


COMPLEX CLOTH

**PRESS
RELEASE
AND
FAQS**

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Complex Cloth: The UGA School of Social Work's stepping stones into acknowledging their complex and difficult history

Complex Cloth is an educational experience regarding the history of the Social Work building with enslaved persons.

ATHENS, GA.- December 10, 2022- The UGA School of Social Work is proud to announce The Complex Cloth Experience: a virtual guide through the UGA School of Social Work's history. The website and virtual walkthrough depict the School's difficult history through slavery, factory work and child labor. It is our hope that these resources will be used as an educational resource for UGA students and faculty, as well as the Athens community.

The website will feature multiple educational resources including photos, documentation and stories about the building, once known as the Athens Factory, as well as resources to support marginalized communities in Athens. The site will also include a virtual walkthrough, an interactive resource for individuals to explore the building and its extensive history.

Though these resources were available in some capacity, they are now available to the general public in a way that is engaging and informative. Many of these artifacts were only available through private access, and were very difficult to navigate. Through our new website, our hope is that individuals of all ages, knowledge levels and backgrounds will be able to use, enjoy and learn from our resources.

"Though it is difficult, we are proud to be able to shed light on our building's devastating yet inspiring history", says Jane McPherson, a faculty member and advocate of the Complex Cloth Project. "It is important to recognize our history and learn from our wrongdoings to inspire a better future."

We hope to continue to improve this experience overtime as we continue to learn about the unique history of our building. We are also looking forward to using these tools as an asset to several of our social work classes, both at the UGA Athens campus and beyond. If you are looking to get more involved, feel free to explore the resources on both the complex cloth as and school of social work websites. We hope that this project will inspire a culture of acknowledgement and growth for UGA and the Athens community.

"Before exploring the Complex Cloth website, I had no idea that the UGA School of Social Work building had such an extensive and upsetting history", says John Smith, a frequent website user. "Though these subjects are often difficult and uncomfortable to talk about, I am thankful that the school has provided these resources to educate the community".

It is simple to get started! To access the site, go to <http://www.complexcloth.uga.edu>. It is accessible to anyone in any location, and is free to use. The site can also be accessed through the UGA School of Social Work website.

F A Q S



ABOUT COMPLEX CLOTH

01.

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK?

The school of social work is an academic sector at the University of Georgia for a Bachelors in Social Work as well as a Masters in Social Work. This is their mission: “The School of Social Work at the University of Georgia prepares culturally responsive practitioners and scholars to be leaders in addressing social problems and promoting social justice, locally and globally, through teaching, research, and service”.

02.

WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK BUILDING?

The UGA School of Social Work was previously the Athens Manufacturing Company, a cotton and wood mill that was established in 1832 and fully rebuilt after a fire in 1858. Additionally, Before 1865, this Athens factory owned and also rented enslaved people of African descent who worked there, as well as built and maintained the buildings. Before becoming a mill, the school of social work is also the ancestral homeland of the Muskogee Creek and Eastern Cherokee Peoples, which was forcibly occupied by white settlers in the late 1700s.

03.

WHERE IS THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK LOCATED?

The School of Social work is located at 279 Williams St. Athens, GA 30602

04.

WHO IS THE WEBSITE FOR?

This website is for the UGA community, the Athens community and beyond. It is designed for anyone interested in learning more about the history of enslaved persons in the United States and at UGA specifically.

05.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

For the user, this experience is completely free. However, to create the website, the template Avada was used for \$69. A domain was also purchased for this project at a cost of \$45.

06.

WHY DID THE WEBSITE NEED TO BE CREATED/UPDATED?

This website needed to be updated, and basically re-created because all of the information was extremely disorganized and decentralized. In order for users to get the most out of this information, it is essential that the information is conveyed in an engaging and accessible way. Additionally, much of this information was not accessible for non-social work students, as it was only accessible through UGA ELC. This website and experience allows for anyone to access the content and educate themselves regardless of UGA affiliation.

07.

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS FOR THE COMPLEX CLOTH EXPERIENCE?

As individuals in the School of Social work will continue to learn more about its unique and extensible history, the experience will continue to be updated. It is also designed to adapt to changes in the School of Social Work curriculum. Dr. Jane McPherson, an associate professor at the School of Social Work and the lead on this experience, hopes to update the website and adapt her curriculum each time she learns something new.

08.

I DON'T LIVE IN ATHENS, WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

Regardless of being an Athens resident, the UGA and School of Social work history with enslaved persons is a difficult yet important thing to discover. Instances of slavery all around the nation have gone under discussed for too long, and it is time that we learn about these instances to prevent them from happening in the future. It is also important to acknowledge this piece of history and use it as an inspiration to become involved in anti-racist and anti-discrimination organizations. This experience and lesson is valuable whether you are in Athens or not, as it provides universal lessons and resources regarding slavery in the US.