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**Angel Brayboy**

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May 11, 2023

**City of Savannah**

City Ordinance  
P.O. Box 1027  
2 East Bay Street  
Savannah, GA 31401

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great privilege that I propose a new name for the city square formerly known as Calhoun Square in the historic district of Savannah. After much review of all information available, including the history of this particular square which I received from Luciana Spracher, I have decided that the square should be dedicated back to the people whom it originally belonged to. Therefore, I would like to designate **Creek Square** as the new name of the square located on Abercorn and East Wayne Streets, in between East Taylor and Gordon Streets in Savannah's historic district. The justification for this designation is based on factual information provided by the City of Savannah's Municipal Archives. Historical information indicates that General James Oglethorpe negotiated a treaty with the indigenous people of the Lower Creek tribe for the transfer of land, thus initiating Savannah's colonization. Due to the fact that Savannah's native indigenous presence was never the same after this treaty came into effect, it is only right for any portion of land in the historic district to be committed to the Lower Creeks and all other tribes residing in this region at that time.

Although my first choice for name designation is **Creek Square**, I have also explored alternative names such as **Lower Creek Square**, **Cherokee Square** and **Yamasee Square**. However, the Lower Creeks were the group who certainly inhabited the land upon the Treaty of Savannah. It is my belief that this designation is one of the most honorable things modern-day Savannah can do, and it would definitely serve as a "welcome back" symbol for all Native Americans who have hesitated to ever live in Savannah again. I have received an endorsement for consideration from Alderman Detric Leggett of District 2,

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which has been attached along with this letter. If any other information is needed, I can certainly be reached by phone at (404) 441-9608 or by email at [arbrayboy@gmail.com](mailto:arbrayboy@gmail.com). Many thanks to all involved for allowing the citizens of Savannah to participate in this process. It truly proves that we are embraced and that the City of Savannah is open to hearing our voices.

Sincerely,

*Angel R. Brayboy*

Angel R. Brayboy

*Savannah Resident*



# CITY OF SAVANNAH—CITY COUNCIL

**Detric Leggett**  
**District 2**

May 11, 2023

City Hall  
2 East Bay Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31402

Re: Naming Request Endorsement for Consideration- 'Creek Square'

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Alderman Detric Leggett, officially endorse the naming request for consideration to name the public square located on Abercorn and East Wayne Streets, to 'Creek Square' in accordance with City Ordinance and the process outlined within 'Article E. Naming of Public Property, Facilities, and Streets'.

I look forward to this application advancing within the process as required by the City Code.

Thank you,

**Alderman Detric Leggett**  
**District 2**  
**Savannah City Council**

Good evening. I'm Luciana Spracher, Director of the City's Municipal Archives.

As background, here is a short history of the land that became the square formerly known as Calhoun Square and for which the City is now seeking proposals for a new name.

Prior to English settlement of Savannah, this region was inhabited by the people of several Native American tribes, including the Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Yamasees. Today, members of the Muscogee, Creek, Yamasee, Cherokee, Shawnee, and Catawba tribes all recognize Chatham County as their ancestral lands.

In 1732, when King George II granted the Trustees a charter to establish the colony of Georgia he was granting land that wasn't his to give, it was already home to the Lower Creeks. When Oglethorpe came to Savannah in 1733 one of his first tasks was to negotiate a treaty with the Creeks. On May 20, 1733, in the Treaty of Savannah, Creek leaders agreed to transfer all the lands between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers extending west to the extremity of the tidewater and all the coastal islands, reserving for themselves Ossabaw, Sapelo and St. Catherine's islands, as well as the tract of land that became known as Yamacraw.

By securing this treaty, Oglethorpe was able to implement his regional plan, which included a system of town wards and squares, garden lots, farm lots, agricultural villages, and military outposts. This plan also established the Town Common, which provided communal land for grazing animals.

During the American Revolutionary War, earthworks, encampments, and trenches encircled the city, including in the Town Common. The area that is now the square we are discussing was part of the network of French batteries during the 1779 Siege of Savannah, just a few hundred yards from the British works. In 2010, archaeologists with the Coastal Heritage Society, funded by a grant from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, conducted investigations in this square looking for evidence of the area held by the French during the War. Their work included ground penetrating surveys and shovel tests.

In addition to grazing livestock, the Town Common was also used for burial grounds. In 1819, City Council designated a cemetery for the interment of strangers or persons who died in Savannah without relations already buried in Colonial Cemetery. The Strangers Burial Ground was intended to alleviate overcrowding in Colonial Cemetery, the cemetery for white Savannahians. Neither of these cemeteries were open to the interment of enslaved individuals or persons of color who were allotted a separate, segregated cemetery, known as the Negro Burial Ground. The land once occupied by the Strangers Burial Ground is now occupied by a portion of the Square, building lots where the Massie School was built, and part of the street between the two. The Negro Burial Ground was located several blocks to the east, in the vicinity of what is now Whitefield Square.

As Savannah's population grew, the town expanded with the addition of new wards and building lots laid out in the Town Common. This Square was laid out as part of the last push of wards eating up the last of the common. By City ordinance adopted by Savannah City Council on March 13, 1851, City Council laid out three wards, Troup, Wesley and Calhoun, along with their squares. By this ordinance Calhoun Square was laid out and named. City Council directed the City Surveyor to lay out the ward's lots and they directed the Committee on Public Sales and City Lots to value and sell them. Lot sales began almost immediately.

As was common with most namings of public property during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Savannah, City records do not state specifically the source of the name. However, upon news John C. Calhoun's death in 1850, about a year before the square was named, Savannah City Council adopted a resolution stating Council quote "mourn over him as over one whose lofty genius and impassioned patriotism are unsurpassed in the history of our country, and whose long and illustrious career from its auspicious beginning to its glorious close, is the property of the whole American people, but the peculiar treasure of the South, in whose service he sacrificed his life" end quote. Council resolved to drape the Council Chamber, which at that time was in the old City Exchange building, in black for thirty days and requested citizens wear the usual emblem of mourning for the same length of time.

While the City's official act in March 1851 naming Calhoun Square does not explicitly state it is in John C. Calhoun's honor, this act followed suit of many other towns, including our neighbor Augusta, who that very same month named Calhoun Street and stated explicitly in their ordinance it was for the late John C. Calhoun. Additionally, the town of Calhoun, Georgia was named in 1852, Calhoun County was named in 1854, and there are at least 6 streets in the state of Georgia named for him.

To accommodate the development Calhoun Square and the surrounding ward, in 1855, the City Marshal oversaw the removal of remains from the Strangers Burial Ground to Laurel Grove Cemetery. While the City has documentation of the mass removal of the remains, because of the nature of strangers' burials and the possibility of unmarked graves that were missed during the relocation, it is possible that there are some remains still present in the area, for instance a skull that was uncovered about 15 years ago during utility work in front of Massie School. However, ground penetrating radar completed during the National Park Service grant did not show evidence of mass graves still present in the square.

On November 10, 2022, City Council unanimously voted to remove the name Calhoun from the square as the name no longer reflected the values of the City of Savannah.

For those who are interested in the historical location of the Strangers Burial Ground and the Negro Burial Ground, I have a map up here available for viewing, and there is a detailed

historical report on both burial grounds available to the public on the Municipal Archives' webpage.

Thank you.