

# **A Developmental Concept for Stone Mountain Park**



Bureau of Business and Economic Research  
Graduate School of Business Administration  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
Athens, Georgia 30601  
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The Honorable Phil Campbell, Jr., Chairman  
Stone Mountain Memorial Association  
Stone Mountain, Georgia

Dear Mr. Campbell:

In January of 1964 the Bureau of Business and Economic Research submitted a report to the Stone Mountain Memorial Association on the economic potentials of Stone Mountain Park. This report resulted from a study by the Bureau for the Association and contained recommendations concerning future developments at the Park.

In June of 1964, committees were appointed by both houses of the General Assembly to study the Stone Mountain project. In a joint report, these committees recommended that the Bureau study be reviewed "with a view towards establishing a firm construction guide for the continued development of the Park."

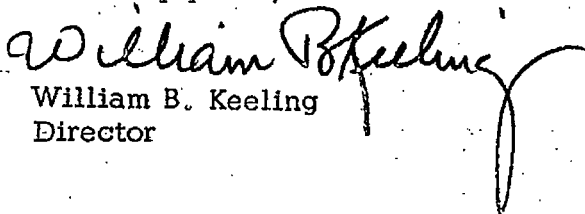
Because much progress has been made at the Park since the Bureau's earlier report, the Association entered into an agreement with the University of Georgia on June 3, 1965, under which the Bureau's 1964 recommendations would be reviewed and brought up to date. This the Bureau currently is doing.

The report which follows addresses itself to the important question of the development concept to be followed at the Park.

I appreciate the opportunity of presenting this report to the Association at this time since, in my opinion, it deals with a question which should be considered carefully before plans for additional developments at the Park are formulated.

I hope this report will prove useful to the members of the Association in their deliberation about future developments at the Park.

Cordially yours,

  
William B. Keeling  
Director

## A DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT FOR STONE MOUNTAIN PARK

The progress which has been made at Stone Mountain Park since January of 1964 when the Bureau last submitted a report to the Association has been most significant.

Work is underway once more on the carving, the Inn has been finished and is in operation, the highway by-pass is completed, both entrance gates are in operation, and the beautification program within the Park has paid handsome dividends.

In short, the Park has lost its "unfinished" look and now presents the picture of a major attraction in full operation.

For several reasons, this is an excellent time to pause, look closely at what the Park is today, and carefully consider what it might become tomorrow.

In the first place, the Park has had a very good year. It was visited by over one million people in 1965, and from the preliminary results of a survey the Bureau recently conducted, these visitors liked what they found.

An overwhelming 73.5% of the visitors who returned questionnaires handed them at the gates in late August and early September expressed a favorable opinion of the Park. Only 16.6% indicated an unfavorable or a conditional opinion, with the most common complaint being the prices charged.

"Nice but expensive" was a typical response.

This is truly a significant achievement, and indicates a level of acceptance which is far above what might have been expected at this stage of

development of the Park. The future success of the Park seems assured. There is time now to pause and take stock.

There also is need now to pause and take stock. Important decisions face the Association in the months ahead. Some of these concern the type of additional developments which should be constructed at the Park. An important era in the life of the Park is ending; a more important one lies ahead.

When we were asked to prepare recommendations for future developments, we began by attempting to formulate a set of guidelines or basic assumptions about the Park. Such guidelines or assumptions are essential to effective long-range planning. They establish the direction one wishes to go.

In essence, we knew we must formulate a development concept for the Park before we could make specific recommendations to the Association.

The formulation of such a concept usually is not a simple task, for the concept must be precise and in considerable detail if it is to provide the type of guidance which is needed.

As we examined the Park closely, however, we found the job to be less difficult than we had thought; for while there were some inconsistencies in the Park, the basic elements of a development concept were there also. In fact, many of them were surprisingly obvious.

Our job became one of putting these elements together into a meaningful pattern.

It is the purpose of this report to describe a suggested development concept for Stone Mountain Park.

First, certain key questions are explored and some tentative answers are given.

Next, an attempt is made to formulate a concept and to show, by use of specific examples, how it could be applied in Stone Mountain Park.

Finally, some implications of the suggested concept are explored and some conclusions are reached.

## SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND SOME SUGGESTED ANSWERS

In the process of formulating a development concept for the Park, questions such as the following arise.

What kind of image should the Park project in its advertising and to its visitors? Should the dominant impression be one of public service or of private gain?

Related to this is the question of whether the objective of the Park is to provide high-level education and inspiration, or simply to entertain. There are aspects of both approaches in the Park at present, and this tends to create some confusion in the minds of visitors as to how to behave and what they should expect to receive from their visit.

Another type of question relates to the length of stay. Should the Park be considered primarily as a day-use facility, or should it be considered also as a vacation area to which people come for visits of two, three, or more days, staying overnight in the Park or vicinity while there? Related to this is the question of whether the Park should be designed primarily to attract people from nearby areas, or whether it also should seek a national and international market.

Even more basic are questions relating to the memorial aspects of the Park. Should the memorial be confined to the carving and the developments at the base of the mountain, or should the Confederate Museum, the Battlarena, the Plantation, and in fact the entire Park also be considered as part of the memorial? And, of extreme importance, what should the Park commemorate? Should the story which is told be limited to the four years during which the Confederacy existed, or should the Park seek also to commemorate ideals and concepts of the South which had their origins long before this period and which, rather than disappearing in 1865, have become a permanent part of our American life and character?

And, finally, what should our aspirations be concerning Stone Mountain Park? Should we consider the Park a success when visitations are at

a certain level and economic self-sufficiency has been reached? Or did the General Assembly and the people of Georgia have more noble aspirations in mind when they began this development? What should be our basic objective? How should success be measured?

In seeking answers to these questions extensive discussions were held with the management of the Park and with a private consultant who was brought to the Park to study it and make recommendations. Consultations also were held with the Recreation Economics Division of Stanford Research Institute and with officials of EXPO 67, the International Exhibition to be held in Montreal in 1967.

Personal visits were made to Callaway Gardens, Disneyland, Six Flags Over Texas, Golden Gate Park, Colonial Williamsburg, and Jamestown Festival Park, and consultations were arranged with key management officials of these developments. The basic concept studies for the Seattle World's Fair, EXPO 67, and other major recreation-education exhibitions were obtained and reviewed.

Finally, the above questions were fully discussed with Walker Hancock, the sculptor who has been chosen to complete the carving and to design the memorial at its base.

Out of this analysis and these discussions some answers have emerged. They are presented here for the consideration of the Association. In essence, these answers constitute the assumptions upon which the rest of this report is based.

First, and perhaps foremost, Stone Mountain Park must be notable. It would be a disservice to the half-century of effort which already has been expended, to the many individuals and organizations who have been involved in its development, to the General Assembly and the people of Georgia who have provided the funds, and to the grandeur of the Mountain itself to have anything other than the very highest of aspirations for the Park.

Success for Stone Mountain Park should not be measured in numbers of visitors or in operating income alone; it also should be measured in terms of the kind of impact it has on visitors and upon those who read

and hear about it. In the eyes of all who come in contact with it, the Park must be as outstanding a development in its field as Disneyland is in the field of amusement parks, as the Smithsonian Institution is in the field of museums, as Golden Gate Park is in the field of urban multi-purpose parks, as Balboa Park in San Diego is in the field of zoological gardens, and as Colonial Williamsburg is in the field of historical restorations.

Each of these developments has received national and international recognition for its excellence. Stone Mountain Park should aspire to this same type of recognition.

Second, the Park should be a memorial not only to those who fought during the four years of warfare, but also to the culture to which these men belonged. The Civil War was a crisis in the life of the South; it was not the climax of Southern civilization. The ideals, beliefs, and ways of life of the states which made up the Confederacy existed for many years prior to 1861, and they did not cease to exist in 1865. For the most part they have continued on as a permanent part of our national character.

The people of the South made many contributions to the evolution of American life and character. Stone Mountain Park should commemorate them, as well as the men who fought during the brief period of the Confederacy.

Third, the entire Park, rather than just the memorial area itself, should be viewed as a commemoration. This does not mean, as is noted later, that activities such as swimming and golf cannot take place, but that every activity, every special event, every future development should be examined most carefully to determine if it is in harmony with the basic objectives of the Park.

Other answers follow rather easily from the ones stated above.

The basic objective of the Park should be an educational one, in the broadest sense of the term. The image which is projected should be primarily one of public service rather than private gain.

Because the story to be told is a large one, it will not be possible to

tell it in a single day. The Park should therefore be designed to accommodate visits of several days in length.

And, because the story to be told is a grand one, it should be told to all who wish to come. The Park should serve the national and international market, as well as the local area.

Building upon these answers, which in reality constitute basic assumptions about the Park, it now is possible to formulate the development concept.

### THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

It is the recommendation of this report that the objective of Stone Mountain Park should be to commemorate the contributions of the South to our American life and character.

These contributions should be viewed in the broadest possible terms, embracing patterns of work and of play, music and art, handicraft, literature, and key ideals and beliefs in the areas of politics and religion.

The basic assumption would be similar to that followed by Colonial Williamsburg: that an understanding and appreciation of the lives, surroundings, and patterns of thought of those who made significant contributions to our American culture not only is valuable in and of itself, but also tends to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of our present day civilization. We tend to be better citizens today because of what we learn about the past.

However, there is a significant difference between Stone Mountain Park and Colonial Williamsburg. Williamsburg is in essence a restoration. It is an attempt to rebuild, to the highest standards of historical and architectural integrity, the capital of Colonial Virginia, as it existed prior to the revolution.



Stone Mountain Park would be a re-creation and an exhibition rather than a restoration. It would attempt to re-create and to exhibit certain aspects of Southern life as they existed in the past. It also should employ the highest standards of historical integrity, but it would not be limited as is Williamsburg to restoring only that which originally existed, exactly where it originally stood.

An example is the Plantation. Although the buildings are authentic, a plantation never existed anywhere exactly like the one at the Park. Yet this does not detract from the story which it tells or the impact which it has on the visitor.

There are many ways in which this development concept could be carried out at the Park.

#### Exhibition Buildings

Exhibition buildings similar to those at Jamestown Festival Park could be employed. The first building would tell, by means of a series of exhibits through which the visitor walks, the story of the development of Southern culture prior to the Civil War. It would begin with the original colonies, with models of early communities and displays of early artifacts and objects of daily living.

The objective would not be to create a museum, but to tell a story through the use of carefully selected displays arranged for maximum impact. Included in this story would be the role which prominent Southern leaders such as Jefferson, Washington, and others played in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods.

Following the Revolution would be sections devoted to various aspects of life in the South during the first half of the nineteenth century, again with reference to the contributions of outstanding Southern leaders.

The Civil War period already is excellently presented by the museum in Memorial Hall and the Battlarena in Confederate Hall.

The story following the war could be told in another exhibition building.

Here should be covered the periods of reconstruction, rebuilding, and expansion which followed the war and which laid the basis for the South of today.

The record should terminate around the turn of the century, perhaps with the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895, itself a tremendous achievement for a city which had just risen from the destruction of war.

These exhibition buildings would develop the theme of the Park in its entirety, but much of the impact and educational value of the Park would be transmitted through special exhibits or re-creations which emphasize certain aspects of Southern life and culture.

Examples of the way in which this could be done follow.

#### Life and Work

The Plantation as it now exists is an excellent presentation of living conditions at several levels in the period before the war.

The Grist Mill and Sorghum Mill, when completed, will provide insights into some of the processing methods of the same era.

To these should be added handicraft shops of several kinds. Candle makers, glass blowers, weavers, book binders and other artisans should be plying their trade in workshops of the early nineteenth century, where visitors could watch them work. Their wares should be available for purchase in the Park.

Another addition should be a functioning farm of the same era, where visitors could watch the land being tilled and farm processes being carried out with the tools and techniques of the day. A blacksmith shop should be a part of this complex.

A limited amount of visitor participation could be encouraged at the farm. How many modern children have had an opportunity to milk a cow?

## Music and Literature

The carillon which recently was given to the Park by the Coca-Cola Company furnishes an excellent opportunity to present the music of the South to visitors. This carillon, with its 610 bells, is the largest in the world and is ideally suited to this type of use. Special-purpose music can be "beamed" to any part of the Park. The melodies of Stephen Foster, for example, could furnish an excellent background for many activities in the Park.

The Park could take advantage of the current popularity of all types of folk music by scheduling special concerts by leading folk and spiritual singers.

Much folk music had its origin in the South, and this should be emphasized in special concerts and by regular singers performing, for example, for dinner guests in the Inn.

The music of the war period also should be emphasized. Again the carillon should prove the ideal instrument.

The literature of the South is extensive, and gift shops in the Park should emphasize books by Southerners and about the South. Eventually a separate bookstore in the Park might be established.

Lecture series and seminars also might prove successful in the future after the image of the Park has become firmly established in the public mind and people begin to view it as a center of information about Southern culture.

## The Memorial Area

The memorial area is one of the central theme areas of the Park.

Other exhibits and areas concentrate upon such things as patterns of life and work. The memorial area concentrates upon major ideals and concepts of the South.

The memorial area will be made up of two main parts.

The first, the carving, commemorates the soldiers of the Confederacy.

The second, the design currently being developed by Walker Hancock, will commemorate great principles and ideals which have been expressed by Southerners. The current thinking of the sculptor is that his work will make use of quotations by Southerners selected because they were either original or unique in their expression of a certain concept, or because they represented an especially notable expression of this concept.

In keeping with the theme of the Park, the quotations would be chosen from both the periods prior to and following the War Between the States, as well as from the war period itself.

The principles and concepts commemorated by the work of the sculptor also should be treated in the exhibition halls. It is extremely important that as many interrelationships as possible be developed between the memorial area and the rest of the Park.

Stone Mountain must not become known as a Park with a memorial within it. The entire Park should be viewed as a living memorial to the South.

#### Supporting Activities

In a commemorative, exhibition park such as is described here, it is important that as many of the activities as possible be related to the theme of the Park. It is in this way that the Park expresses its unity of purpose. It is in this way that it becomes notable.

However, it is not likely that all activities within the Park could be related to the central theme, nor is it necessary that they be so.

A modern vacation or destination area cannot be a success unless it offers its visitors a well-rounded program of activities. People expect to be able to engage in activities such as golfing and swimming when they visit a vacation area.

In the selection of these activities some definite principles should be followed.

First, the activities must be compatible with the basic theme of the Park. A motorcycle race is not compatible with a memorial area.

Second, the activities chosen should be those which appeal to the type of visitor normally attracted by the basic theme of the Park. The visitor should come to the Park primarily because of his interest in the theme-related activities of the Park (in this case, the exhibition hall, the museums, the memorial area, etc.). He should not come primarily because of his interest in supporting activities.

Third, care should be taken in publicizing the Park that principal emphasis is given to theme-related rather than supporting activities. It should become known that activities such as golfing or swimming are available at Stone Mountain Park, but the Park itself should receive primary promotional emphasis.

Supporting activities are especially important for children in a vacation area. Supervised care should be provided during periods when parents wish to engage in their own activities.

An excellent suggestion which has been made is that a special playground be constructed making use of animal characters from the Uncle Remus stories of Joel Chandler Harris.

Evening entertainment also is important. A suggestion which has been made is that a theater building be constructed in which Gone With the Wind could be shown several times a week. The building could be used for other purposes, such as convention meetings, at other times.

This is not a definitive list. Many additional supporting activities will be needed. A detailed activity analysis should be carried out to determine what the needs are and how they can best be met within the principles set forth above.

## Role of the Concessions

The central issue in a commemorative, exhibition Park is not who owns or operates an activity, but how that activity relates to the basic theme of the Park.

Some concessions (the Plantation, for example) already are directly related to the theme of the Park. The Railroad also falls in this category (although portions of the entertainment on the ride are not theme-related). Concessions which are not theme-related would fall into the category of supporting activities.

In a commemorative park concession-operated activities should be viewed no differently from non-concession-operated activities. However, the Association has a special obligation to the concessions currently at the Park.

Every attempt should be made to encourage and assist them to relate their activities to the basic theme of the Park. Where this is not possible, every attempt should be made to work them into the pattern of supporting activities of the Park.

It should be noted, however, that as the Park prospers, so should the concessions prosper. A development and promotion program which will result in a steady, large flow of people into the Park should also result in satisfactory revenues to the concessions.

## Architecture

Every attempt should be made to establish a central architectural theme for the entire Park and to conform to it.

The architecture in any of the re-created areas should of course be historically accurate.

For other sections of the Park, it is suggested that Memorial Hall be considered as the "theme structure." Every additional building

should be designed to be consistent with this magnificent structure, which combines the modern and the traditional with such excellent effect.

Maintaining architectural integrity is not a simple task, and the Association may wish to establish an advisory committee to assist it and the Park's consulting architect in establishing architectural policy.

The dominant impression that should be given throughout the Park is the one suggested by the Mountain and by Memorial Hall: simple grandeur.

### Landscaping

A significant difference between Stone Mountain Park and Colonial Williamsburg is that the story at the Park can be told in surroundings of tremendous natural beauty and grandeur. An important part of the development concept is the full utilization of these natural surroundings through a continuation of current programs of landscaping and beautification.

Here again, the Park need not limit itself, as must Colonial Williamsburg, to only those plants which were in existence at a given place and time. While it may be appropriate to do this in the re-created areas, other sections of the Park should make use of whatever plants and design techniques seem most appropriate.

The objective always should be to complement and reinforce the natural grandeur of the Mountain. In general, this suggests maximum use of indigenous materials and natural growing patterns, although more formal treatment probably is appropriate in some of the more developed areas of the Park.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of natural beauty of the Park. In the survey recently conducted, the Mountain and the scenic beauty of the Park were very high on the list of things most enjoyed by visitors to the Park.

### Promotional Activities

It seems almost superfluous at this point to emphasize that all promotional

activities of the Park should be related to the development concept.

The adoption of the concept would provide the guidance necessary in the selection of advertising programs and of special events.

Special events should be scheduled to smooth out the seasonal variations in attendance. Some events which might be used are costumed dinners on significant holidays, nature walks and programs when the Park foliage is particularly attractive, special educational programs conducted in cooperation with school history classes, and candlelight and lantern tours of the Plantation and other re-created areas.

The special events program of Colonial Williamsburg is an excellent one and many of their events could be adapted for use at Stone Mountain Park.

Not to be overlooked is the significant support from private sources which is available. Each year Colonial Williamsburg receives contributions from a number of individuals and organizations because of the excellence of its objectives and its programs. Stone Mountain Park too should be able to enlist this same kind of private support.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is possible for Stone Mountain Park to become as notable in the field of commemorative, exhibition parks as Colonial Williamsburg has become in the field of restoration parks.

The developments already completed and under way provide an excellent base upon which to build. In reality, Stone Mountain already is well on its way to becoming such a park.

The Association should carefully consider the adoption of a development concept such as the one presented in this report which will define the future direction of the Park and provide guidance for decisions at all levels.