The Power of the Plan: Building a University in Historic Columbia, South Carolina

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Ford’s dynamic photographs appear true and real as they present the people and their environments between 1971-1975.

As a followup Ford returned to Oxford and the areas he visited in 1971-1975. The photographs taken in 2013 thru 2016 give us a “then and now” contrast of a “way of life” that disappeared or is disappearing. The drama of the change seems directly related to mechanization, environmental observations and ways of life of those who now live in North Mississippi.

As an added opportunity to see Ford’s research through the eyes of a film camera, see Ford’s 1975 documentary award winning film, “Homeplace”. It can be viewed on YouTube. Also to learn more about the Michael Ford Materials Collection, go to the American Folklife Center, at the Library of Congress. www.loc.gov. Recommended for public and academic libraries and archival centers.

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant


On the day that a review copy of The Power of the Plan: Building a University in Historic Columbia, South Carolina arrived at my door, I wondered, “Is this another over-sized coffee table book?” To my delight, Richard Galehouse’s beautiful and historically fascinating book is not a mere coffee table treasure.

As a graduate of both the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Education and the master’s program in the College of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina, I may not have been the best reviewer to give my thoughts on Galehouse’s book. Certainly bias may have entered into my praise as you will see below. Inside the pages, the research provides to the reader the University’s planning history from its beginning days in 1801 through the 200 years that have followed. The book is a journey documenting planning, vision and the leadership the University has provided to integrate and enrich its provenance within the city of Columbia.

This story shows the evolution of this state university’s involvement and enrichment in and of the City of Columbia. Richard Galehouse tells the story that explains the first days of the South Carolina College plan of 1801—the famed Horseshoe concept for the campus. Situated in the center of the town of Columbia, the evolution of the college into a university spread and grew within the city. Sometimes troubles impeded plans and sometimes successes allowed the growth needed to continue within the confines of the city. Galehouse’s outstanding and highly readable research documents his stories. Of great interest are today’s vigorous plans for the Innovista research campus and its potential great value to the city and surrounding areas.

Mere words cannot explain the beauty of the graphics within each chapter—full color photographs, intricate plans for building sites, notations for all inserts, portraits of famous individuals who have spurred planning and nurtured growth of both campus and city. Historical research into manuscripts, interviews, many valued documents explain and verify planning over the years and photographs, maps and charts are the highlights of this book.

The book offers an insider’s view of how a city and a university’s leadership worked together tirelessly over those 200 years to produce “a university in a city”.

Recommended for public, academic and graduate school collections (particularly architecture, landscaping and land management).

Carol Walker Jordan
Librarian and Consultant