and holding final approval over local housing authorities. Shortly after the passage of the Georgia Housing Authorities Law in 1937, local authorities were established in Atlanta, Athens,

¹⁹ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 223.

²⁰ Oberlander and Newbrun, *Houser: The Life and Work of Catherine Bauer*, 155-156.

²¹ Lusignan, "Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949," 37.

²² Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 224.

Augusta, and Savannah. The cities of Columbus, Macon, and Rome followed suit in 1938.²³

The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta

As the nation's first public housing development, Techwood Homes was viewed at the time as a great success, and as President Roosevelt stated at the dedication ceremony, "the first slum clearance" project in the country.²⁴ University Homes, the African American counterpart to the 604-unit Techwood Homes, was a similar development completed one year after Techwood Homes, in 1937. University Homes, with 675 units, was built in the Atlanta University Center area, just southwest of the commercial downtown.²⁵ Two areas identified as slums were cleared for both these developments: Techwood Flats, or Tanyard Bottom, was cleared for Techwood Homes and Beaver Slide was cleared for University Homes. Dilapidated frame dwellings with a lack of sanitation and running water had, in part, prompted the massive demolition effort. Public reaction to the idea of public housing varied, but the majority of Atlanta agreed with the concept of slum clearance.²⁶ Although both public housing developments were, in theory, to be comparable to one another, the loan amount provided by the federal government was over \$1 million less for the larger University Homes, reflecting the systemic inequities of the Jim Crow South.²⁷

Just as University Homes was being completed, the push to establish a local housing authority in Atlanta grew despite opposition by Mayor William B. Hartsfield, who was concerned about the prospect of the city taking on the additional expense. Political pressure, propelled by the success of Techwood and University Homes and by a large fire that destroyed thirty houses near Grady Hospital in March 1938, gave Hartsfield the

²³ Coleman Woodbury, ed., *Housing Yearbook 1938* (Chicago: National Association of Housing Officials, 1938), 54-55.

²⁴ Garrett, Franklin M., *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events*, Volume II (Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1954), 909.

²⁵ Eric Hill Associates, Inc., "City of Atlanta, Georgia Report on the Relocation of Individuals, Families, and Business," Atlanta Community Improvement Program, September 1966, 149.

²⁶ Ivey, John E., Jr., Nicholas J. Demerath, and Woodrow W. Breland. *Building Atlanta's Future*, (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1948), 174-175.

²⁷ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 908-910.

incentive to create a municipal housing authority on May 27, 1938.

On June 11, Mayor Hartsfield commissioned the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), with Charles F. Palmer appointed to serve a five-year term as chairman. A real estate businessman by trade, Palmer managed and owned several downtown office buildings. He was a leading advocate for slum clearance in the city as a means of protecting property values and was responsible for the redevelopment of Techwood Flats.²⁸ Other originating members included a select group of prominent Atlanta businessmen: James D. Robinson, Jr., the vice-president of Trust Company of Georgia, A. Robert Dorsen, president of the J.M. High Company, Frank G. Etheridge, a West End business owner, and O.M. Harper, construction superintendent and member of the Atlanta United Brotherhood of Carpenter's Union, Local 225. Shortly after the creation of the commission, members traveled to Washington, D.C., to advocate for the new program. The U.S. Housing Authority ultimately allocated \$9 million for the AHA, out of the congressionally-appropriated national sum of \$800 million.²⁹

The AHA approved the construction of six additional public housing developments between 1936 and 1941: John Hope Homes (606 units), Clark Howell Homes (630 units), Capitol Homes (815 units), John J. Eagan Homes (548 units), Herndon Homes (520 units), and Grady Homes (616 units).³⁰ John Hope Homes, built for African Americans and adjacent to University Homes, and Clark Howell Homes, built for whites and adjacent to Techwood Homes, were constructed in 1940. The following year, construction was completed for Eagan Homes and Herndon Homes. Both were located west of downtown and built for African Americans. In 1941, Capitol Homes (815 units) was built for white occupancy near the state capitol. Grady Homes, located just east of downtown, was completed for African Americans a year later in 1942.³¹

²⁸ Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1989), 15-16.

²⁹ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 908-910.

³⁰ Eric Hill Associates, Inc., "City of Atlanta, Georgia Report on the Relocation of Individuals, Families, and Business," 149.

³¹ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 908-910.

Black Expansion and Urban Renewal in Atlanta

Following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1946 ruling in *Chapman v. King* declaring the Georgia Democratic Party's white primary to be unconstitutional, black voter registration in Atlanta surged from 8.3 percent to 27.2 percent of total registered voters in the city.³² Recognizing the growing power of African American voters at the ballot box, Mayor William Hartsfield courted black support during his reelection bid in 1949. During the rest of his tenure as Mayor of Atlanta, Hartsfield's base of political support was founded on a biracial coalition of moderate middle-class whites, members of the Atlanta business elite, primarily represented by the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and various black business and civil rights leaders from the Auburn Avenue community that included the NAACP's Atlanta branch, the Atlanta Negro Voters League, the Atlanta Urban League, the Empire Real Estate Board, and executives of the Citizens Trust Bank, Mutual Federal Savings and Loan, and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company.³³ African American voters supported Hartsfield as long as he and his administration engaged in efforts to weaken the Jim Crow "separate but equal" system, provide protection from white violence, and did not use racially polarizing language in political discourse.³⁴

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, chronic housing shortages and displacement caused by highway development forced African Americans to expand into working class white neighborhoods on the city's west side.³⁵ In 1952, Hartsfield organized the biracial West Side Mutual Development Committee (WSMDC) as a means of averting violence in expansion areas, facilitating racial transition, and maintaining residential segregation in suburban Atlanta. Black representatives, including prominent builder Walter Aiken and real estate agent T.M. Alexander, agreed to a series of negotiated settlements with white business interests and the city government, which stipulated that African Americans would stay out of white neighborhoods on the north

³² Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 18.

³³ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁴ Ambrose, Andrew M., "Redrawing the Color Line: The History and Patterns of Black Housing in Atlanta, 1940-1973," Dissertation, Emory University, Atlanta, 1992, 151.

³⁵ Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004) 179,181.

side of Atlanta and reside only in pre-approved areas, primarily in the south and west sections of the city.³⁶

The fast pace of construction of Atlanta's public housing, particularly through the 1940s, reflected an overall investment of \$21 million.³⁷ During the early 1950s, two of the city's largest public housing developments for black residents were built. Carver Homes, with 990 units, was constructed in 1953 in south Atlanta, and Perry Homes, with 944 units, was built in 1955 in northwest Atlanta.³⁸ Harris Homes, named after the famed local author Joel Chandler Harris, was built in 1956 for low-income whites. Harris Homes was located in Atlanta's West End neighborhood and contained 510 units. After the construction of Harris Homes in 1956, public housing construction in Atlanta was temporarily put on hold, largely due to reductions in federal funding and local white opposition to rezoning.³⁹

Both Carver Homes and Perry Homes were located in remote areas of Atlanta that had been selected by the AHA and the all-white the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) as suitable for black expansion in the 1952 planning report "Up Ahead." The land use plan heralded the beginning of urban renewal in Atlanta using the slum clearance and redevelopment provisions in the National Housing Act of 1949 as its basis. "Up Ahead" not only encouraged additional African American residential expansion on the west side (and in some cases beyond the city limits), but also proposed the demolition of historically black neighborhoods near the downtown central business district. While generally supportive of recommendations for additional black expansion areas on the west side for housing development, black business leaders were angered by the suggested elimination of the Auburn Avenue commercial district as part of the greater Butler Street redevelopment area on the east side.⁴⁰ Furthermore, informal "gentlemen agreements" between the city and private business interests, particularly the Atlanta Real Estate Board and the Atlanta Central Association, prohibited the construction of

³⁶ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005), 78-79.

³⁷ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 961.

³⁸ Atlanta Department of Community Development, Bureau of Planning, "Citywide Housing Plan," December 1989, 36.

³⁹ Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs*, 239.

⁴⁰ Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 71.

federally funded public housing on designated urban renewal land, thus making black housing shortages near downtown more acute.⁴¹

African American leadership, which was not consulted in the development of the report, was sharply critical of the "Up Ahead" plan. John C. Calhoun, a realtor and co-founder of the Atlanta Negro Voters League, viewed the plan as an attempt to dilute black political power in Atlanta and codify segregated residential patterns for the future.⁴² Although full-scale redevelopment of the Auburn Avenue neighborhood was initially rebuffed due to sustained protest by the black business community, the urban renewal projects that followed in other economically depressed parts of the city during the 1950s and 1960s accelerated the removal of African American residents from areas northeast and south of downtown and magnified growing tensions within Hartsfield's biracial coalition and the city at large.⁴³

In contrast to the slum clearance initiatives of the 1930s and early 1940s, redevelopment during the urban renewal era under the Hartsfield and succeeding Allen administrations was exclusively reserved for commercial or municipal improvement projects. The city's refusal to build public housing on urban renewal land exacerbated the severe housing shortages for African Americans that had plagued the city since the end of World War II.⁴⁴ Poor blacks overwhelmingly bore the brunt of urban renewal as entire neighborhoods were cleared for redevelopment to the east and south of the central business district. Between 1956 and 1966, approximately 21,000 housing units located in predominately African American and low-income neighborhood were razed as a result of urban renewal or slum clearance, interstate highway construction, and code enforcement.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 40.

⁴² Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 71.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁴ Wiese, *Places of Their Own*, 174.

⁴⁵ Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, "Equal Opportunity in Housing, Community Improvement Program, City of Atlanta, Georgia, Supplementary Report on Negro Housing Needs and Resources," November 1967, 2.

One in every seven Atlanta citizens, or roughly 67,000 people, were displaced as a result of these demolitions, while only 5,000 new public housing units were constructed during that same period.⁴⁶ Only 11 percent of the population forced to move from urban renewal sites were relocated to public housing.⁴⁷ In addition, the few black public housing units that were built during this period, such as Carver Homes, Perry Homes, and later Bowen Homes in 1964, remained racially segregated and spatially isolated, located on the city peripheries, far removed from the central business district and access to jobs, public transportation, and social services.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, former African American neighborhoods near downtown were replaced with a civic center, interstate highways, and the Atlanta Stadium; large developments, which also served as racial barriers designed to prevent black expansion into white neighborhoods.⁴⁹

The Egleston Site Controversy

As urban renewal efforts unfolded in Atlanta during the early 1960s, African Americans became more vocal and resistant to mass displacements and for not having a voice in the policy decisions that were impacting their lives. In 1959, the Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board issued the report, "Shall We Rebuild Again? Atlanta Faces the Problem of Central Area Blight." It echoed the earlier 1952 plan by again identifying the Auburn Avenue community as one of nine locations, or "study units," near the central business district targeted for urban renewal. Other urban renewal study areas occupied by low income African Americans included Bedford-Pine, part of the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood to the northeast and the Rawson-Washington area to the southeast.⁵⁰

African Americans' growing frustration with the city's unwillingness to build black housing in cleared urban renewal areas, which threatened to undo Hartsfield's biracial coalition, was encapsulated in what became known as the Egleston Site

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁷ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 202.

⁴⁸ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 35-36.

⁴⁹ Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, 74.

⁵⁰ Moffson, Steven and John A. Kissane. "Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 2001, 47-48.

controversy. The Atlanta Housing Authority located a site just east of the Bedford-Pine urban renewal area for the construction of 350 new public housing units for blacks, of which 210 would be for the elderly residents. The proposed housing was on the former site of Egleston Hospital, near the historically black Buttermilk Bottom community, to the east of the central business district and bounded by North Avenue on the north and the downtown expressway on the west. In the 1959 planning report, Buttermilk Bottom had been identified as a blighted area with a pressing need for new housing for African Americans. Both Hartsfield and the AHA expected the Board of Alderman to approve the site since it was adjacent to an existing African American neighborhood and any black residential expansion out of the area would be curtailed by impending industrial development.

This proposed Egleston site was in keeping with the established biracial agreements that black housing would not be located in white areas. The project would also satisfy the need for better quality low-income housing for African Americans. However, opposition from the white community, particularly nearby Georgia Baptist Hospital, grew as fears that public housing would lead to an "accelerated racial transition in the area."⁵¹ The Board of Alderman denied the rezoning of the Egleston site twice in 1960, sending supporters of public housing on designated urban renewal land into loud protest over the unforeseen defeat.

End of the "Gentlemen's Agreement"

The rezoning decision caused an outcry among the black leadership who felt it was a betrayal of their agreements with moderate white political and business interests and signaled a shift in this biracial coalition that had governed Atlanta since 1946.⁵² Protests against the lack of adequate housing for African-Americans and the city's continued policy of maintaining segregated neighborhoods, became mobilizing forces in the burgeoning Atlanta Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s. Younger African Americans eschewed the gradualism and backroom negotiations preferred by the older generation of civil rights pioneers in favor of the direct action of organized boycotts, picket lines, and sit-ins at segregated eating establishments.⁵³

⁵¹ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 155-156.

⁵² Stone, *Regime Politics*, 43.

⁵³ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 180.

Mayor William Hartsfield's successor in 1962 was Ivan Allen Jr., the President of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and a general supporter of the biracial system of cooperation. Allen relied heavily on African-American voters during the 1961 Atlanta mayoral campaign and was generally more responsive to increasing black demands for an end to segregation in city hiring, housing, public facilities, and school integration.⁵⁴

The rezoning defeat of the Egleston site ultimately brought an end to the informal "gentlemen's agreement" that prohibited the development of public housing on cleared urban renewal land. Under the Hartsfield administration during the 1950s, the city only built 3,008 of its quota of 5,500 public housing units.⁵⁵ As a result of black protests over the Egleston decision, the federal government's Urban Renewal Administration warned the city in 1963 that continued support for urban renewal in Atlanta was contingent upon the construction of additional public housing.⁵⁶ Allen and the Atlanta business community responded to the pressure by ending the city's unofficial policy pertaining to urban renewal land and agreeing to build public housing on a site east of the central business district.⁵⁷

Antoine Graves Homes

Following the city's decision to allow for the construction of public housing on urban renewal land in 1963, the AHA began working on plans to build new housing adjacent to Perry Homes in west Atlanta, and a facility for seniors on a site in the Butler Street urban renewal area. The proposed elderly multi-story building would be the first public housing project approved for construction on a designated urban renewal area and the first to be located near Auburn Avenue since the construction of Grady Homes just over twenty years earlier. Coined "Sweet Auburn," in reference to its exalted stature in the Atlanta black community, the neighborhood had served as the economic, political, and religious center for African Americans in the city since the early 1900s. The Alexander-Calloway Realty Company, Alonzo Herndon's Atlanta Life Insurance Company, and the *Atlanta Daily World* newspaper were among the many businesses that lined the

⁵⁴ Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 34-45.

⁵⁵ Stone, *Regime Politics*, 44.

⁵⁶ Bayor, *Race & the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 74-75.

⁵⁷ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 187.

street. The neighborhood was also home to prominent Atlanta civil rights pioneers John Wesley Dobbs, Rev. William Holmes Borders of the Wheat Street Baptist Church, and Martin Luther King, Sr., who headed the Ebenezer Baptist Church.⁵⁸

It was noted that the decision to build black housing near the central business district would be an exception. The proposed senior public housing would consist of a single, multi-story building, not a sprawling "garden style" complex and was therefore not expected to attract the type of development the downtown white business elite wanted to avoid.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the decision to construct elderly public housing signaled an end to longstanding city planning policy dedicated to the elimination of the Auburn Avenue district and the removal and dispersal of African American residents near downtown. The *Atlanta Daily World* heralded this reversal stating, "The Atlanta Housing Authority's decision to build a high-rise building of 250 units for the aged adjacent to Grady Homes is a progressive step." The article also offered suggestions for locations for future public housing, emphasizing the dispersal of public housing across the city and out of the west side.⁶⁰

Efforts to develop federally subsidized housing for the elderly in Atlanta began as early as 1960 when the Public Housing Administration provided \$34,000 for planning studies for three projects to house white residents.⁶¹ Senior citizen multi-story housing was a relatively new public housing initiative that had been authorized in the Housing Act of 1959 and was later expanded in the 1962 Senior Citizens Housing Act. High-rise public housing represented an architectural shift from the Public Housing Authority's earlier project site plans of the 1930s and 1940s, which were often characterized by complexes of multiple, low level buildings grouped around landscaped open spaces. Multi-story, senior citizens housing generally followed the 'Radiant City' concept promoted by the modernist Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, which entailed a tower in the garden of uniform blocks of high-density apartment skyscrapers separated by open grounds consisting of courtyards and green space. This

⁵⁸ Moffson and Kissane, "Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District," 39.

⁵⁹ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 163-164.

⁶⁰ "Urban League Makes Observations on Public Housing In Atlanta," *Atlanta Daily World*, February 28, 1964, 1.

⁶¹ "Atlanta Gets Housing Loan," *Atlanta Journal*, July 13, 1960.

became a popular, but generally ill-fated model for public housing design among architects and planners in Britain and the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.⁶²

The first public senior housing building to gain funding in Atlanta was Low Rent Housing Project No. GA 6-13 (later known as John O. Chiles Homes), a 250-unit building for elderly whites located on Ashby Street near Harris Homes.⁶³ In November 1961, the U.S. Public Housing Administration approved \$3.1 million in loans for the project design and construction, which was scheduled to be the first of its kind in Atlanta.⁶⁴ Project No. 6-14 (Palmer House) was another senior multi-story housing development for whites. It also contained 250 units and was awarded \$2.4 million in funding for planning and construction. Project No. GA 6-11 was designated for African American residents. With 210 units and a \$2.17 million budget, it was the smallest and cheapest of the three proposed senior citizen's housing projects.⁶⁵ The building was later named after Antoine Graves, an important African American community leader in the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Graves was credited as the first African American licensed in real estate in the city, and for conceiving and promoting the idea of a planned upper class African American neighborhood in west Atlanta.⁶⁶

The Atlanta firm of Edwards and Portman and associate architect Henry D. Norris received the commission for the design of Antoine Graves Homes and plans were developed in 1962 for an eight story building containing 210 dwelling units and shared community areas.⁶⁷ H. Griffith Edwards and John Portman established their practice in 1956 and remained in business together for thirteen years until 1968. Prior to their commission for Antoine Graves, the firm's first major venture

⁶² Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing), 222-227.

⁶³ "250 Homes For Aged Slated Here," *Atlanta Journal*, June 15, 1961.

⁶⁴ Kiker, Douglas. "Elderly Housing Project Okayed," *Atlanta Journal*, November 31, 1961.

⁶⁵ Eric Hill Associates, Inc., "City of Atlanta, Georgia Report on the Relocation of Individuals, Families, and Business," 149.

⁶⁶ "Antoine Graves Did Much For His Race and Atlanta," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 28, 1964, 1.

⁶⁷ Saxon, Richard, *Atrium Buildings, Development and Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), 19.

was the Atlanta Merchandise Mart in 1961, a project in which Portman served as both the designer and developer.⁶⁸

Henry Norris was a native of Brookline, Massachusetts and studied architecture at the University of Miami. He served as a partner in the firm Locatell-Norris & Co. from 1947 to 1950. Starting in 1950, Norris became the president of his own firm, Henry D. Norris, based in Atlanta.⁶⁹ Norris gained a professional reputation designing traditional, contemporary, and modern style residences in Atlanta during the 1960s.⁷⁰

The Atrium Concept

Portman and his associate, Mickey Steinberg, began the design process for Antoine Graves by visiting existing high-rise housing in other parts of the country. This experience left Portman unimpressed with the buildings, which he felt were "simply storage facilities for our senior citizens." To Portman and other critics of multi-story public high-rise developments such as the infamous Pruitt-Igoe complex in St. Louis, Missouri, the fundamental design failures were born out of government guidelines "that virtually dictated narrow double-loaded corridors, no air conditioning, and small public areas. The problem is that it forced the residents to stay in their rooms with no place to congregate other than the public sidewalk." In contrast to the closed, non-functional design of the Pruitt-Igoe planning model, Portman explained:

Our goal for the Antoine Graves Home was not to build another storage warehouse for senior citizens, but to design a home for the residents that provided them with an enhanced life experience and would allow them to not only live comfortably, but to enjoy their neighbors and to experience a community life that was more fulfilling.⁷¹

Unlike some of the large, federally subsidized high-rise developments built throughout the country during the 1950s and 1960s, Antoine Graves Homes and its white counterpart, John O.

⁶⁸ Barnett, Jonathan, *The Architect as Developer* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 22-23.

⁶⁹ AIA, *1970 American Architects Directory*, 671.

⁷⁰ Burns, et al., "Atlanta Housing 1944 to 1965, Case Studies in Historic Preservation," 63.

⁷¹ John Portman, personal communication, 2011.

Chiles Homes in west Atlanta, were solitary, mid-rise buildings designed on a smaller scale. Approximately designed at the same time, both properties featured interior atria, or courtyard plans. Atlanta architect and Georgia Tech graduate Herbert Millkey designed John O. Chiles Homes in 1963 and it was completed in 1965, a year before Antoine Graves Homes.⁷² Renovated in 2008 and now known as The Atruim, John O. Chiles Homes was constructed as a ten-story building with an H-shaped plan. It had a full-height, central interior courtyard ringed by offices and common rooms on the first floor, with efficiency and one-bedroom apartments located on floors two through ten. In a 1961 newspaper article, Millkey discussed additional special design requirements of housing for the elderly, such as raising electrical outlets and cabinets, and installing handrails and non-skid floors to prevent injury and provide a self-sufficient environment for the residents.⁷³

While Herbert Millkey's design for John O. Chiles Homes featured a similar, central atrium configuration, it was John Portman who would take the concept and build upon it over the course of his career. The use of the atrium concept by the two architects was intended to provide maximum interior space in a building constrained by a small site plan.⁷⁴ According to Portman, the open space provided by two central atria served dual purposes with no appreciable increase in cost. It addressed both the social inadequacies of standard, closed interior plans and also affording some measure of climate control in a non-air conditioned building. His philosophy for the "active space" of the atrium concept was based on the immense spatial experience found in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum, which promotes a communal aspect through the spiral walkway ringing the central open area.⁷⁵ Portman viewed the atrium as an attempt to "enhance people's lives and not just put them away in a file cabinet."⁷⁶ Portman's dedication to design with people as the focus and

⁷² Eric Hill Associates, Inc., "City of Atlanta, Georgia Report on the Relocation of Individuals, Families, and Business," 149.

⁷³ Thomas, Esther, "Aged Rate Special Deign," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, September 3, 1961, 64.

⁷⁴ Saxon, *Atrium Buildings*, 19.

⁷⁵ Leitner, Bernhard, "John Portman: Architecture Is Not a Building," *Art in America*, March-April 1973, 81.

⁷⁶ John Portman, interview by John Sugg for a book on the history of the Atlanta Housing Authority, 2009.

within an established budget is also evident when he discusses the practical aspects behind the atrium concept for Antoine Graves Homes:

We arrived at the solution by linking our goals of making the elderly more comfortable both physically and spiritually with a unified concept, the atrium. We provided two covered atria within the building with roof designs that provided natural ventilation for the building. We provided apartment windows that opened to the outside of the building as well as those that opened into the atrium, and natural ventilation created a nice breeze as outside air was pulled through the apartments into the atrium and the warm air rose and was exhausted through the roof. The roof structure also featured skylights that transmitted wonderful natural light into the atria.

The interior walks within the atrium at each floor were wide enough to allow the occupants to place chairs on them and sit and visit with their neighbors. In addition, the large covered, but open, common spaces at the bottom of the atria created large communal spaces that the tenants used for community activities within the confines of the building. The resulting building was constructed within the budget set by the federal government for their standard designs, so the atrium concept allowed us to dramatically improve the use of the building by its occupants with no price premium.⁷⁷

Construction and Use

AHA advertised an invitation for bids on Antoine Graves Homes in the *Atlanta Daily World* on February 28, 1964.⁷⁸ It was announced on April 7, 1964, that the construction contract had been awarded to the H. A. Lott Company of Houston, Texas.⁷⁹ A groundbreaking ceremony was held on the 2.4-acre site shortly thereafter on April 27, 1964. The building site was located on the east side of Hilliard Street about a half block north of Decatur Street and two blocks south of Auburn Avenue. Grady Homes was located just across Hilliard Street to the west. Groundbreaking ceremony participants included Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., and federal and local housing authority officials, such as AHA's executive director M.B. Satterfield, assistant

⁷⁷ John Portman, personal communication, 2011.

⁷⁸ "Invitation For Bids," *Atlanta Daily World*, February 28, 1964.

⁷⁹ "Public Housing Contract Awarded For the Elderly," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 7, 1964.

director Gilbert Boggs, and George F. Dodd, the manager of Grady Homes. Portman's partner H. Griffith Edwards was also in attendance. The Monday morning ceremony began with a parade featuring the David T. Howard High School band and a number of children from nearby Grady Homes. City Alderman Rodney Cook was also present and described the future mid-rise building as "a new concept in public housing." Mayor Allen spoke of the importance of public housing in the city, saying to the children, "It means that every one of you boys and girls when you grow up you can get a good education, and get a decent job."⁸⁰

Construction appears to have gone smoothly, with the exception of a chemical fire on the roof and wind damage to skylight panels, as evidenced through historic photographs located at the John Portman and Associates archives. Fifty-five studio efficiencies, 154 one-bedroom apartments, and one, two-bedroom apartment comprised the building's 210 total units. Additionally, there was a management office, a maintenance shop, and several community facilities including an arts and crafts room, reading room, auditorium, community kitchen, public health clinic, counseling rooms, laundry facilities on alternating floors, and a central garbage disposal and incinerator.⁸¹

The completed building contained two atria, or interior courtyards (identified as "open wells" in the floor plan drawings), separated by a linear group of rooms running along the center. This group of rooms contained a bank of elevators and stairwell, with restrooms and a kitchen located on the ground floor. The west atrium acted as the lobby atrium, as this was the main entrance to the building, facing Hilliard Street. The ground floor of the west atrium was partially excavated and was situated lower than the east atrium. The units were placed around the courtyards in rectangular blocks; eleven rooms on each level spanned the longer northern and southern sides of the building, while four rooms on each level spanned the shorter eastern and western sides. Each unit had an exterior balcony. The balconies architecturally defined the building's exterior, much as the balconies on the Hyatt Regency defined the exterior of the hotel. Each balcony formed a bay

⁸⁰ Coleman, George M., "Mayor Allen, Others Break Ground for New Antoine Graves Homes," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 28, 1964, 1.

⁸¹ "Dedication, Antoine Graves Homes, Atlanta, Georgia, May 8, 1966," ceremony program.

framed in pre-cast concrete slabs and the succession of bays formed a rectilinear pattern along the facades. The pre-cast concrete slabs used for the balcony railings were formed with two concrete raised lines, emphasizing the horizontality of the rows. The exterior end walls of each side were faced in tan bricks. The roof over the atria was formed by a succession of y-shaped concrete beams that held in place the curved plastic skylights. The skylights protected the atria from the elements, but fresh air flowed under them, circulating through the building, which did not have central air conditioning. Metal bars formed screens along the front and rear entries to the building, also promoting the circulation of air.

While each of the units contained a bathroom, they all had open floor plans, with partition walls or curtains used to separate the bedroom, living room, and kitchen. Doors exiting onto the exterior balconies and the interior corridors could be opened to provide cross ventilation for the residents. Windows were placed next to the doors allowing light to filter in from the outside and from the atria. The units had exposed brick walls and tile floors. The interior corridors circling the atria featured colored panels facing into the atria. The atrium floors were poured concrete.

Edward L. Daugherty, one of the first proponents of modern landscape architecture in the southeast, was commissioned to design the property's outdoor spaces.⁸² According to John Portman:

We chose to collaborate with Ed Daugherty because he understood the importance of designing the landscaping such that it becomes a natural extension of the building design so the building and the landscaping may exist in harmony for the benefit of the humans who use the space.⁸³

A garden terrace featuring general sitting and game areas with tables and chairs all designed by Daugherty, was located on the east side of the building. The park-like area included a chessboard and shuffleboard integrated into the hardscape areas. A curvilinear, serpentine brick wall formed a patio area along the north wall of the building. Shrubs and trees used for the

⁸² Hicks, Cinque, "Current Retrospective Celebrates Local Landscape Architect Edward L. Daugherty," *Creative Loafing Atlanta*, January 26, 2009.

⁸³ John Portman, personal communication, 2011.

landscape surrounding the building include red maples, dogwoods, crepe myrtles, southern magnolias, Japanese crabapples, white poplar, water oaks, abelia, and nandina.⁸⁴

At the time of the building's dedication ceremony in May 1966, the average age of an Antoine Graves Homes resident was seventy years old, with an average yearly income of \$1,143. The monthly rent was \$29.88, and seventy of the residents received welfare. The building was fully occupied with 224 tenants by the time of the dedication ceremony, held on May 8, 1966. Marie C. McGuire, commissioner for the U.S. Public Housing Administration, gave the dedicatory address that Sunday afternoon. John O. Chiles Homes was dedicated the following Sunday, with Mayor Ivan Allen giving the dedicatory address.⁸⁵ At the Antoine Graves Homes dedication, blessings were given by the Reverend N.D. Daniel of the Mt. Sinai Baptist Church and Reverend Jesse Moore. The ceremony program contained a dedication to Antoine Graves, with his daughters present at the ceremony:

Antoine Graves Homes; respectfully dedicated to the memory of Antoine Graves who not only envisioned a better residential area for his people, but was among the first to conceive the need and possibility for such a neighborhood. His memory will thus be preserved for generations to come in this impressive landmark located in the community he loved.⁸⁶

Housing Authority administrators in Washington had encouraged Portman to design a different type of public housing building, but they were afraid his design was meant for a luxury hotel and would be cost prohibitive. In fact, the building proved to be within budget, and garnered positive feedback from its occupants. Reaction to Antoine Graves Homes after its construction included one resident commenting, "I would like to meet the guy who designed this; he had a head on his shoulders."⁸⁷ When Portman walked through the building after residents started moving in, one resident told him she loved the

⁸⁴ Portman and Edwards with Henry D. Norris, "Apartment for the Elderly, for Atlanta Housing Authority, Project GA-6-11, Antoine Graves Homes." Building plans on file with the Atlanta Housing Authority. Plans dated September 24, 1963; correlated with as-built prints December 8, 1965.

⁸⁵ "Homes for Elderly Fill Up Quickly," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 8, 1966, 37.

⁸⁶ "Dedication Antoine Graves Homes, Atlanta, Georgia, May 8, 1966," ceremony program.

⁸⁷ Saxon, *Atrium Buildings*, 19.

building as it provided her with privacy as well as places to socialize with her neighbors.⁸⁸ Although residents seemed to like the building, one *Atlanta Journal* writer critiqued the bars used near the lobby entrance by stating, "the general first impression is of a jail." The poured concrete floor of the lobby gave him a second impression of being inside a garage. The article pointed out that the open-air features of the two atria contributed to a problem with flies during the summer as well as uncomfortable cold temperatures during the winter months.⁸⁹

Elderly residents of Antoine Graves Homes quickly formed a close-knit community, with regular social events and activities taking place throughout its history. In May 1966, residents sponsored their first talent tea on a Sunday afternoon, with its program of events praising "our new building."⁹⁰ Holiday banquets were regularly held for the residents and nearby school children visited to sing Christmas carols and decorate the hallways.⁹¹ Residents formed social groups like the Golden Age Club, which held receptions for local ministers and their families.⁹² In 1980, residents organized a music festival, which was free and open to the larger community, with a local band performing.⁹³ The Antoine Graves community was featured occasionally in the local African American newspaper, the *Atlanta Daily World*, reflecting the importance of Antoine Graves Homes to the larger community. One story from 1986 featured an eighty-eight-year-old woman named Mattie Carson who decided not to allow her family and friends to throw her a birthday party, and to instead host her own party in her apartment at Antoine Graves Homes, showing the independence Graves residents retained.⁹⁴ Community programs at Antoine Graves included a daycare center for seniors and a literacy program initiated in

⁸⁸ Saporta, Maria, "Portman's First Atrium Building to be Torn Down," *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, October 12, 2009.

⁸⁹ Askins, John. "High-Rises House Elderly," *Atlanta Journal*, September 21, 1966, 1.

⁹⁰ "Talent Tea," Antoine Graves Residents Talent Tea program, May 22, 1966.

⁹¹ "Grady Homes Youngsters Enjoy the Holidays," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 1, 1974, 3.

⁹² "Social Swirl, Swirl Notes," *Atlanta Daily World*, September 18, 1977, 3.

⁹³ "Music Fest Set By Residents of Antoine Graves," *Atlanta Daily World*, July 10, 1980, 6.

⁹⁴ "Mattie Carson 88 Years Young," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 27, 1986, 5.

the 1980s.⁹⁵ In 1996, Antoine Graves Homes and the adjacent Antoine Graves Annex were placed under the private management of H.J. Russell and Company of Atlanta as part of a two-year contract with the Atlanta Housing Authority. The plan allowed for private firms to manage 13 public housing complexes in Atlanta and was intended to increase on-site accountability for conditions in the buildings.⁹⁶

John Portman, Architect and Developer

By the time Portman had begun design work for Antoine Graves Homes, he had been a practicing architect in Atlanta for just over a decade. Portman was born in Walhalla, South Carolina in 1924 and moved to Atlanta with his family as a young child.⁹⁷ During World War II, he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1942 to 1944, and studied for a brief period at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland in 1945. At the close of the war, Portman attended the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1950.⁹⁸ During his time at Georgia Tech, Portman worked for the architectural firm Ketchum, Gina and Sharp and H.M. Heatley Associates, who he has described as "the leaders in retail design at the time."⁹⁹

After graduation, Portman worked with the prominent Atlanta architecture firm, Stevens & Wilkinson for three years before receiving his license and opening his own practice in 1953. While working in his private practice from 1953 to 1956, Portman is credited with designing buildings in Atlanta for the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Henderson Office building, the Lemer House, the Toubman House, and the Midway Elementary School.¹⁰⁰ Not satisfied with these small commissions, Portman took steps to create his own opportunities and it was during

⁹⁵ "Daycare Center for Elderly Here," *Atlanta Daily World*, December 12, 1974, 12.

⁹⁶ "Atlanta Housing Authority Selects Private Mgmt. Firms," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 19, 1996.

⁹⁷ Stanton, Cathy, "Portraits: John Portman, Architect Plus," *AIA Journal*, April 1975, 60.

⁹⁸ Muriel Emanuel, ed., *Contemporary Architects*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 639.

⁹⁹ "Recession Tales: John Portman," *The Architect's Newspaper*, January 21, 2010, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Emanuel, *Contemporary Architects*, 639.

these formative years that he became committed to forging a dual career based on the idea of "the architect as developer."¹⁰¹

Through an associate he knew from his time at Stevens & Wilkinson, Portman met John O. Chiles, president of the Adams-Cate Company, a leading real estate figure in Atlanta who served as chairman of the board of commissioners for the AHA.¹⁰² Chiles agreed to let Portman observe his real estate projects if, in turn, Portman provided architectural advice to Chiles. The experience proved worthwhile, for Portman began to seek opportunities to develop his own commissions.

Following the dissolution of a joint design and real estate venture for a medical center, Portman went into partnership with H. Griffith Edwards in 1956. He realized that by focusing on developing as well as design, he would need a partnership to sustain the work. Edwards had been one of Portman's professors at Georgia Tech and was considered an expert on construction specification. Portman handled the design and promotional aspect of the business, while Edwards managed the administration and construction side. Their partnership lasted thirteen years, until Edwards retired for health reasons in 1968.¹⁰³

Through his dual role as real estate entrepreneur and architect, Portman could create commissions for his architectural firm, instead of relying on outside developers to seek them out and put constraints on their designs. Construction of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart in 1961 was the first large venture into real estate development by Edwards and Portman. The original design of the 23-story modernist building featured one million square feet that was primarily dedicated for trade show use. The financial success of the Merchandise Mart allowed Portman to pursue even more ambitious projects during the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the sprawling Peachtree Center complex that would define his career and reshape the Atlanta downtown area.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Barnett, *The Architect as Developer*, 21-22.

¹⁰² "Homes for the Elderly Fill Up Quickly," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, May 8, 1966, 37.

¹⁰³ Barnett, *The Architect as Developer*, 22-23.

¹⁰⁴ Barnett, Jonathan, "John Portman, Atlanta's One Man Urban Renewal Program," *Architectural Record* 139, January 1966, 138.

The Hyatt Regency and the Legacy of the Atrium Concept

In 1961, Portman traveled to Brasilia, Brazil's new capital city that had been completely designed by architects and urban planners. The severe, modernist insistence on uniformity of building design and disregard of public and private spaces in Brasilia had a profoundly negative effect on Portman and led him "to question the direction of modern architecture."¹⁰⁵ The plan and execution of Brasilia proved to be the embodiment of Portman's dissatisfaction with Modernism, which he felt sacrificed "innate human spiritual needs" in favor of the "spirit of the scientific and technology." Citing the popular view of modern architecture as "cold" and "emotionally lacking," Portman sought to distance himself from Modernism, stating:

What I am seeking is a new synthesis, a synthesis that accepts much that came out of the Modern Movement, salvaging what has proven to be valid over time, while correcting those aspects to which people didn't react positively.¹⁰⁶

After Brasilia, he refocused his attention on solving large-scale urban planning problems while reworking his philosophical approach to architecture and its relation to human needs. Although generally reticent to admit the influence of other architects, Portman admired Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier for their approach to architecture as part of a comprehensive system of social thought. Wright's concept of "organic unity as a design ideal," meaning the integration of basic geometric shapes, such as circles and triangles, into the organization and structure of a building also held a particular attraction.¹⁰⁷

Portman's emerging architectural principles were incorporated in the design and construction of his personal residence, coined *Entelechy I*, between 1961 and 1964. He considered the project "an early testing ground for my evolving ideas on architecture, particularly concepts of *cell explosion* and *shared space*."¹⁰⁸ Around the same time, the concept of shared, or active spaces, was expanded in the use of two full-height atria in Portman's

¹⁰⁵ Riani, Paolo, *John Portman*. (Washington, D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1990), 23.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ Barnett, *The Architect As Developer*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ Riani, *John Portman*, 24.

design for the eight-story Antoine Graves Homes elderly housing project, his first and only public housing commission.¹⁰⁹

John Portman's most celebrated and fully realized application of these ideals however, was his design for the Hyatt Regency Hotel (originally named Hyatt Regency House) in Atlanta, Georgia. When the Hyatt Regency Hotel opened in May 1967, its dramatic 220' high interior atrium lobby helped make the building a critical and financial success for Portman. The building was first major hotel to be built in downtown Atlanta since the 1920s, and was also Portman's first hotel design and development project.¹¹⁰ The twenty-one-story, 800-room hotel was oriented around a full height atrium lobby, an architecturally unique feature at a time when the cost of interior square footage was considered at a premium.¹¹¹ The exposed elevator shafts also became part of the atrium experience, not receding into the background as was customary, but designed as "pod-shaped glass elevators-trimmed in lights like dressing room mirrors."¹¹² At the elevator summit was the revolving Polaris restaurant, located in a blue glass-domed circular structure, "perched atop the building like a flying saucer."¹¹³ The guest rooms were arranged along the outer corridors surrounding the sky-lit atrium, and each room had an exterior balcony. The excitement to see the hotel upon its opening was palpable, with thousands of people arriving to see the atrium lobby.¹¹⁴

When the Hyatt Regency opened, the *Architectural Record* proclaimed the atrium as "an idea whose time had come," and over the ensuing decades, the atrium hotel would become Portman's trademark.¹¹⁵ The basis for Hyatt Regency's celebrated design however, was first tested in the more functional design for Antoine Graves Homes in 1962-63.¹¹⁶ When discussing the use of an atrium in the private hotel and public housing project for the

¹⁰⁹ Saporta, "Portman's First Atrium Building to be Torn Down."

¹¹⁰ Riani, *John Portman*, 29.

¹¹¹ Goldberger, Paul and Robert M. Craig, *John Portman and Architecture* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 26.

¹¹² Chen, Aric, "The Kubla Kahn of Hotels," *New York Times*, June 25, 2006.

¹¹³ Goldberger and Craig, *John Portman and Architecture*, 24.

¹¹⁴ Auchmutey, Jim, "Hyatt Regency Turns 40," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 1, 2007.

¹¹⁵ Saxon, *Atrium Buildings*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Goldberger, Paul, "Buck Rogers in Time Square," *New York Times*, August 26, 1973.

elderly, Portman explained that the "ideas are one and the same."¹¹⁷ Even, Dorothy McGuire, the Washington-based PHA administrator for the Antoine Graves Homes project, remarked that the design for the elderly mid-rise building seemed more appropriate for a luxury hotel, when Portman presented her with the preliminary plans.¹¹⁸

For both buildings, John Portman sought to turn the focal point of his architecture to the interior courtyard, where all the activity would take place. Just as he had criticized the high-rise public housing projects he had visited in other parts of the country for "housing people in boxes without air conditioning," Portman intended the Hyatt Regency to be the antithesis of the traditional downtown hotel:

We wanted to create a significant space that offered a place of refuge and release within the building instead of the small cramped public spaces that were the norm for hotels at the time. After the experience of the atrium at Antoine Graves, we knew that an atrium could provide a great indoor piazza, which, if properly designed, would satisfy all these requirements.¹¹⁹

Although Portman sought to distance himself from the various styles of Modernism that emerged in Europe and the United States during the post World War II era, the architectural vocabulary of his work produced during the 1960s and 1970s is most often categorized as a refined permutation of Brutalism. This association is often based on the exterior aesthetic employed by Portman for the Hyatt Regency and later commissions, which generally featured pre-cast concrete curtain walls punctuated by rows of rectangular windows and the use of offset massing to produce variations in the repetitive fenestration.¹²⁰ The Hyatt Regency's façade was a concrete wall void of windows, reflecting Le Corbusier's rejection of the street, while features commonly associated with urban social space, including sculpture, plantings, and lounge areas, and restaurants are reserved for the interior atrium.¹²¹ The result of the inward focus of the Hyatt Regency was what some critics remarked was an exterior

¹¹⁷ Saporta, "Portman's First Atrium Building to be Torn Down."

¹¹⁸ Saxon, *Atrium Buildings*, 19.

¹¹⁹ John Portman, personal communication, 2011.

¹²⁰ Barnett, *The Architect As Developer*, 27.

¹²¹ Goldberger, "Buck Rogers in Time Square," *New York Times*.

that did not relate to the street and that it was not pedestrian oriented. Portman was mindful of this critique, explaining in his published interview with Paolo Riani:

As urban designers, architects frequently over-emphasize the street facade to the exclusion of many other pressing concerns. I say, never mind just the facade, the street is not everything. We must go behind it and think of substance...The idea of the atrium is to create an interior park. Therefore, when you enter the atrium from a busy street and move into it, a resort-like image is projected. The atrium is an antithesis to congestion and anxiety...The design becomes a study of space within space. Movement through the atrium creates fun, dynamic, visible activity...It was this kind of thinking that led to our concept of the hotel design and the atrium. We were addressing the evolution of the City and the relief of congestion by seeking a more humane environment.¹²²

The popularity and financial success of the Hyatt Regency Hotel spurred Portman to build several more hotels using the atrium concept, and other architects joined in the trend. Portman followed the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta with hotels including the Hyatt Regency in the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco in 1976, the Bonaventure in Los Angeles in 1977, and the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta in 1985 (as part of the larger Peachtree Center development).¹²³

While a few other architects were building atrium buildings contemporaneously with the Hyatt Regency, Portman is widely acknowledged by admirers and critics alike as the architect who revived the concept and popularized it.¹²⁴ Later noted atrium hotels designed by other architects include the Grand Hyatt in Shanghai, China by Adrian Smith of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1999. Smith recognized the legacy of Portman's atrium hotels, saying, "Portman obviously was instrumental in reintroducing major public spaces into modern architecture in the 1970s. He brought the atrium back into a very popular mode."¹²⁵ The Burj Al Arab in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, was designed by British architect Tom Wright and completed by 1999. It is a

¹²² Riani, *John Portman*, 28.

¹²³ Chen, "The Kubla Khan of Hotels."

¹²⁴ Saxon, *Atrium Buildings*, 20.

¹²⁵ Chen, "The Kubla Khan of Hotels."

continuation and expansion of Portman's model of the ultimate hotel experience, with the atrium measuring almost 600' tall.¹²⁶

The Atlanta Housing Authority and HOPE VI

Over the course of its history, Antoine Graves Homes remained a subsidized public housing complex for elderly African-American residents. *De jure* segregation of public housing in the United States was ended with President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order #11063 in 1962, which prohibited discrimination of tenants based on race; however, the policy, which was in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, was not initially implemented by the Atlanta Housing Authority until 1967, a year after the completion of Antoine Graves Homes. In instances where public housing was integrated, it was often minimally applied. Reports in 1967 indicated that the few African American tenants in white public housing were placed in discrete rear apartments.¹²⁷

About 14.5 percent of the total public housing stock in Atlanta was built between 1973 and 1983. Most of this subsidized housing was primarily for low-income elderly and handicapped residents.¹²⁸ Among these properties was Low Rent Project No. GA 6-26, commonly referred to as the Antoine Graves Annex Building. The modernist, eleven-story building was designed by Henry D. Norris, the associate architect for Antoine Graves Homes, and was completed in 1974. Antoine Graves Annex was located at 110 Hilliard Street, adjacent to Antoine Graves Homes, just to the north. It provided an additional 100 units for senior housing in the area.¹²⁹

In 2008, residents were forced to move out of Antoine Graves Homes after a tornado damaged the building. Prior to the storm, Antoine Graves Homes, Grady Homes, and the Antoine Graves Annex had all been slated for demolition as part of the AHA's larger redevelopment plan for the area.¹³⁰ According to AHA director

¹²⁶ "Tom Wright - Architect RIBA," Tom Wright Design, accessed August 9, 2010, http://www.tomwrightdesign.com/web/burj_al_arab.php.

¹²⁷ Ambrose, "Redrawing the Color Line," 215-216.

¹²⁸ Research Atlanta, "The Atlanta Housing Authority: An Analysis of Two Options," January 1983, 1.

¹²⁹ "Antoine Graves and Annex Profile," undated fact sheet provided by the Atlanta Housing Authority.

¹³⁰ Reid, S.A., "Atlanta to raze most of its public housing complexes," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 17, 2007.

Renee Glover, Antoine Graves had become functionally obsolete and was unable to "make for good quality living for seniors today."¹³¹ Grady Homes and the Antoine Graves Annex were demolished prior to Antoine Graves Homes. The redevelopment is part of a larger U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and AHA policy shift in public housing. HUD established the HOPE VI program as part of the Independent Agencies Appropriations Act in 1993. The Hope VI program was a result of recommendations provided by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, with the goal of developing a national action plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The HOPE VI grants fund major rehabilitation, new construction, and demolition projects, as well as the land acquisition and community and supportive programs.¹³² The AHA has developed the Quality of Life Initiative, which allows "families in AHA's remaining conventional public housing projects the opportunity to escape an environment of concentrated poverty."¹³³ Beginning with the demolition of Techwood Homes prior to the 1996 Olympics, the AHA began efforts to fulfill its mission to construct new and updated housing for mixed-income residents.

¹³¹ Saporta, "Portman's First Atrium Building to be Torn Down."

¹³² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Homes & Communities, Public & Indian Housing, "About HOPE VI," electronic document, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/about/index.cfm#4>, accessed August 13, 2010.

¹³³ Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), "Quality of Life Initiative," electronic document, <http://www.atlantahousing.org/portfolio/index.cfm?fuseaction=qli>, accessed August 13, 2010.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. General Site Description:

The Antoine Graves Homes mid-rise building and adjacent grounds occupy 2.4 acres of land approximately one mile east of downtown Atlanta. The parcel is bounded on the west by Hilliard Street, on the north by Pittman Place, on the east by William Holmes Borders Sr. Drive (historically named Yonge Street), and on the south by a medical center, constructed circa 1989. Decatur Street, a main thoroughfare running in an east-west direction between downtown Atlanta and Decatur, is located one-half block south of Antoine Graves Homes.

Development surrounding Antoine Graves Homes included the recently demolished Antoine Graves Annex to the north and the demolished Grady Homes, the large garden apartment-style public housing complex located to the west. The former site of the Antoine Graves Annex remains cleared and vacant, while new apartment home construction is underway on the former site of Grady Homes. Just one block south of Antoine Graves Homes is the King Memorial Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) train and bus station. Northeast of Antoine Graves Homes, on the west side of Hilliard Street, is a newly constructed apartment complex. Interstate 75/85 is located just two blocks west of the property, dividing the east portion of Atlanta from the central business district.

2. Historic landscape design:

The Antoine Graves Homes mid-rise building occupies the majority of the 2.4-acre parcel of land on which it is situated. A semi-circular paved driveway is located off of Hilliard Drive on the west side of the building, providing vehicular access to the main entrance. This drive runs under the west side of the building, providing a sheltered area for dropping off and picking up residents. A park and recreational

area designed by landscape architect Edward L. Daugherty is located on the east side of the building. This area contains paved pathways with benches and tables and a chessboard and shuffleboard integrated into the hardscape. Plants and trees used for the landscape surrounding the building include red maples, dogwoods, crepe myrtles, southern magnolias, Japanese crabapples, white poplar, water oaks, abelia, and nandina. On the north side of the building is a curvilinear serpentine brick wall, forming a patio area between the wall and the building.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions:

This is an eight-story building. The long northern and southern facades span eleven bays across, while the shorter east and west facades span four bays across. A central linear block of rooms containing elevators and stairwells separates the two interior atria. This central section is located at the sixth middle bay on the north and south facades.

2. Structural system and walls:

This building is constructed of a reinforced concrete structural system. The exterior finish on the walls is concrete along the facades and brick at the four building corners. The exterior walls flanking the lobby entrance are clad in texturized concrete panels. Similar panels can be found along the ground floor on the south façade.

3. Balconies:

The facades are defined by the rows of balconies that correspond to each unit. The balconies are constructed of pre-cast concrete wind walls and railings. The railings feature doubled rows of horizontal raised lines.

4. Openings:

During the field research stage for this project, the building was being prepared for demolition. Access was limited due to asbestos removal. Doors and windows had been removed. However, historic photographs have been used to identify original features such as doors and windows.

- a. Doorways, doors, and windows: Double-leaf full-light doors were located at the lobby entrance. Windows were located beside both the interior door that accessed the interior corridor and the exterior balcony doors. These windows varied between three and four light sliding aluminum sashes with screens. Similar windows were used on the ground level common area rooms along the exterior walls. The east side of the building had an entrance to the landscaped grounds; it is not known what types of doors were located here.

5. Roof:

The roof over the two atria is formed by a succession of sixteen pre-cast concrete Y-shaped beams. The beams span between the north and south sides of the building. Between each Y-beam rests curved plastic that forms the skylights. The atrium roof system is not closed along the sides, allowing air to circulate through the building. The Y-beams are supported underneath by a system of cross braces that form a grid on the ceiling. The roof covering the portions of the building containing the residential units is a built-up roof system.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

The overall floor plan consists of two atria surrounded by the residential units. The atria, located on the east and west sides of the building, are separated by a bank of elevators and stairwells. On the ground level, this area dividing the atria also

contains common area rooms and bathrooms. Other ground level common area rooms are found along the north and south sides of the west atrium, near the lobby entrance. From the second floor to the eighth top floor, there are thirty residential units on each floor. For each floor, there are eight efficiencies, or four each located along the east and west ends of the building. Eleven, one-bedroom units each were located along both the north and south ends of the building. Two, side-by-side elevators along the center portion of the building face the west atrium and they are flanked by stairwells. The floor plans of the units are similar for both the efficiencies and the one-bedroom units, except the efficiencies lack some of the floor space provided by the one-bedroom units. Additionally, efficiencies do not have full kitchens. The floor plans are open, with a partition wall dividing the kitchen from the living room, and a curtain dividing the bedroom from the living room. The bathrooms are located along the exterior walls, near the doors to the balconies.

2. Stairways:

Two stairwells are centrally located in the building. They are found on either side of the pair of elevators located between the two atria.

3. Flooring:

The atrium floors are poured concrete. A square section of floor in front of the elevators in the lobby was labeled as having a "textured concrete" finish on the building plans. The floors in the residential units were originally tiled in a marbled-finish material; these may have been vinyl asbestos tiles.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Interior walls are primarily exposed brick with some stuccoed walls. Drop ceilings are found at the ground

level common rooms. Residential units had ceilings with a textured finish.

5. Openings:

During the field research stage for this project, the building was being prepared for demolition. Access was limited due to asbestos removal. Doors and windows had been removed. However, historic photographs have been used to identify original features such as doors and windows.

- a. Doorways, doors, and windows: Doors to each unit were solid wood or metal with small square windows placed at eye level. Similar doors placed on the outside walls provided access to the balconies. Windows were located beside both the interior door that accessed the interior corridor and the exterior balcony doors. These windows varied between three and four light sliding aluminum sashes with screens. Similar windows were used on the ground level common area rooms along the exterior walls. Divided aluminum light windows that spanned from floor to ceiling were located on the interior walls of the ground floor rooms, looking into each atrium.

6. Decorative features and trim:

The modern design aesthetic used for Antoine Graves Homes was spare, with only the building materials themselves imparting ornamentation. The aesthetic of the exterior was defined by the doubled horizontal lines of the concrete balcony railings and the use of tan brick at the building's corners. Materials defined the interior's finish as well: window glass, concrete, and brick. The atria had metal railings along each balcony with colored panels facing into the atria. Screens constructed of metal bars could be found near the lobby entrance.

7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating and ventilation systems: Each residential unit had a heating unit located below the interior windows. The building did not originally have central air conditioning. Air entered through the metal screens located at the lobby entrance and also through the roof, underneath the skylights. Later, it appears that individual air conditioner window units were added to each apartment.
 - b. Elevators: Two elevators facing west are centrally located along the wall dividing the east and west atria.

Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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B. Early Views:

The following are available in the field records for this project and housed at the Library of Congress. They are also on file at the John Portman & Associates Archives, 303 Peachtree Center Avenue, NE, Suite 575, Atlanta, Georgia. These photographs were converted to digital files and printed on archival-quality paper. The John Portman & Associates catalog numbers are in parenthesis.

Clyde May, photographer, 1966

Exterior perspective with large tree in brick part of building, parking lot on right [0015-001-0001_P1b (66585 C)].

William Barnes, photographer, 1965-67

Atrium upper levels, person looking down, person walking to right [0015-002-0003_P1b (#1241-2)].

Main entrance doors and bars [0015-002-0005_P1b (#1241-11)].

Roof detail looking down skylight vent, antennae on right [0015-002-0006_P1b (#1242-5)].

Interior atrium from lobby floor looking up toward skylight, person on 2nd floor left side of center rectangles, person on 3rd floor right side [0015-002-0011_P1b (#1248-11)].

Exterior perspective from courtyard [0015-002-0013_P1b (#1248-7)].

Interior of dining area looking out to atrium with person sitting at table [0015-002-0015_P1b (#1262-1)].

Interior of living room area and bedroom area in background with two people [0015-002-0016_P1b (#1262-3)].

Exterior of balcony area with two people [0015-002-0017_P1b (#1262-7)].

Exterior crop of left side of building from courtyard with two ladies and one man [0015-002-0019_P1b (#1262-12)]

Cityscape from roof, shows construction of Hyatt Regency Atlanta, looking northwest [0015-002-0024_P1b (unmarked-part of panoramic 1 of 3)].

Exterior main entry gate looking north [0015-002-0047_P1b (unmarked)].

Atrium lobby from upper floor, looking down and east,
plant in center [0015-002-0050_P1b (unmarked)].

Top most floor looking across atrium and skylight
beams [0015-002-0056_P1b (unmarked)].

Atrium from upper floor looking across and down,
skylight fills upper half of image [0015-002-0057_P1b
(unmarked)].

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Further research could be conducted to examine the theoretical development of communal public space and interior planning principles for public housing high-rise buildings, both nationally and internationally, during the mid-twentieth century. Were Herbert Millkey and John Portman progenitors of the open, atrium concept as a practical solution to government design standards that required non-functional public spaces in subsidized housing projects? Or did they draw upon and, in Portman's case, popularize emerging architectural concepts for interior high-rise planning that were broadly formulated as a reaction to the Corbusian 'Radiant City' ideal, which had been exemplified by the failed Pruitt-Igoe housing project.

Possible primary sources of information that might document these shifts in design and planning may be found in U.S. Housing Authority records at the National Archives. Sources at the international level could be found in the respective archives of European housing councils, where the concept of the high-rise public housing estate was initially developed and more widely embraced.

Also, interviews with former residents of Antoine Graves Homes were not conducted and the experiences of former residents would be beneficial to include with the overall history of the building.

Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was prepared to assist the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) in meeting their Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. After consultation with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD), HUD concluded Antoine Graves Homes is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District. The AHA, as administrator of federal funds allocated for this purpose, wishes to redevelop the site and its plans will have an adverse effect on the listed property. Thus HUD, the AHA, and HPD entered into a Memorandum of Agreement in 2009 to complete a HABS Level II documentation of the Antoine Graves Homes public housing mid-rise building for seniors.

This documentation was prepared by New South Associates (NSA) under the direction of Principal Investigator Mary Beth Reed, Historian at NSA. Photography was completed by NSA Graphics Director David Diener, assisted by NSA Historian/Architectural Historian Patrick Sullivan, who also prepared a portion of the historic context relating to the early history of public housing. The photography team also took digital photos of the interior of Antoine Graves, as they were not able to take large format photos of the interior due to the demolition preparations underway. Some of these digital images are provided in the appendix. NSA Historian/Architectural Historian Jackie Tyson prepared the remainder of the historical report and was the

photographer for 2010 views of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, included in the appendix. Tom Quinn of NSA prepared the photo key. James Talley of the AHA assisted NSA personnel with accessing the building and provided personnel with original building plans, which were photographed by David Diener. Andy Wallace, curator at the John Portman and Associates archives, provided NSA with historic photographs of Antoine Graves Homes that are included in the field records for this report and can be accessed for research at the Library of Congress.

APPENDIX
Historic and Current Views and Maps



View of Antoine Graves Homes, North and East Facades, 2009.



View of Antoine Graves Homes Atrium, Looking East, 2009.



View of Antoine Graves Atrium, Looking Northeast From Top Floor, 2009.



View of Antoine Graves Homes Atrium, Looking Southeast From Top Floor, 2009.



View of Hyatt Regency Hotel (On Right) and Surrounding Peachtree Center Buildings, 2010.



View of Atrium In Hyatt Regency Hotel, 2010.



View of Atrium In Hyatt Regency Hotel, 2010.