

**A Clash of Native Space and Institutional Place in a Local Choctaw–Upper Creek Memory Site: Decolonizing Critiques and Scholar–Activist Interventions
[Abstract]**

Jason Edward Black

This essay – a combination of authorial narrative and scholarly critique – examines a grassroots organization’s (Friends of Historic Northport) campaign to preserve a site in west Alabama where a pivotal Choctaw-Upper Creek battle took place in 1785. The organization has faced opposition from city planners and business leaders intent on developing the site. I argue herein that these institutional agents have maneuvered within colonial contexts and neocolonial ideologies to mute the voices of indigenist-centered preservation efforts, mostly by occluding a key Native-centered narrative that affirms the battle’s location. In the process, Native memories and indigenous “space” have been ignored, and a presentation of these memories has been left out of the “place” of the site. Here, Native memories are made illegitimate by the trumping of oral stories with paid-for physical evidence deemed authoritative as a part of municipal “governing rules.” In addition to demystifying the institutional agents’ colonial and neocolonial renderings, this essay offers an interventionist charge through prescriptive decolonial tactics to remedy this particular moment of neocolonization. These more local decolonial prescriptives are then extended to general struggles involving Native memory and “space.”

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