

**Bridge to Formal Education, Bridge to Gentrification: A Narrative History Examining the
Link Between Property Ownership and Education in Hilton Head, South Carolina from
1865 to Present**

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to answer two research questions: First, what educational opportunities did the construction of the James F. Byrnes bridge built in 1956, connecting Hilton Head Island to the mainland afford the Native Islanders? Secondly, how did the building of the bridge to Hilton Head impact the traditional lifestyles of the Native Islanders?

This is a narrative qualitative study, using an unstructured interview process that collects the story of Joseph Grant, a Hilton Head Island native. This narrative research project is uniquely important as there is little recorded history of what life on Hilton Head Island was like from Native Islanders' perspectives. The researcher, who is also his daughter, has the unique opportunity to capture Mr. Grant's story. While she was not born on the island, she did finish growing up there, and continues to return to her family's original land, where her father still lives. Several conversations with Joseph Grant provide insight into his life of long-standing traditions, respect for the land on which he lives, that he has toiled, and that provided him family strength while growing up on the island prior to the late 1950s. Joseph Grant left the island, first for a college education in Savannah, Georgia before departing the South entirely to acquire experience as an educator for New York and New Jersey school systems. He returned to the island to live after the passing of his father, which enables him to offer a perspective of the transformation of Hilton Head that is different from those who have remained behind. The "before" and "after" effects of the bridge construction are viewed from cultural studies, sociological, and critical race perspectives. Joseph Grant's detailed outlook serves the purpose of addressing the research questions concerning what the impact the bridge connecting Hilton Head to the mainland had for the Native Islanders in terms of access to formal education, as well as the effects of gentrification on island traditions due to large-scale resort-style development.

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Chapter 1

Linking Land with Education

Introduction

My grandfather, James Grant was born in 1918 to a family of caretakers on the Joe Pope Plantation in Hilton Head, South Carolina. His parents lived on the plantation for free in exchange for caring for the property. Not only did my grandfather lack property to call his own on Hilton Head during a time where Black¹ landowners on the island were prevalent, formal educational opportunities were limited to him as well. Consequently, my grandfather made two decisions. First, he would purchase his own property on Hilton Head for his wife and children. Secondly, all of his children would receive a formal education.

Like his nine siblings, my father, Joseph Grant, born in 1939, had to leave Hilton Head to be educated formally. He departed in 1957 for Savannah State College in Savannah, GA. Upon graduation, my father obtained additional life and educational experiences in Rhode Island, New York, and Peru, eventually settling with his wife and daughters in New Jersey. When my family was living in Northern New Jersey, my father would always tell stories about “The Old Country,” which is what he called Hilton Head Island, South Carolina where he was born and raised. He would describe a time where the island had endless farms, grazing cattle, beaches with sand dunes taller than he, and dirt roads the people walked to homes of neighbors that would share food and festivities during holiday times. I visited Hilton Head twice a year, during Christmas and summers, building my own memories. I can still see the white house made of

¹ I capitalize “Black” and “White” because I am referring to them as ethnic groups in addition to race. I do not use “African-American” to refer to Black people as the term is not inclusive of the entire African diaspora.

tabby, a ubiquitous sea island building material made of mortar and ground oyster shells, half hidden by a canopy of pecan trees (Washington, 1984). Surrounding the house would be the barn and farm on the left, the vegetable stand and package store on the right, and Granddaddy's brown horse grazing in the distance. Outside of the family land, the island was different than my father's memories. It was busier and constantly growing.

The death of my grandfather in 1979, resulted in our sudden move to Hilton Head a year later. I was finally living in the "Old Country," however Hilton Head was very different than my father's stories. The biggest reason was the rapid population increase of "come-heres," which is what newcomers to the island were called (Jones-Jackson, 1989). Because I was born in New Jersey and not on the island, I was also considered to be a comya² although I was returning to my roots. Because of the stories told by my father, I wanted to know more about the binyas³ that are the native island community, and the reason that the changes to the island would all but erase their memory. Today, although the vegetable stand and package store remain, the farm and barn are gone. Granddaddy's horse died the same week he passed on. However, no matter how different my Hilton Head is, my father has always kept "The Old Country" alive for me.

Our family settled on a property that was purchased by my father independently of the family land upon advice given by my grandfather. What was unique about this property is that it was outside of the gated subdivisions called, "plantations," where many newcomers to the island typically settle. Instead, my father chose to live among native islanders⁴ in the community of

² Comyas means "Come-heres" in Gullah. They are people who were not born on the Sea Islands, but have come to live (Campbell, 2008).

³ Binyas means "Been-heres" in Gullah. These are people who were born and raised on the Sea Islands (Campbell, 2008).

⁴ Native Islander is the name given to Black landowners who have inherited property purchased by former slaves under General T.W. Sherman's Field Order 15 (Blockson, 1987).

Gardiner and was a middle school educator of Hilton Head area students from the early 1980s until early 2000s. Following my father's example who carried the values of my grandfather, I believe in the indigenous led reinvestment and leadership for Black communities. This means that Black people understand the value of Black historical communities and either retaining property or engaging in purposeful movement to these areas. Indigenous-led reinvestment serves two purposes:

- 1) Preventing historically Black communities from being gentrified, which is the repopulation of neighborhoods by upwardly mobile White homeowners (Smith, 1987; Moore, 2009). Gentrification leads to the displacement of indigenous residents or changes the neighborhood characteristics that were established by the previous community, into one that mirrors the suburban attitudes of the newer residents (Moore, 2009).
- 2) To rebuild deteriorating Black communities and reestablish the cultural mindset that educational attainment is the key to obtaining middle class status (Ogbu, 2004).

My grandparents and father believed in obtaining formal education and retaining property to build future generations. My grandparents were property owners on Hilton Head. My grandfather acquired property upon adulthood and my grandmother's family owned property since the end of the Civil War. They both understood that they had to adapt to the transition of Hilton Head Island. No longer able to rely on fishing and farming to sustain their family, they had to find employment outside their family on the Honey Horn Plantation. The fact that developers named these gated subdivisions "plantations" meant revisiting that status of exclusion for Native Islanders that was established during the pre-Civil War era. Like the plantations of the antebellum south, Black people could work as servants within the gates. However, it is not

economically feasible for them to relish in the modern-day amenities within these gated subdivisions that include golfing, swimming, dining, and beach dwelling. Additionally, costs excluded Black people from living in these “plantation” communities as well.

In recent years, I feel as if I have been charged with the responsibility of telling the story of my family’s legacy, through a specific lens. My experiences as a land use planner allowed me to understand how and why property on Hilton Head is being gentrified. Working in education has also allowed me to understand how a once strong Native Island community was instrumental in the academic success among its Black students. The purpose of my study is to examine the events that lead Black people to leave Hilton Head Island, where they have already established family landownership, in pursuit of higher educational attainment.

Black Education from mid-1800s to early-1900s. Land is connected to everything: wealth, geography, heritage, and legacy. Land is even connected with formal educational attainment⁵. Both land and education were also denied to Africans who were brought to the Americas. Land was for slaves to toil, but not to own.

A new Black culture emerged when African culture was lost as a result of being enslaved (DuBois, 1898). This culture included a desire for educational attainment. Historically, education had been denied to slaves. Whites believed that an educated slave was dangerous because it would attribute to the equality of the slave therefore making them impossible to dominate. To ensure that slaves remained undereducated, Whites enacted laws that made

⁵ Formal education attainment is defined as individuals physically attending a specific setting for the purpose of transmitting knowledge through subjects such as grammar, mathematics, and science, which may contradict cultural practices. I use the term, “formal education” because people such as my grandparents were educated informally in the traditions that were passed down through their elders providing them with cultural knowledge (Scribner & Cole, 1973).

literacy for slaves illegal (Fultz, 1995). Breaking these laws were punishable by whipping, mutilation, and even death (Anderson, 2010). In spite of these threats to their safety, some slaves did learn to read and write. House servants were also among the literate because of their constant company with educated Whites. Some house servants were even provided with schooling. However, their places of learning were kept out of reach of the less valued field slaves (DuBois & Dill, 1911). Slaves who were literate were revered by other slaves because they were perceived as being successful (Anderson, 2010). This reverence for the educated speaks to the educational culture that had been established among Black people. For Black people to obtain an education meant to transcend the perceived inferior status placed upon them by White society (Fultz, 1995). Consequently, legal and ideological challenges to access a quality education have always been present beginning with denying literacy to slaves. Black people sought methods to circumvent these barriers by establishing their own learning institutions.

Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation enacted in 1863, slaves sought a formal education as Black people had understood its importance. In fact, when the missionaries from the North traveled to the South for the purpose of educating and assimilating former slaves, they found that schools already had been formed. It was important for Black people to have the power to educate their own children without interference from Whites. The Sabbath School was created even before schools were built by the northern missionaries and the Freedman's Bureau. Sabbath schools were church sponsored institutions that provided a basic literate education. Because they operated on nights and weekends, students were able to complete their labor responsibilities in addition to obtaining an education (Anderson, 2010).

Although Sabbath Schools were sponsored by White religious societies, additional support was provided by the local Black community and had an all-Black teaching staff. Even

after schools were established by the Freedman's Bureau, Black students still preferred the Sabbath Schools where they felt a sense of racial pride and self-sufficiency. By 1885, there were 40,000 Sabbath Schools in operation (Anderson, 2010).

Formal schooling for an ex-slave was important, as literacy distanced them from their past of bondage. Schools and churches, barely distinguishable between one another, provided stability for the Black community. Baptist and Methodist preachers believed that building an institution for education would serve to uplift the Black community by instilling self-help and racial pride. Black educators, some of whom were preachers, were leaders in establishing schools for Black students, as their positions as teachers provided them with prestige (Fairclough, 2004). African Methodist Episcopalian (AME) and African Methodist Episcopalian Zion (AMEZ) Churches functioned in conjunction with some Black colleges. Because these churches had the grassroots support in the Black community only, they lacked adequate financial resources and therefore these schools were of poor structured quality (McPherson, 1970).

Schools for Black people were identified as primary, secondary, and college level. Some schools that were established by the church were named, "college" and "university" as that was the expected type of instruction (Jackson, 1923). The inception dates of these historically Black institutions, such as my alma mater Hampton (Institute) University established in 1868, shows that many schools of higher learning for Black students were established not long after the Civil War, which ended in 1865. A popular discourse concerning the meaning of educational success for Black people are the philosophies of scholars, W.E.B. DuBois (1868 – 1963) and Booker T. Washington (1856 – 1915). Their differing educational experiences were instrumental in shaping these philosophies.

DuBois' theory concerning education was rooted in how Black people exist in the United States. While attending Fisk University in Nashville, TN (1885- 1888), his presence in the South provided him with the reality that the Black masses were still suffering from the effects of slavery. This realization that Blacks were striving for racial equality was constantly at war with his Puritan upbringing (Rampersand, 2010). DuBois was from the North and of free Blacks. Although his family was not of middle class socio-economic status, they did own property, enabling them to be considered a member of their community. DuBois did not experience segregation in his youth and did not understand the full impact of racism until he traveled south to attend Fisk University in Tennessee (Rampersand, 1976).

In addition, DuBois' time south was impacted by two landmark Supreme Court cases that stripped Black people of their civil rights. The first case, *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1898, ruled that facilities for Black and White people were to be "separate but equal." The second case also in 1898, *Williams v. Mississippi* rescinded the voting rights for Black people. These two court decisions shaped DuBois' philosophy in that Black people were removed from rights that should have been afforded to them as citizens of the United States. Therefore, his time spent in school at Fisk University, and later in Atlanta, GA, allowed DuBois to understand that the only way for Black people to be successful in the United States was to be educated through books that produced scholars.

Booker T. Washington believed that vocational training was more within reach for former slaves and would better integrate these new United States citizens into society. Washington's philosophies stemmed from the fact that he had to work exceedingly hard as a janitor to pay for and to obtain a formal education from Hampton Institute. What Washington learned through his experiences of laboring while keeping abreast of his studies, is that Black

people can take pride in manual labor. Nevertheless, Washington's school of thought was less popular because to be educated in the minds of some, meant to have a "good time free from the necessity of manual labor" (Washington, 1901). In other words, Black people tend to shy away from work that requires the hands, as manual labor is too close to the work of slaves. However, in examining Washington's theory, an argument can be made in favor of skilled work as it is always needed by the masses, thus contributing to the economic stability and independence of former slaves. When Washington founded Tuskegee Institute in 1881, he modeled this institution after Hampton Institute, an agricultural and normal school where in addition to educating future teachers, students were trained to work in industry and farming. Students did not just study from books but placed the brick and mortar for the buildings with their own hands, therefore contributing to their education as laborers (Washington, 1901).

DuBois and Washington both believed in formal institutions but had differing opinions in terms of curriculum and purpose. DuBois (1903) was not confident that White leadership was in a position to benefit Black success therefore, he believed that it was important to educate the best of the Black race. The "Talented Tenth," a small elite class of Black people would lead the rest who were worth saving away from the "contamination and death" (DuBois, 1903; Green, 1977).

The actual debate between these two scholars gets misinterpreted, particularly DuBois' philosophy that he is totally opposed to Washington's education theory of industrial training for Black people in order for them to prosper in mainstream society (Green, 1977). DuBois (1903) actually believed that second to the establishment of Black institutions, normal schools that specialize in trade is a valuable asset to Black people. DuBois (1903) did believe that the "Talented Tenth" needed to be college educated *first*, as many teachers were needed to train students of the normal institutions for which Washington advocated. Also under DuBois' (1903)

“Talented Tenth” philosophy, once educated, these elite Blacks would return to their communities to aid the rest. What DuBois did not anticipate was the fact that once degreed, the elite class became Americanized⁶, abandoning their moral value of aiding others and leaving behind their community in search of prosperity (DuBois, 1903; Green, 1977). DuBois (1903) attributed this factor to underestimating the mindset of the labor industry, as he had never been member of this class.

Washington was not opposed to DuBois. In fact, Tuskegee University that was founded by Washington exemplifies many of DuBois’ theories, which were to lead the masses, serve as role models for the less fortunate, lend assistance when needed, and be a liaison between their community and dominant society (Green, 1977). These are philosophies for which I am advocating in terms of land and educational attainment.

The philosophies of both scholars have merit. However, the education of scholars and artisans should take place simultaneously. While DuBois advocated for scholarship that enabled competition with White society, by first educating the most talented students, Washington wanted to ensure that Black people were economically independent. Therefore, he felt that establishing agricultural and normal schools that would provide an education in literacy and manual labor would help Black people obtain a place within a society that once thought of them as property. Laborers are always needed. Considering the fact that there is a ceiling to career advancement and wages for Black people who are as equally educated as their White counterparts, it is important to interpret both Washington’s philosophy of vocational training and DuBois’ position of obtaining a philosophical degree as educational success (Ogbu, 1990).

⁶ Merriam-Webster identifies the term “Americanized” as embodying the cultural, political, and commercial characteristics of a United States citizen.

Black Americans were hindered by Whites from prospering as a social group. Although Blacks already began to seek a life of freedom, at the end of the United States of America's (USA) Civil War (1861-1865), the nation's leaders sought to answer the question as to how to integrate the freed men and women into mainstream society (DuBois, 1903). W.E.B. DuBois (1903) dubbed this dilemma, "The Negro Problem." During the 17th and 18th centuries, African slaves and indentured servants were imported to the United States to provide labor that would contribute to the nation's economic prosperity. However, the legal status of the slaves was called into question (DuBois, 1898). The Slave Codes addressed the fact that fleeing Black people were property and that they were to be returned to their owners. These codes neglected to address the comingling of Whites with Blacks that produced a new mulatto population that could own property, vote, and be educated (DuBois, 1898; DuBois & Dill, 1911). To regulate this particular "Negro Problem," Whites replaced the Slave Codes with Black Codes that restricted the mobility of all people with African ancestry, regardless of station (DuBois, 1898).

Black people tried to evolve their societal position by establishing a self-sufficient community on the plantations. Most slaves had forgotten their African traditions, but they established an American culture that consisted of strong families, languages, and churches. Whites addressed this Negro Problem by establishing quasi-free men that serve to be divisive to the Black population (DuBois, 1898). Like slaves, their positions were not economically secure, but they were able to own property and be laborers (Barron, 2000).

In spite of any attempts to rise above their limited circumstances, Whites constantly squelched the social position of Black people in order to uphold their positions of power, which would continue to impact the race for future generations (Jalata & Dahms, 2015). Regardless of their social positions, Black people have been excluded from Whites in what DuBois (1898) calls

a “national life,” meaning that Black people have been consistently barred from prosperity that consists of economics, education, and social efficacy. Based on this exclusion, any legislative measures enacted to correct these ills have been ineffective. Nevertheless, upon emancipation of the slaves, White legislators continued to work towards solving “The Negro Problem” in terms of what their positions were as freed men and women (DuBois, 1898).

In effort to aid the ex-slaves in their integration with mainstream society, the Freedman’s Bureau under the United States Government of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands was created in 1862 (Jackson, 1923). Through this program, there was a connection between how to educate slaves and where to settle these former slaves once they were emancipated. The Freedman’s Bureau had six initiatives:

1. Providing rations and medical supplies
2. Establishing schools and aiding benevolent groups
3. Issuing labor contracts
4. Controlling confiscated lands
5. Providing justice for ex-slaves
6. Making payment of bounty to soldiers

The Freedman’s Bureau (1862 – 1870) operated on little funds the first two years of its seven-years of existence and was barely operational by 1870. In fact, educational strategies for ex-slaves were formulated by aid programs independent of the Freedman’s Bureau, culminating in the existence of the Port Royal Experiment in 1862 (Jackson, 1923). Specific to the Sea Island of South Carolina, the Port Royal Experiment addressed the needs of the slaves who were first abandoned by the Confederate soldiers, followed by the plantation owners (DuBois, 1903; Rachal, 1986; Ochiai, 2001). The northern abolitionists, aware of these unoccupied properties,

described the slaves' abrupt freedom as a "test case in which to demonstrate the capabilities of freed Blacks" (Ochiai, 2001). Rather than leave them alone in already established, self-sufficient communities, the Gideonites, named for the Biblical Gideon's missionaries, supervised the Port Royal Experiment. This program entailed relief and educational efforts for freed children and adults that would enable them to be suitable for United States citizenship (Ochiai, 2001). What began as providing basic adult education and daily living skills, evolved to the process of socializing Black Sea Islanders into mainstream society. As the purpose of the Northern missionaries was originally to eliminate the planting oligarchy, the newly established system of four million Black people who were freed under the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 to farm on White property for wages, was not much different than the slavery system (Ochiai, 2001).

Black Education from mid-1930s to 1960s. In addition to arguing before the Supreme Court that salaries for teachers be determined by merit, not race, the NAACP protested that deteriorating school conditions had adverse psychological impacts on Black students and called for school integration (Fultz, 1995 spring; Fultz, 1995 winter; Ladson-Billings, 1994). De jure segregation had provided employment stability for Black educators. Therefore, while publicly criticizing the "separate but equal" ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, educators were privately concerned that overturning this decision in favor of integration would displace them in the teaching profession. The NAACP who was leading the campaign for desegregation, insisted that integration was necessary to weed out the bad teachers (Fairclough, 2004).

After *Brown v Board of Education* was decided in favor of integration in 1954, the small number of Black teacher dismissals were ignored (Fultz, 2004). The second *Brown* decision in the following year where the courts called for integration with "all deliberate speed," resulted in more teachers losing their positions as more schools were forced to desegregate. Beginning from

the mid-1950s Black teachers, principals, coaches, counselors, and other personnel were demoted or fired (Fultz, 2004).

Black Education from mid-1960s to Present. Unfortunately, Black people's efforts to retain control over learning institutions were a constant struggle between Black leaders and White education administrators (McPherson, 1970). When public schools integrated in the 1960s and 1970s, it was for the purpose of socializing Black students (hooks, 1994). Giroux (1983), states that schools are a reproduction of dominant society. Consequently, White schools threaten Black culture and make assimilation more difficult as students of color continue to cling to their identity, resulting in a cultural gap between Black and White students (Ogbu, 1990; Sleeter, 2001). Ogbu (1990) believed that in response to the discrimination Black people in America have faced when striving for a career and fair wages, they have formed an "oppositional culture" towards educational success. In other words, Black people have rejected academic achievement because it is associated with the White culture that has also rejected them.

In addition to the "oppositional culture" formulating among Black students, the destruction of Black neighborhoods has contributed to the lessening value of the education in the absence of community (Thomas & Ritzdorf, 1997). When the post-Civil Rights era increased opportunities for upwardly mobile Blacks, they left their poorer, yet historical communities behind (Wilson. 1986). First, the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision provided an opportunity for Black students to have equal access to better schools. Busing, or transporting students to schools outside of their assigned districts, was purposed to desegregate schools (Farrell et al, 1977). Consequently, Black students had to leave their inner-city neighborhoods and attend schools in White suburban areas (Fultz, 1995). Secondly, reversing housing discrimination policies provided more neighborhood options to middle class Blacks (Thomas &

Ritzdorf, 1997). As Black people left their old neighborhoods, they took their skills and expertise with them, leaving behind a shell of once vibrant areas that consisted of homes, business, churches, and schools (Wilson, 1987). Finally, communities, once abandoned became deteriorated, therefore causing a change from a culture that valued educational attainment. This deterioration also made the communities vulnerable to gentrification as middle-class homebuyers saw these low-priced properties near urban centers by jobs, transportation, and amenities, as an opportunity to rehabilitate blighted structures, raising its market value, therefore making a smart economic investment (Zurkin, 1987).

Currently in formal education, there are disparities between White and Black/Latinx⁷ students in reading and math skills and standardized testing scores. As a result of their low rates of success, Black and Latinx students are less likely to be enrolled in advanced placement or honors classes, which may limit them from academic advancement. These students are also more likely to drop out of school, which negatively impacts graduation rates (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Ladson-Billings (2006) actually described this gap as being an “educational debt” that she compared to the United States deficit and can be categorized into the areas of historical, economic, and socio-political.

The historical debt was created because of the educational inequities on the basis of race, class, and gender. Although there may be positive gains for class and gender, racial disparities are always present (Ladson-Billings, 2006). For Black people in particular, slaves were forbidden to be formally educated. When Freedman Schools were established, it was for the purpose of maintaining a servant class (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ochiai, 2007). The legal

⁷ The term “Latinx” is a gender-neutral term to describe people of Latin descent as opposed to “Latino” or “Latina.”

segregation of schools between Black and White schools also contributed to the historical debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Black schools had fewer resources that were either in poor condition, cast-offs from their White counterparts, or there were no resources (Fultz, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2006). In the south, considering the agrarian culture, Black schools were in session for a lesser time period to allow for students to participate in planting and harvesting. As a result, these students were not exposed to the same amount of schooling (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Ladson-Billings (2006) describes the economic debt resulting from the funding inequities between Black and White schools. Property taxes ensures that the affluent, predominantly White communities will assure greater educational resources for White schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The socio-political debt that Ladson-Billings (2006) describes consisted of communities of color that are excluded from the civic process. There are few to no legislators that represent minorities therefore, it is difficult to change the laws that contribute to the discrimination of these groups (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

It is important to understand that problems within the classroom cannot be rectified without addressing the societal ills (Durkheim, 1977). In order to repair the achievement gap between Black and White students, it is important to first repair the communities.

Black People and Property. Property has created a barrier between Black and White people. In terms of land ownership, originally property was owned by Whites, which included the slaves themselves. African slaves, as property, like land, could be bought and sold at the will of the owner. They were also tasked with toiling the land that Whites owned. Like education, slaves understood the implications of owning property after freedom. However, racism through legislation and personal ideology, has contributed to the inability of Black people to elevate their social economic status through education and property ownership (Massey & Denton, 1996).

Even laws that sought to reverse discrimination such as the 1915 case, *Hopkins v. City of Richmond*⁸ that allowed for the integration of neighborhoods, had discriminatory undertones. As a strategy to retain home ownership and to deny Blacks their own property, Whites would purchase property in “Black” neighborhoods as rental units for Black tenants. Even as the “white flight” from the central cities to the suburbs occurred, White homeowners would rather rent than sell their homes in their old neighborhood that was turning over to Black residents. Not only would Whites make a profit from the renters, they had successfully barred Black people from owning property in the inner city and maintaining stable neighborhoods (Silver, 1997).

Racist housing policies had the unforeseen impact of creating stable Black neighborhood. However, Black communities have been threatened by gentrification, which is the rehabilitation of working class neighborhoods by middle class homebuyers, landlords, and professional developers. In 1964, Ruth Glass (1955) was credited with coining the term, “gentrification,” as she observed the process in London, England. However, this neighborhood transition is not a new phenomenon. For example, in the mid-1800s Fredrick Engles noted the displacement of workers to make room for improved structures in the name of progress, a movement that is comparable to the current definition of gentrification (Clark, 2005). In fact, gentrification is the result of middle class social restructuring in that professionals have shifted from manufacturing positions to jobs of professionals, managers, and experts enabling them to create a rising tax base for the neighborhoods they settle (Smith, 1986). However, this process is reserved mostly for

⁸ Two people, one Black and one White, moved into a house together in a zone designated for White people called, “The White Zone” after establishing the city zoning ordinance. While the court ruled that the laws did not deny property rights, meaning that the occupants of the house could not be regulated, the decision confirmed the fact that there was a racial zoning law in existence (Silver, 1997).

White homebuyers, as Black middle-class residents will encounter difficulties when seeking to purchase properties in gentrifying neighborhoods (Moore, 2009).

Gentrification has been defined as the “new segregation” that is maintained by White homebuyers, bank lenders, and insurance companies. First, homebuyers have faced discrimination when seeking to purchase homes in White suburbs (Wyly & Hammel, 2003). Consequently, Black homebuyers had to seek homes in Black neighborhoods. Therefore, these racist lending policies contributed to the formulation of Black communities. Secondly, bank lenders steer gentrifiers away from minority neighborhoods, even if there is new-build construction, in order to keep that neighborhood from decreasing in value (Wyly & Hammel, 2003). Thirdly, banks are less likely to lend to Black homebuyers in White gentrifying neighborhoods, which keeps the value of the neighborhood high as increasing minority presence is associated with neighborhood decline (Wyly & Hammel, 2003). Fourth, while lenders may be lenient towards White homebuyers with marginal credit, Black homebuyers are not provided with the same luxury. Finally, White residents may only be provided with insurance coverage in White neighborhoods. Again, this is because minorities are associated with declining neighborhood value (Wyly & Hammel, 2003).

Smith (1982) describes two assessments concerning the trajectory of gentrification. First, this process is temporary and caused due to the high cost of suburban housing, low housing vacancy rates, and lifestyle changes. Secondly, gentrification revitalizes the inner city. Employment, transportation, recreation, and popular businesses attract segments of the middle-class population to the urban core. As housing “filters” down from upper to lower class residents in various states of condition that ranges from decent to poor quality structures, gentrification is necessary in order to prevent the central cities from falling into blight (Smith, 1986). The greater

the difference of socioeconomic status between old and new property owners in targeted areas, the greater the structural improvements (Clark, 2005).

Black people have failed to obtain the education necessary to remain abreast of current economic shifts (Anyon, 2005). The “new middle class” has more purchasing power for urban area housing as a result of high salaries associated with the changes in occupation types (Smith, 1986). In other words, difficulties arise when neighborhood inhabitants, mainly poor and people of color are displaced as rising land values bring higher property taxes (Blockson, 1987). Neighborhoods are revitalized through gentrification, which leads to the cultural decline of these neighborhoods due to rising property taxes associated with rising housing values.

Gentrification can appear in several forms (Moore, 2005; Hackworth & Smith, 2001). One type is what is termed by Moore (2009) as “yuppification,” where businesses in previously marginalized neighborhoods experience an influx of high income and high status residents and businesses. This sporadic gentrification occurs in areas geared toward corporate and financial services (Hackwork & Smith, 2001; Moore, 2009). Business service professionals are attracted to the cultural amenities and have large amounts of discretionary income to spend on home renovation. The flood of upper-middle class residents causes popular chains to replace indigenous small businesses (Moore, 2009).

The second type of gentrification, more common in small global cities, which are networking and financial centers, is marginal gentrification, where educated residents are not as upwardly mobile (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Moore, 2009). Transitory family patterns are displayed as these residents transition out of a neighborhood as they establish themselves in higher paying jobs and begin building their families. Middle class residents replace one another in the neighborhood turnover. The third gentrification type, termed third wave gentrification,

occurred after the 1990s-recession period. This strategic process consists of corporate and government agencies rehabilitating already gentrified and marginal neighborhoods for the practice of attracting middle class residents to specific areas (Moore, 2009).

Gentrification does not only take place in urban spaces, but in any area that attracts homebuyers, such as transportation, employment, and other amenities (Clark, 2005). Rural Gentrification, or counter urbanism is the movement of upper and middle-class population from the urban to rural areas (Nelson & Nelson, 2010; Smith & Higley, 2011). Country living offers open spaces, the perception of health and safety, and nostalgia for times past (Nelson et al., 2010).

The 1970s and 1990s provided an upswing in rural population. During the 1970s was the first time, rural dwellers exceeded the urban population (Nelson et al., 2010). Called the Rural Renaissance, this transformation of non-urban areas was in response to the completion of the interstate highway system enabling travel to and from urban centers. In addition, the oil embargo necessitating the establishment of a new energy source made country living more desirable. In the 1990s, a resurgence of population increases called the Rural Rebound occurred with the rise of information-based technology that allowed for a more globalized connection. As a result, urban dwellers established wealth through global markets, which improved their income as well as the rise in real estate value making rural relocation affordable (Nelson & Nelson, 2010). In the rural settings, the decline of traditional employment such as farming was replaced with the service industry encompassing the economic restructuring of the rural areas (Nelson et al., 2010).

In the rural settings, the decline of traditional employment such as farming, is replaced with the service industry, encompassing the economic restructuring of the rural areas (Nelson et al., 2010).

In addition to the older population, rural gentrification has been attractive to affluent families with children in search of lower home prices with more room. The perception of higher quality schooling in these areas has also been attractive to parents. With rural gentrification, economic and racial stratification that is present in the community is reflected in the schools (Smith & Higley, 2011).

Gentrification in both the urban and rural context has altered the social composition of the impacted area. Gentrification in both urban and rural context has altered the economic and political composition of affected area (Nelson & Nelson, 2010).

Significance of the Study

In *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, Bell (1992) describes the era of the 1960s where slavery was a subject of fascination rather than shame, particularly among academics. The highest point of this period of enlightenment was during the mid-1970s with the airing of the *Roots* miniseries, an adaptation of the novel written by Alex Haley (1976). The racism associated with slavery was finally acknowledged in the form of support for enacted civil rights laws that were made to curtail discrimination. Unfortunately, even with the statutes in place, the racism was still deeply embedded within individual biases and policies. Consequently, careers and educational advancement are stymied (Bell, 1992). Black people have not achieved the cultural status that will afford them the “full national life,” meaning that they have not reached the social standards as it relates to economics, mental training, and social efficiency (DuBois,

1898). Racial inequities are present on the Sea Islands as well. On Hilton Head, Native Islanders, defined as Black landowners on the island via Field Order 15 and other methods of land acquirement as described in Chapter 2 that granted the Sea Island properties to former slaves, are denied equal access utilities that are paid for by private companies, access to “plantations” with manned security guards, and limited beach access, where the three points of free entry are outside of the subdivision gates (Jones-Jackson, 1989; Blockson, 1987).

Zoning laws, denied home loans, and gentrification are some of the ways that Black people are denied property ownership, which has impacted their social mobility (Wyle & Hammond, 2003; Moore, 2009). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) make the point that the United States was established based on property rights. The fact that Native American tribes were the first occupants of American soil, was not considered as Europeans sought to settle property in the United States (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In addition, Whites believe that Black people, who had once been property, have no rights to land ownership. My research will explore the various methods that granted property to the Sea Islands slaves. The bridge built in 1956 connecting Hilton Head Island to the mainland, provided the opportunity for White to reclaim properties that were confiscated during the Civil War. In fact, Charles Fraser who founded Sea Pines Plantation, which is the first gated community on Hilton Head Island, stated the following regarding Native Islanders selling their family property:

“It is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. Every Black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and uses part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment

in the future of the family. I wish more of them would do it” (Jones-Jackson, 1989).

In other words, landownership is an economic opportunity for Whites. For Blacks, land is a burden for them to maintain and to be relieved of as soon as possible.

Gentrified areas are not just confined to inner cities. Hilton Head Island is one of the many Sea Islands located off the South Carolina and Georgia coasts and has been impacted by this process. The navigable waterways of these coastal areas made it possible for direct slave importation to these islands until as late as 1858, although slave trading became illegal in 1808. At one time these were isolated communities forgotten both by time and man. As a result, the Gullah, people of a mixed West African and English heritage, flourished. Similarities to African lifestyles were evident in speech patterns, religion, basket weaving, and extended family communities (Jones-Jackson, 1989). Although they did not benefit, Gullah slaves were responsible for the economic success of the agricultural industry in the Carolinas and Georgia, as they had knowledge in indigo and rice cultivation that Whites did not possess. Eventually, crops were expanded to accommodate cotton (Jones-Jackson, 1989).

Developer, Charles Fraser’s vision of an exclusive island community called Sea Pines Plantation came to fruition, meaning that Hilton Head’s self-sufficient culture was approaching its end (Jones-Jackson, 1989). Once the bridge that connected Hilton Head to the mainland was constructed in 1956, newcomers began to arrive to the island. This influx of homebuyers meant that other developers would soon follow with their own plans for the island. Thus, began the struggle of property owner and property-less owners that are still being carried out presently as Black islanders lose their land (Marx, 1967). Hilton Head was no longer the agrarian and fishing society it once was, but a place where the service industry dominates. My grandparents could no

longer rely on fishing and farming to sustain their family and had to seek employment outside of their land.

Two research questions that will be examined are the following:

- 1) What kind of educational opportunities did the bridge connecting Hilton Head to the mainland afford the Native Islanders of Hilton Head?
- 2) How did the building of the bridge impact the traditional life styles of Hilton Head?

Theoretical Framework

This research will use critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework. CRT addresses the fact that racial oppression, rather than just economic inequities as described in the critical legal response (CLS) theory, contribute to the disparities between Black and White people (Cole, 2012). Deeply embedded within United States society, racial oppression and discrimination have become normalized (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

CRT uses storytelling, (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001), rather than law and science to relay individual instances of racial discrimination. Through parables, chronicles, narratives, poetry, fiction, and revisionist history, relaying experiences of oppression can serve as a catharsis for the individual, as well as provide a community of understanding for others who have suffered from racism. Using the “voice” of the oppressed provides a context for the complexities of racism, as oppressors have the tendency to rationalize their behavior, allowing them to maintain their privilege as the dominant group (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorano & Yosso, 2001). However, Bell (1995) notes that rather than the factors that contribute to oppression be a source of victimization, it provides a sense of reaffirmation through resistance strategies.

CRT also acknowledges how White people have benefitted from civil rights laws. Affirmative Action was meant to prioritize employment for discriminated groups, such as minorities and women. However, it was White women who received positions, which subsequently provided additional income to a household that included White men and White children (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Wilson, 1987).

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) were the pioneers of CRT. *Towards a Critical Race Theory of Education* aligns closely with the topics I would like to address in this research. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) framed three aspects of social inequities that have contributed to racism in the United States: social and economic inequities, property rights, and education. They argue that race determines social inequities. CRT brings to light the reality of being in a racialized society. Class and gender inequalities do intersect with race, but do not alone explain the differences in achievement between Black and White students. Even Black students of middle class status do not achieve at the same rate as White students. Class and gender also do not account for the high rate of dropouts, suspensions, and failure among male students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) describes DuBois' use of race as a social construct. DuBois described Black people as having a "double consciousness." Being Black was one identity and being American another. However, being Black is not being seen as being American by the White majority. Being an American is to be a person of citizenship, political ideology, and religion all of which was denied to a person of color. However, to be African is to be of a historic race that is separated by a veil in which Black people see themselves in the manner White people see them (DuBois, 1903).

CRT addresses education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) emphasize the fact that there is an inequity between property and race in education. Ladson-Billings (1998) makes the point that decisions pertaining to education are regulated to state governments. The fights for civil rights for minority students were waged over equal opportunities culminating in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954). However, there are still barriers to equal education that have been outlined by critical race theorists in the categories of curriculum, instructional strategies, assessments, and funding.

Curriculum is “master-scripted” in that points-of-view relayed by Black students are silenced when they contradict dominant culture and power. Clear historical divisions between Blacks and Whites are softened into a “race-neutral,” “color-blind” perspective (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Teachers resort to generic instructional strategies for all students that disguise remedial techniques for Black students who are perceived to be “at risk.” Fortunately, new research that addresses racial inequities in school and society rejects this teaching style (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Assessments do not present an accurate perception of knowledge. Success is analyzed by test results that provide only a *perception* of the students’ knowledge. However, stressors outside of the classroom that may impact student learning are not considered (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Funding inequities, according to CRT, is a function of institutional and structural racism. Because schools are funded based on property taxes, areas of greater wealth have better funded schools. Funding formulas need to be designed in order to adequately address funding inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The “separate but equal” clause that was established by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling extended to schools, which separated Black and White students. The *Brown v. Board of*

Education ruling of 1954 was for the purpose of overturning the Plessy ruling and requiring schools to integrate. The second *Brown* decision in 1955 was the implementation phase where the courts called for the integration with “all deliberate speed.” Enforcement strategies were so vaguely outlined in *Brown I*, allowing for resistance strategies to school integration. Protests to the ruling included protests as well as intimidation and lynching of those who supported the legislation. Districts also denied funding to schools that integrated. Schools even modified or repealed compulsory attendance laws (Ladson-Billings, 2004). However, the stall tactics eventually failed. The legislatures began to require proof of racial balances in the school between Black and White students (Bell, 1980).

In spite of the *Brown II* decision that called for the implementation of *Brown I*, schools in the North and South did not integrate until the 1960s and 1970s, respectively (Ladson-Billings, 2004). The Supreme Court decision of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* in 1971 ordered the busing, or the transporting of students, to public schools outside of their assigned districts to achieve racial balance. This legislation resulted in increased public school enrollment for White students, showing that there was still resistance to integration. Magnet schools, also created for the purpose of desegregation, have been to the advantage of Whites. Because these institutions are two schools in one, White students were attracted to the originally all-Black schools, benefiting from specialized programs that were separate from the minority student population. Whites took advantage of the extended childcare hours as well (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Currently, schools have resegregated (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Deteriorating neighborhoods consist of predominately Black students where the schools lack resources therefore, influencing their academic performance (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Due to these factors impacting education, it has become a challenge for Black students to strive for high educational attainment, which would serve to improve their economic position. My research, using CRT framework, will connect property and education. Through narrative inquiry, I will research educational opportunities available to Native Islanders with the arrival of the bridge to the mainland, and whether pursuing a viable career required them to leave Hilton Head in order to establish a legacy of upward mobility for future generations. Furthermore, it is important to discuss if leaving Hilton Head was a contributing factor to island gentrification, therefore affecting Native Islander lifestyles.

Research Design and Description of Methodology

The methodology that will be used for this research is a narrative qualitative study, using an unstructured interview approach. A narrative qualitative study used mostly by social scientists has extended to other fields of study as well (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003). This research will encompass both educational and social foundations. The data is found within the story that is being relayed allowing for the researcher to make sense of events given to them by the participant in a personal voice. Rather than using questionnaires, surveys, and statistical data, feelings, images, and time are used for analysis. For issues such as gentrification that can have different viewpoints on both the developer and the displaced, a narrative study allows for ambiguities to be addressed because the relaying of this story is an actual perspective of a lived experience (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003).

Life on Hilton Head Island exudes a specific culture and is best told from a narrative perspective (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003). The landscape of the island is changing with each generation and Gullah people, along with language and culture, are displaced by exclusive development (Blockson, 1987). It is important to capture personal stories from those who have

lived the experience in order for future generations to understand the importance of formal education and property ownership.

I want to not only use my father's words but be able provide interpretation as to how his experiences relates to the study of education and property attainment. I choose to use only Joseph Grant in this study for the following reasons:

1. It is difficult to gain access to historical information from a Sea Island community as an outsider. Other scholarly papers regarding Gullah or Sea Island culture use similar sources because it is difficult to establish trust. In fact, Jones-Jackson (1989), born in Arkansas and educated in Michigan, was able to complete her five-year ethnographic study *When Roots Dies* when a Black islander on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina "adopted" the scholar as her granddaughter. I would also like this research to have a fresh perspective. For my research paper for my undergraduate degree from Hampton University, I was able to interview a native Hilton Head Islander after establishing my connections through my father's lineage. However, although I have Sea Island roots, there is still an element of aloofness because I was not born on Hilton Head Island, therefore I am still considered to be a "come-here" rather than a "been-here."
2. Joseph Grant can provide a unique perspective that ties in with my research. Though born and raised on Hilton Head, Joseph Grant is one of the few Islanders who left the for a substantial period (1957 to 1981) and returned to live on land that he purchased, not only independent of his family's property, but in the predominately Black community of Gardiner, which is outside of the gated "plantations."

3. I want my family story to be known. My grandfather was born to caretakers of property belonging to a White plantation owner (in the historical sense), with a third-grade formal education. He and my grandmother reared two generations of educated progeny on one of the few remaining Black-owned property on Hilton Head.

Chapter 1 of this study has provided an overview of the history of education and property attainment for Black people. While these are the first aspects of freedom that ex-slaves sought upon emancipation, there has been a struggle to retain both. Systemic racism has contributed to the declining regard for the importance of educational attainment and property ownership, resulting in the declining regard for either in recent generations.

Chapter 2 will discuss the history of Black landownership in the Sea Islands. Sections will include regulations that contributed to disseminating confiscated Confederate properties to former slaves, life experiences on Hilton Head using the voice of Joseph Grant, the difficulties in keeping acquired properties for future generations, and personal accounts as to how my family acquired property on Hilton Head Island.

Chapter 3 of this research will continue to outline the experiences of Joseph Grant. Born and raised on Hilton Head, he is a member of one of the twenty-six Native Island extended families. He will describe his educational journey beginning with his schooling on the island, including his attendance at the neighborhood Chaplin school and Robinson Middle School, the largest Black school on Hilton Head. His education also included high school and institutions of higher learning that required him to leave the island, and eventually the South. Assigned to Peru in South America, he also dedicated himself to a two-year commitment of service in the Peace Corp. Mr. Grant began his journey of teaching in New York and New Jersey school systems, where he was an industrial arts instructor and eventually a guidance counselor. Mr. Grant would

return to Hilton Head Island several decades later as a person who had received high educational attainment, an educator of the island's children, and part of a land-owning legacy that had been established by his parents.

In chapter 4, I will describe the gentrification process that has taken place on Hilton Head since the erection of the James F. Bridge⁹ in 1956. The rapid development of the island has severely impacted landownership of native islanders as well as their culture.

Chapter 5 will be the conclusion. The bridge that connects Hilton Head Island with the mainland enabled members of historical Black families to obtain higher education as they were provided with access to schooling opportunities that did not limit them to the island. The bridge also created access to the island for developers to gentrify the properties of historical Black families on Hilton Head, through outright sales for less than the value from descendants who have left the island in search of other opportunities, education or otherwise. These sales have also resulted in land loss due to rising property taxes as a result of skyrocketing land values created by gentrification. Therefore, Black people on Hilton Head are denied a legacy of landownership that can be passed on to future generations. The conclusion of this study will also provide a discussion of future research of how land ownership and educational attainment are connected.

The voice of my father will present in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. His words will be distinguishable from the rest of the text by the indentations in the paragraphs.

⁹ The James F. Byrnes Bridge is called, "The Bridge" and will be referred to as such throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 2

To Land, to Live, to Lose: Black Landownership

“Don’t let anyone tell your story. You tell your own story.” – Joseph Grant

It is not just the fact that property ownership symbolized citizenship to people who were newly emancipated in the United States, it was the difficulty that Black people endured to acquire the land that contributed to its value. Lawmakers concerned with how to mainstream Black people created policies under the Freedman’s Bureau in particular that encompassed providing them with property. Although South Carolina was the frontrunner in providing landownership for a large Black population, these properties were difficult to obtain, and unfortunately, easy to lose.

I think what makes land loss difficult for me to accept is the knowledge in spite of the efforts South Carolina made towards providing opportunities for land purchase after emancipation, it was still difficult for Black people to achieve (Rivers, 2007). Jalata and Dahms (2015) describes the interference of emancipation efforts by marginalized and indigenous communities by dominant society. All that was promised was not provided or was rescinded based on the perception that ex-slaves would begin their new lives from a place of equality.

To Land

Five formal policies contributed to land acquisition for Black people in South Carolina: 1) Direct Tax Sale, 2) Pre-Emption 3) The Philbrick Experiment, 4) Field Order Number 15, and the 5) South Carolina Land Commission.

Direct Sales Tax. In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, each state was assessed for property taxes. A lot of Southern properties were delinquent in paying their taxes, resulting in its confiscation by the United States government (Ochiai, 2007). The total acres of property seized in Beaufort County, South Carolina alone was 76,775. Of that total, the government claimed 60,296 acres (Rivers, 2007). Citizens who were loyal to the United States were able to purchase 16,479 acres, and the Freedmen pooled their resources to purchase 2000 acres on the abandoned plantations on Ladies and Port Royal Islands (Ochiai, 2001; Rivers, 2007).

Preemption. In 1823, Justice John Marshall presided over the landmark case *Johnson v. McIntosh*, ruling that Native Americans only have a “right of occupancy” on United States lands and hold no formal title. Therefore, the ownership rights belong to the federal government as they are the conquering nation (Rivers, 2007). These public lands were reserved for colleges, railroads, and homesteads. Preemption of land, also known as the Homestead Act of 1862, was passed for settlers on the Western frontier, where land could be purchased at a minimum price of \$1.25 per acre, or they could receive a land patent at no cost to the settlers after five years of occupation (Ochiai, 2001; Rivers, 2007).

General Rufus Saxton, appointed military governor of the Department of the South and missionaries, recommended that the principles of the preemption used in the Homestead Act of 1862 apply to the confederate properties that were confiscated in South Carolina (Ochiai, 2001; Rivers, 2007). Saxton and other Preemptionists¹⁰ believed that Freedmen who were able to acquire their own property would have economic autonomy and enjoy the rights afforded to them as American citizens (Ochiai, 2001). Furthermore, Preemptionists understood that newly freed

¹⁰ Those who believed that Freedmen should be granted the first rights to purchase confiscated Confederate properties at a lower fixed price, which is similar to the guidelines of the Homestead Act of 1862 (Ochiai, 2007)

slaves did not have the economic means to bid in competition with White land buyers. Saxton was concerned that White speculators would purchase the available property before the freedmen were able therefore, he was able to reach an agreement with President Lincoln that after reserving the land for education and the military, 16,000 acres on specific plantations would be available to the Freedmen for purchase in twenty and forty-acre tracts. The plan for South Carolina in particular, involved extending credit to Black buyers with fifty cents down payment and seventy-five cents payment upon receipt of the deed. Black soldiers were given preferential treatment in the option to purchase land (Ochiai, 2001, Rivers, 2007). However, Saxton, who was responsible for implementing the pre-emption rules for land purchase did not follow Lincoln's directive to make available land purchase for ex-slaves available within the specified plantations that added up to 16,000 acres. Consequently, the Freedmen claimed sites, which totaled 20,000. This raised the opposition of tax commissioner, William Brisbane who claimed that the coastal lands were more valuable than properties on the Western frontier and had not been improved (Ochiai, 2001; Rivers, 2007). In fact, he insisted on surveying properties in square blocks like those that surveyed lands in the West. The low country topography proved this task challenging and time consuming, thus discouraging perspective landowners (Ochiai, 2001). His other arguments against pre-emption contradicted one another. On one hand, Brisbane claimed that before the Freedmen could earn enough, property buyers from the North would take advantage of the fixed lowered prize to purchase the land first. On the other hand, he also reached an opposite conclusion that Northern speculators were needed to elevate the status of former slaves but would be discouraged from settling due to the smaller tracts of land held by Freedmen, which would devalue their larger acres (Ochiai, 2001).

The other arguments made by Brisbane only served to cover his true beliefs in the role of the ex-slave. He and other Anti-Preemptionists¹¹ believed that the Freedmen's independence should be tested and they should not be shown special treatment. Therefore, discounting their economic and social disadvantages. Black people should be made to compete with Whites for the purchase of confiscated properties (Ochiai, 2001).

In 1864, Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase accepted Brisbane's arguments that opposed preemption. Only the 16,000 acres of the plantation President Lincoln for "charitable purposes" was available for purchase under preemption. Lands outside of the reserved area went to the highest bidder (Ochiai, 2001; Rivers, 2007). In the end, 110 Black families were able to buy on the land under preemption (Ochiai, 2007)

The Philbrick Experiment. Edward Philbrick, a missionary and Anti-preemptionist from Boston desired to successfully demonstrate the integration of newly freed slaves into the United States labor force (Rivers, 2007). As an Anti-preemptionist, Philbrick argued that Freedmen should be integrated into society an equal wage earner (Ochiai, 2001). To support his theory, Philbrick established a joint stock company and purchased 7,000 acres of the confiscated plantations on the Sea Islands, including 1/3 of Saint Helena Island (Rivers, 2007). On his properties, Philbrick's "free labor experiment" served to hire overseers as managerial staff and contracted Black people to work to harvesting cotton, maintaining them in the station from which they had been emancipated (Rivers, 2001; Ochiai, 2007).

Philbrick refused to comply with the land distribution programs that required him to survey and divide his property on Saint Helena to sell to the newly emancipated. Succumbing to

¹¹ Those against applying preemption rules for confiscated Confederate properties (Ochiai, 2007).

government intervention and political pressure, Philbrick finally sold 4,000 acres of his property to the Freedmen (Rivers, 2007).

Field Order Number 15 (Forty Acres and a Mule). In 1865, Secretary of War, Erwin Stanton and Union General William T. Sherman met with Black leaders in Beaufort, South Carolina. The discussion of the land distribution policies during that meeting culminated in the establishment of Field Order Number 15, also known as Forty Acres and a Mule, which stated, “The Islands from Charleston South, the abandoned rice fields for thirty miles back from the sea and the country bordering the St. John’s River, Florida are reserved and set apart for the settlement of Negroes now and made free from an act of War (DuBois, 1903).”

A total of 400,000 acres in South Carolina was available under this order. Again, Saxton was called to oversee the distribution of deeds to Black land speculators who were required to live in the territory for at least six months prior to purchasing a deed. A single male could purchase thirty acres. Forty acres was allowed if the buyer was married. The forty-acre maximum was for the purpose of keeping the tracts affordable. Land buyers who were in the military, were actually allowed 80 acres (Rivers, 2007).

Andrew Johnson, taking the office of president of the United States after Lincoln’s assassination had devastating consequences. His leniency towards the confederacy included allowing southern landowners to regain their confiscated properties. Field Order Number 15 was revised to where the Freedmen could only lease government-owned land that had been seized through non-payment of taxes. Eventually those revisions were recalled as well, and Saxton was removed from office (Rivers, 2007). In 1866, the former land owners who returned to their property only allowed the Freedmen to remain on the land they claimed if they worked on their

plantations. Out of the 40,000 Freedmen who settled under Field Order Number 15, only 2,000 Black people in South Carolina and Georgia retained their property (Rivers, 2007).

South Carolina Reconstruction Government Program. The state of South Carolina was the most of successful in providing affordable land distribution programs to the formerly enslaved. The 1865 South Carolina Constitution enabled \$1million distributed to the state to be available for land distribution in a program similar to the Homestead Act. The commission purchased a total of 118,000 acres to sell. Whites mostly benefitted from this program, with 68,355 acres purchased. 44,599 acres were bought by Black landowners (Rivers, 2001).

My father does not know exactly how his mother's family, the Aikens acquired their property. Personal details of land ownership among Black landowners are passed along orally. It is his understanding based on family discussion that his great grandfather, James Aiken had the opportunity to purchase his acres in the Gardiner Community for \$1.25 an acre. This is consistent with the act of Preemption described earlier in the chapter.

On my father's paternal side, land ownership occurred more recently. Abraham and Peggy Grant were caretakers of the Joe Pope Plantation, which is present-day Shelter Cove, a development that consists of high end condominiums, shopping areas, a marina, and a park. The only remnants of Joe Pope Plantation are the cemetery next to the Whole Foods grocery store, almost invisible to those who do not know to look among the oaks and Spanish moss to find grave markers that date back to the 1800s. It is the resting place for both Grants and Aikens, including my grandparents.

They were assigned to be caretakers. And I guess at a certain point they could have brought some property, but because they were living there

and living free – and I’m just gathering this from what Dad tried to explain- they were being free and everything is okay. They made no stake in any kind of ownership.

My grandfather, James Grant grew up with his own goals of landownership. He did not just want to stay on someone else’s land. He understood the freedom of owning property to raise a family and to till the land for the benefit of himself and his family. When my grandfather expressed his desire to get married and leave Joe Pope he was met with criticism from relatives and friends for leaving his family behind. However, his mother and siblings were just content with just residing on someone else’s property and not seeking other opportunities. My grandfather would not live like that. He wanted more.

Because when Mom and Dad got married, he took her into that area [Gardiner]¹². And he still wanted to get out. And so, he was sharing that with Papa James. Papa James Aiken is Papa Brankey’s father. My mother’s grandfather. Ok so Papa James told him that there was a lady who was having trouble problems keeping the property.

My grandfather got his chance to purchase property in 1938. Papa James told my grandfather about woman named, Patsie Murray whose husband recently died, needed money and wanted to sell her property in the Chaplin Community. This property, located not far from

¹² Brackets are being used for words or phrases that may have been omitted in order to provide clarification to the reader.

Joe Pope Plantation, fronted on present-day William Hilton Parkway, about 500 to 600 hundred yards from Singleton Beach. My grandfather did not have enough money to buy the five and quarter acres Ms. Murray had for sale, so he appealed to his brother, Sonny to purchase some acres using the money he had earned from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). My grandfather, James bought one and one quarter acres and Sonny procured the remaining portion. When Uncle Sonny left the CCC, he never returned to Hilton Head to live. Instead, he made his home in Savannah, Georgia. My grandfather lived, built a home, and farmed on the Chaplin property, paying the taxes on the entire five and quarter acres. This is the property where my grandfather brought his wife, Janie, raised his family, farmed, fished, and taught his children the value of owning property and acquiring a formal education.

To Live

The Sea Islands are hundreds of small islands located along the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts. The mostly flat, marshy, landscapes are characterized by the canopies of massive oaks covered in Spanish moss, pines, and palmettos (Halgrem, 1959; Jones-Jackson, 1989). There are countless rivers and streams from which to fish, go crabbing, and sail. The climate and appearance of these islands are compatible to the West African countries of Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, where slaves were selected from these regions specifically for their skills in cultivating rice, cotton, and indigo. The isolation of these islands were conducive for maintaining African traditions from the countries described, culminating in establishing the Gullah/Geechee culture (Jones-Jackson, 1989; Campbell, 2008).

This research on land and education centers around Hilton Head Island, South Carolina where my family has lived since emancipation. Until 1956, Hilton Head, like many of the Sea Islands could only be accessed by boat. The isolation of the island existed outside of White

influences and allowed for the development of a well-functioning system. Like the West African Villages, Hilton Head (and other Sea Islands) was divided into distinct communities consisting of extended family that worked independently and in conjunction with one another (Jones-Jackson, 1989; Campbell, 2008). Each of these communities consisted of a praise house for spiritual worship; homes of the “essential skills bearer,” meaning particularly skilled labors; and food processing mills (Campbell, 2008).

The Black Communities on Hilton Head were Stoney, Jonesville, Spanish Wells, Gardiner, Chaplin, Union Cemetery, Mitchelville, and Fish Haul. While these areas have changed over time with new development, their history and contributions to the island are significant. The Stoney Community, regarded as the downtown of Hilton Head, consisted of the post office and grocery store. Jonesville was home to wheelwrights, shoemakers, businessmen, and carpenters. This community was also known for islanders who played African music that consisted of rhythmic drumming. Spanish Wells, named for the Spanish explores who dug the water wells on the Island in the 1500s is located near Broad Creek. This is the reason fishing, crabbing, and oyster harvesting defined this community. Spanish Wells is also the community where Charlie Simmons’ Fishing Camp was established in 1928. Simmons had the first passenger boat on Hilton Head Island (Campbell, 2008). In interviewing my father, Charlie Simmons is referenced often in his recollections. Gardiner was where I grew up and my parents still live. Large acres within this community were purchased by Native Islanders, including my family, shortly following the Civil War (Campbell, 2008). Chaplin, where my father grew up, is on Hilton Head’s beach side. Chaplin is named for one of the plantation owners that once farmed the island prior to the Civil War. The families who lived in this community were farmers and fishermen (Campbell, 2008). My father still has the handwoven casting net made by my

grandfather. This community consisted of a grocery store and other businesses. Chaplin was also known for hosting picnics for Native Islanders during the summer. The Union Cemetery community was established for fallen Black Civil War soldiers. It is also the burial site for Islanders of that community. The families in Union Cemetery were known for farming watermelon, sweet potatoes, and beans to be sold at the farmer's market in Savannah (Campbell, 2008). Mitchelville was the first free settlement of the United States that housed former slaves during the Civil War. This community contained the island's earliest schools and churches. The Cherry Hill School was the first and only free-standing school built solely for the purpose of educating Black children on Hilton Head (Campbell, 2008). Fish Haul was known for both fishing and big-game hunting.

There were other areas on Hilton Head as well that existed outside of the established communities. A map showing Hilton Head before 1861 had the sections correctly named and were still in existence when my father was going up. However, there were some boundary discrepancies between the printed map and where the Native Islanders knew these places to be located. However, people did not travel to these areas, unless it was necessary. For example, Shipyard was located closer to my father's family in Chaplin and not in its present south end location.

But those are the names [of the communities] that you're seeing in the written material now. You cannot say that they're incorrect because the people who put that information there got it from archives and so forth. And we got [the community names] from the people who told us what it was and [the] people writing books [just] go to the archives and they get that information. Nobody ever stopped them.

But we didn't know all those other places. It was just that [was the] area where people lived. And you go into that area beyond the Grasslawn area – we used to call it, “Grassland” not Grasslawn. And right across from there was Big Hill. And after you get past Big Hill, you got down into the other area, it is called, “Baygall.” Because Beach City Road was not there. There was nothing. But [Baygall] was a dirt road. One, no two families lived on that road.

There was always a Dillion Road. I don't know if it was always in the same place because the contour of the highway changed from the time when I was a youngster, but the highway, rather than go all the way around by Port Royal, came around where Oak Grove Church is.

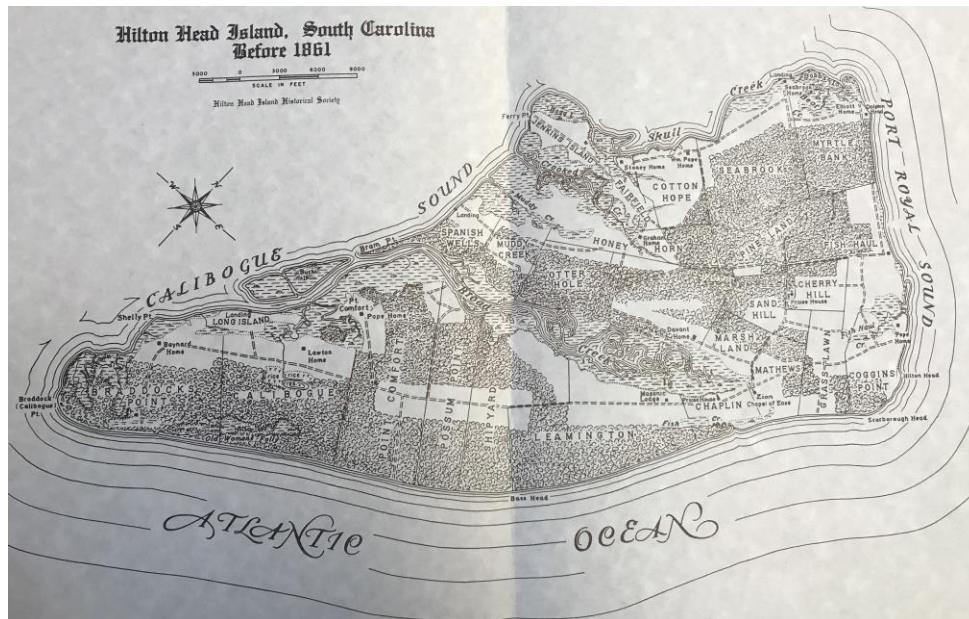


Figure 1: This is a map of the communities on Hilton Head in 1861 obtained from the Hilton Head Discovery Museum that is located on the Honey Horn Plantation. The map outlines the different communities that my father addresses in the following discussion.

What is now Sea Pines Plantation, was once called, Braddock's Point where my father's aunt and uncle lived. However, this part of the island was not wildly inhabited and it was where the cows were driven in the fall.

[We would] go back in the Spring and pick [the cattle] up and bring them back into the "civilized area" (laughs). So they would go out down where Sea Pines is not and just eat and had calves and stuff and when we would go, a few people would go and bring back everybody's [cattle] because some people were very old and they couldn't ride horses. So, the younger people went and picked up everything and brought everything back and then of course, like the cowboys, they'd cut them out, "That's yours..." (laughs).

[My brother] and I used to drive the cows down [back to the farms]. Used to be a long horseback ride, oh my goodness. Seems like it took forever and when we got back [we're] sore because you've been riding the horse for such a long time and we didn't – we didn't have saddles. We rode bareback. Well we put a bag- what do you call it- a crocus bag, a burlap sack on top or[on] the back of the horse. Then you ride, but man, by the time you get back, you are really, really sore.

I asked my father about what his life was like before the bridge was built. He did not have a simple answer for me and I was very confused when he made this statement:

Bridge that brought us, during that time, before the bridge, was the bridge that brought us, before the bridge that came.

I would not understand his words until much later into our discussion. It was difficult for him because of all of the stories connected with each other, but my father was able to tell me tales of farming, of fishing, of educating, and of living.

Oh my goodness Sherri, that's a whole story all by itself. Because it lasted so long. Um, the things that I remember, it has to do with working, it has to do with playing. It had to do with going to school. It had to do with all – oh my goodness, I could go on and on... so many things.

...folks like Dad would go to the market on Saturday. Saturday was market day. So, for example, you're picking beans all week and you're going to the market on Saturday. So, you have to bring those beans in, put them on the porch, you had to spread them out on the porch, so that they don't get- so the humidity does not affect them. Because if they get wet, and they're packed on top of each other, it'll all spoil. So you had to keep them apart... No, they used to go more than Saturday, but Saturday was the big day when they were going to do all that ferry-catching and stuff. We had to wake up early in the morning to bag those beans. Because if you do it the night before and bag, the heat is going to be in it and [you will] spoil your crop. You wait until morning, fill those big bags up, fill those big bags up, tie the top, put them in the [truck] to be gone.

Dad would be gone, but we would still have to be in the fields harvesting until – just harvesting from early morning, until up in the evening. And [then] we would come home. We would go in the field early in the morning, then we would be called for breakfast, then go back in the field, work until noon-time, lunch, whatever [meal] come home rest for a little while, then go back into the fields, and then come home for dinner and then you rest for a little while – we used to have supper. We had four meals a day. Yeah. And all your food was taken from the farm. Except when the folks went to Savannah. There were certain things that were not here, that they would buy in Savannah and bring back here. Because other than cornbread, we had no other bread. Dad used to know how to make sourdough bread...

Planting season was between late February and March. Because the cattle were still on the south end of the island, my father and siblings would use the horses to pull the harrow that plowed the field, clearing it for planting. Plowing was my father's favorite part of farming. Whatever leaves and brush were turned over by the plow were burned. Burning was not just for the purpose of ridding the debris, but served to fertilize the soil as well. The field would be left to sit while it dried before being plowed again clear the field of short grass. And plowing again, pulled up the remaining dried grass to be set in piles and burned. Furrows were made next, which are the rows where the seeds were planted.

And the corn field is the first that you plant because the chance of cold weather is basically gone in late March. Or middle March. So, you plant your corn. And then you have to put in the fertilizer. In the [furrows]. And then you come back with the plow and cover it up. Both sides.

Fertilizer came in all forms. It could be store-bought or from nature, such as rotting leaves. Manure was also used.

All right um, guess how that was done. From the horse stable. You get in your wagon, and you go down to the water to the water's edge. To the marshes. Have you ever notices those long strips of marsh that is dried that looks brown or whatever that's just laying there? When you go out there, because when the tide is high, it doesn't happen as much as now seemingly as it used to, those things used to be piled up like nobody's business. So, you would put them [in the wagon] and bring them back. And put them down on the ground of the horse stable. But [the marsh grass] would have been down there a long time ago. And uh the horse with all of its [manure] and it walks on it and stuff, and all that [manure] gets together, then um now is the time when you have to dig all that stuff out. And then you put it in the middle of the field and you let it dry out some. And then you have to go, when it's dry like you want it to, and put them in a pail and sprinkle them in the row and cover them back up.

After the corn was planted, beans and watermelon were next in the ground. However, watermelon was planted differently as the seeds were buried in the raised rows so that the vines had room to spread. Even after the plants are growing, part of the field has to be continuously plowed in a way that dirt falls on the corn.

Corn grows funny. If you do not put dirt [continuously] it'll fall over before they can get to the point where they can hold themselves up. So, you have to plow at certain times. When the corn starts coming up, you have to have um something to brace them.

Corn was planted first because they were solely for feeding the barn animals that were kept inside during the winter months. The corn remains in the field until they are dried out and then broken apart in October and stored in the corn house.

And that's how you would be spending your time during the months for example, of February, March, and April. That's what you would be doing. All of that. And hoeing of course. Don't forget hoeing. Because um grass is going to grow. And before they get to a certain point, that grass will not allow them to grow so you have to get – you have to keep them hoed. And after while then that's finished, then they grow, grow, grow. Now it's harvesting time.

School closed for one week in October for the potato harvest, which was the last crop planted.

It's a process, but it doesn't end. The moment you finish with one group of things, you have to move on to the next group and so forth and that's the same thing that will happen from every – from late February and March to October. [Farming] are the kind of things that you do. In each season. It never ends. Just keeps going. Monday through Saturday. Moses and I, we had to work six days a week in the fields and all the other kids on Saturday, they're not doing anything. They're going to the beaches and all kinds of stuff. We used to be picking beans on Saturdays and all that. And when the busses were coming to Hilton Head, [we are] in our fields where the Mini Market is [now] over there, um from the road, all the way back there stretching. We'd be out there Saturdays picking beans and the buses would be coming from Savannah - now this was the time of the bridge - and busses would be coming from Savannah because you know that [in]all of Savannah, Black people used to come to Hilton Head to go to the beach because they couldn't go to the beach in Savannah. They could not go to Tybee. And um and we did not – and we took the beach for granted because we could go to the beach any time we wanted to. And we could not understand why they were coming all the way to Hilton Head to go to the beach when they had beaches right there. And I didn't learn until I was a young adult that the reason they couldn't go to the beach was because they were Black and couldn't go to the [White] beach. I did not learn until I became an adult that... [segregation] is why – and all the doctors and lawyers and all those people were coming

to Hilton Head. So, when people talk about what Hilton Head people have and didn't have as Blacks, we had more going for us than a whole lot of people. That's why we were, when it came to segregation, [and] a lot of those things, we were spoiled. Because we didn't know. We didn't know about those kinds of things. Here on Hilton Head, when we wanted to go to the beach, we go to the beach. No big deal. But [the Black people] had to come from Savannah. Busses after busses. When we saw the buses coming, we would run and hide because they'd be pointing at us and laughing about us being in the field.

When my father told me this story about the Black beachgoers laughing at my uncle and him in the fields, I got angry. Black business people were trying to remove themselves from the roots of slavery to the point where they ridiculed those who still engaged in farming and yeomanry. My grandfather *owned* that farm and his children were laboring on land that would one day belong to them. However, those on the busses were looking for a place to belong because society had barred them from public spaces. My father is "matter-of-fact" when he recalls this story, and my anger subsides as he puts this incident into perspective. To live on Hilton Head meant that there was no one to dictate where Black Islanders belonged. My father and uncle should not have been laughed at, they should have been envied.

My grandfather used to drive the members of the Hilton Head Hunting club in their cars back to their full-time homes in North Carolina, Tennessee, and other places allowing him to see other parts of the country. He saw segregation and discrimination that people on Hilton Head

did not encounter. When my grandfather returned from these trips, he would explain to his children that they were fortunate.

And at that time, it bothered us, but when I stop and think about it we had it better than them. Because we didn't have to go to Savannah to go to the beach. And they had to come to Hilton Head to go to the beach and have a good time. We had a good time whenever – whenever we wanted. But that only crossed my mind when I thought about it as an older person.

Fishing took place in the winter months.

My dad was a great fisherman. Dad and his brother-in-law used to do a lot of fishing. They were fishing partners. They use what is called a “dragnet.” Oh my goodness, maybe about a hundred feet long- more than one hundred feet long. An um they would go fishing at Broad Creek and we called it a “dragnet” because that how you put it out. And Uncle Marion and Dad [fished together] After Uncle Marion died, Dad tried a lot of other people for fishing partners, but they didn't work out because when dad was ready to go, many times they were not ready. You know, all that kind of stuff. So, I had to help a lot. Just about every night. Seems like the tide is low at night. Well I couldn't go in the daytime because of school. And uh every night I hear, “Joseph!” Oh lord... (laughs). “It's time to get up to go...” Oh my, oh my. So [I] get up and put on my

fishing clothes and we'll go out there. And then go out and we went to the beach, for example. We would uh... we would already have the boat out there. Then he would give me the end net. Because the end net was tied to the end – the pole was tied to the end of the net. The rope was tied and I had to hold that while he went way out into the water. And [I would hold it and pull it] back to shore. And he would be in the boat, taking it way out... He would have to hold on while it continues to unfold.

Because as he was going [out into the water] it was unfolding. So, he goes all the way [out] and come back on the other side [to shore] and there's a rope at that end. He [would] get out of the boat, anchor the boat, and he grabs the net and starts pulling his end. So, I'm way over there, he's way over there, but he's pulling. Once we get both ends, we go to shore and get it far enough on the shore, then we get one end together. And so as he's pulling the net, I am walking around the back end of the net. I'm just holding, just holding to keep it from rolling because the tide is rolling in, which means that it will roll the bottom of the net and the fish would escape underneath, so I had to walk around to keep the net from rolling. I would have to do that all the way around the net. Until it comes all the way to shore. And then when it gets there, then when the fishing was right, oh my goodness, loads of fish. All kinds. Then you would sort them... And you would have, oh my goodness, bass, trout, mullet, whittings, all kinds.

Out here [on Broad Creek] you have to do it a bit different. With the cast net. Because there is no place out there really to take a boat, like you take [the boat] out on the beach. Because you don't have that kind of a shore line. So, you use a cast net in the [creek] like this. You would be in the boat, but not with the drag net. Then out there [on the creek], you have a lot of oyster banks. And those shells would cut up your net. And uh although sometimes when you use a drag net, you have to stretch it out and see if there are any holes, you have to mend them before you go back out. And after Dad stopped fishing a lot, we used to fish on our own, [my brother] and [my friend] and I. And we did that to make money. And we'd make good pocket change. We go fishing, string them out, and send them to Savannah to be sold. We send them via Mr. Charlie Simmons or uh – Big Saul – Saul Grant and uh or John Patterson and they would come back, give us our money and we'd be good to go. When we go to the beach, we got spending money (laughs) so we...we would do that.

We used to walk out [on Broad Creek] and catch crabs. The crabs would be settling right there in little puddles of water. We grab them and put them in our bags. Believe it or not, we used to go barefoot. We didn't have boots, shoes, or anything. Sometimes the shells would cut your feet.

My grandfather not only farmed to provide for his family but contributed to the economy of Hilton Head by hiring employees to work on the farm for wages and meals.

Regardless, my father along with his siblings were working right along with them. This occurred for many years until other people began to come to Hilton Head.

The tomato farm came and the people out of Florida, from the areas of Fort Pierce and Fort Meyers [came] with the migrant workers. I don't know how they established to come to Hilton Head, but all of a sudden, the tomato farm and all those areas [in Barker Field] and all of those areas out there. [And there] were tomato farms in the Squire Pope area. And they were paying people even out on Honey Horn, where the museum is, that whole area, there's nothing but tomato fields.

They began to recruit people to work on the tomato farm. They were paying... First of all, [the tomatoes] were planted, then they have to be watered every day because you know there were no water sprinkling systems (laughs). So, they had to bring trucks of water and hired people to walk around with pails. Imagine now the lakes and lakes of tomato plants and every day. [The workers] had to go behind those trucks.

And they would fill those trucks and bring them into the field. And people would follow [the] truck row by row and people would put water [on each plant]. Every day. Every morning. All over those lakes of tomatoes.

My grandfather lost his employees who worked on his farm in Chaplin to the large tomato farms. Receiving twenty-five dollars for a basket of tomatoes was more money than they

were used to seeing. My father and his siblings had to work harder to make up for the people who left for the larger farms. But the tradeoff was that leaving my grandfather's farm to work on the larger farms meant spending out-of-pocket for meals from the food truck that the family used to provide. Other large farms came to Hilton Head, specifically watermelon and gladiolas, were grown in the Joe Pope area.

People didn't have anything else to do except [farm]. And with all of [the larger farms] coming, that's when people's way of life began to change. A lot of people just left completely what they were doing and went directly to [the new businesses]. And then by the time they got back, other things had happened, so they just couldn't back to what they were doing before. A lot of people abandoned their farms and all kinds of stuff. And that's why only a few people were farming. Like Dad and some of the others. But those were the things that brought people away from what they were doing normally. Some people were deep-sea fishers and many of them kept what they were doing. Until that got over saturated [with other fishermen] once we were "discovered" and things got different. But of the people who had their farm and their own businesses and so forth, [they] dropped all of that and went to these kinds of [new] things I just mentioned. Like tomato [farms], the gladiola flower farm, [and] the watermelon [farm].

I did not get to witness life before bridge, but I saw remnants of it. I saw the slower pace and my grandfather's farm. I saw his horse and the fish that he brought back. My cousins and I used to fight over which one of us would get to shell the lima beans because those were the easiest. My grandparents would always send me back to New Jersey with a peach. Until I got older, I thought Hilton Head was the only place you could get peaches. The Native Islanders did not need the bridge because they were self-sufficient. My grandfather was wise enough to understand that life can change and knew that in order for his children to survive those changes they needed two things: land and a formal education. I revisited my father's words from earlier:

Bridge that brought us, during that time, before the bridge, was the bridge that brought us, before the bridge that came. You have to hear it. See everyone is brought over by a bridge. Our "bridge" was Hilton Head before the bridge. And so that's why I say it's not that easy to say "life after the bridge [is easier] than before." Because for me, life before the bridge was the best thing – was the best thing that I knew. I did not know that much about life after the bridge. But I knew what life was before the bridge. And I knew that that bridge did not come here specifically to make that life easier...

To Lose. The Sea Islands, which included Hilton Head could only be accessed by boat resulting in their decades of isolation (Jones-Jackson, 1989). The isolation was both an advantage and a disadvantage. Being secluded was an advantage in that Native Islanders were able to preserve their Gullah heritage and establish a self-sufficient community. Unfortunately,

on Hilton Head Island (and other islands) there was a shift in population in both volume and demographics. The Native Islanders were unable to adapt to these changes when from an exceeding number to be overrun by what is termed, “come-heres,” who are people who have no cultural ties to the island (Patricia Jones-Jackson, 1989). The affluent homeowners settled in Hilton Head, settled in seven gated communities termed, “plantations,” as well as populating other communities on the island.

The mild climate, marshy inlets, abundance of green foliage, and beach proximity create a beautiful landscape (Patricia Jones-Jackson, 1989). Developers relishing in this beauty created exclusive communities of living and leisure, while revisiting a time period of segregation along racial and class lines. High land prices were justified by private emergency services, in the gated communities, as well as road maintenance, beach access, and other amenities, and would be paid for by people of means.

Consequently, the impact of these arriving newcomers were the displacement of Native Islanders. Developers sought to purchase property from Black landowners. One way was the outright purchase from those who were disinterested in maintaining a lifestyle of farming and fishing. As a result, Native Islanders were priced out of the island’s housing market due to the rising land values and higher property taxes (Weber, 1905; Blockson, 1987).

Many people left because there's nothing here. Imagine having a college education – if you can let your mind go back to those particular years in the '60s – if you have a college degree, coming back to Hilton Head, other than farming, what would you do? And did you go to college to come back to farm? Because farming to us, was not a profession and all

we [Black people] knew were being a minister and being a teacher. Those were our professionals in the Black Community, and it wasn't until I started attending Savannah State [College], that I heard about business administration and so forth and so on. But even then, people who graduated with degrees in business administration could not find jobs. Not down here. Then if you're a teacher, where do you teach? Everybody can't teach the same place, so you have to leave no matter how you look at it. Because the people who are back here teaching, they weren't going to give up their jobs because you graduated from school. So, you have to leave and go other places to get into the profession that you trained for, but if you leave Hilton Head and come back, you want to come back to do something that having an education – having a college degree [is needed]. [But] coming back [then] was not to your advantage. You had to leave. But some people left and never came back. We always knew that we were coming back. We were always accepted the fact that we were going to come back home.

According to Rivers (2007), Black landowners who wanted to retain their land did not trust the legal system in spite of plans for large-scale developers and corporations to acquire their property. Affordability of legal representation was also an obstacle that Black people faced when their landownership was threatened by outside encroachment.

Rivers (2007) describes Black property owners as “tenants in common,” meaning descendants of the original deed-holder has equal possession of the entire property. Tenants in

common are vulnerable to forced partition sales where land not for sale can be brought because a single owner cannot be determined. (Rivers, 2007). This makes land retention among Black people difficult because without a will to legally establish a transfer of ownership, the interest in property is inherited by all surviving family members. This is termed, “heirs’ property.” As the numbers of the family grow, the number of heirs’ to the property also grow. Heirs’ property was the undoing of Native Islanders because a single heir can sell his/her interest in the property resulting in a sale of the entire parcel (Blockson, 1987; Jones-Jackson, 1989; Rivers, 2007).

And so, Dad had to pay all – continue to pay all the taxes... but see during that time, people were looking out for each other. He was looking out for his brother and um to make sure they didn’t lose the property.

Unfortunately, my grandfather taking care of his brother’s property would have unforeseen repercussions. Sonny wanted to sell some of his acres to an unknown solicitor however, my grandfather purchased it instead. Regardless of which brother own which acres, my grandfather continued to pay the taxes for the entire five and quarter acres. When Sonny died in 1963, his daughter appeared to make her claim to the property, following the laws of “heirs’ property.” Between long lost heirs and town easements, the property that my grandfather acquired years ago to raise his family, to farm, and build his businesses is presently smaller than what he had purchased and maintained.

As my father was recounting this information about the portion of the property that went Sonny’s daughter, he noted that I looked, “somber.” Somber was exactly what I was feeling because I knew that property of which he spoke. When we visited Hilton Head from Northern

New Jersey in the summer, while my grandfather was still alive, I saw the crops growing in that field that was across the road¹³, adjacent to Broad Creek. Not too long after he died, the crops were replaced with an open field. My grandfather's crops belonged there. Finally learning what happened to that piece of land was very difficult to hear. I told my father this was the reason I was somber and he had words of wisdom for me.

Whatever is yours, is yours, and you do all you can to maintain what is yours. And sometimes with all the things that are going on, you say, "Maybe...maybe things happen for the best," because at least you know we have no dealings with those [people]. With anything. They're gone and then you're gone.

Hilton Head would no longer be an agrarian and fishing society, but one where the service industry would dominate. My grandparents understood that they had to adapt with the transitioning of the island. No longer able to rely on fishing and farming to solely sustain their family, they had to find employment outside their home. My grandparents saw these changes to their island and knew that their ten children would have to exceed their levels of formal education, even if that meant that they had to leave the island. However, it was expected that they would return home to retain the land for future generations. Unfortunately, the later generations and even some people that my father grew up with did not carry with them the value of the lands that were obtained by their forefathers, believing that their use was obsolete. They left and did not return, therefore destroying the relationship that had been established among the

¹³ "The Road" is what the older Native Islander refer to William Hilton Parkway (Highway 278), the main thoroughfare on Hilton Head Island.

different island communities. All that remains is the presence of a small group of Native Islanders and the stories that are passed down through the generations if we choose to listen.

Chapter 3

The Cycle of Education

Educated

Historically, Whites have controlled public education for Black students, resulting in the continuous struggle for equality between the two races. Teachers were the among the most educated group of Black people. Not only was it the job of the teacher in the Black community to provide instruction, but they were responsible for maintaining moral character of the students, therefore hiring practices were controversial. White school board members were wary of prospective teachers who were well qualified and steered towards applicants that were “nonthreatening” (Fultz, 1995 winter).

When schools were in session, they were equipped with one or two instructors. The schools were either overcrowded or the students had sporadic attendance, based on the growing season. Fultz (1995, spring; 1995 winter) explains that training for teachers in rural settings ranged from 6 weeks to 2 years. Their salaries correlated with the size of the community, resulting in challenges in hiring outside of the region. The other issue with salary on a grand scale is that Black teachers were paid less than White teachers with equal or less qualifications (Baker, 1995; Fultz, 1995 spring). Thus, in the mid-1930s, the NAACP spearheaded a fight against wage discrimination. *Alston v. School Board of Norfolk* (1940) ruled that teachers’ salaries would be determined based on qualifications rather than race. With Ben Wood and his campaign to use the National Teachers’ Exam (NTE) by any means possible to determine teaching qualifications, the assessment was wielded by southern school boards to regulate

teachers' salaries, which was a new form of discrimination that was difficult to dispute (Baker, 1995).

Racial inequity prevalent in the school system in early to mid-20th century was evident when comparing the education for Black physical structures of the facilities and the resources available to Black students with those of their white counterparts (Fultz, 1995 spring; Fultz, 1995 winter). Although the district school boards made educational decisions concerning the hiring practices and salaries of Black teachers, in the early 20th century, they did not provide the actual school facility. The schoolhouses for Black students were spaces, mostly churches, donated by the community. Because the limited resources, in spite of philanthropic efforts sought from the community by the teachers, the facilities were usually in disrepair (McPherson, 1970; Fultz, 1995 spring; Fultz, 1995 winter). Fultz (1995 spring, 1995 winter) notes that the rural schoolhouses in particular, were dilapidated one or two room structures.

“Among signs of neglect were rickety benches with and without backs, holes in the floor and roof, inadequate heating, poor lighting, unpainted walls, dilapidated steps, unkempt surroundings, and a lack of desks, and other educational supplies and materials” pp. 402-403.

Schooling on Hilton Head. Literature explains about resources that were lacking in school and my father did encounter using outdated textbooks that were castoffs from White students (Fultz, 1995 spring; Fultz, 1995 winter). When I asked my father about the physical conditions of his schools, his reply was, “Compared to what?” I should have not have been surprised by my father's response because he usually answers questions that makes me think about the deeper meaning of what I am asking. Regardless, I was still taken off guard because I was expecting his answer to be in line with other researchers that reported on rural southern schools during the early to mid-1900s. According to Fultz (1995 spring; 1995 winter),

educational facilities in the rural south were dilapidated structures with worn roofs, steps in disrepair, and rotting floorboards. To my father, the conditions of his schools were relative. An outsider may look at the schools he attended and see a structure that is worn because of age. They were not modern facilities, but were solidly built. The Chaplin neighborhood school, where my father attended during his elementary school years, was very well built. The roof on the two-roomed structure did not leak in the rain and the cold in the winter did not seep through the walls. The classrooms could be warmed adequately with a single wood stove.

The Freedmen of the Mitchelville Community in Hilton Head, the first free settlement for ex-slaves in the United States, created an independent government system and were responsible for spearheading the campaign for compulsory schooling in South Carolina (Campbell, 2008). Like other educational facilities for Black people, the Cherry Hill School, located in Mitchelville, had been erected by the Native Island Community in 1937, making this the first Black educational facility of the Beaufort County school district (Anderson, 1988; Heffernan, 2012). The district supplied teachers' salaries for three months to teach three months out of the year, however the parents pooled their resources to keep the teachers and additional month (Harvey, 1998). Recognized as a part of the history of Mitchelville and place of education for Native Islanders, Cherry Hill School was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. Students of elementary age attended schools in their neighborhood, therefore my father attended the school in Chaplin. He began school at the age of 6 years, when school was compulsory. Some parents waited an additional year to send their children to school. The students from the Chaplin school came from Chaplin, Grasslawn (Grassland), Gardiner, and Marshland neighborhood, making up approximately 100 children in attendance, with an estimate of 20

students per grade. The numbers are difficult to calculate because the students did not always sit together in the classroom, especially, if they were being “tried out” in another grade.

We had – I guess we would call it a neighborhood school. Because every neighborhood had a school. There was Chaplin Elementary School. That’s the school I attended. Two room school and [it took the kids in Shipyard], the kids that lived in Chaplin, the kids that lived in Grasslawn, and the kids that lived in Pineville. Those are the people who went to Chaplin elementary, I guess [that’s what it was called], because of where it was located. Right up there where Oak Grove Church is. That’s where the two-room school was. We didn’t have kindergarten, pre-school, [or] pre-kindergarten. But Mom used to teach us so when we go to school, we knew just about – we knew a lot because Mom taught us.

There was a lunchroom at that school, but the lunchroom was not attached to the school. The lunchroom was across the highway in another building and uh much of the food was donated by the government for the lunch program. I didn’t know anything about those kinds of things, about you know, [lunch] programs and stuff like that. We knew nothing about that. I just knew that happened. They used to charge the kids [5 cents] for lunch. We were never in the lunchroom. We always took our lunch. You remember now there was a whole bunch of us [siblings]. Five cents? (laughs) Everyday... ? So we would always take our lunch and although we were not all at school at the same time, we always made our lunch and took our lunch to school.

But anyway, the school itself is a two-room school – and what grade did it go? One through five, I think. Or one through four. But in one room. One through [sixth grade]! One room, we had – one through six... three grades in one room and three grades in the other room. And yeah, three grades because the tables were set up so that each [student in the same grade] was sitting [together]. So, if you are, for example, a first grader, in your room you [also] have the second grade table and you had the third grade table. But there's only one teacher and the teacher would teach the grades separately. But if you were smart enough, you would listen to what is going on at the other [table]. Many kids didn't pay any attention but some of us did and yet many of us were moved because I skipped a grade. Yeah, because I think it must have been the third grade. I skipped third grade and went to fourth grade because I knew enough to move over to the other room and so I skipped third grade and went into the fourth grade (By this time my father had surpassed his father's level of formal education who had a second-grade education.) Took me out of this room and put me in the other room where there were fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Now once you get to that point, they don't skip you, but they can skip you up to fourth grade and some students along with myself were able to do that...so if you're smart enough, you listen and you hear

what is going on. And they don't move you immediately. They kind of try you out...



Central Oak Grove Church on Mathews Drive was photographed before its new steeple added. The home behind it is no longer standing. (*Island Packet*.)

Figure 2: The caption on this photograph taken from Harvey (1998), describes the structure behind Central Oak Grove Church as a “home.” However, remember my father’s discussions, I knew that the photograph is mislabeled. I confirmed with my father that this is in fact the Chaplin School where he attended. The fact that this photograph provides an inaccurate description is the reason that it is important to gather the oral history from those who lived on Hilton Head before the mass scale development. Without passing stories along for future generations, Native Islanders have the potential to be effectively erased from the island’s history.

In his 7th grade year, my father attended Robinson Junior High School until 9th grade. Robinson Middle School included the children from all communities, making the total approximately 200 students in attendance.

Going to Robinson [Junior High School] ... remember I used to tell you I used to help Dad with his fishing? Sometimes I am leaving the fishing situation to run home and get a quick breakfast to get the bus to go to school because the tide goes low later in the night [and that would] take

you [later] in the next day. And sometimes I'm running out there to get home to have breakfast and um you get the bus to go to the junior high school and you had breakfast every morning and every morning, one of your breakfast course is grits and grits are hot (laughs)! Imagine trying to eat [hot] grits and trying to get out there to [school]! But that's what I had to do a lot of times. Matter of fact, many times we had to go into the field before we went to school in the morning. Do some hoeing up to a certain point. And then you go home, have breakfast, and you go to school. Come back in the afternoon, change your clothes, go into the fields, until its time to come home for dinner. We worked hard. We worked hard, but that's all we knew. And that's the only way we knew farming to be - living on a farm to be - living in a country place to be. And then I'm sure all of much of South Carolina was the same way. Much of South Carolina. And I think that could be one of the reasons why when people got away from the farm, they didn't really want to come back to it. But what's amazing when we moved back here, one of the first things I wanted to do was plant some vegetables and stuff. Because I kind of miss seeing things grow. And it even got to the point where I had a little garden next to the house over there. Grew those squash and stuff like that. So, I just like to do that. But farming, growing up in the country, is hard. Growing up in the southern country is hard. Now I imagine that's the same way in every place, but the work is hard. And that's why you wanted to go to school.

Get an education. Get one of them “easy” jobs. Easy, relatively speaking.

One of these professional jobs. Make some money.

Prior to establishing Robinson Junior School, in 1949, students who wished to continue their education would travel to the mainland to attend the Penn School or Mather School for Girls (Harvey, 1998). After finishing the Chaplin neighborhood school, my aunt attended a school in the Gardiner community called, Brownsville until she reached the 9th grade. Beyond that, schooling options were limited to the Mather Boarding School. My grandfather was unable to send her to Mather but was determined that she finished her education. Therefore, she was sent to Savannah to live with family in order to attend Beach High School. Some students were sent to the Penn School, a boarding school on Saint Helena Island. The Penn School was established as a part of the Port Royal Experiment, named for Port Royal Island, South Carolina, where many of the freedmen rehabilitation programs took place (DuBois, 1900). Black students, educated by Ellen Murray and Charlotte Forten, benefitted from the industrial arts curriculum that was model after the higher institutions of Hampton and Tuskegee Agricultural and Normal Schools. Once completing their studies, they served as educators for the students who attended the Penn School (Campbell, 2008). According to my father, not all families had the means to send their children away to Penn, Mather or even to Beach High School in Savannah. Those students ended up leaving for New York, worked in the fishing industry, or just stayed home.

But [my sister] went to Beach High School and that’s where she graduated from and then to Savannah State and when I came through, um they were making – the county was making arrangements for students

finishing 8th grade to go to [the Black High School] in Bluffton and that's where we went to school.

My father had to leave the island to attend the Black High School in Bluffton. In his 10th grade year, Michael C. Riley High School was built, which is where he was salutatorian of his graduating class in 1957.

... So they built that new school and we were one of the first groups that moved into Michael C. Riley high school that was built, named for a Black man who donated the land for the school to be built.

In order to attend Michael C. Riley in Bluffton, my father was picked up in a truck loaded with roughly 40 other Black students from Chaplin (There was a second driver who served the other communities) and taken to the ferry on Jenkins Island¹⁴.

The boat would let us off [on Buckingham Island] It was a boat that took cars and everything. People would [also] go to Savannah. People like Charlie Simmons would have a truck on one side of the river, the Hilton Head side and then had a truck on the Bluffton side – the Buckingham side, so when they brought their stuff to go to Savannah, they just load it from the truck to the boat. And from the boat to the truck. All

¹⁴ Jenkins Island is not an island per se, it is a portion of Hilton Head located on the north end of the island where the people met the ferry prior to the building of other points of embarkment such as Broad Creek Marina or Harbor Town.

of these Hilton Head children going and at that time. Four or five White kids also because they had the same situation. They had to go to Bluffton also when you know, they got to a certain grade... And they went over [to the mainland] at the same time. I'm talking about a lot of kids going over there. And four White kids. We didn't talk to them and they didn't talk to us. We couldn't care less. It really didn't make a difference. You know, I think to some degree we were sheltered and we were spoiled because we didn't know to be afraid of – you know we were just our own people. We couldn't care less about situations. The first time I ever truly realized true segregation was when I went to Savannah because we never had to deal with that kind of situation. We had our own thing...

The journey to school took most of the morning. After being picked up early in the morning and taking the ferry to the mainland, a trip that would take about 15 to 20 minutes, when my father and his classmates arrived at Buckingham Landing, they had to wait for the bus to take them the rest of the way to school. Unfortunately, the bus was always late due to the extra 16 students the driver would have to pick up in Bluffton. If it was a rainy day, it would be a miserable experience because there was not a shelter.

And when it came, [the bus] was loaded with children that had already been picked up, and then it still had other children after we got on to be picked up. The bus [was] jammed with kids and it was the slowest bus. The worst bus in the fleet that ran that particular route. The four

White kids – and I don't know if the other kids paid attention to it but it's something that had stuck in my mind all of these years. Those four White kids would get there at the same time as we. When they got there, their bus was sitting there waiting for them. And their bus was a brand-new bus. And I could still vividly see that picture right now with me standing there and those kids are gone. Brand new bus. Then way later, we see our old, raggedy, bus slowly coming down. That bus couldn't get up to 20 miles an hour if it tried (laughs)...

Although they had a normal school day, my father would arrive home late because he would have to go through the long journey in reverse. My father cannot remember the year, but eventually the students from Hilton Head were provided with their own bus that remained parked at the Buckingham dock, considerably reducing their travel times to and from school. The bus was, while still crowded due to the number of students traveling to school from the island, it was less so as it was no longer necessary to share transportation with the Bluffton riders. As my father advanced through high school, his class sizes grew smaller. Ironically, the students on the mainland, those who did not have to take an additional bus and ferry, were dropping out of school.

Bluffton was a big city. Imagine coming from Hilton Head. Even though Bluffton was very small and whatnot, for us [coming from Hilton Head] it was like a city. So, you're going to this place, and of course the people who lived in Bluffton – the kids – thought they were something

else. In my class, we had a large class when I went [to Michael C. Riley].

When I graduated, one student from Bluffton was in my graduating class

and all of the other students [from Bluffton] had dropped out of school.

All of the other kids were from Hilton Head, but when we started off,

there were a lot of kids in our class. I don't know what happened. But

kids from Hilton Head went to school.

My father had a lot of interesting experiences in school. School was a place where he obtained knowledge on social behavior in addition to academics, from public protocol to the proper treatment of members of the opposite gender. He was on the basketball team after watching other students in the school yard play and being determined to learn. My father was also vice president of the organization, New Farmers of America (NFA) where they traveled the state to conventions with other schools from all over South Carolina, engaging in speaking, talent, and quiz contests.

There was a counterpart to (NFA). The White schools also had that same organization and they did the same thing. But they were called "FFA," "Future Farmers of America." We were the new farmers, they were the future. But they did the same things that we did. I don't know to what extent they did, but I know that the [benefits] of the program itself was a good training for a lot of things. When I go to meetings now [and] they talk about process and procedure, it's not because of what I learned later on, it was what I learned when I was in high school.

College. After graduating Michael C. Riley in 1957 at the age of 17 with honors, my father attended Savannah State College. The first year he would travel with a small group from Hilton Head. The driver was older friend (who would later become my uncle) who was just out of the army and finishing his senior year of college. My father attended Savannah State from 1957 until 1962. He stayed in college an extra year to complete a course in industrial technology and engineering. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Arts Education, with a minor in mathematics.

But in the car, we had three other people. There were other ladies going [to Savannah] with him. These were people who were much older than we – who were our teachers. See it had gotten down to the point now that some of the teachers who were teaching us [were not] certified teachers and they had courses they had to take. And so even when we started going off to school, some of my teachers were going with me to finish their degree. And so [Black] teachers were allowed to teach without degrees but when things started happening, they had to go back otherwise they would lose their job. And they were given time to do so. But it was amazing [that] they were going back to school with us and then were our teachers. And so then when [my friend] graduated at the end of that year, that's when the commuting stopped. I had to live with a relative. That's when I lived in Yamacraw Village [in Savannah] with [my uncle] and his family.

My father went to school in the day and worked at a supermarket on Broughton Street in the evenings. He had to take the bus across town from West Savannah to Thunderbolt. Taking the bus was a skill in timing. There were two buses that he had to avoid. One was the bus filled with the women who worked at the Tradewinds shrimp factory. Unfortunately, the odor of the shrimp smell that had seeped into their clothing could not be washed out regardless of how often they washed their clothes causing the bus to smell. Even worse than the women, the other bus to avoid was one driven by the racist bus driver.

See, he knew we were all going to school because the bus would be loaded with college kids and he would drive that bus at a slow pace. All classes – we didn't have semesters, we had quarters – it meant that your class met every day. And every class started at 8:00 in the morning. And that man would take that bus really slowly. And the kids would be raising sand and telling him to drive the bus. And when he [got] to a stop, he would stop and take his nice little time to open the door and then take his nice little time to close the door when people [got on] to try to make us late for school. Kids were raising sand and you try your best not to get that bus. But sometimes you couldn't help it. But he was really, really something.

Jobs for college educated Black people on Hilton Head were scarce in the 1960s, which is when my father graduated from Savannah State College. He studied education to be a teacher and those jobs were already filled. If a person returned to Hilton Head during that time, it was to farm. According to my father, students also studied business education. Again, those positions

were scarce in the south and therefore it was necessary for people to leave to find careers in that major.

So you have to leave and go to other places to get into that profession that you trained for. But if you leave Hilton Head and come back, coming back [to Hilton Head with a college degree] would not have been to your advantage. You had to leave. But some people left and never came back. We always know that we were coming back because that was always in our DNA I guess. We were always told – we always accepted the fact that we going to come back home.

It was important for me to ask my father the reason his younger siblings were able to be raised and remain on the island.

Because the population started growing. More schools were opening up [and] more students were coming [on the island]. Schools were becoming integrated. People had to be put in all of these [schools]. When [my younger sisters and brother] came along, there were more opportunities to stay here then when [we older children] came up. You have to be there to truly understand. But when we came out of school, there was also nothing and [now] there's people. And when we came out of school, all of the schools on Hilton Head were still separated. And so the people who were working there, they weren't going anywhere. Schools in Savannah were segregated. Folks who [already] had the job,

they weren't going anywhere, so [opportunities] were limited. But your question is "How come not right back here [on Hilton Head]." Not right here because there was nothing here to help you make it financially. Nothing! And then my sisters came along and things had changed.

[There] was a federal mandate to integrate the schools in South Carolina. South Carolina was the toughest place where that could happen. There were the two [Black students] that started the integration process [with] that federal order.

Well Daddy and [a neighbor] decided to put their children in that situation [to integrate the school in Bluffton]. See Dad was always looking for what he considered the best and I guess [you would] call him a pioneer because if something came and it had to do with education, he is going to be in the forefront. Make things happen. He used to insist, and Mom used to teach us. Because we learned a lot of things way before we went to school. Mom taught us everything. Taught us our A,B,Cs, taught us our time table. Everything while we were still at home and not at school. Because [she] was our first Kindergarten teacher. And when we went to school, we were head and shoulders above everyone.

However, before the increase of population in Hilton Head and school integration, professional opportunities for my father were slim on the Hilton Head.

When I graduated from college, before I left here, I came back [to Hilton Head] and was working in the fields with Mom and Dad. After I graduated, I [had a plan] to do things because I didn't have a job yet. Papa Brankey [used to] work for Charles Fraser's office [in] Sea Pines. There's an office there. He used to do cleaning and all that other stuff. He was so happy that his second grandchild [graduated from college]. So now with this big company being on Hilton Head, he wanted to find me a job and he was so happy [telling] all these folks – all these White folks, his grandson has a college degree. [He must have] asked them to give me the opportunity to work with the company because that was about the time people were beginning to [move] to Hilton Head from other places and many of them were moving into Sea Pines. And so he came by the house, he was just as happy as a pig in slop, telling the family about this interview that I have [with Charles Fraser]. I'm happy. Happy as I could be now, because I'm a college graduate and I have my degree and all that. So you know what we do – put on a brand new suit that I had worn for graduation. For baccalaureate service, [and] sat down in the interview with Charles Fraser. [He's] the builder [of Sea Pines]. That's who Papa used to work for. For the Sea Pines Company, so you know that was a whole organization. [Papa Brankey] saw what people were doing – you know, there were young, White guys in there. People doing [office stuff] and he wanted his grandson to do some of the same things. Those folks told me, "Yeah well what we have is uh, we have a lot of people coming

to Hilton Head that want to show properties. So what we want you to be able to do – we have a horse and buggy and we’ll give you a suit.” You know when you go to The Bahamas Islands or places like that and you see those folks, they would have given me a white suit, a horse, and a buggy to drive people around to properties.

Charles Fraser already had a clear position that Black people should not own property (Jones-Jackson, 1989). He had a romantic view of returning to the antebellum time period as his development is called Sea Pines “Plantation.” Native Islanders were only props to display to prospective buyers in this newly developing paradise. My father was an educated person seeking a career, and Fraser tried to display his supremacy by offering a subservient position in his empire, regardless of his credentials.

And so, I continued working in the fields. And then word got out, “There goes that Grant, Josh.” That’s what they called me. “He got a college degree and he’s still out there [in the fields].” And see, they didn’t know that I already had my plans in terms of what I was going to do.

My father’s younger siblings had more opportunities on Hilton Head.

Educating

Service Work. My father wanted to go overseas because he had always been interested in service. First, he submitted an application to Crossroads Africa, a volunteer organization

established in 1962, but he was not accepted. My father's advisor from Savannah State provided him with information on the Peace Corp, another service organization.

And I was accepted [into the Peace Corp]. And I was accepted to go to Jamaica. But (laughs) because I was still living at home, I told Dad that's where I was going, he didn't want me to go. Because I could not convince him that the [Peace Corp] was not going to war.

My father honored my grandfather's wishes while he was still living on Hilton Head not to go to the Peace Corp during that time. Instead he moved to New York to live with my aunt, who was already living there after her graduation from Savannah State College. Now on his own, my father submitted another application for the Peace Corp as soon as he got to New York.

And this time, I wanted to go to Africa. But when I [heard from] them, again [I was accepted] but they couldn't send me to Africa [because I wanted to go] into community development and they didn't have anything there, but they [did] in South America, Peru.

Although my father had accepted his assignment in Peru, and he would journey there several months later. Up until that time, he still needed a job and took the New York State Teacher Examinations in order to apply for teaching positions. While waiting for their response concerning job openings, my father worked at the Bookazine Bookstore in Greenwich Village.

However, it was time to travel to Peru before he heard from the New York City school district. He was in Peru from 1963 until 1965.

That's where I went for those two years. Doing everything: teaching, building houses, building latrines (laughs), drainage systems, community meetings. You know all kinds of things like that. So, President Obama was not the first community developer that came about. Some of us were [already] doing that. Just not in this country.

The advantages of being a Peace Corp volunteer was that they provided you with jobs upon completion of the program. When my father returned to the United States in 1965, he had offers from the Boys Club of America in several places, although not in New York City as he had hoped, but in Schenectady, New York; Buffalo, New York; and Providence, Rhode Island. My father mapped out where each city was located in relation to New York City, because he wanted to be close to the place he loved. He selected Providence because it was only three hours away. Because his job began at 1:00 in the afternoon, he was able to secure a job at the local school in the morning, teaching physical education. He remained in Providence (where he also met my mother) from 1965 to 1966.

Teaching/Counseling. Eventually the Peace Corp was able to find my father teaching positions in New York City. He had to choose from Long Island, Yonkers, and Ossining. My father decided to take the position in Yonkers. He worked in Yonkers from 1966 until 1970. While working in Yonkers, my father was studying at Leaman College, one of the schools that

comprise City College of New York for a master's degree in guidance counseling, which he received in 1970.

But when I went to Yonkers, one of the things that I did [because] I was married at that time, [I] talked with the people about my wife being a teacher and she came in [for an interview] and got a job just like that (snaps his fingers). So, [the schools in Yonkers] provided for the both of us. And we stayed in Yonkers for a while and then we lived in an apartment on Pine Street, but we wanted a house. Sunday afternoon, we used to be everywhere. [Looking in] Long Island and way up in New Jersey. Finally, we found Teaneck. We would be passing Teaneck all of the time and never realized. But one time we went [and the realtor showed] all kinds of places and that one I really liked was an old house. But the thing about it was, I don't know whether it was the neighborhood or that particular neighborhood of Teaneck, but it was a 2-story house with an attic, with living space that had all of the high windows and all. And I really liked it. An artist lived there. [The person] was a painter and boy I liked that house. But we decided to continue looking. That's when we finally found the place! Oh, I know one of the reasons why [we kept looking] – because of where it was sitting. Right in the middle of everything and I always wanted a house on a corner lot.

When my parents found their home in Teaneck, New Jersey in 1970, they were still commuting to Yonkers. The morning commute during rush hour was 45 minutes, with most of

the frustration occurring on the New Jersey side before crossing the George Washington Bridge. Fortunately, the majority of the commuters once crossing the bridge would head south into Manhattan and my parents drove north away from traffic. The commute home to Teaneck was only 30 minutes because school was released before evening rush-hour traffic.

While living in Teaneck, my father had very few Black friends, as there were not many where he worked and lived. However, the Jewish and Italian colleagues he befriended provided him with knowledge on how to successfully navigate through the politically charged climate regarding the education system. People believe that discrimination was regulated to the South however, regardless of the diverse population, Black people were not hired for all professional positions in Teaneck. When my father decided to apply for a position in the Bergen County school district at Teaneck High School, he never received a response from the hiring committee. In fact, Black parents were complaining about the lack of Black educators in the Teaneck schools. My father was finally hired as a guidance counselor at Teaneck High School in 1971.

See all this time now, people are not all into – even up there – hiring a lot of Black professionals. Most of the people I worked with were Jews and Italians. And in Yonkers for example, there were three Black teachers and they were all men. One, two in mathematics and one in industrial arts. And we taught in different areas of the school, so we didn't get to see each other. Except one of the guys was on the faculty basketball team and so we met each other then. But the other guy spent most of his time by himself. And when I went to Teaneck, it was the same thing.

When I applied to Teaneck High School, I never heard from them. [They] never got back to me. Then one day I was reading the newspaper and some of the Black parents were complaining that the Teaneck school system will not high Black people – Black staff. And here they have this guidance department needing [a guidance counselor]. They only had one Black person [working in the school]. Black people in Teaneck were very vocal and they were Black parents.

By that time, I had sent in my application. I saw this thing in the newspaper, “We have no Black people applying to any of those positions.” So, I read that in the newspaper. You know [I was] never afraid of expressing [myself] when I have a point. I think it must have been a Sunday [when I read the article]. On Monday, I called those folks. And I told them, “I was reading the newspaper about [what you said about Black people not applying to positions at Teaneck High School and] I sent you an application.” I think at that time you were not allowed to put [race] but somehow [they should have been] able to tell. I said, “I never heard from you.” [They asked], “You sent in an application? Maybe it got misplaced somewhere.” I said, “No I never heard from you.” Shortly after that, they called me for an interview and that’s how I got the job.

Before it was time for me to [start my position, your mother] ended up getting that reading position in Teaneck. So, we were both able to move out of Yonkers [school system] at the same time and move right into another. [Your mother] went into reading and I went into guidance.

Before we went to Teaneck [High School], I was in Lincoln High School in Yonkers. And then something came up. You know a lot of things happened during that time and if you didn't make it then, it's because you had nothing going for you. Because there were so many opportunities. And this work/study program [needed] counselors. This was in Yonkers. And what happened is that you're assigned a school. And you work with children who have possibilities. You work as a counselor with those children [but] you had a specific time to see them and you also went out if you found that kid was [older] went out to try to find jobs for them at school. So, in the morning, I scheduled sessions with the kids who were assigned to me. And in the afternoon, I would go to places talking to different employers about children who could possibility work after school and so forth.

In the Yonkers system for the work/study program [I] worked as a counselor. [It helped me] when I went to Teaneck [High School] and they asked, "What experience do you have in counseling?" [The work/study program was an experience] I could include and all of those things that I did when I was in the Peace Corp. So that helped me along that line because I got my master's degree [in counseling] when we were still in Yonkers at one of the city colleges called, Lehman College and that's in the Bronx. That's where I got my master's degree in guidance [counseling]. [And] that work/study program gave me some experience working in guidance.

My grandfather passed away in December of 1979. Losing him made it difficult for my father continue to live in Teaneck. He felt that he needed to return to his home. Because he subscribed to the Island Packet, which was the local newspaper, my father saw the advertisement for principal at the Sunrise alternative school in Beaufort, South Carolina.

I told [your mother], “I think I’m going to apply for it, what the heck.” (Laughs) Because I wasn’t just going to pack up and leave because I knew that things were not that great in [the Beaufort County] area as far as employment was concerned, particularly for Black people. And sure enough they called me and told me to come in for an interview and I went in and I got the job.

In addition to leaving his position at Teaneck High School, my father left his doctoral program at Rutgers University where he was All But Dissertation (ABD). Although I was young, I remember that we left for Hilton Head the evening before Valentine’s Day. I told my class farewell and gave my friends promises to write letters as soon as I arrived at our new home. When we visited Hilton Head at Christmas and in the summers, we had a full car for the 16-hour journey, but I felt how this trip was different. My baby sister and I were crowded into the back seat with most of our belongings and we were saying goodbye to the small white colonial with the red shutters for a final time. The one that my father picked because it was on the corner lot.

On February [1981], we were packing. I remember that. No, we didn’t stop. We drove all the way here. Because I had my car loaded down

with stuff and the van had already taken all the other things and was having a hard time finding Hilton Head (laughs).

Although my father was raised and educated in Hilton Head, this was the first time he lived on the island as a professional. He had to learn to be an educator in a school system that was now not only integrated, but also had a different political climate from that of New York and New Jersey.

And truly, I wanted to go back to Teaneck. I didn't like all I saw. I didn't like – it seems like you are almost a forgotten person and when you go away from a place for such a long time, you can't come back and expect people to know you. The only thing they know is your family. They don't know you, where as in Teaneck, people knew me and knew who I was and knew what I did. People I grew up with were gone, not that I was hanging with them that much after I graduated from college, but I knew them, but I think they were all gone and now I'm looking at their children and their grandchildren.

The Sunshine Alternative school closed the fall after my father arrived. He had to find another job for the 1981-1982 school year. The superintendent offered to provide my father with a teaching position, however he had been a guidance counselor in Yonkers and in Teaneck and was not inclined to return to the classroom. Fortunately, my father was offered a job as a

guidance counselor in Battery Creek High School in Beaufort. Beaufort County, South Carolina was very different from New York and New Jersey.

...and working in the school system, you're frustrated by the way people did some things. After coming out of a public school system like Westchester County and particularly Bergen County, particularly Teaneck where things seem like they were on a grand scale, especially in the Teaneck area and then to come to Hilton Head feels like, you know, "Am I'm wasting my time?" Because I'm not using what I have.

It was difficult working with the other guidance counselors at Battery Creek. They had their own established culture of remaining their office completing paperwork, where my father was used to engaging with students. As a newcomer to the school, he was careful about not asserting himself above the senior colleagues. He refused to follow this same passive direction when he transitioned the following year to McCracken High School in Bluffton. This latest move, while still over the bridge, was still a relief to him, as he was no longer making the hour commute to Beaufort. Being a guidance counselor at McCracken, meant working with students from Hilton Head who were the children and grandchildren of his former schoolmates. In addition to these students, he was the guidance counselor to mostly the children of affluent White parents who had made Hilton Head their home.

You know at that point, I was beginning to feel more confident.

So when I went into the office and started doing things. See, when I came

from Teaneck, I brought a lot of my stuff with me. My literature, my methodology.

My father realized that the students did not have access to the information they needed when he had to make the athletic director aware that his special needs athletes could in fact have a future that extended past high school. Students whose parents were college educated, could benefit from their experiences, however, not all of the students had the same opportunities. My father began meeting with his students. They met my father with suspicion, asking “what did I do?” because in years past, summons to that office had never been for a casual occasion. After introducing himself as their guidance counselor, my father asked about them and their academic plans. Then he created academic files for each of them.

Because that’s what we had to do in Teaneck. And I started doing that and the other [guidance counselors were] just looking. They can’t figure out what’s going on. I even brought with me that form or the sheet that I use in Teaneck to take notes on about the children, what they are doing, [and what] their parents do for communication purposes. What kind of things [the students] liked to do and where do they see going from here. You know all kinds of stuff like that and what courses they are taking, although I had that information. And all of these things I write down so that [we’ll] know how to work with each other’s students, as they’re going through. Well then [the other guidance counselors] finally figured out what I was doing. And I don’t think the other two counselors ever got into that. But that’s what I did with the students who were assigned to me.

Back in Teaneck, we had to help our students. Many of them knew the [colleges and universities], but that's all they knew. They didn't have all of the other information, so you had to help them. You have to have materials from those schools. Show them what's going on at the school. And so, with me I also brought those big books, like Barrow's Book of Schools that had the addresses and you could write for information and an application. And in Teaneck, you had to write a letter of recommendation for every student that was assigned to you, whether that student was [going to college or not] at the end of their senior year. Whatever it is [the student was doing], there's supposed to be a letter of recommendation of your perception of that student. And so, even if [their counselor] is not there [and] someone asks for that student's record, that information is in there along with that's student's academic record and everything else. So, I started doing that with the students. Because they did not have a form that shows all the grades or anything like that. The record keeping was horrible. And I brought from Teaneck the big card that you have that showed – let's see, you had nine, ten, eleven, twelfth grade in those cards. And the classes you took each year and the grade you made. The final grade report and on top of it had your name, school, and birthdate. [And] your GPA because that has to be filled out in your junior and senior year. Your GPA. They didn't have any [cards] like that, but I brought a copy of that from my other school. And I made copies for my own office. For my children.

As his daughter, I know for a fact that his using the term, “my children” to describe his students means that my father had invested in them personally and wanted the best outcome for their future.

And I used that as a guide to help me. You know students need four years of English. Student needs at least three years of math. So, you can automatically look down and see if your student has all that he or she needs at the end of the time. I do not know how they kept records. I do not know how they did what they were supposed to do. And so, one day, Smart Alec me, decided I’m going to show these folks something. These kids need grade point averages. I’m going to fix this stuff up.

My father met with the school principal to impress upon him the importance of keeping grade point averages for the students. At that time, the senior class had not been ranked. The “top” students had name recognition among Hilton Head’s elite citizens and the classes had been ranked according to those assumptions, rather than actual academic performance. This was not something that my father encountered growing up on Hilton Head or throughout his career educating students in the Northeast. My father knew the proper points assigned to course work. It was not only the grade made in the class, but the weight of the class itself. For an A in a regular math class will earn a student three points. However, an A in an honor’s class will earn that student four points. Guidance counselors from other school districts knew this as well.

Now students are beginning to come [to Hilton Head] from other places. They're coming with their records. Set up the same way I was doing it in Teaneck. But they're coming. Transferring to Hilton Head. Parents are moving to Hilton Head from other places. [I] look at [the new student's] record. They have designated honors [classes] and so forth.

The results of ranking students on academic merit were not met favorably with the principal. The document showed that a transfer student had the number one ranking and not the students whose name recognition afforded them position as being in the top percent. Now the parents were beginning to understand that students who were moving to the area were privy to information on becoming the top students and they were determined to have that same access. My father was born on Hilton Head, yes, but professionally groomed in a more progressive school system knew how the overall education structure worked.

Because of the things that I was doing, the parents were complaining that their kids were not getting the same things that some of the other kids were [getting]. Understand now that their eyes are beginning to open. Because of some of those kids who I had and some of the seniors who had the other two counselors... The parents knew each other, and they wondered how come [my] kids knew things and were doing things that [their] kids were not.

In addition to student academics, my father also worked in behavior intervention, by counseling the student before final disciplinary action was determined.

I learned that in Teaneck. And I brought that back over here to the high school. And so, I would work with the principal and assistant principal when it came up. But the other [guidance counselors] did not. There were a lot of things that I was doing that they were not doing and now when that principal called, because the parents were complaining about what their kids were not getting, his focus was on [the other counselors]. Well after [our] meeting, [the other counselors] got really angry with me.

The gentrification of Hilton Head brought about different types of parents and different politics that affected the school climate.

Administering. In 1983, Hilton Head High school was built on the island. The principal and most of the administrative staff transferred there.

And then Hilton Head High School was built. But at that time, [McCracken Middle School] was looking for a principal at that time. And I did not apply for the position because [my brother] did. He applied for the position of principal at [McCracken] middle school. But he didn't get it.

I would have been going to the high school as a guidance counselor. [McCracken Middle School] needed an assistant principal. And I applied for an assistant principal position and got it. Which took me out of the guidance thing. Now I didn't want to get out of the field of education, but I wanted to move to another level.

My father's first year as an assistant principal was also my first year I attended McCracken Middle School as a seventh grader. While this did not help my nonexistent social standing with the students or my teachers, as an adult I am realizing that it was fortunate that he did remain at McCracken. He was in a position to see firsthand the difficulties that I was facing transitioning into this new culture. His overwhelming presence was supportive. Students would boldly say they didn't care if I was "Grant daughter," they would behave however they wanted towards me. Somehow, my father always knew when I was being confronted and his sudden appearance would make them not only retreat but send a message to them that I wasn't alone. I also now know that I wasn't trying to adjust alone. My father was born and raised the island, but being back in Hilton Head meant learning a different culture for him as well.

But the buses. Had to deal with the buses. Pain in the neck, oh my goodness. Oh my. Bad situation. Hard to explain. Because see when we were in Teaneck, although I didn't have anything to do with students' transportation, there was never a transportation problem. Because students got to school. Most students walked to school, regardless of where they lived. Or their parents brought them. Or they drove, and not many

students had cars. Just a few students had cars. So, there was really no problem. That too was a whole lot different.

So, a new, better [middle] school came to Hilton Head and [everyone] moved into that school. Bluffton and Hilton Head. See when the [middle] school came to [Hilton Head], it was called, McCracken Middle School. And the people in Bluffton didn't like it because the middle school [in Bluffton] was named McCracken all along. And they didn't like the fact that the name was [already] taken. But anyway, there was talk about building a middle school in Bluffton, which eventually took place. And that name "McCracken" went back to that middle school in Bluffton. And this [middle school in Hilton Head] became Hilton Head Middle School.

And then of course, I stayed there until I retired. But all during this time, I have been applying for principal positions, but never got them. And then I said "the heck with it. I only have a few more years, so I am going to stay where I am and do what I gotta do."

My father seemed to hit the "glass ceiling" in his education career. Black men were just not hired as principals in Hilton Head Schools. There is yet for one to hold that position. The fact that my mother, a Black woman, was a principal of Hilton Head Primary School was an amazing feat in itself. There has not been one since she has retired. Both parents have proved that it is not the title that makes a person a great educator, but it is what they achieved when holding any position, regardless of if it is the highest position. Therefore, while as a Black man

my father would not ever be a principal, he did the work of a principal regardless of his position. As a guidance counselor and as an assistant principal, my father raised expectations of what it means to hold those titles.

And the middle school had never been under SACS review before. The high school was, but the middle school was not. Fortunately, I knew about school evaluation because Teaneck High School went through one when I was there. See, people down here don't realize the experience you get in other places. But McCracken Middle School where I was, was going to be [under SACS review].

SACS or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, is an accountability process that addresses performance of the schools and professional development for teachers to ensure high quality education for all students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; <http://www.sacs.org>). Successful outcomes are necessary in order to grant or maintain accreditation to the educational institution. Knowing that those in charge of school accreditation review are vulnerable if certain standards are not met, the principal wanted my father to oversee coordinating the materials for SACS. The principal did not know that my father had previous experience with school accreditation review in New Jersey. It remains to be seen if this was solely the decision of the principal, or if other officials were involved in selecting my father to supervise the SACS review. Thinking back on my own experience teaching at a high school under SACS review, it was the who principal was responsible for its coordination.

My father carefully followed the SACS guidelines that require the committee that consists of chair and co-chair, which were positions he was not allowed to hold. Two teachers

held that position and he still praises their organization and efficiency. My father needed to include all of the heads of math, science, English, and social studies. My father's positive relationship with the teachers that had transferred from the high school was instrumental as they had already gone through the SACS process and were now teachers at his school.

One of the first things you have to do is find the deficiency that exists in your school. From every department. Every department. Find every deficiency that exists in your department. Every deficiency that exists in your school from the parking lot all the way to the inside. [We] did all of that. We met once a week. Meeting would go way up into the evening.

You talk about [the deficiency and] what we need to do to fix them. And we had all kinds of things. Keep the word, "identify," because I'm going to come back to that. Don't come up with what it's going to cost because that's got nothing to do with you. Don't think about personnel [you] need to make it happen. Don't think about it because that's not what's yours. That's not your decision. You know, think about everything. Teachers, other personnel, materials, you know, all. Why. Whatever it is. And you document all of those things and put it down. All of the things you did. I'm talking about a report so complete, you wouldn't believe it. Now, let me get back to the word, ["Identify"]. Identify? Because if you don't identify them and the [SACS] committee does, they are going to hold you [responsible] – that's so many points against you, it's not even funny, because you failed to identify.

And when the people came, they took a group of people, [and] they went and called the teachers. And you had to make arrangements because teachers were called out of classrooms. You had to make sure you were ready and had someone to cover [their] classroom. Because if you did not do that, it was marked against you because [it looked like] you don't know how to run your school. See, every little thing, you had to think about before you got there. And they talked to teachers and [the SACS evaluators] were positive about everything they got [from us]. [We were] positive even about the negative things that they got, because it was all out there and it was not afraid to be mentioned. [The report talked] about to fix it.

[We] came out with flying colors. When we had the final meeting, the auditorium was full of people, parents, school improvement council members, members of the PTA. And when [SACS] made their report, it was outstanding.

Hilton Head Middle School was not expected to pass the SACS evaluation because of the perception that the school was low performing. Again, my father's experience and ability had been underestimated. Being the assistant principal of Hilton Head Middle School became a game of challenges set in place by seen and unseen forces, and how my father would respond to these challenges.

See, if you can do it, I can do it better, if I chose to do so. But it was one of the greatest reports that ever came up. And talk about basking in the glory, I did it to them again!

The principal of Hilton Head Middle School was sent to the new middle school in Bluffton. Once again, Hilton Head Middle School needed a principal. My father applied for the position, however it went to one of his teachers who lacked administrative experience. My father taught me a lot about character. One of the largest testaments to that is the fact that he continued to exceed the job expectations of assistant principal in spite of being passed over for the principal position.

I can't let people determine my end. I have to do that myself. Ok, you think I'm going to quit because of that, you got another thing coming. When I get ready to quit, I'll let you know.

My father did not apply for the principal position after the teacher left. Although he did not apply for the principal of the high school after the present one retired, they were interested in him. Unfortunately, the "promotion" they offered to him was to be the new principal, but to be the dean of students. My father refused.

[As Dean of Students] you have nothing except discipline. You are not in charge of any curriculum, any school [work]. You're in charge of

discipline. And they didn't think I knew what the heck that meant? A Dean of Students? Dean of Students, you've got to be joking!

But I was one of the ones who transformed some of the things assistant principals do because I told them right off the bat when I interviewed, I didn't come to just discipline. I'm a school administrator. I'm a leader. And I said that to all of the principals I worked with. I said [that] I want to be in touch with the learning of students. Of everything. I had supervisory positions over subject areas. And areas that I supervised [were] mathematics, science, foreign language, and ESL program. Because before that, assistant principals didn't do those things. [But] at my middle school, it was my responsibility.

My father refused to be the dean of students, but those in charge worked to ensure that my father would not have as much involvement with school curriculum as he had in the past. There was a program in place at the elementary school where the students were divided into three programs, one of which my mother was the head. In 2004, the concept was extended to the middle school. The three programs of study were language and literature, math and science, and global studies. Very few minorities were a part of language and literature. Students with influential parents, or what my father calls, "the well-heeled," were members of math and science. My father was head of the later, global studies, which encompassed mostly Black and Latinx students. Again, my father extended beyond what was expected. Global studies is a multi-disciplined program, in that the curriculum incorporated math, science, language, and literature. The program also established a model United Nations where the students became

very involved. My father insisted that the educator who he selected to implement the curriculum for the program report to the student improvement council and the parents on the progress of the program. Because of the success of the global studies program, the principal wanted to extend membership to the Model United Nations to other students. My father had to respectfully decline the request.

It would remove some of the students from the global studies program who should be there. This is a global studies program and it's not math and science program and it's not a language arts program. It's a program for global studies. Man, folks didn't like that. See, they wanted their cake and eat it too. See, when they heard all of the good things that were going on, even with the reports that were being made, they want their kids to take advantage of the opportunity [in the model UN] that was taking place, but they did not want their kids in the [global studies] program. But our program was full and could not take any more students. And they thought no one was going to show up for that program, which would put me out of doing anything.

The program's popularity ensured that my father would remain in his capacity of assistant principal. Unfortunately, those in charge limited the funding for the program the following year. My father understood their antics and would never let their racism defeat him.

Retirement. When he was ready to leave the school system, he left on his own terms. Although my father wanted to see the incoming sixth graders graduate from eighth grade, he

retired in June of 2004. And true to his character, he cared enough about “his kids” to write a letter to all of the parents explaining his departure. I remember that my father’s retirement party was full of people who had worked with him and had been touched by his influence over the years.

Regardless of the systemic beliefs of the Beaufort Country School System, particularly those political forces from Hilton Head, my father changed the culture of administration. He personified being an educator because being involved in student learning was important to him. However, Black men were supposed to discipline, not educate. Although it was the students who benefited, he was not supposed to be the source of their knowledge, particularly if those students are White and from Hilton Head.

My father attended elementary, middle, and high school under a segregated system, however he did not feel its full impact living in a homogeneous, Black, isolated community. My grandfather, who traveled to other places when driving White members of the hunting club back to their home states, often explained to his children that they were fortunate to live on Hilton Head. He did not gloss over the racial prejudices that impacted Black people in the rest of the country. Because he lived on Hilton Head, my father not impacted by the funding disparities as described by Ladson-Billings (2006). His materials were castoffs, but he didn’t know differently. Except for overcrowded and late transportation provided to Black students on the mainland, he had few White students with which to compare his experiences. Furthermore, unlike his older sister, my father was fortunate that the middle school and high school were built by the time he needed a secondary education. His parents first provided him an education at home. His teachers continued to offer my father a quality formal education where he was able to skip a grade, develop oratory skills provided Negro Farmers of America, and cultivate a strong

work ethic instituted through farming and fishing, resulting in his graduating second in his high school class and successfully obtaining a degree. Bridge or not, my father had the means for high educational attainment. My grandparents expected nothing less.

Discrimination was exposed to him when he attended school in Savannah with the bus driver who drove slowly enough for my father and his classmates to miss their eight o'clock class and Charles Frasier of Sea Pines plantation saw him as a laborer in spite of his college education. While these are expected behaviors of the South, there was some discrimination in the North in terms of the ability for Black professions to access jobs related to their caliber of education. They were not provided with opportunities based on merit alone. However, my father was able to navigate through the educational politics with the aid people of other nationalities with whom he was able to connect. In addition, with the community calling for changes made in the hiring practices of Teaneck High School, my father was provided with the opportunity to showcase his professional ability and guide the students.

In Beaufort County, my father was offered administrative positions first as a guidance counselor, with the belief by those who hired him that he would fall in line with the other counselors and remain in his office not engaging with the students with which he was assigned. Secondly, he was provided with an opportunity in administration as an assistant principal, where he was expected to discipline students. When my father did not remain within the boundaries established for him by this system of education, several attempts were made to limit him. 1) Placing him a position to defend his school's accreditation by being charged with coordinating the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) evaluation. 2) Controlling the type of students he was allowed to educate, which were mostly students of color who were signed up for the Global Studies program. 3) Attempting to move my father to the high school under a new

title as “Dean of Students.” The title provided the perception of his promotion but removed his ability to educate his students with his established curriculum, therefore limiting him disciplining the students. Finally, 4) Never providing him with the principal position where he could be in the position shape the direction of the school. However, those in the position of power did not want to admit the reality that the school was actually a reflection of my father’s professionalism and his dedication to the students.

Racism was increased when my father returned to Hilton Head under an integrated system due to the increasing White population; their political values and their expectations of Black people permeated the climate. Because my father had to leave the South to pursue opportunities that aligned with his formal education, he was exposed to the way other school systems outside of Beaufort County operated. Therefore, my father lead in the change of the hegemonic culture within the McCracken High School, by providing academic availability to all of his students, the knowledge of tabulating quantifiable student achievement, and personal investment in the futures of the students he encountered.

Chapter 4

The Gentrification of Hilton Head

Development

When we lived in New Jersey, my father took us back to the “The Old Country,” which is what he calls Hilton Head twice a year. We traveled once during the Christmas season and again in the summer. The trip from New Jersey to Hilton Head Island took sixteen hours by car. My father would wake us up at “fore day in da’ mornin’,” which means, “before dawn,” pile into the Buick Skylark coupe that was loaded with suitcases, toys, and snacks and headed south on Interstate 95. Traveling to Hilton Head was how I learned all of my states on the east coast because my mother would point out each time we crossed the border – Delaware, Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina. We would usually stop in North Carolina and stay overnight, preferably, where there was a pool if we were traveling in the summer. I was excited when we finally reached South Carolina and we would stop for a few hours at a tourist attraction called “South of the Border.” We would eat there and visit the souvenir shop crowded with travelers headed to other places, where I would look for a nameplate, never finding one for my nickname that was spelled with an “i” rather than a “y.” I definitely could not find one for my given name (I still can’t), but it was still fun to look. There would be a lot of cars on the road as we continued to make our way south. I could not understand why it took so long to get to Hilton Head. However, we were traveling to the bottom of the state, which took approximately three hours to arrive at the exit, as the speed limit during that time was 55 miles per hour. When we finally crossed the Coosawatchee River and reached exit 28, it would not say, “Hilton Head” but “Coosawatchee,” with the arrow pointing to the right. We turned left, which was east towards the Atlantic Ocean. Suddenly the road noises

from the crowded interstate would cease. I always called this stretch of road, “going through the trees,” because the pines, oaks dripping with Spanish moss, palmettos, and underbrush were so thick that it blocked out much of the sunlight when traveling by day. By night, everything was so pitch black that the only light that could be seen was from the headlights of our car or the occasional car traveling in the opposite direction. As we traveled those last 35 miles on that two-lane highway, my eyes would not stray from looking out of the window. Every once in a while, there would be a break in the tree line for a brief moment, and the moon (at night) would reflect on the water in the marsh, then just as suddenly, we would plunge back into darkness once more. This was the pattern until we finally reached a wide body of water, when my heart would quicken because we were there and I would be moments away from seeing my grandparents. I would see the islands in the distance, where we would cross the first bridge to Pinkney Island, then finally the second, the drawbridge to Hilton Head.

The trip that I take now as an adult with my family is much different. The left off of Exit 28 looks almost untouched. However, there is increasing traffic along with Hilton Head’s popularity. The further east we travel, the trees grow thinner. There are very few places where my children can see the dark and light trick with the moonlight. More homes, businesses, and shopping centers can be seen among the trees. Increased traffic lights used to manage the now six-lane highway are necessary to handle traffic volume. A fly over connecting the main artery, Highway 278, to Buckingham Island on the mainland addresses the issue of rush hour gridlock to and from Hilton Head however, the steel concrete ruins the beautiful vista. My children will not know about “going through the trees” unless I tell them.

Discovery. Over 60 years of gentrification began in 1949. Four partners from Hinesville, Georgia, who comprised the Hilton Head Company, were involved in a profitable timber-

harvesting project on the island's south end, where the islanders used to let the cattle roam in the winter. These cutters of the ubiquitous tall pines were seen as the "visionaries" who would be instrumental in the development of Hilton Head Island (Holmgren, 1959; Harvey, 1998). The way of life for Native Islanders would change significantly in how they lived, worked, and the places they would be able to access.

Connecting to the Mainland. The first bridge, called the James F. Byrnes Bridge that connected Hilton Head with the mainland opened on May 20, 1956. This \$1.5 million project was a drawbridge that would swing open, allowing the boats on Skull Creek to pass (Holmgren, 1959; Harvey, 1998). The bridge, built in two spans, linked the mainland with Pinkney Island, a present-day wildlife preserve, and Pinkney Island with Hilton Head Island (Holmgren, 1959). Passengers crossing the bridge were assessed for \$2.50 toll, which was removed in 1959 (Harvey, 1998).

Then of course after I left here and came back, that's when I truly saw the changes that were taking place. Because although I left here, every long holiday I came [back to Hilton Head]. I would be coming back for a few days. Just could not believe – but that's when I saw a whole lot of the other things going on. More people were beginning to come to Hilton Head. All kinds. Because it was easier to do so. At first, there was a toll going across the bridge. And I guess after the bridge was paid off, the toll was taken off.

And then it was a drawbridge. And so, at that time, many people were coming to Hilton Head in their boats. And so, you had to think about

when the boats were going to be coming through. And then they had a lot of shrimp boats coming out of Hilton Head during that time. A lot more than now. To go shrimping. And the bridge opens. And you're trying to get somewhere, the cars would be lined up waiting and waiting and waiting. And you try to get there before because there are certain times when you know it's going to happen.



Figure 3: The first bridge to Hilton Head was a drawbridge (Harvey, 1998)

In 1982, the year after we moved to Hilton Head, a higher, stationary bridge replaced the drawbridge (Harvey, 1998). Building first the drawbridge, followed by the stationary bridge, brought changes to Hilton Head in the form of increased population, a paved Highway 278 (also known as William Hilton Parkway constructed in 1967), and the building of year-around homes. Continued population increases placed stressed on the few main arteries in Hilton Head because of the limited access to areas on the island as a result of the gated subdivisions, also known as

“plantations.” To alleviate the stress, the construction of the cross-island expressway in 1998 served to connect the north and south end of the islands (Harvey, 1998).

Plantations Redux. In the same year the first bridge opened in 1956, developer Charles Fraser, son of one of the founders of the Hilton Head Company, established the first planned community called, Sea Pines Plantation, which is known for Harbor Town, the site of the iconic red and white striped lighthouse. This ‘plantation’ or gated development where the cattle once roamed and where Native Islanders are buried, consisted of homes, beach access, hotels, golf courses, restaurants, and other amenities (Harvey, 1998; Blockson, 1987). Other gated communities followed. In 1962, Port Royal Plantation, developed by Fred Hack, was built at the “heel” in the Grasslawn (Native Islanders call it “Grassland”) section of Hilton Head. This planned community built in 1962 holds several historic sites behind its gates, the Confederate Fort Walker (c. 1861), the remains of Union Fort Sherman (c. 1962), and a marker for the steam cannon (c. 1901) used in the Spanish American War, all of which capture the interest of tourists (Holmgren, 1959; Harvey, 1998). In addition to homes for newcomers to the island, Port Royal Plantation also developed golf courses, hotels, and villas. The 1967 Palmetto Dunes Corporation, established next to the Chaplin community, followed suit with gated access and amenities for their residents. Other gated “plantations” followed including Shipyard in 1970 and South Forest Beach in 1971 (Harvey, 1998).

Hilton Head Island is 69.15 square miles in size (12 miles long and 3 miles wide). Securing large acres behind the 11 gated “plantations” (see Table 1) restrict public access, therefore confining the general population to fewer square miles to live, work, and traverse outside of the gates. 3

Table 1: List of Hilton Head Island Plantations

Hilton Head Plantation	4,000 + acres
Indigo Run Plantation	1,400 acres
Long Cove Club	630 acres
Palmetto Dunes and Shelter Cove	2,000 acres
Palmetto Hall Plantation	750 acres
Port Royal Plantation	1,000 acres
Sea Pines Plantation	5,200 acres
Shipyards Plantation	800 acres
Spanish Wells Plantation	350 acres
Wexford Plantation	37 acres

<http://www.hiltonheadluxuryproperties.com/hilton-head-bluffton-plantations.php>

Additional smaller communities with gates have been established as well, creating even fewer open areas. These changes to the island are difficult for people who were used to freely fishing, hunting, farming, and living.

Population Growth. When my father brought us to Hilton Head in the early 1980s, the island was undergoing a significant population increase and was incorporated as a town in 1983 (*Town of Hilton Head Comprehensive Plan*, 2017).

Table 2: Population Growth for Hilton Head

Year	Population	Growth	Growth Rate
1960	300	-	-
1980	11,344	11,044	3681.33%
1990	23,694	12,350	108.87%
2000	33,862	10,168	42.91%
2010	37,099	3,237	9.56%
2011	37,534	435	1.17%
2012	38,311	777	2.07%
2013	39,090	779	2.03%
2014	39,867	777	1.99%
2015	40,506	639	1.60%
2016	40,500	-6	-0.01%

Worldpopulationreview.com

According to Table 2, there has been a steady increase in the population of full-time residents, with another significant jump in the 1990s.

Table 3 shows that White full-time residents became more prominent in the 1980s as well, with the largest increase occurring between 1975 to 1985 at 7.9%. In fact, the number of White full time residents greatly exceed the number of Black people who live on Hilton Head, which has shown a decline from 1975 to 2010 (*Town of Hilton Head Comprehensive Plan*, 2017).

Table 3: Population Increase by Race/Ethnicity

Race	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2010	Change 1975 - 1985	Change 1985 - 1995	Change 1995- 2010
White	9,659	15,488	21,208	25,547	28,893	30,751			
Percent	85.0%	87.9%	89.5%	88.7%	85.3%	82.9%	7.9%	0.8%	-5.8%
Black	1,647	2,000	2,259	2,647	2,797	2,766			
Percent	14.5%	11.3%	9.5%	9.2%	8.3%	7.5%	-8.4%	-2.1%	-1.7%
Other	38	134	227	611	2,172	3,582			
Percent	0.5%	0.8%	1.0%	2.1%	6.4%	9.6%	0.5%	1.3%	7.5%
*Hispanic Percent	1.0%	1.3%	1.4%	4.2%	11.5%	15.8%	--	2.9%	11.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 U.S. Census
U.S. Census Bureau - Special Census for Hilton Head Island: 1975, 1985, 1995.
Town of Hilton Head Comprehensive Plan
Note: *Not a race by U.S. Census Bureau definitions.

Economy. Table 4 shows the employment numbers for Hilton Head industries ranging from the years 2010 to 2016

Although there were some fluctuations in the numbers, retail (10.4%); professional, scientific management, and administrative services and waste management services (13.5%); arts, entertainment and recreation accommodation and food service (21.3%), and education services, healthcare, and social assistance (21.3%) were the leading industries in Hilton Head in 2016. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining have a low percentage of 0.6 in 2016. This supports the conclusion regarding the shift in employment numbers for island residents from agricultural to service industries. Additionally the rise in employment for arts, entertainment, and recreation is due to the perpetuation of the resort lifestyle.

Table 4: Employment Numbers for Hilton Head Industries 2010 to 2016

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	16,236	16,740	16,777	17,088	17,016	17, 290	17,383
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	50 (0.3%)	123 (0.7%)	137 (0.8%)	156 (0.9%)	253 (1.5)	218 (1.3%)	111 (0.6)
Construction	1,647 (10.1%)	1,679 (10.0)	1,887 (11.2%)	1,953 (11.4%)	1,878 (11.0%)	835 (10.6%)	1,793 (10.3%)
Manufacturing	489 (3.0%)	657 (3.9%)	744 (4.4%)	631 (3.7%)	709 (4.2%)	688 (4.0%)	705 (4.1%)
Wholesale Trade	245 (1.5%)	321 (1.9%)	312 (1.9%)	287 (1.7%)	245 (1.4%)	248 (1.4%)	262 (1.5%)
Retail Trade	2,072 (8.5%)	2,086 (12.5%)	2,235 (13.3%)	2,209 (12.9%)	2,059 (12.1%)	1,923 (11.1%)	1,800 (10.4%)
Transportation and Warehouse Utility	450 (2.8%)	415 (2.5%)	410 (2.4%)	446 (2.6%)	446 (2.6%)	513 (3.0%)	542 (3.1%)
Information	231 (1.4%)	215 (1.3%)	251 (1.5%)	257 (1.5%)	384 (2.3%)	489 (2.8%)	503 (2.9%)
Finance and Insurance/Real-Estate Rental and Leasing	1,387 (17.5%)	1,522 (9.1%)	1,365 (9.3%)	1,529 (8.9%)	1,553 (9.1%)	1,540 (8.9%)	1,402 (8.1%)
Professional, scientific and management, and administrative services and waste management	2,839 (17.5%)	2,798 (16.7%)	2,459 (14.7%)	2,659 (15.6%)	2,420 (14.2%)	2,328 (13.5%)	2,342 (13.5%)
Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance	2,292 (14.1%)	2,195 (13.1%)	2,064 (12.3%)	2,264 (13.2%)	2,207 (13.0%)	2,466 (14.3%)	2,846 (16.4%)
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, accommodation and food service	3,366 (20.7%)	3,467 (20.7%)	3,446 (20.5%)	3,416 (20.0%)	3,687 (21.7%)	3,768 (21.8%)	3,703 (21.3%)
Other services (Except public administration)	818 (5.0%)	838 (5.0%)	953 (5.7%)	1,003 (5.9%)	891 (5.2%)	999 (5.8%)	1,055 (6.1%)
Public Administration	350 (2.2%)	424 (2.5%)	314 (1.9%)	278 (1.6%)	284 (1.7%)	275 (1.6%)	319 (1.8%)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau

Incorporation of Hilton Head. Introduced in the 1900s, zoning laws, or how land is classified, were purposed to improve blighted, or neglected areas by regulating building, placement, height, and use. However, the southern states began to use zoning as a means of racial segregation. As Black people fled the south and populated the inner cities, zoning served to contain them to areas no longer desired by Whites (Silver, 1997; Berry, 2001; Rothwell & Massey, 2009).

Hilton Head was incorporated in 1983. The town makes decisions concerning the continuing development. This includes preserving open space, building façade appearance, signage, and zoning. The Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance ensures that the character is preserved with strict regulations concerning signage, building height, and conservation of natural landscape.

Table 5: Hilton Head Zoning Classification

Residential Districts	
RS – 3 ¹⁵	Single family
RS- 5	Single family
RS – 6	Single family
RM - 4 ¹⁶	Low to moderate density
RM – 8	Moderate density
RM – 12	Moderate to high density
Mixed Use and Business Districts	
NC	Neighborhood Commercial
MS	Main Street
SPC	Sea Pines Commercial
LC	Light Commercial
CC	Community Commercial
MED	Medical
IL	Light Industrial
PD – 1	Planned Development
MF	Marshfront Mixed Use
MV	Mitchelville
WMU	Water-oriented Mixed Use
RD	Resort Development
CR	Coligny Resort
Conservation and Recreation	
CON	Conservation
PR	Parks and Recreation

Town of Hilton Head Official Zoning Districts 2017

While there are some zoning classification on Hilton Head (See Table 4), which are common with other municipalities, some neighborhoods such as Sea Pines and Stoney are specific to Hilton Head in order to preserve the characteristics of the island's landscape. Mitchelville, which is the historic site of the first freedmen community, is currently in the process of being recreated and has its own zoning as well. Conservation and recreation districts

¹⁵ The number indicates the number of allowable units per net acre.

¹⁶ Less than three acres allows four units per net acre, however for properties over three acres, but less than six acres allows for six units per acre. If the property is more than six acres, eight units are allowed per acre.

were created to preserve Hilton Head's natural beauty, enabling islanders to enjoy what remains of Hilton Head's natural beauty.

Impact to Native Islanders.

You know after you live in a different place for a long period of time... the only thing that bothered me was the limited space. And I didn't realize when I came back [to Hilton Head] that all of these planned communities had gates to them. And I think that bothered me a whole lot because when I was here, we could go anyplace. It didn't matter where people's homes were. We could go anyplace we wanted to. I couldn't believe how many gates were up when I came [back]. And I think that bothered me quite a bit because I used to like to go in the woods. But I couldn't do that. [Not] anymore. That's one of the things. Then you look around your neighborhood and your neighborhood where you were born is not the same anymore. As a matter of fact, [what] is not the same any more are too many places. I think when I came back, the only place that still resembled some of the old neighborhood [were] places like Spanish Wells before they built the stuff down there. Squire Pope and Baygall areas [were still the same when I first came back]. Those were the [places] that maintained some of the things that you remember. Not that you wanted to go back to it, but they remind you of what it used to be like.

Now when I lived in New York City, I did not have a car. But everything is bustling all around you. And in New York City, I didn't need a car because the transportation was so readily available. And

parking is so scarce, why would you want a car when you could go anyplace and spend [only] a dime. At that time, it cost a dime to ride the subway. I understand now it's about five dollars. Yeah, but you [spent] a dime to ride the subway. That's one of the reasons why I enjoyed New York so much. When I lived in the city I did not live that far from Morningside Park. I didn't live that far from City College. And there was a park that I used to walk through – that you dare not do now – I used to walk through Central Park. You don't [walk] in certain areas in Central Park now. But I used to walk up the hill to go to City College. Many times [I would walk through] because they would have concerts. And I would just go and sit and listen, you know because they were free. I was used to the activity. Because of the experience I had when I left here [because of] the traffic. Imagine being in Teaneck and then having to take Route 4 to the George Washington Bridge to go to work every morning. And what the traffic is like going into New York City. Fortunately, once I got across the George Washington Bridge, I went north rather than south because south was headed toward New York City where traffic continues to be congested. I'm talking about on the West Side Highway. When you turn to go north, from the Henry Hudson, which is part of the same extension [of the West Side Highway], then the traffic eased up... But it's the same thing being in Boston. Being in Providence, it's the same thing. So, you still had to deal with all of those things. Building around you. Changes around you. Coming back [to Hilton Head], the changes

themselves did not bother me in terms of people and traffic and so forth - as much as the things that I could not do that I used to do, when I was here [and] then the longer I was here, the worst things got in terms of access to places because when I first came back here, I could go down to Singleton Beach to go fishing without any bother at all, because it was open but now they have built houses all around and that did not happen initially. So, you know those kind of things took getting used to. Traffic, congestion, people, oh my goodness. I've been around it all my life. When I was in South America, it was the same thing. You know the street [was] loaded down with people. And you think people drive badly or crazy here. You try driving in the streets of, for example, Chimbote and see what it was like. Or trying to go from Chimbote to Lima, which is about five, six hours drive and now the people drive on the highway. You know passing around curves [where you have the mountains] on one side and the Pacific Ocean down, way down there. So, I didn't think [changes on Hilton Head] affected me as much as it could have. It was just the things that I was used to in the manner that I used to do them changed. And I didn't like that to well. I still don't like that. But I got used to it. I'm adaptable. I know I adapt to things very easily. When for example, when I went to South America, one of the things, [the trainers would call it] "culture shock" [happens] to a lot of people. And culture shock comes about in my opinion, as people [try] to go to another place and expect to find in that other place the same place they left behind. And I think that's [how]

culture shock comes about. But when I went [to Peru], in spite of the things that I saw, I tried to continue to keep my focus on the fact that I'm not home. That I am in somebody else's country and those folks will tell you in two seconds when you try to tell them well this is how we do things, they will tell you, "Pero sí estamos." [or] "Here, that's the way we are." So, if you don't get in that mindset, it will drive you crazy. And a lot of [the] Peace Corp Volunteers, many of them, got very homesick. And they could not handle it., but the thing about it, they could not go home. Because once you got there, you had to stay there. It would have to be something really out of figure for you to go home, so you had to live with it. Some people went to the Peace Corp and because of [being homesick] never did anything. They stayed for two years, right in their house, just come out to eat, and go back [to their house]. That's because they didn't know how to put things in their proper place [volunteering] in these undeveloped countries. You have to change a whole way of living and I think having grown up on Hilton Head, helped me in some of those things because I understood some of the things that were happening. You know there were some things [there] that reminded me of the earlier days of Hilton Head. Like lack of plumbing and the water situation. You know all those kind of things. I had seen some of those things before [such as] the bathroom facilities. So, it's not like I would [have to] try to understand it. I [already] knew it existed. Because I was there before. Not [Peru] but [Hilton Head]. You understand.

I went into the Peace Corp in 1963. The Peace Corp started in [1961]. So, I was in the early part of the Peace Corp. But most of the Peace Corp volunteers were children from wealthy families. Because many times they are the first [in] line for programs like that because they learn about it before everybody else. And so, I was in the Peace Corp with people whose parents are extremely rich [and] out of Princeton University, Out of Yale University, out of the University of California, out of USC, you know all those places, so I knew and the amazing thing [is that] it didn't bother me and I found out that the things that they talked about – we talked about and discussed – they didn't know any more about what was going on than I did and I went to Savannah State College. So, I am really adaptable and that's why I didn't get that hung up. I missed my family, but I tried to make myself busy enough so that I did not. The worst time [was] the last two months. Just before it was time to come home. And I think that was the anticipation of coming back home, when I got back, I wanted to go back [to Peru] (laughs).

My father has made the statement more than once that the arrival of the bridge did not affect him in terms of his ability to achieve. He left the island before the changes. While he sees the benefits to the island in that it eased some of the transportation hardships for Native Islanders, he knew that the purpose of the bridge was to accommodate those relocating to Hilton Head.

And then when I came back [to Hilton Head from college], I stayed here a few months and then I left. But there were a lot of things happening before I left here. I do know that [the bridge] allowed people who were still here to get to and from the island quicker than they used to. And during that time, there were no supermarkets and stuff except for your general stores. And people went to Savannah to buy their groceries or those who were still farming were able to take their stuff and sell without having to send by somebody else. Because sending [goods] with other people was necessary before the bridge because only certain people had transportation to get there. But for people who were still there [on Hilton Head] doing things here, doing things that made it easier for them to do a lot of different things.

But, it did help with the people who remained here [in Hilton Head] in a tremendous way. Because they had – now they had more options of things to do and how to do them. And a lot of Hilton Head had begun to develop before I left here anyway. Like the area on Folly Field, Beach City Road, those first houses were built there. They were some of the first new houses that were built on Hilton Head. And they were called, “holiday homes.” And then further down on Folly Field Road, towards the beach, other people were building the houses on top of each other and you know all big structures. These are people coming from places like Savannah, for example.

It did not do that much in terms of enhancing my situation. Because then I left here. It was shortly after the bridge [was built] and

when I came back [to Hilton Head to live], everything was in place. But I'm sure the people left behind were ecstatic about the fact that they could do the things they wanted to do. In a different manner.

As Hilton Head became more attractive to developers, they worked to acquire property, some of which were owned by Native Islanders. As discussed in Chapter 2, Native Islanders who saw the island as offering few opportunities beyond farming and fishing, sold their property outright for less than its value (Blockson, 1987). From my family's perspective, this was a very shortsighted view. When my father left the island in the 1960s, there were few positions for a Black educator and he had to leave. However, he never lost sight of the value of the property his parents had acquired and toiled. In fact, while still living in New Jersey, he took the advice of his father and purchased property in the Gardiner area with his brother and older sister. He saved that property until he returned in 1981 and built a house in 1982. Those who believed in the value of their property and refused to sell were not as fortunate as my father. They became victim to the insidious practices of developers who took advantage of the fact that property belonging to Native Islanders was likely "heirs' property." As described in Chapter 2, "heirs' property" is when a single parcel has acquired several generations of owners when the original deed holder dies. The original Black landowners had limited access to legal representation, and therefore did not have the means to draft a will establishing a clear title or a way of subdividing the property for multiple heirs. Unfortunately, now, property has passed through over a century's worth of heirs and is almost impossible to subdivide (Blockson, 1987; Jones-Jackson, 1989; Rivers 2007; "A Vanishing History: Gullah Geechee Nation).

Like the experience on other Sea Islands, shareholders who did not live in South Carolina and who had no knowledge that they owned land on Hilton Head, were approached by developers who had conducted a property search. These distant relatives, literally and figuratively, were convinced to sell because they did not have the ties to the area and more importantly, did not understand the value of the land that they owned. When this owner sold their share, it resulted in the sale of the entire property (“A Vanishing History” 2016).

When the Native Islander property was sold, the areas became gentrified, increasing the land values resulting in higher taxes for neighboring properties. Consequently, those who were unable to keep current with their taxes saw their property sold at auction (Blockson, 1987). This is an ironic twist of events as those loyal to the confederacy lost their property in the same manner. This push for acquiring Native Islander property can be interpreted as vindication for White people who did not believe the Black Native Islanders had the right to property in the first place.

It is important that Black landowners in Hilton Head keep apprised of their zoning classifications. Depending on how property is zoned, it can restrict what uses are allowed on the property, impacting its development.

See, only a few of us [Native Islanders] are living in Chaplin [now]. Most of Chaplin has become [zoned] commercial and residential. They changed [Chaplin’s zoning] from agriculture to commercial. And fortunately, [my brother] and I got a hold of the land use map and we protested and it was changed to commercial.

My grandparents' property in Chaplin, originally agriculture land, contains a house and two businesses. If the property remained zoned commercial, the house would have been grandfathered in its current use, however no improvements or expansions would have been able to be made to the façade, or worse been able to be rebuilt if anything were to happen to the existing structure. The property in Chaplin is currently zoned LC or light commercial under the Mixed Use and Business district designation. This means the property can contain not only a house but allows for office space and small businesses, therefore both the house and the businesses could be protected under this classification.

In addition to cultural diffusion and property loss, gentrification caused a decrease in relying on the land and sea to live in favor of supporting the resort lifestyle, with increasingly lower paying service jobs (Jones-Jackson, 1989; Nelson & Nelson, 2010). Native Islanders who lack formal education worked on the "plantations" or "gated communities" as wait staff, cooks, maids, caddies, and maintenance staff. It was necessary for those formally educated and desiring higher paying professional careers to leave Hilton Head. My father's story is an example of this.

Protecting Native Islander Property. Native Islanders became concerned that the island's development was not inclusive of the Native Islanders and the Ward 1¹⁷ Master plan was drafted in 1999. The plan addressed zoning designations compatible with Native Island communal living and future development. Other concerns were limited access to waterways, hunting grounds, beaches, and burial sites that are now in restricted gated communities (*Town of Hilton Head Ward 1 Master Land Use Plan*, 1999). Most of the Ward 1 communities have a septic system and the need for sewer service to handle the increasing capacity associated with

¹⁷ Hilton Head is divided into six wards. Ward 1 describes the identified Native Islander communities as described in Chapter 2.

island growth is also a concern (1999). The progress of inclusive policies for the Native Island community requires further study for future research.

In 2006, Governor Mark Sanford signed a bill that gave Black owners the “right of first refusal” which allows for a shareholder of heirs’ property to have the option of being the first to purchase the property before it is auctioned (Glanton, 2006). While this bill is designed to protect the landowner, purchasing the entire property, particularly in high land value areas such as Hilton Head, is virtually impossible (“A Vanishing History: Gullah Geechee Nation”, 2016).

Gentrification. Gentrification of Hilton Head has resulted in successfully maintaining racial segregation (Wyly & Hammel, 2003). Most White homeowners remain behind the gates, while Native Islanders who have been able to retain their land remain in historic communities. However, I have observed more gated communities not as large as the planned “plantations” encroaching in the Native Islander areas of Gardiner, Chaplin, Baygall, and other neighborhoods, therefore restricting public access on the island.

Although the first gated “plantation” was established in the early 1960s, the island personifies the characteristics of the Third Wave Gentrification of the 1990s in the purposeful, exclusive development of Hilton Head (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Moore, 2009). The Hilton Head Company led the way in establishing the pattern of affluent resort-style living that the gated plantations offered, where the residents have access to shopping, dining, and outdoor recreation separate from the general population. Hilton Head has also experienced the “yuppification” as described by Moore (2009) where residents of higher socio-economic status seek to benefit from the island’s increasing exclusiveness.

Nelson et al. (2010), suggests that gentrifiers of rural areas are an aging population seeking a place for second homes and a leisurely lifestyle, which was a selling point for the exclusive Hilton Head communities. Significant population increases in the 1980s and particularly the 1990s, suggests that Hilton Head was a preferred destination of non-urban living during the Rural Rebound period as discussed in Chapter 1 (Nelson et al. 2010; Nelson & Nelson, 2010). Native Islanders were once a part of an established, well-functioning society that was socially and economically independent. However, one of the characteristics of rural gentrification is the transformation of social, economic, and political nuances. This became evident in the stratification of the island communities, the political pressures establishing the town that supports the resort lifestyle at the expense of Native Island traditions, and the shifts from traditional self-employment and efficacy to their dependence on service jobs (Martin, 1993; Nelson et al. 2010; Nelson & Nelson, 2010).

Affluent families have also made Hilton Head their home in order to take advantage of high performing schools, which is another pull factor to rural living (Smith & Higley, 2011). Parents are able to influence the political climate of the education system as recounted by my father in Chapter 3. Martin (1993) discusses intra-class conflicts where distinct middle-class groups replace each other in rural gentrification. With new groups relocating to Hilton Head, parents were expecting education values comparable to the school systems they left behind. A clear example of this issue of changing expectations is replacing a culture of popular students who are class leaders with those students who are in the upper academic percentile as a result of the proper calculation of grade point averages. My father facilitated this. Had he stayed in Hilton Head upon graduation from college, he might not have been as instrumental in introducing this new and accepted academic culture. Unfortunately, lower income students,

typically Native Island children. may become marginalized because of the parents' lack of influence within the school system (Smith & Higley, 2011).

Those desiring the country lifestyle are attracted to “times gone by” and want to preserve a particular historic era (Nelson et al., 2010). Developer Charles Fraser has been revered in some circles as the pioneer for Hilton Head Island development (Holgrem, 1959; Harvey, 1998). In actuality, he had a romanticized view of returning Hilton Head to a pre-Civil War antebellum period where White people would be the owners of property on plantations where they can live comfortably and engage in leisurely activities (Nelson et al., 2010). Black people would forfeit their property where they have lived and worked, through either outright sale or loss. Instead, they would provide the service and make life comfortable for those who had the means to live and play in the gated exclusive areas. My father witnessed this for himself as he recounted the memory of Fraser offering him, a recent college graduate, the position of carriage driver to potential buyers of property on his plantation, providing them with a view of the "good life" his community offered.

My father is concerned about the future of Chaplin. Although my family is one of the few Native Islanders who were able to retain their property in that community, this property that was acquired by my grandfather is not as large as it once was. In addition to disputes of ownership on some of the acres as described in Chapter 2, the town of Hilton Head has launched its own assault on our family land by securing easements of the property front for the creation of Highway 278 (William Hilton Parkway) in 1965, subsequently widening from single lane to double lanes in the 1980s, and finally expanding to its present five lanes. In the early 1990s, the town also required more right-of-way for a portion of the bicycle lane that connects the entire island. Communities of three-story homes abut the rear of the property. Not only do these

homes have the view of Singleton Beach where my family used to dwell freely, the structures and gate have blocked public access.

Because my family's property in Chaplin is on a main thoroughfare, keeping abreast of any changes to zoning and comprehensive plans is necessary. My father and uncle were able to secure a zoning change that was beneficial to maintain the home and businesses, however that does not mean that the LC under mixed use zoning will remain. Therefore, my father's recollection of the dispute with the town council concerning zoning for the Chaplin property serves as a reminder to the future generations in our family, as well as other Native Islanders, to be involved as much as possible in Hilton Head Island government decisions. The town may have their plans for the future development, but that does not mean that Native Islanders should not secure their own plans to maintain their own position in this ever-changing community.

My father has his own thoughts about the building of the bridge that connects Hilton Head with the mainland.

If people ever thought we were isolated because of the lack of the bridge, they are sadly mistaken. Because my feeling is that the bridge came here specifically to accommodate the people who "discovered" Hilton Head later on. The bridge coming here had nothing to do – [this] is my feeling – very little to do with the people who lived here. I don't want anybody to believe that the bridge was built to accommodate the [Black] folks who lived on Hilton Head 365 days a year on Hilton Head. There's so much about Hilton Head that existed long before the bridge. And that's what we know best. When the bridge came here, it brought other people.

It changed our way of life, our way of doing things. Not necessarily everything. Not necessarily in a bad way, but it brought other things into play. But [Black] people on Hilton Head were self-sufficient. Did whatever they needed to do to make a living. They did what they needed to do to put food on the table. Did whatever they needed to do to make a home life for their children. All of those things. And yes, when you think about it and make comparison, it was hard. [But] it didn't seem that hard when you knew what it is you had to do.

Before there was bridge, my family lived, worked, and even played on Hilton Head Island. After the bridge, they continued to live.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research is displayed from a personal perspective in terms of how committed Black people were to acquiring a formal education. Within strong Black communities such as Chaplin, the students in Hilton Head had access to schooling within their neighborhoods. In studying gentrification, there needs to be an understanding as to the ways sudden shifts in community characteristics can impact schooling. The effects have the potential to benefit White students, while negatively affecting Black students (Smith & Higley, 2011). The reverse is true as well. Strong Black communities are reflected in the successful education of Black students. Educational attainment for Hilton Head students before gentrification of the island was difficult to assess in the higher grades when the students had to travel to Bluffton on the mainland for schooling. My father stated that the number of students in his graduating class was smaller than when he entered high school in the ninth grade. Further research for the decreasing numbers of matriculating students once entering high school during the 1950s is an additional project worth pursuing.

The presence of the community schools and Robinson Junior High School on Hilton Head displayed that there was a call for facilities to accommodate the educational needs of a secluded community. Society is reflected in the classroom (Durkheim, 1977). When Hilton Head succumbed to gentrification, the schools began to take on a different appearance in terms of which students would be successful and who would be the ones to educate them.

Analysis of Research Questions

When my father crossed the bridge to the mainland for his education and to begin his life as an adult, he never forgot what he left behind on the other side. He made sure his family knew what was there as well, and that it was valuable. The purpose of this research is to answer two research questions. First, what educational opportunities did the bridge connecting Hilton Head to the mainland afford the Native Islanders? Secondly, how did the building of the bridge to Hilton Head impact the traditional lifestyles of Hilton Head? This study worked to answer those questions.

Bridge to Education. When I began this journey, I thought I already knew the answer to the question about education. However, I was wrong. I fully expected to find that the building of the bridge to Hilton Head was instrumental in providing additional access to higher education for my father and other Native Islanders. Unarguably, the bridge made traversing to the mainland easier. Based on my father's words throughout this loosely guided interview, my grandparents' determination that all of their ten children would have a formal education, coupled with his own strength and perseverance, the result would be the same: This pathway to the mainland schooling would have been taken by my father regardless of whether it meant traveling across a wide body of water by ferry or bridge.

It is important to revisit the fact that Hilton Head has had several self-sufficient communities where they lived, worked, worshipped, as well as educated an almost entirely Black population prior to the island's development. Until the 1950s, the neighborhood schools in each community provided the Native Island students with an education until the 8th grade. My grandparents went through great lengths to ensure that their oldest child was educated beyond that grade level. They were unable to send my aunt to the Mather Boarding School for Girls,

which meant entrusting her with relatives in Savannah, where she first attended Beach High School, before continuing on to Savannah State College.

Although my grandfather and grandmother only completed 2nd grade and 6th grade respectively, they both held formal education in high regard. In fact, my grandmother was my father's first teacher, which is partly the reason why he did so well in elementary school. Another cause was that my grandparents' attitude towards education filtered to my father who had the ingenuity to listen to the lessons of the older grades, which facilitated in his being able to skip the third grade. Expectations of success stretched beyond my father and his parents. According to discussions with my father, he had teachers who were confident in his abilities and talent to where they took an interest in his achievement. They quickly let him know when he fell short of his capabilities.

My father was also fortunate that he reached his school milestones the same time facilities were made available. For example, Robinson Junior High School was built in time for him to attend from 6th until 8th grade. Additionally, my father was among the first group of students to attend the newly constructed Bluffton school, Michael C. Riley High, in 1954, which he had to access by ferry. By the time my father received his high school diploma in 1957, the bridge had been operational a year. Therefore, it can be concluded that the bridge construction did not determine my father's educational journey.

Although the bridge had limited influence on my father's schooling decisions, it did not necessarily mean that it was not impactful for other Native Islanders. Higher education meant no longer farming as a means to live. Many of the younger generations of Native Islanders did not want to remain farmers. My father described this as very hard work. This also goes back to the discussion in the first chapter concerning the position of DuBois believing in the formal

education of the Black leaders, versus Washington's less than popular view of establishing agriculture and normal schools that emphasized manual labor in order to provide a foothold within society (Washington, 1901; DuBois, 1903). In discounting Washington's philosophy of educating students in the manner of maintaining what is considered to be traditional work roles such as agriculture and manual labor, there was a missed opportunity for those who did not continue their formal education to prosper in spite of the resort-type development occurring on the island. They would then realize that their work on their land had value and they may not have been compelled to sell their property.

Obtaining higher education determined the departure of many Native Islanders, including my father. When he attempted to return to Hilton Head after finishing college, he quickly realized that finding employment to match his skill set would be challenging. My father's degree was not considered when he sought career opportunities in Charles Frasers' empire. The developer was determined that my father should remain in a subservient position. That was certainly the fate of some of the ones who remained as service jobs became more prevalent on the island, stripping them of their independence (Jones-Jackson, 1989; Campbell, 2008).

According to my father's discussions, Black students who obtained degrees in education and ministry were unable to pursue careers in those fields while remaining in Hilton Head. Those positions were not available on the island because they were already filled by those in the community who taught and ministered to them. My father also made the point that those people would not leave their jobs because the younger graduates have a degree and are seeking jobs. For example, my father, after receiving a degree in education from Savannah State College, could not teach on Hilton Head, because Black teachers already held those positions. What became of those teachers after integration would be another interesting focus of study. Black

students who studied businesses had limited opportunities as well, therefore traveling to the North was necessary to realize those career goals.

My father's words were the best way to convey his experiences through a critical race perspective. However, he did not experience discrimination while he was in elementary and secondary school during the 1950s and 1960s. Ironically, he faced racism as an educator in the 1980s, which was *after* the Civil Rights Movement that called for equality and lasted until he retired until the early 2000s. My father's words were emotional for me because of my desire to not see him hurt by these experiences. Although he spoke mostly in an even voice, there were times that the frustration would color his comments as people *attempted* to make him the victim of their ignorance. Furthermore, I was reliving my own experiences as I listened to him, as I have felt some of the same discrimination both as a student and a professional.

Because my father was educated with Black students and teachers throughout his school years on the island that was mostly Black, he did not experience racial discrimination as a student. My grandfather, who traveled to other places to chauffeur members of the Hilton Head Hunting Club back to their states of origin, would note to his children how fortunate they were to grow up on Hilton Head where they were allowed to live their lives away from such hatred.

When my father attended college at Savannah State College, a historically Black institution, he was again educated with and by Black people. The racism he faced was in traveling to school from the west side of Savannah to the Thunderbolt district with a White driver who was determined to make the students late on purpose to their 8 o'clock in the morning class. My father encountered bigotry again when he returned to Hilton Head after finishing college, before leaving for New York City, when Charles Fraser made his attempt to limit the value of his education by offering a job that served his clientele. When my father left the South,

the racism in the North was more covert, in that there was some discrimination when seeking the guidance counselor position for Teaneck High School and he, although qualified, was not called in for an interview. Fortunately, he was able to overcome this setback due the pressure placed on the Bergen County school system by Black parents concerned with the lack of diversity in the high school.

While the bridge construction was not a consideration in determining my father's path to formal schooling, it affected the manner in which island children were educated. When my father returned to Hilton Head, the schools were integrated, beginning with the first Hilton Head Elementary school built in 1974 (Harvey, 1998). Black children, like my father and his classmates, were used to being exclusively provided with quality education, resulting in their ability to obtain high education. As a result of gentrification, Native Islanders suddenly found themselves in competition with students from other areas whose parents had political sway over those in charge of educational standards on the island. Smith and Higley (2011) describe the fact that lower income students are the most likely group to be displaced and marginalized as school performances rise to meet the expectations of gentrifying parents.

It was interesting that my father had fewer racist encounters while growing up in the isolation of Hilton Head, but was able to handle obvious discrimination when he was an educator in Beaufort County. His time in the Northeast provided him with the experience he needed to navigate through the political climate established by parents and facilitated by the schools. Particular instances occurred when middle class parents whose children were established as class leaders based on family prestige were replaced with those who expected accurate grade point averages to reflect student rankings (Phillips, 1993; Smith & Higley, 2011).

The research of Solórzano and Yosso (2001) highlights the intersection of gender and class with race in Critical Race Theory. My father's gender and certainly his race, was a factor other in power used in determining duties he should perform as an assistant principal. As an administrator, he was in charge of math, science, foreign language, and English as a second language curriculum. However, as a Black man, my father was only supposed to be a disciplinarian. When he did not remain within the confines of what others perceived of him, they worked to try to force him into a position that required subordination (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). These occurrences of tempering father's talents became more prevalent when the middle school was moved from the mainland town of Bluffton to Hilton Head. With the new McCracken Middle School built in Bluffton as well, Hilton Head Middle School solely consisted of students living on the island, and therefore mirrored its expectations of exclusivity and prestige. Again, the societal realities of Hilton Head were reflected in the schools.

Restating the examples of diminishing my father's contribution and talent to the changing school system on Hilton Head: First, there was the attempt to remove my father from the assistant principal position at Hilton Head Middle School by placing him in charge of the SACS review and was expected to fail. However, experience with accreditation review he obtained working in other school systems and his positive working relationships with his other committee members were underestimated. Secondly, the school system's administrators repeatedly denying my father the promotion of school principal, in spite of the fact that his every day duties matched the position description. Thirdly, their offering him the position of "dean" provided the false sense of importance, while masking the removal of curriculum and instruction responsibilities. Lastly, assigning my father to head the global studies curriculum, which was perceived as being less prestigious than math and science, of which he was the former head, or language and arts.

My father took on DuBois' (1903) true philosophy, which was to educate himself first, requiring him to leave the island. My father then fulfilled the often forgotten second part of he DuBois (1903) philosophy, which is to return to Hilton Head and educate others. Although he faced the challenge of racial discrimination, he spent twenty-five years in a position that allowed him to effectively influence education.

Bridge to Gentrification. The second research question asked how building the bridge affected the traditional lifestyles of Hilton Head. Before the bridge was built, the land and the water would provide the food. Mr. Charlie Simmons would operate the boat so the islanders could take their goods "to town", as my grandmother would call Savannah, on Saturdays. Neighbors would socialize during special occasions. The cattle would roam free on the south end of the island during the winter months. Building the bridge that connected Hilton Head to the mainland fostered the development of Sea Pines Plantation, followed by other resort-style communities. (Holgrem, 1959; Harvey, 1998; Blockson, 1988). Subsequently, the lifestyles of Native Islanders were impacted.

Gentrification changed customs and traditions. My father does not call the culture on Hilton Head, "Gullah." He calls it "living." Working on the land to farm, casting the net in the water for fish, church worship, inflections in speech patterns, schooling, playing with handmade toys, watching television at Driessen's store with his friends, and going to the beach was his life. The farms are gone now. What remains behind that closely resembles that life from long ago is my grandmother's garden where my father and his grandchildren plant vegetables and fruit. Permits are needed now to hunt and fish. They are even needed to operate a small already established business. There are very few places on the island for the public to access the beach. Most of my father's friends from Chaplin are no longer there; they went the way of Driessen's

store. There is no more land for the cattle to roam. The timber harvesting on the south end by Fraser and the Hilton Head Company fostered an idea to build an exclusive community where residents could play as well as live. In order to build similar communities, more land was needed and would be acquired.

Ladson Billings and Tate (1995) use Critical Race Theory to argue the social inequities in property rights. Chapter 2 described the difficult methods that enabled Black people to become landowners. In the cases of Preemption and Field Order 15 for example, the formerly enslaved received less property as a whole than originally planned due to display of power by White legislators who sought to restrict Black landownership. Those who were able to acquire land, had difficulty retaining their property for future heirs due to the fact that Black people do not have the same access to legal representation. Black landowners lost their properties through outright sale, as victims of loss through heirs' property, and higher property taxes, and zoning laws that restricted the uses for property.

Hilton Head was a strong community that consisted of Black landowners. When the island became gentrified, developers in particular saw the value in their property and approached them to sell. Rather than learning to live and adjust to rapidly changing society, some Native Islanders perceived the money offered to them for their property by developers as an opportunity for profit. They also did not believe they could retain the self-sufficient lifestyle to which they were accustomed with the changes, which was another reason they sold their property. Unfortunately for Black people, once they sold their property, it is almost impossible to buy it back. They have lost their home.

My grandfather had always advocated for landownership, which is the reason he acquired the Chaplin property at first opportunity. He made certain that his children took the

opportunity to purchase property on the island while the land values were still affordable. He always believed that although some of his children sought opportunities for their lives elsewhere, they would return to Hilton Head. Therefore, they would need a place for a home. My father and his siblings live outside of the “plantations.” This is not something that can be easily achieved presently due to the high cost of land on the island. If other islanders had thought similarly in retaining what they had purchased or attempting to acquire additional acres prior to the land grab by developers, perhaps the Native Island population on Hilton Head would be more significant. They also did not consider the fact that with the changing population, career opportunities that were not present before would become available.

Unfortunately, heirs’ property was another downfall to land ownership on Hilton Head and other sea island of South Carolina and Georgia. As property owners die without a will that clearly establishes the new deed holders, the number of families owning shares to a single parcel will grow, making subdividing virtually impossible. Furthermore, the property becomes vulnerable to being lost when a family member sells his or her interest (Blockson, 1987; Jones-Jackson, 1989; Rivers, 2007). Although Governor Mark Sanford of South Carolina passed the 2006 legislation that allows a co-owner of disputed property to have the first opportunity to purchase the property, the rising cost of land has rendered those protections useless (Glanton, 2006; “A Vanishing History: Gullah Geechee Nation”, 2016).

Although my grandfather partnered with his brother in purchasing the Chaplin property and there has been a dispute concerning the ownership of some of the acres, the title for the remaining acre is clear in that my grandparents were deed holders. Because they bought directly from a Black landowner, who was selling the property as opposed to being one of many

shareholders as the property was passed down through the generations, they were in a position to clearly designate the future beneficiaries in a will.

Learning to leave a clear will or a power of attorney as the way to conduct the business of leaving a land inheritance for progeny was the result of witnessing the mistakes and failures of others. These are unfortunate people who had neither acquired the knowledge or the legal resources to provide for future generations (Rivers, 2007). As large tracts of land were lost this negatively affected the functioning historic Black island communities.

Other changes brought by development concerned the governing of Hilton Head. Current regulations for Hilton Head, that was for the most part self-governing before the bridge was built, are severe changes in that neighbors usually settled their own disputes before. The more serious offenses were handled by the town magistrate. Laws on the island now seem to mostly impact access to areas and property. On Hilton Head, zoning laws can be used to regulate the building patterns that are suitable for each district. This can be for the benefit of the island in maintaining its resort-like charm, with restrictive building heights and a neutral color pallet for the façade of businesses and homes. Updating the zoning ordinance or the future land use plan is presented at meetings conducted by the town of Hilton Head and is open to the public. However, not everyone knows how to take advantage of this opportunity. Zoning laws, historically racist, also have the tendency to restrict access by regulating islanders to certain areas of the community based on economic resources. It can also limit uses of personal property depending on the zoning classification. Therefore, it is necessary for Native Islanders to remain apprised of the continuous changes that affect the island. Unfortunately, for those who remain unaware of the rights and powers established by the governing bodies of Hilton Head, zoning has been detrimental for the

Native Islanders who wanted to develop their property, because of the restrictions that have been placed of which they were unaware.

The lost acres by Native Islanders on Hilton Head are lost communities that people will only know through the stories told by those who lived during that time before the bridge. Those properties cannot be reclaimed. What is important now is to retain the properties on Hilton Head that remain. The best way for that to happen is to become educated on the town legislation that affects property, establish clear ownership for future generations, and most importantly, impress upon family members the value of property ownership.

I wanted to use my father's voice for this research because the experiences of people on the Sea Islands, particularly that of Hilton Head, are told from one perspective. Usually, historical research is from the point of view of people who were born on the island, remained, and saw the changes. Many times, the same sources are used however, not all experiences of Native Islanders are the same. My father was one who grew up on Hilton Head before the bridge and left in pursuit of opportunities that included providing service and establishing a career. Unlike others, he returned to live on the island because his family retained their property, as his father encouraged him to purchase additional land in Gardiner, before the cost were too high. In addition, career opportunities for him opened eventually and he was able to return to Hilton Head. Fortunately, he had property on which to settle.

Students and other educators benefitted from my father's experiences from other school systems, which he would not have had if he remained on Hilton Head. Nevertheless, my father never forgot where he came from. He always carried Hilton Head with him and he made sure that his children knew as well. Until now, there are no written sources for my father's life, just his words.

Data Collection Process

I decided to interview my father because he could provide a different prospective of one who was raised and educated on Hilton Head, taught in New York and New Jersey, and provided service in Peru in South America, before returning to the island to educate and raise his own family. I wanted to use his voice and stay true to his experience, while providing my own insight. These were not linear discussions as different events had the tendency to become connected. For example, discussion about life on Hilton Head, easily led to making a connection his ease into adjusting to life in Peru. His dialogue about schooling could easily transform to tales about farming. These talks were all relevant to research and it was important that I did not overly guide the discussion.

Listening to his recordings as I worked to transcribe his words, was both a joyous and difficult experience. Not only was transcribing several hours of recordings a lengthy process, the fact that I was emotionally tied to the subject allowed me to experience a range of emotions as I listened to my father's life story. The details were so vividly described that I was able to follow along in my mind's eye about lands that were different from what I was seeing in 2011. Some information I already knew. My father made it his priority to share with us what it was like to live on Hilton Head. I already knew about the farming. Not only from what he told me, but also from my own memories of the crops growing when we would visit during summer vacation. I knew about the fishing. Somewhere in my childhood home, there is a picture of my grandfather standing over his massive catch. I did not know the details about the process of the dragnet. My father's stories about his education on the island and in Bluffton were new to me as well. I was surprised to learn that he had skipped the third grade and was salutatorian of his high school graduating class. I am proud that he was so successful and took advantage of what his education

had to offer. While I was in school, I did not feel the pressure like most students to always be on top. My father was proud as long as I did my best work. Because of this, I am also glad that he waited until I was older to tell me of his successes, as I would have felt the pressure to measure up. I knew of my grandfather's determination to see his children formally educated. My grandmother would always check to make certain that her grandchildren were "getting their lesson"¹⁸. I did not realize the extent my grandparents had to go to ensure schooling for their oldest child.

I had to stop the recordings often as my father discussed my grandfather. My grandfather died when I was eight years old. One of the few things I remember about him is when he would ask during Christmastime, "Was Santa Clause good to you?" I remember the blue, Dodge van that he would use to drive to the farmer's market in Savannah. My cousins and I would pile inside while it was parked in the yard and take turns pretending to drive. I also remember my grandfather's horse that would graze in the yard with his tail periodically swishing away the flies. Unfortunately, that's all I remember of him. My father brought him back to life for me during the interview, but I wish I could have directly benefitted from his wisdom. I cried when my father described my grandfather's determination to own property and now only one acre remains of the five and quarter he acquired. Education for his children and owning property were the two things that he wanted from this life. These are also the two aspects of this research that examine education and property ownership for Black people on Hilton Head.

I knew of my father's journey from industrial arts teacher, to guidance counselor, and finally assistant principal. My father used to take me to the basketball games at Teaneck High

¹⁸The Native Islander vernacular of dropping the "s" from the end of words is quite endearing to me.

School, where he was the guidance counselor. He bought me the same jacket the cheerleaders wore because I wanted to be them when I got to high school. At that point, it never entered my mind that I would not be attending Teaneck High School. I did not know that it was difficult for my father to acquire the guidance counselor position for this school due to racial discrimination in spite of the diverse community. My father and mother, who was also an educator, would have heated discussions about the frustrations they encountered while working, particularly after we moved to Hilton Head. It made me determined to not be a teacher. My mother, as an elementary assistant principal, and eventually principal, was a part of the students' first educational experience. My father, who would encounter those same students, worked to continue to maintain the guidance my mother first established. Listening to the blatant racism my father experienced was so overwhelming, with the initial discussion. I had to stop the recording when I transcribed his recollections of the grade point calculations incident. This time, my needing a break was due to the intense anger I felt with how political pressure tried to take precedent for how my father and most guidance counselors elsewhere performed their duties. It took me a couple of days to compose myself enough to continue. Although it was difficult, I kept listening to the recollections about SACS accreditation and leading the Global Studies program. I was proud that he was able to persevere through both incidents and it showed me the extent of his strength as barriers were constantly used in attempt to block his successes.

My father witnessed the transformation of life on Hilton Head. While no longer having access to the freedom on the island, while this upset him, he was not bitter. I listened to my father speak in person, listened to his voice on the recordings, and then I transcribed his words. My father's life on Hilton Head and his experience in education punctuated the points that I tried

to establish in my research concerning the bridge's impact on life, education, and property retention on the island.

Future Research

Throughout this final chapter, I have noted potential for continuing research based on what I have learned through my father's experiences.

Educational Experiences of Other Native Islanders. While researching my father's educational experiences, as first a student then an administrator, I found that it is important that other oral histories concerning Black education on Hilton Head should also be collected. There are brief mentions of particular individuals in publications however, there is not much written detailing the journey of these Native Islanders. For example, what was the educational journey of those who attended the Cherry Hill School, the first facility on the island built solely for the education of island students (Campbell, 2008)? Another example is to gather information about my younger aunt who was one of the first Black students to integrate the schools on Hilton Head. It would be important to understand what fueled my grandparents' decisions to have their child on the front lines of such a monumental and potentially dangerous situation. Additionally, it would be compelling to compare her education experience before and after integrations, specifically, if her feelings mirrored those of bell hooks' (1994) accounts in *Teaching to Transgress*.

My father spoke of needing to leave Hilton Head to pursue a career in education because the positions were already filled by Black teachers on the island. Further research is necessary to determine what befell those educators once the schools became integrated. Similarly, my father rode in a car from Hilton Head to Savannah State College his freshman year with educators

needing teaching credentials. It would be beneficial to pursue additional information about these individuals as well.

I would like to also research my mother's experience with the Beaufort County school system. Born, raised, and educated in Providence, Rhode Island, she was the first Black female assistant principal on the island before being promoted to the position of principal of Hilton Head Primary school. As school principal, she implemented different programs that were coveted by the parents on the island, instrumental in raising test scores, and reaching national acclaim. There has not been a Black woman in that position since my mother's retirement in 2009.

Chaplin: Past, Present, and Future. In addition to the Grant family, several other families lived, worked, and attended school in Chaplin. Homes and businesses that were in existence before are no longer present. I am interested in researching the specific number of families who resided, and the type of Native Islander businesses were in the community before the bridge was built, to compare with the number of families that remain who live and work in Chaplin. In addition, I would like to explore the specific reasons why these Native Islander families left Chaplin, and what has befallen those families. The research would also include interviewing the families that remained in the community to discuss the changes in their lifestyle and the challenges that may be present with remaining in Chaplin.

Obtaining other Native Islander Oral Histories. As continuing development threatens the existence of Native Islanders, it is important that their experiences are recorded for future generations to experience. Further research needs to include interviewing other islanders who lived on Hilton Head prior to the late 1950s and gain their perspective of the island's transformation.

Zoning for Native Islander Properties. While Native Islander property owners may look to the past to remember what Hilton Head once was, it is important to be able to function in the present condition of the island. Therefore, it is important to understand what is in the land use plan for individual parcels of Black landowners, as well as the surrounding uses. Future research in this area encompasses exploring the zoning designation for all of the Native Island properties to ensure that it is conducive to operating within the current state of the island. For example, my grandparents' property in Chaplin is zoned LC for mixed use, allowing for the businesses to remain in operation, in addition to maintaining a dwelling on the same parcel (Town of Hilton Head Zoning Districts, 2017). My parents' home in Gardiner is zoned RM-4, which allows for four units on the same parcel if it is small than an acre, which supports the familial communal traditions of building more than one home on a small parcel (Town of Hilton Head Zoning Districts, 2017). The question becomes whether or not zoning designations for all Native Islander properties support the desired uses that allows for Black landowners function in the present condition of Hilton Head.

The Decline of Black Communities. The court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* impacted Black students and teachers in ways that has some scholars questioning the benefits of the decision requiring school integration in that students left their communities to learn in White suburban neighborhoods. Additionally, Black educators were dismissed from their positions as a result of integration (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Fultz, 1995, spring; Fultz, 1995, winter; Fultz, 2004). Another issue impacting once thriving Black communities is the departure of the middle class on account of reversing housing discrimination laws that provided more neighborhood choices (Wilson, 1987; Thomas & Ritzdorf, 1997). Thirdly, the gentrification of these neighborhoods resulted in the departure of people who took with them the skills and expertise

that maintained a functioning community (Wilson, 1987). The future research question that needs to be explored is the correlation between the deterioration of Black neighborhoods and overall lack of Black student achievement. The next section for future research calls for the rebuilding of deteriorating historically Black communities.

Rebuilding the Black Community. It is important that I continue with my research by establishing a connection with the repair of Black neighborhoods to achievement among Black students. The education challenges include: low standardized test scores, lack of advanced placement, increased high school dropout rates, and low college admissions that disproportionately affect Black students (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) of 2001 and *Race to the Top* (RT) of 2009 policies established for educational achievement offer solutions that include hiring teachers that are highly qualified, replacing school leadership, and setting accountability measures. However, the policies do not consider the fact that the difficulties with student achievement are not just contained to the classroom (Noddings, 2004; Hursh, 2007; Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008; DeBray-Pelot & McGuinn, 2009). These societal issues of poverty, lack of resources, and the impact of racial and class discriminations that students may be facing are reflected in the classroom (Collins, 1971; Durkheim, 1977).

Gentrification is a process that will continue to take place. Therefore, is important for Black people to be involved in its process to where it will benefit them. This benefit begins with reestablishing the strong Black neighborhoods that will reinforce a culture of high educational attainment for Black students. It is my desire to continue with research that closes the achievement gap between Black and White students. In order to repair Black communities, it is important for Black landowners, to retain property to pass to future generations by making clear

establishments in a will. For Black people who do not own property, it is important to consider a movement towards indigenous-led reinvestment in historically Black communities to prevent the loss of property due to gentrification and the further destruction of previously strong neighborhoods.

Pedagogical Considerations

Black people established a culture of high educational attainment that is reinforced in the communities. The foundations of educational foundations are rooted in urban planning. When students are successful, it reflects a strong community. The reverse is also true. The strength of the community is reflected in the success of its students. It is important for future educators to understand that societal ills impact student performance in schools. In addition to coursework that addresses classroom curriculum in particular subject matter and maintaining classroom order, it is important for future instructors to understand the root causes of challenges that may enter the classroom. Therefore, introducing classes in urban and regional planning, particularly classes that are particularly geared in associating the effects of gentrification with classroom performance, would serve as an added benefit. In my pursuit of a PhD in education, I was able to utilize my training in urban planning when studying the social foundations of education as it relates to work in social justice, multicultural education, and education sociology. Courses in these subjects fueled my interest in establishing a correlation between the impacts of community gentrification and Black student success.

Final Thoughts

In our house in Gardiner, you can see Broad Creek out of the dining room window where we eat dinner. During high tide, the view is a stunning scene of the blue water peeking through

green palmetto trees and marshy grass. Maybe a bright, white egret has landed and its long beak is poking through the muddy banks for dinner. Beyond the creek, on a clear day, you can see the buildings of Shelter Cove. If you shift your gaze to the left, you may see my grandparents' property in Chaplin. In our dining room with the clear view of Chaplin located across Broad Creek, I heard my father pass along instructions for his two older grandchildren. They were the two that had a relationship with my grandmother or "Granny Janie," as she is called, before she passed away. They would work in her garden and sit in the fruit and vegetable stand like I used to do during the summer months. Although they were small children, it is my hope that their experience with their great grandmother, provided them with sense of what was at stake. I believe that is what my father was thinking when he instructed his oldest grandson and his only granddaughter to lead the younger children in understanding what having the property means. It is where they lay their head to sleep, eat dinner, and play in the yard out front. The yard, which is outside of the gates of the plantation, is now rare and coveted by developers, among other people. The land represents a freedom and a place that will always be their home. That is why they must do everything in their power not to sell. These are the instructions the remaining Native Islanders must pass on to their children. There must be people left to tell the unwritten stories. As my father says, "Don't let anyone tell your story. You tell your own story."

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Vita

Sheryse Noelle Grant DuBose was born in Teaneck, New Jersey and graduated from Hilton Head High School in South Carolina in 1989. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Hampton University in 1994. Sheryse attended the University of New Orleans, completing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning in 1999. She maintained a career in Comprehensive Long Range, Short Range, and Transportation for Anderson County, South Carolina; Henry County, GA; and Knoxville/Knox County, Tennessee. After working at Southwest High School as a Behavior Intervention specialist for a year, she was offered a permanent position teaching Social Studies. In 2010, she was granted an alternative teaching license from the Middle Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA).

Presently, Sheryse is working towards a doctoral degree, majoring in education, with a specialization in Cultural Studies. She has worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) for the general education course, "Survey of International Education," for four years. Sheryse plans to complete her PhD in 2018.