Historic Athens App
Project Brief

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PART 1: PROJECT PITCH

Home to exceptional food, outstanding athletics, and lively music, Athens, Georgia is a cultural hub of the Southeast. These features attract visitors from far and wide, and while they make Athens a great place to live and visit, there is more to the community than meets the eye. With a diverse culture comes diverse stories, so why don't we know more about the people and places that make up the Classic City?

There are many ways to learn about Athens history, but none that are both convenient and comprehensive. Historic Athens, a local historic preservation and conservation organization, seeks to engage residents and visitors alike by providing broad access to local history. The Historic Athens App for iOS, a mobile app designed to compliment Historic Athens' programming and events, bridges the knowledge gap between community members and local history.

A one stop shop to learn all things Athens history, the Historic Athens App features three key components:

1. A calendar of upcoming Historic Athens events.
2. A map identifying historic places nearby using location services.
3. A page detailing opportunities for involvement with Historic Athens.

Successful historic preservation requires engaged local communities. The Historic Athens App inspires involvement and investment in Athens, Georgia for users of all ages and abilities.

PART 2: DEFINITION, JUSTIFICATION + EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Purpose Statement

The Historic Athens App exposes Athens residents of all ages to Historic Athens' programs, events, and locations. As an organization, Historic Athens has primarily engaged its audience through its website, Facebook page, and Instagram account. The Historic Athens App, however, engages Athenians on the go and broadens the accessibility of Historic Athens' mission to anyone with a mobile device. It is the first mobile resource uniquely dedicated to helping Athens citizens and visitors alike explore the community.

Problem + Solution

In school, students learn world history, United States history, and even state history, but few people learn about the history that has taken place in their own neighborhoods. Learning local history allows residents to develop a sense of identity and better understand the community as well as the inequities and issues it currently faces ("Recovering and Teaching Local History"). Exploring local history encourages the examination of that history as it has been taught and as it is being made ("What Is Local History?"). Athens' past significantly impacts its present and its future; appreciating the city's history creates a stronger, more empathetic community.

The purpose of the Historic Athens App is simple: help local citizens learn the history, both good and bad, around them. Successful historic preservation requires engaged local communities, and this app will help connect Athens residents with the local history that makes Athens the Classic City. For example, the app includes a local map that features historic landmarks to help users navigate and explore the community. In addition, the app includeS details about local programs and events hosted by Historic Athens to encourage residents' and visitors' participation.

Research Report

Tommy Valentine, the Executive Director of Historic Athens, suggested we explore [National Trust UK](#), which inspired his vision for the Historic Athens App. National Trust UK features three primary pages:

1. The Discover page allows users to explore National Trust places, even when offline.
2. The What's On page allows users to browse upcoming events.
3. The Places page allows users to favorite places and create a wishlist for future visits.

While National Trust UK is functional, it is not particularly beautiful or logical. It also requires users to set up an account, which can be a barrier for some who are looking for immediate or easily accessible information. As requested by Tommy, the Historic Athens App follows a similar structure and is both attractive and intuitive. Combining these elements will encourage users to connect with local Athens history.

There are two comprehensive lists of historic places in Athens that the app compiles: the [National Register of Historic Places Listings in Clarke County, Georgia](#) and the [Athens-Clarke County Unified Government Historic District Maps](#). These resources include relevant information, like coordinates and maps of historic properties, that the app's design incorporates.

While many apps, like [the History Channel's History Here app](#), exist to help users locate historic markers near them, few are truly community-oriented in the way the Historic Athens App is. Unique to Athens, the app inspires community involvement and appreciation.

Client Information

According to the website, [Historic Athens](#) "is a 501(c)(3) non-profit working to celebrate and conserve community heritage in Athens, Georgia. For over 50 years,

[they] have worked to improve historic preservation and heritage conservation in the Athens area." Their mission is "to be a proactive force in developing community-wide understanding of the value of historic buildings, neighborhoods, and heritage." Historic Athens has three staff members, five executive board members, and thirteen trustees. Their team works alongside volunteers to carry out Historic Athens' mission.

Technology

Historic Athens' Executive Director Tommy Valentine requested an iOS app that utilizes location services and GPS technology. The app will be developed in Xcode and will populate a map of historical sites near the user. Resources like Wikipedia's National Register of Historic Places listings in Clarke County, Georgia and the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places identify historical sites in Athens, Georgia; however, these resources are dense and difficult to consume quickly. The Historic Athens App mitigates this problem by allowing users to quickly and efficiently identify historical locations nearby.

Features + Components

The Historic Athens App includes three components:

1. A calendar of upcoming Historic Athens events, which makes these events more accessible to users.
2. A map identifying historic places nearby using location services. Users can easily use the map to locate historic places near them.
3. A page detailing opportunities for involvement with Historic Athens. Historic Athens relies on volunteer work, and this element encourages and welcomes volunteers.

This app also uses embedded audio to increase accessibility.

PART 3: COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE REPORT

Market Justification

If you Google "Local Athens History", the first several results include:

1. [ACC Government Website](#)
2. [Visit Athens](#)
3. [Red and Black article: A Brief History of Athens](#)

These resources are primarily informational or helpful for a brief visit to Athens. As a college town, Athens welcomes thousands of new residents every year. Whether incoming freshmen, passionate graduate students, or tenured professors, each individual adds value to the community. The Historic Athens App bridges the gap between short-term and long-term residents and proactively engages residents of any kind to explore and appreciate the town they call home.

Many resources that are in competition with the Historic Athens app target one of three Athens community members:

1. The Student
    a. [The Red and Black](#)
    b. [UGA Libraries](#)
2. The Local
    a. [The Red and Black](#)
    b. [Flagpole](#)
3. The Visitor
    a. [Visit Athens GA](#)

Competitive Advantage

The Historic Athens App outshines competitors by offering an accessible platform for all users to interact with the history that surrounds them. The app itself is a completely new way for residents and visitors to learn about local history. Rather
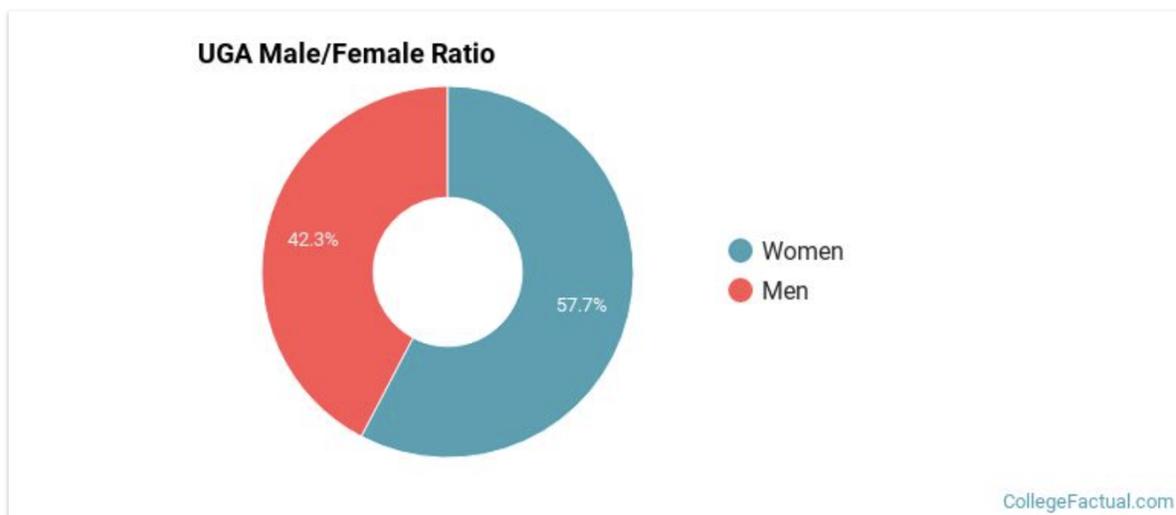
than reading an article riddled with facts, users can engage with their surroundings via a walking tour and interactive map. The app is also the only resource uniquely dedicated to engaging local residents with the history around them, meaning users must make minimal effort to identify research and information about the area around them.

Consumer Research

Athens-Clarke County is the 19th most populous of Georgia's 159 counties and 5th most populous of Georgia's 535 cities (https://www.accgov.com/). It is a diverse community with the following demographic breakdowns:

1. **Gender**: The Athens population is made up of mostly women. This also holds true for the University of Georgia's population ("Demographics: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website").
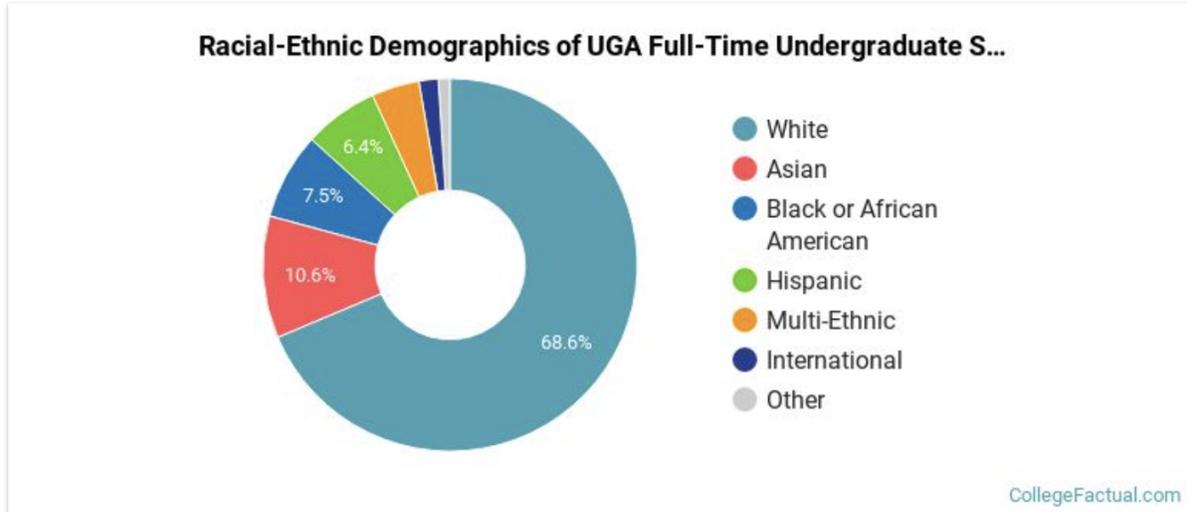
The full-time UGA undergraduate population is made up of 58% women, and 42% men.

("University of Georgia Diversity: Racial Demographics & Other Stats.")
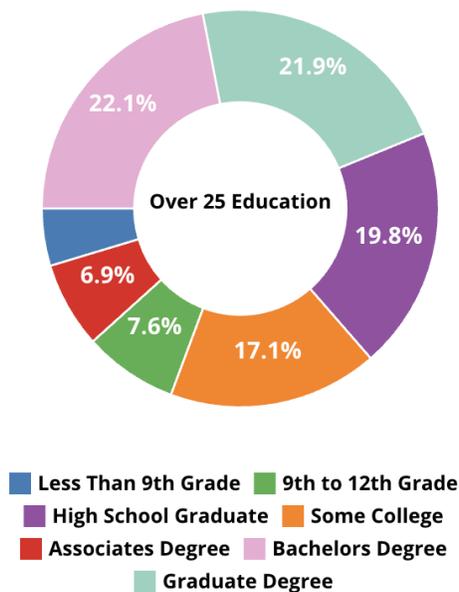
2. **Race**: Athens' population is majority white with significant Asian, Black, and Hispanic communities. This breakdown is similarly reflected in UGA's population ("Demographics: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website").

UGA Racial/Ethnic Breakdown of Undergraduates

("University of Georgia Diversity: Racial Demographics & Other Stats.")

3. **Age**: Due in part to a large campus presence, the average age in Athens is 28 years old ("Demographics: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website").

4. **Education:** The majority of Athens residents hold a highschool education or higher ("Demographics: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website").

5. **Income:** The median income for Athens is $38,000 ("Demographics: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website").

Name	Median	Mean
Households	$38,311	$59,118
Families	$54,627	$81,085
Married Families	$80,434	$102,947
Non Families	$25,723	$35,597

The Historic Athens App considers this demographic information and is free of charge, uses simple, concise language with embedded audio, and engages users of all ages through intuitive design. The ideal Historic Athens App user:

1. Is **interested** in history and historic preservation, informal educational opportunities, and political engagement.
2. **Wants** to be engaged in their community and support historically disenfranchised neighborhoods.

User Personas

Maria

Maria is a 19-year-old incoming freshman at the University of Georgia. She is looking for an adventure in the Classic City. While she grew up just an hour outside of Athens, she knows little about the history that makes up her new home.

Maria is an intended psychology major who is passionate about the way people think and interact with their environment. She is a digital native and seeks out innovative tech experiences. Because Maria is new to town, she wants to get to know Athens and explore the opportunities the local community has to offer.

Paul

Paul is a 43-year-old husband to Michelle, age 45, and father to three daughters: Bailey, age 10, Laurel age 7, and Mia, age 5. Paul and his family live in a historic home in Normaltown and enjoy family walks in their historic neighborhood.

Paul owns a local landscaping company and his wife is a web developer, so the family loves the outdoors and technology equally. After some discussion, Paul and Michelle agreed to find an interactive way for their family to learn more about the neighborhood.

Edith

Edith is 70 years old with minimal understanding of technology. After a few tutorials from her grandson Ben, she comfortably navigates her iPhone to make phone calls and send an occasional text message.

Edith wears reading glasses and struggles to read small text. As a retiree, Edith recently challenged herself to get outside and walk the neighborhood more. The ability to take in her surroundings and simultaneously learn more about the neighborhood intrigues Edith.

Product Comparison

The most similar options to the Historic Athens App currently available to customers are the [History Here App](#) and [the Georgia Historical Society Markers Mobile App](#). The History Here App is a 2015 Webby Award winner for Apps and Travel Software. The app offers a large variety of options based on nationwide location, as well as directions to points of interest. The Georgia Historical Society Mobile App is lesser known but offers a guide to more than 300 historical markers across Georgia. Both of these applications provide an overview of local history based on users' location; however, both apps assume a significantly larger scale than the Historic Athens App does.

The Historic Athens App is designed to be Athens-specific, meaning resources are tailored to residents and visitors in Athens, Georgia. Providing this narrow location range makes the app more cohesive and usable, particularly as users explore town. It also better achieves Historic Athens' goal of promoting historic involvement and preservation in the Athens community. While the range is significantly smaller than that of the History Here App and the Georgia Historical Society Markers App, this intentional choice creates an intimate, community-centered experience for users.

Competitor Research

National Trust UK
National Trust UK inspired most of the client's vision for the Historic Athens App. National Trust UK features three primary tabs called "Discover," "What's On," and "Places." Obviously, this app is specific to historic locations and information in the United Kingdom, meaning it competes with the Historic Athens App conceptually rather than locally.

Athens Historical Society
Athens Historical Society does not offer an app; however, the organization is a direct competitor of Historic Athens in the field of historic preservation and conservation. Both organizations work in the same community; while they similarly host events for the broader community, Athens Historical Society focuses more on art and literature, while Historic Athens works to preserve physical spaces.

Georgia Historical Society Markers Mobile App
Since 1998, the Georgia Historical Society has offered Georgia's statewide marker program, which includes more than 300 historical markers that cover a wide variety of subjects across Georgia (https://georgiahistory.com). The GHS Markers Mobile App allows users to search markers and learn more about the history the markers detail. Originally created for the Civil War 150 Historical Marker Project, the app consisted of Civil War markers only but has since been updated to include more markers and different search functions by offering the following:

1. A display of markers closest to the user's location or to an area previously searched.
2. A search by category feature that includes comprehensive details and photos of marker content.
3. Turn-by-turn directions via Google Maps.

Users see a menu with four options upon opening the app:
1. Welcome, which includes a brief introduction to the app and prompts users to "View the Tutorial."
2. Find, the app's main search function where users can search for markers by title, category, location, or distance.
3. Marker Info, which offers information about GHS Markers and FAQs.
4. About GHS, which provides historical information about GHS and its mission.

The last update to this app occurred in 2017 and only has four reviews in the app store. As a significant competitor to the Historic Athens app, the GHS Markers Mobile App offers inspiration about features to include and avoid to make the Historic Athens App a usable, engaging tool for community-oriented users.

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