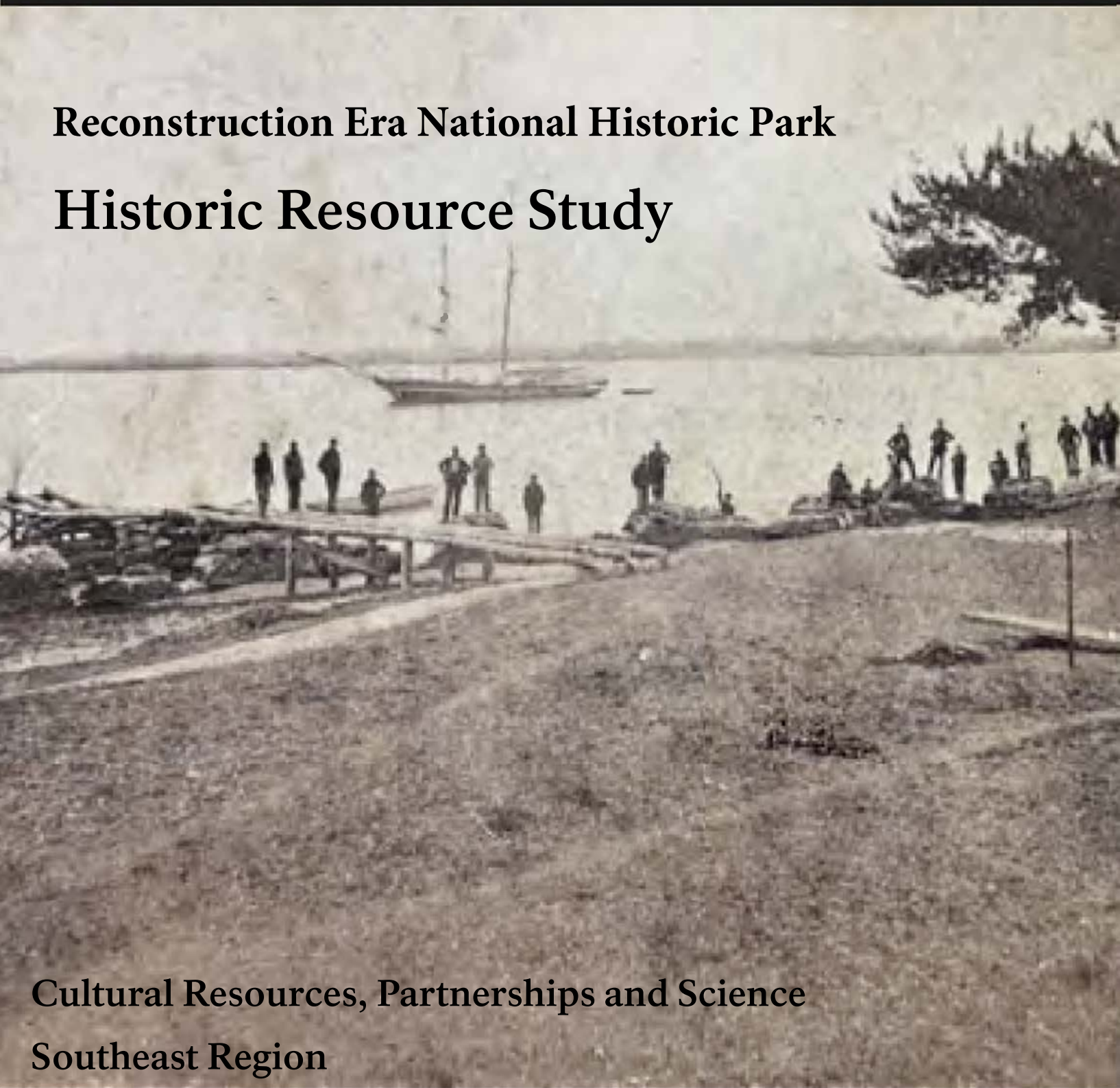


National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Reconstruction Era National Historic Park
South Carolina



Reconstruction Era National Historic Park Historic Resource Study



Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science
Southeast Region

Reconstruction Era National Historical Park

Historic Resource Study

"My people need no special defense, for the whole history of them in this country proves them to be the equal of any people, anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life."¹ - Robert Smalls

Report Prepared by

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¹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free: Robert Smalls of South Carolina and His Families* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 225.

Executive Summary

In June 2023, the National Park Service (NPS) contracted New South Associates (NSA) to complete a Historic Resource Study (HRS) for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park (REER) in Beaufort County, South Carolina. An HRS is a multi-faceted management document designed to aid resource managers in park planning and interpretation of historic resources. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) names NPS as the responsible entity in identifying and planning for the protection of cultural resources in national parks. An HRS aids in this mission by collating past documentation and assessments to present a baseline review of all known historic resources on the Park's property and the historic contexts through which these resources can be evaluated for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. This is the first HRS for REER. In addition to providing a comprehensive assessment of all buildings, structures, objects, and sites within REER, the document incorporates additional scholarship with a renewed focus on formerly underrepresented groups or themes.

REER is formed by five, discontinuous sites in Beaufort County, South Carolina: Darrah Hall and Brick Baptist Church, both within the Penn School National Historic Landmark District on St. Helena Island; the Camp Saxton Site in Port Royal; and the Old Beaufort Firehouse and Beaufort Bible Chapel, in downtown Beaufort.

In September 2023, NSA historians surveyed six resources in REER's operational boundary. These six resources contained a total of 14 buildings, structures, or objects including restrooms, storage buildings, and cemeteries. As a result of this study, four of the 14 buildings documented were determined not eligible for NRHP listing as they were not 50 years of age and did not meet Criteria Consideration G.

One individually NRHP-listed site, the Camp Saxton Site, and portions of two NRHP-listed historic districts overlap REER's operational boundary: the Beaufort National Register Historic District and the Penn Center National Register Historic District. Additionally, two of REER's resources are located within National Historic Landmark (NHL) Districts. Darrah Hall and Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery are contributing resources in the Penn School National Historic Landmark District, designated in 1974. In addition to NRHP-listing, these properties have been determined nationally significant and designated NHLs by the Secretary of the Interior.

In consultation with NPS, NSA completed intensive NRHP eligibility evaluations for the newly-acquired Beaufort Bible Chapel, the Old Beaufort Firehouse, Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery, and Darrah Hall. As a result, Darrah Hall and Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery were recommended individually eligible for NRHP listing, in addition to their status as contributing resources in the Penn Center National Register Historic District and the Penn School National Historic Landmark District. Beaufort Bible Chapel was determined not eligible for NRHP listing and the Old Beaufort Firehouse was determined not eligible for individual NRHP listing but remains a contributing resource in the Beaufort National Register Historic District.

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This study would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of the Cultural Resource team at Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. The project team extends its sincerest thanks to Nathan Betcher and Eric Ellis for their time, guidance, and hospitality throughout the project. The New South team would also like to thank William M. Hunter, Regional Historian for NPS Interior Region 2, and Deanda Johnson, Civil Rights Historian for NPS Interior Region 2, for their contributions to the project.

This study rests on the works of the many archivists, historians, and authors who have compiled and interpreted the history of Beaufort County and the Reconstruction-era South. Grace Morris Cordial, MLS, SL, CA, Senior Librarian, Archivist, and Collections Manager at Beaufort County Library was extremely helpful in retrieving Reconstruction-era sources. NSA would also like to thank Dr. Marie Gibbs, Museum Docent and Program Manager for her tour of the Penn Center and personal account of growing up on St. Helena Island.

Archival repositories throughout the southeast have catalogued, maintained, and exhibited large collections related to the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. Institutions that informed or provided materials for this study include: the Beaufort District Collection at the Beaufort County Public Library, Special Collections at the College of Charleston, the Penn Center, and South Carolina Freeman's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872, available on FamilySearch; National Archives Records Administration.

List of Acronyms

CLI	Cultural Landscape Inventory
CRIS	Cultural Resource Information System
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
FMSS	Facility Management Software System
GMP	General Management Plan
HRS	Historic Resource Study
HSR	Historic Structure Report
NSA	New South Associates
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
REER	Reconstruction Era National Historical Park
SCDNR	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SHPO	South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
USGS	United States Geological Survey

Chapter 1. Introduction

In June 2023, the National Park Service (NPS) contracted New South Associates (NSA) to complete a Historic Resource Study (HRS) for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park (REER) in Beaufort County, South Carolina. An HRS is a multi-faceted management document designed to aid resource managers in park planning and interpretation of historic resources. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) names NPS as the responsible entity in identifying and planning for the protection of cultural resources in national parks. An HRS aids in this mission by collating past documentation and assessments to present a baseline review of all known historic resources on the Park's property and the historic contexts through which these resources can be evaluated for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. This is the first HRS for REER. In addition to providing a comprehensive assessment of all buildings, structures, objects, and sites within REER, the document incorporates additional scholarship with a renewed focus on formerly underrepresented groups or themes.

Reconstruction, traditionally defined as the era following the Civil War in 1865 until the removal of Federal troops from the South in 1876, remains one of the most complicated and poorly understood periods in American History.² Efforts to establish a NPS site to interpret Reconstruction began in 2000 under the administration of President William "Bill" Clinton. Despite strong local backing and an organized strategy for the study, the effort failed due primarily to "deep-seated and unresolved attitudes toward race, slavery, and historical memory that manifested themselves through a Sons of Confederate Veterans campaign."³

When Beaufort-area leaders, NPS officials, and historians revived the effort to establish a park in 2014, they encountered a range of political challenges. These challenges included creating an historical justification, unifying disparate local groups behind a single proposal, and complying with the policy requirements of the Antiquities Act of 1906. Three years later, they achieved their goal of securing a NPS site devoted to Reconstruction.⁴ On January 12, 2017, President Barack Obama established the Reconstruction National Monument through executive action. Congress redesignated the Monument as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park on March 12, 2019.

² National Park Service, "Foundation Document: Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, South Carolina" (National Park Service Department of the Interior, September 2019), <http://npshistory.com/publications/foundation-documents/reer-fd-2019.pdf>.

³ Jennifer Whitmer Taylor and Page Putnam Miller, "Reconstructing Memory: The Attempt to Designate Beaufort, South Carolina, the National Park Service's First Reconstruction Unit," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 1 (2017): Page 39.

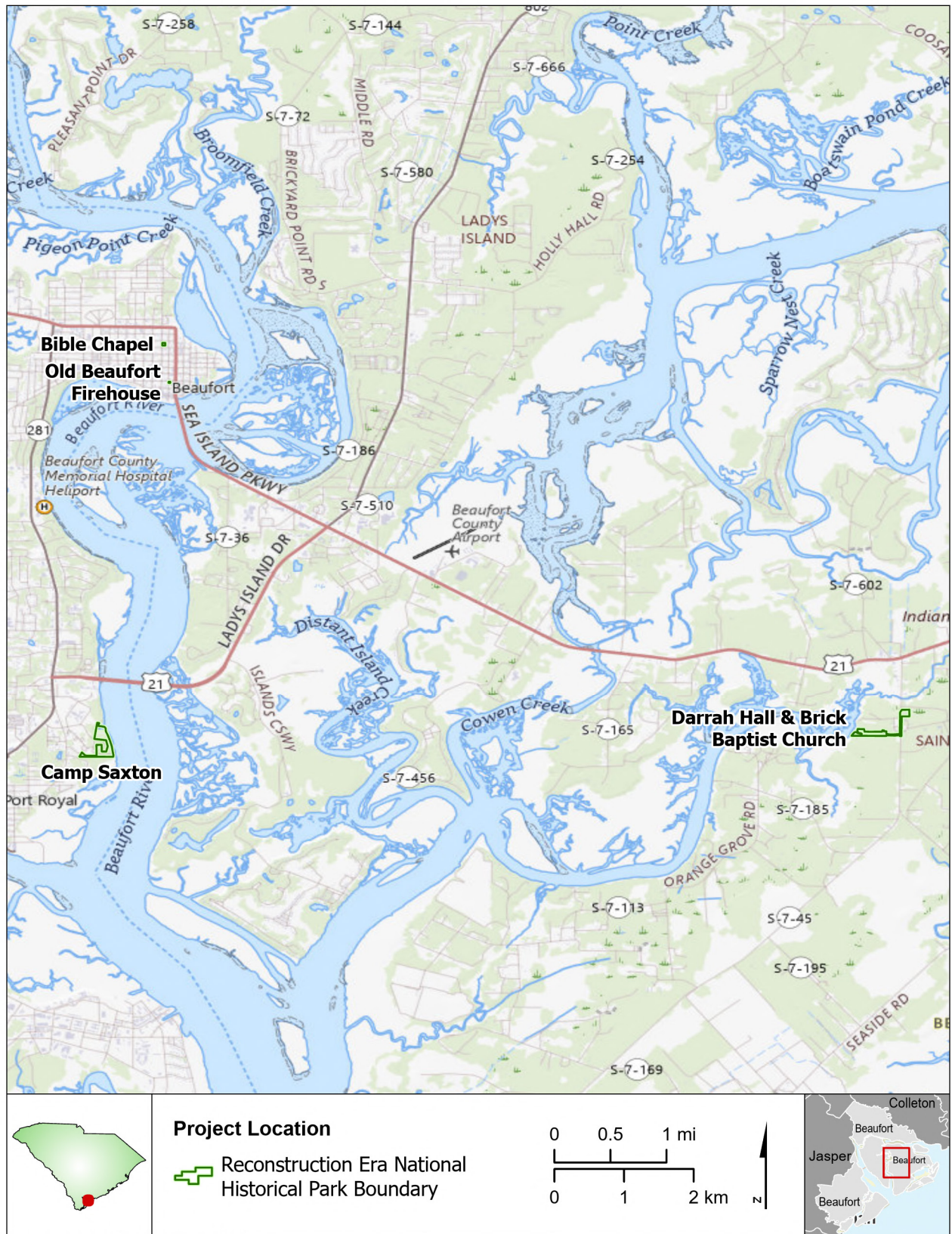
⁴ Bruce Babbitt et al., "132nd Annual Meeting (January 4-7, 2018): The Struggle to Commemorate Reconstruction in National Parks," American Historical Association, 2018, <https://aha.confex.com/aha/2018/webprogram/Session16466.html>.

Reconstruction Era National Historical Park encompasses five, discontinuous sites in Beaufort County, South Carolina: Darrah Hall and the Brick Baptist Church, both within the Penn Center National Historic Landmark District on St. Helena Island; the Camp Saxton Site on present-day US Federal Navy property in Port Royal; the Old Beaufort Firehouse; and Beaufort Bible Chapel in Beaufort's Historic District .

Sites in REER are significant for their contributions to the Port Royal Experiment, the 1861 start of Reconstruction. Enslavers fled St. Helena Island and Beaufort's coastal communities after the Federal bombardment of Port Royal at the start of the Civil War. Assisted by the U.S. Army and Northern missionaries and teachers, the formerly enslaved who remained on abandoned plantations on St. Helena and in the city of Beaufort experienced freedom. Through education, paid wages, political gains, and land ownership, the formerly enslaved enjoyed rights once reserved for their enslavers and white males.

In interpreting Reconstruction, NPS has redefined the era as the period between 1861 and 1900, inclusive of the Civil War, the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, and the enactment of Jim Crow laws that dismantled and curtailed African American freedoms into the first half of the twentieth century. The historic context developed for this HRS seeks to aid the NPS in interpreting Reconstruction-era sites through a more inclusive lens, expanding the knowledge and impact of this controversial, little understood, and pivotal period in American History.

Figure 1.
Overview Map of Reconstruction Era National Park



Chapter 2. Methodology

Archival and Secondary Research

NSA completed archival research between August 2023 and December 2024. This research included a thorough review of previous architectural and historical contexts developed for Darrah Hall, the Brick Baptist Church, Camp Saxton Site the Old Firehouse in Beaufort, and St. Helena Island, as well as primary source materials, relevant maps, photographs, and previously collected data on known historic sites.

The following repositories were visited or supplied relevant material during this phase:

- Beaufort District Collection, Beaufort County Public Library, Beaufort;
- Special Collections at the College of Charleston, Charleston;
- Penn Center, St. Helena; and
- South Carolina, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872, July 18, 2022, FamilySearch; National Archives and Records Administration.

Additionally, NSA oral historian, Velma Fann, interviewed Dr. Marie Gibbs, St. Helena Island native, educator, and program coordinator at the York W. Bailey Museum at Penn Center. Dr. Gibbs added insight into the hurricane of 1893, growing up on the Island, family, and the Civil Rights struggle. The oral history transcript is found in Appendix C.

Field Methods

Preparation of the HRS began with a systematic survey and mapping of buildings, structures, objects, and sites aged 50 years old or older to affirm their NRHP status and document existing conditions. In September 2023, NSA completed a comprehensive survey that recorded resources constructed in or before 1973. Historians photographed and collected baseline data for each resource including its location, age, material condition, and architectural and historical features. The team consulted current and historic maps, including United States Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps, and aerial photographs. Unless noted, all photographs were taken in September 2023.

NSA historians documented six resources during the field survey. Resources are defined as standalone buildings, structures, objects, and/or complexes such as churches which include associated outbuildings anchored by a primary resource (e.g., cemeteries, parsonages, etc.). Located within these six resources, historians recorded a total of 14 buildings, structures, objects, and sites. Of the six resources, four have been previously listed in the NRHP, either individually or as part of a district. One resource, Pinckney-Porter's Chapel (former Porter's Chapel A.M.E) was moved to REER in 2020. Constructed around 1901, the original church building was rebuilt at its current site between 2020 and 2022.

National Register of Historic Places

Historic properties were evaluated based on criteria for NRHP eligibility specified in the *Department of Interior Regulations 36 CFR Part 60: National Register of Historic Places*. Cultural properties can be defined as significant if they “possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association,” and if they are 50 years of age or older and:

A) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (history); or

B) are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (person); or

C) embody the distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that components may lack individual distinction (architecture); or

D) have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (archaeology).

As per the project scope, this study was limited to above-ground resources. Resources’ eligibility for the NRHP and research potential as archaeological sites were not evaluated.

Ordinarily, cemeteries; birthplaces or graves of historical figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; properties primarily commemorative in nature; and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not considered eligible for the NRHP. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of historic districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

Criteria Consideration A: a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

Criteria Consideration B: a building or structure removed from its original location, but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

Criteria Consideration C: a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance, if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with their productive life; or

Criteria Consideration D: a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves or persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or

Criteria Consideration E: a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or

Criteria Consideration F: a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or

Criteria Consideration G: a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.⁵

Literature Review, Previous Designations, and Assessments

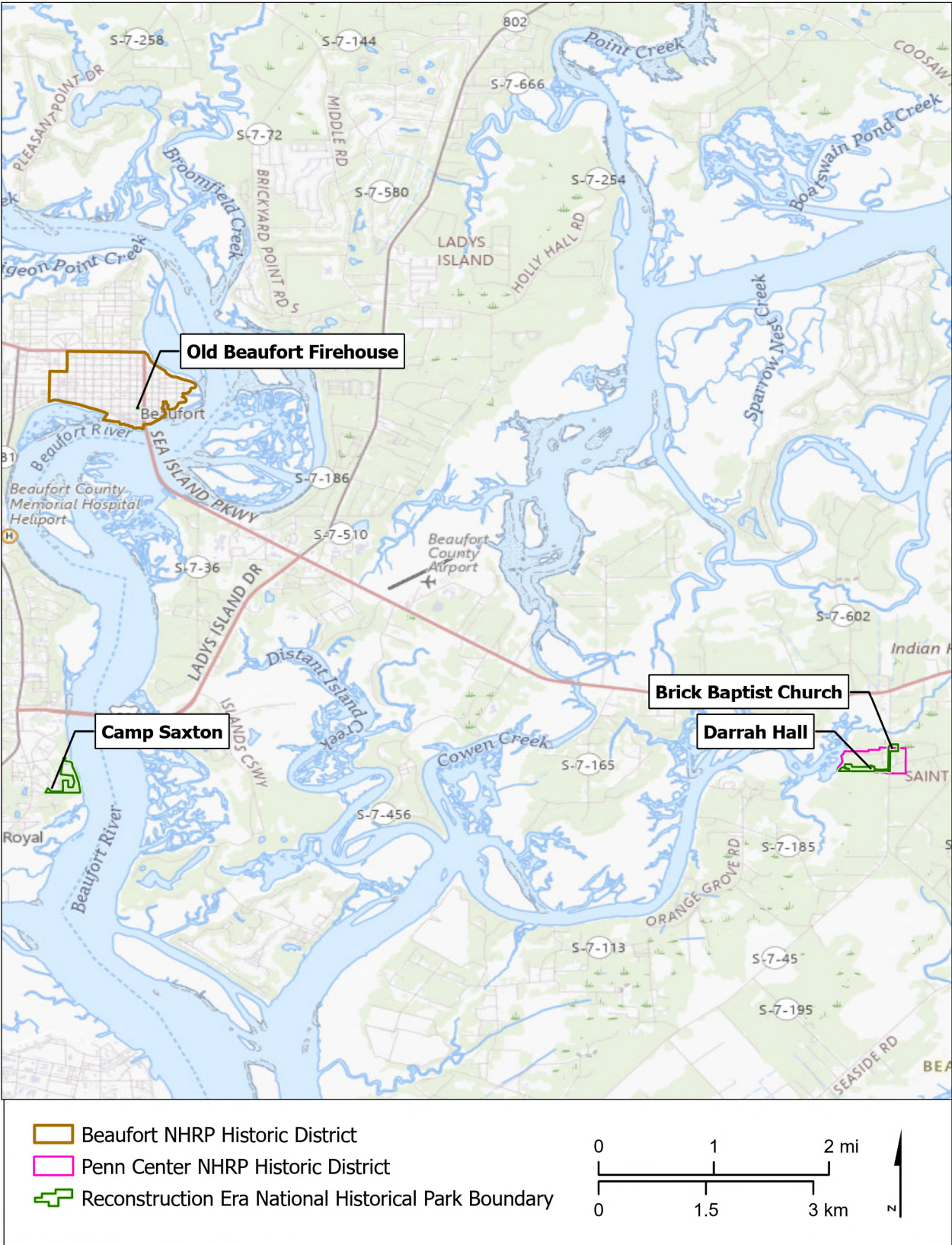
Prior to the current survey, NPS recorded four historic properties within the REER boundary. As of April 2024, no resources have been documented in the organization's Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS). The SC-SHPO identified the same four properties in ArchSite, the SC-SHPO's online GIS platform. Each of the four previously identified properties are listed in the NRHP either individually or as part of a district (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1. Previously NRHP-Listed or Eligible Properties within REER:

Site/ SC-SHPO Site Number	NRHP Status
The Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery (0038.15/0038.18)	Contributes to the Penn School National Historic Landmark District (0038)
Darrah Hall (0038.03)	Contributes to the Penn School National Historic Landmark District (0038)
Camp Saxton Site/Smith Plantation (0019)	Individually listed in the NRHP
Old Beaufort Fire House (0908)	Contributes to the Beaufort National Historic Register District

⁵ While properties constructed within the past 50 years were included in this study, none were recommended for NRHP eligibility under Criterion Consideration G.

Figure 2.
Previously NRHP-Listed or Eligible Properties REER



Resources within the REER boundary have been exceptionally well-documented through NPS-sponsored park planning documents including Historic Structure Reports (HSR), Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR), and the General Management Plan (GMP). Under the direction of the NPS's Interior Region 2 Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science Division, WLA Studio drafted CLRs for four resources in REER's operational boundary: Brick Baptist Church, the Old Beaufort Firehouse, Camp Saxton Site, and Darrah Hall. Each CLR provides an in-depth site history, existing conditions reports, NRHP analysis and evaluations, and treatment recommendations. Historical summaries presented in Chapter 4 are largely guided by these documents.

In 2019, Panamerican Consultants, Inc., Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., and WFT Architects, PA completed an HSR documenting Darrah Hall for the Southeast Region of NPS. The report provides a context and physical history of the building. Also in 2019, the project team conducted a HSR of the Old Beaufort Firehouse, a contributing resource to the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District. The document provides a thorough history of the building, built as a meat market in 1912 and acquired by the NPS in 2017 to use as a visitor contact station for REER.

In 2020, students of Clemson University and College of Charleston's joint Graduate Program in Historic Preservation completed an HSR for the Brick Baptist Church on the campus of Penn Center. Constructed in 1855 by enslaved people, the Brick Baptist Church became a place of worship and education and continues to have an active congregation. The HSR provided a history of the church and documented its physical condition and evolution over time.

Lord Aeck Sargent Planning and Design, Inc., prepared the *Robert Smalls House Historic Structures Report* for the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2022. This document chronicles alterations to the home of Robert Smalls of Beaufort, who escaped enslavement and rose to national prominence as a statesman.

In addition to these site-specific studies, REER is guided by the park's *Foundation Document Overview: Reconstruction Era National Historical Park*.⁶ Prepared by NPS, this document offers a concise overview of Reconstruction and its lingering effects, from 1860 to the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s. The *Foundation Document Overview* describes the physical boundaries of the Park and lists the key Reconstruction-era sites therein. Additionally, the National Historic Landmarks Program prepared *The Era of Reconstruction 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, which offers a

⁶ National Park Service, "Foundation Document Overview: Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, South Carolina."

comprehensive overview of Reconstruction, 1861-1900, in the former Confederacy.⁷ The Study includes Reconstruction-era themes of land and labor, African American institution building, enfranchisement and new Democracy, civil unrest and violence, Federal power, and remaking and modernizing the South. This report identifies properties associated with events considered nationally significant within the history of the Reconstruction era.

In addition to these NPS-guided studies, individual and district NRHP nominations are available for resources within REER including the Penn School National Historic Landmark District, Beaufort National Historic Landmark District, and Camp Saxton Site.⁸ The bulk of the resources in REER were documented during the 1998 survey of Beaufort County's above-ground historic resources.

Primary and secondary sources pertaining to the history of Beaufort, Port Royal and St. Helena Island and the Port Royal Experiment were identified during NSA's research. Primary sources, although few, offered first-hand, personal accounts of the work, challenges, and success of missionaries, teachers, and officers of the U.S. Army who trained members of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers.

Primary sources identified include:

- *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (Riverside Press, 1900);⁹
- *Journal of Charlotte L. Forten* (New York Press, 1953);¹⁰
- *Letters and Diary of Laura Towne: Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina 1862-1884* (Cambridge, England Riverside, 1912);¹¹
- *Palmetto Post*, January 10, 1895;
- *Sunday Record* (Beaufort), November 24, 1929;
- *Beaufort Gazette*, January 26, 1939

⁷ Gregory Downs and Kate Masur, "The Era of Reconstruction 1861-1900" (Washington D.C: National Park Service, 2017), <http://www.npshistory.com/publications/nhl/theme-studies/reconstruction-era.pdf>.

⁸ James Sheire, "'Penn Center Historic District,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form" (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1973), South Carolina Department of Archives and History, <http://nationalregister.sc.gov/beaufort/S10817707020/S10817707020.pdf>; Mrs. James W. Fant, "'Beaufort Historic District,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1969); Tracy J. Power and Charles M. Wright, "'Camp Saxton Site,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form" (Washington, D. C.: U.S Department of the Interior, National Park Service, December 19, 1994).

⁹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Army Life in a Black Regiment By Thomas Wentworth Higginson ...," HathiTrust, July 18, 2015, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo1.ark:/13960/t4th93k2r?urlappend=%3Bseq=55>.

¹⁰ Charlotte Forten, *Journal of Charlotte L. Forten; with an Introd. and Notes by Ray Allen Billington* (New York: Dryden Press, Inc., 1953), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106001269924?urlappend=%3Bseq=9>.

¹¹ Laura Matilda Towne, "Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884" (Cambridge, England: Riverside, 1912).

Chapter 3. Historic Context

The Era of Reconstruction grappled with integrating newly freed men and women into the economic, political, social, labor, and landholding systems of the nation. One place where these new freedoms were tested was Beaufort County, South Carolina. The City of Beaufort, the town of Port Royal, and St. Helena Island served as a rehearsal for freedom, where Africans and their descendants won and contributed to rights of citizenship for all people. Reconstruction ended in a bitter defeat—of violence and political maneuvers that undermined hard-won gains. The determination of African Americans to experience the full rights of citizenship remains evident, more than 100 years later, in the continued fight for the unmet promises of Reconstruction.

History of Beaufort and St. Helena, South Carolina

Indigenous communities occupied the Sea Islands of South Carolina for thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish explorers in the 1500s. The Spaniards called the island Santa Elena. In 1562, a French expedition explored the area and claimed it, calling the area *Porte Royale*. The Yemassee Indians resisted the Spanish but aided the French. Neither the Spanish nor French efforts to establish permanent settlements were successful. Only after William Hilton's 1863 English expedition did a lasting European colony survive on the Island. The Spanish and French placenames became St. Helena and Port Royal under English rule.¹²

The colonial government established the town of Beaufort in 1711. St. Helena's Parish was created in 1712 by the General Assembly, which noted "several persons are settled to the southward of Colleton County on Port Royal Island, St. Helena Island, and several adjacent Islands."¹⁴ Angered by unfair trade practices, enslavement, the whipping of Native people, and encroachment on their land, the Yemassee and several other Native American tribes rose against the English in 1715. They destroyed the town and killed approximately 100 settlers in that year.¹⁵ Only after the Yemassee were defeated and driven south of Savannah, was the eventual success of the European settlement on St. Helena Island secured.¹⁶

¹² National Park Service, *"Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740 - c. 1935," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988), Section E, Page 1.

¹⁴ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 1.

¹⁵ Michael Morris, "Yemassee War," *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (blog), accessed December 6, 2023, <https://www.sencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/yemassee-war/>.

¹⁶ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 1.

Economic growth on St. Helena Island was slow. In the colonial era, residents produced subsistence crops, raised livestock, and developed a naval stores industry to support shipping. Indigo became a staple crop by 1750 but fell out of favor as long staple Sea Island Cotton became the dominant crop. The number of enslaved Africans imported to plant, pick, and gin the expanding cotton industry grew rapidly. By 1790, enslaved Africans accounted for more than 80 percent of the population of Beaufort while the percentage of enslaved people on St. Helena Island was even higher.¹⁷ Brought forcibly from diverse ethnic groups in West and Central Africa, the enslaved on St. Helena and in coastal South Carolina mingled on plantations and developed a unique culture. African in origin, the culture is known as Gullah and is practiced today.¹⁸

The Fripp, Coffin, Sams, and Chaplin families emerged as the primary landowners and enslavers on St. Helena in the eighteenth century and amassed significant wealth cultivating cotton in the first decade of the nineteenth century. These families built large plantations on St. Helena. Tombee, the Oaks, Fripp at Seaside, and Coffin Point are among extant plantation houses on the island.¹⁹ Most plantation houses were built near waterways. These locations proved beneficial in shipping cotton to Beaufort and in enjoying fresh sea breezes believed to combat vapors and fevers such as malaria.²⁰ Salt marsh grass and mud used as fertilizer stimulated cotton production. Improved cultivation and soil revitalization, lower rainfall, and a longer growing season favored the Sea Islands over the mainland. As a result, the Sea Islands become renowned for their high quality, long staple cotton.²¹

From 1790 to 1860, isolation shaped the lives of the enslaved on St. Helena Island. They rarely went to Beaufort, which required travel by wagon or rowboat. Family and friends lived out their lives on the island, unless granted time to see loved ones on other island plantations or sold to enslavers on the mainland. As a result of limited contact with whites, they retained much of their own African influenced culture.²²

The Island economy depended on Sea Island cotton, which required a large labor force for production. Under supervision of a white overseer or Black driver, each enslaved hand was given a daily task—planting, plowing,

¹⁷ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 2.

¹⁸ National Park Service, *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (Atlanta, Georgia: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2005), Page 13.

¹⁹ SCIWAY, "Plantations - Beaufort County, South Carolina SC," South Carolina Plantations, 2019, <https://south-carolina-plantations.com/beaufort/beaufort-county.html>.

²⁰ Charles Kovacik and Robert Mason, "Changes in the South Carolina Sea Island Cotton Industry," *Southeastern Geographer* 25, no. 2 (1985): Pages 83,87.

²¹ Charles F. Kovacik, "Cotton," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 2019, <https://www.sccyclopedia.org/sce/entries/cotton/>.

²² National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 3.

picking, or ginning cotton—that took nine to 10 hours of grueling work to complete. Some enslavers allowed their laborers to hunt, fish, or tend to a personal garden after they completed their assigned tasks.²³

Although the task system provided limited independence, it was no substitute for freedom. Forced labor extended beyond agricultural work. Enslaved men worked as skilled blacksmiths, carpenters, tanners, cobblers, and other artisans, and built and repaired plantation outbuildings. Enslaved house workers, particularly women, performed long and often humiliating hours of domestic duties including cooking over a fireplace, carrying heavy pots of hot food, cleaning, sewing, taking care of white children with little time for their own, and generally submitting to the enslaver’s every command.²⁴

Thomas Chaplin of the Tombee plantation kept a journal from 1845 to 1858 that provides a glimpse into plantation life from the enslaver’s point of view, chronicling social life, workload, runaways, and punishments. On July 28, 1856, Thomas Chaplin wrote of Jim, a “trusted slave” who, having been falsely accused, ran off and stayed away for 14 days. Jim had been enslaved by Chaplin for 13 years, and the two had known each other longer. When Jim returned, Chaplin wrote “Gave Jim, a very moderate punishment, say about 60 paddles, put on his bare hide, with my own hands,” before returning his privileges.²⁵

On May 4, 1845, Chaplin sold 10 enslaved people to satisfy creditors. Paul and his brother Titus were among those sold. The two later struck out for freedom. On October 12, 1848, B. M’Bride placed an advertisement in the *Charleston Courier* announcing a \$50.00 reward for the apprehension of Paul and Titus, both once “property of Thos B. Chaplin of St. Helena.” The two were suspected of lurking about Combahee, where their mother was enslaved or being sheltered by the enslaved community on St. Helena, as shown in Figure 3.

According to the U.S. Slave Schedule for South Carolina, 32,530 persons were enslaved in Beaufort County in 1860. Only the Charleston District had a higher enslaved population. The secession of South Carolina in 1861 and the coming of the Civil War would change life on Beaufort and St. Helena Island, giving freedom and voice to the formerly enslaved.

²³ National Park Service, *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (Atlanta, Georgia: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2005), 38; National Park Service, “Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740 - c. 1935,” *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988), Section E, Pages 3-4.

²⁴ National Park Service, *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, Page 40.

²⁵ Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), Pages 159-160, 673.

Figure 3.
1848 Runaway Slave Notice

FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD will be paid for the apprehension and delivery of PAUL, and his brother TITUS, to the subscriber, or twenty-five dollars for either. Titus is about 35 years old, of common size, and will be known by one of his fingers on the right hand having been mashed in a corn sheller, but fully well when he runaway, the first of last March.

Paul, who runaway on the 14th inst., is about 30 years old, tall, and speaks and acts quickly, and who may attempt to pass with a ticket furnished him some five weeks since to go to Beaufort, St. Helena, Combahee and elsewhere in search of his brother Titus. These two runaways, until a few years ago, were the property of Mr. Thos. B. Chaplin, of St. Helena, where they were raised and have relatives, and a mother on Combahee, belonging to Mr. Chas. Myers, where it is well known they met with kind friends for more than six months during their runaway tour some two years ago. It is evident these fellows are lurking about their mother's on Combahee, or their relatives on St. Helena.

B. M^rBRIDE.

Hickory Hill, Sept. 20. [th4 O 12]

TO HIRE, a Female SERVANT, who is Child's

Source: Charleston Daily Courier, October 12, 1848, 2 Newspapers.com.

The Start of the Civil War

On November 6, 1860, Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln, whose party opposed the expansion of slavery, was elected president, strictly by a northern and Electoral College vote. Four days later, on November 10, Senator James Chesnut, Jr., fearing a Republican ban on slavery, resigned his Senate seat and returned home to South Carolina to draft an ordinance of secession. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the United States. By February 4th, 1861, six more states seceded, creating the Confederate States of America.²⁶

By early March 1861, rumors were circulating of a threatened Confederate attack on the Federally controlled forts in the South, including Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. To avoid hostilities, President Lincoln alerted the South Carolina governor of his plans to send provisions to Fort Sumter. The Confederate commander demanded an immediate surrender of Fort Sumter, refusing the Federal commander's offer to evacuate the fort after they exhausted their food supply. On April 12, the Confederates fired on the fort forcing a Federal surrender.²⁷ The firing on Fort Sumter signaled the beginning of the Civil War, the bloodiest war in American history.

The Beginning of the Port Royal Experiment

War reached Beaufort, South Carolina, in early November 1861. On November 6, a joint U.S. Navy and Army force arrived at Port Royal Sound in the largest fleet assembled by the U.S. Navy. Confederate forces put up little resistance and retreated toward Charleston. On November 7, the U.S. Navy began bombarding forts Beauregard and Walker, which guarded the entrance to Port Royal. The rumblings of the cannon struck fear in residents. The enslaved remembered November 7 as the day of the "Big Gun Shoot."²⁸ Federals occupied the Port Royal area, including St. Helena Island. More than 300 white enslavers and their families, owning 55 plantations on the Island, fled, coaxing the enslaved to come along with them (Figure 4). The majority of the enslaved, more than 2,000 people, chose to stay on the island.²⁹ Assistance given to the newly freed, as they traversed the road to freedom, would become known as the "Port Royal Experiment."

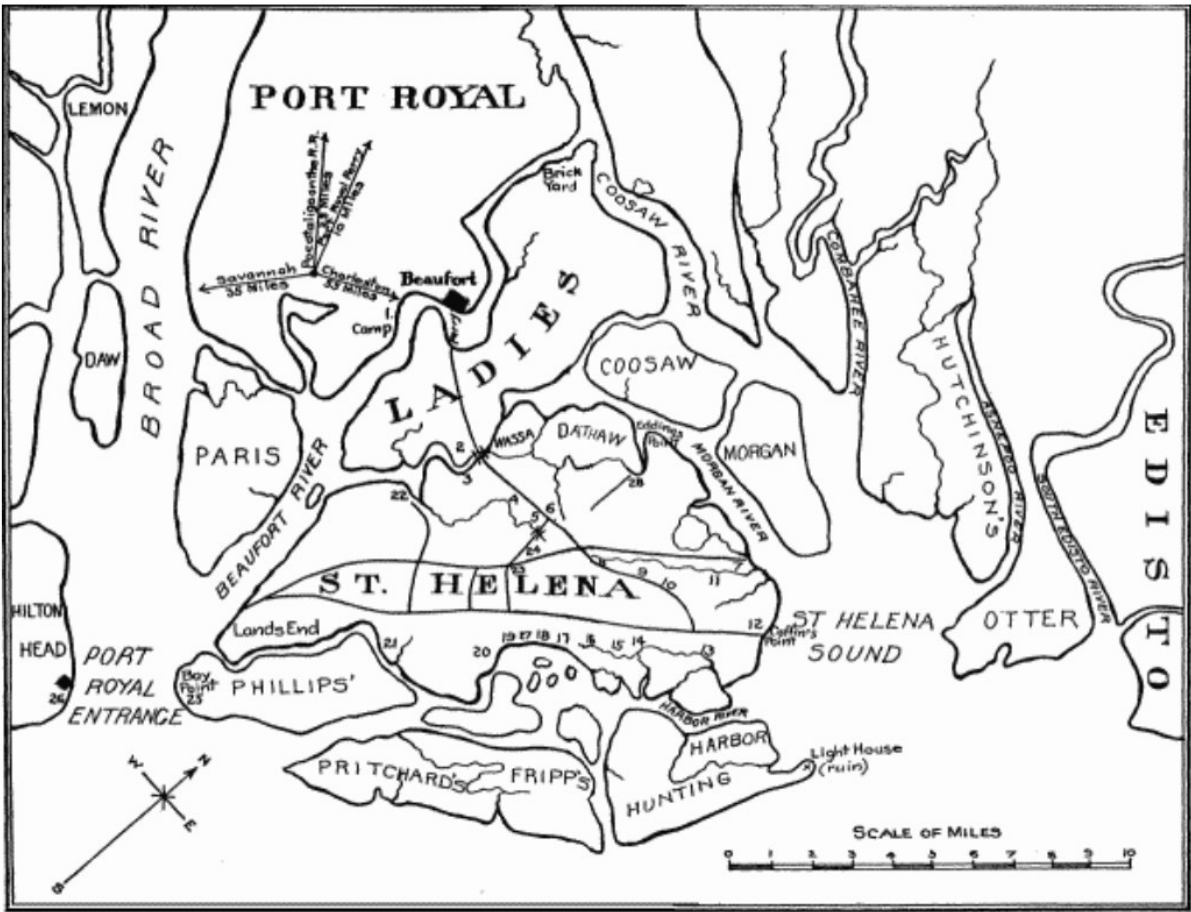
²⁶ United States Senate, "U.S. Senate: The Civil War: The Senate's Story," United States Senate, accessed February 13, 2024, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/civil_war/RoadtoWar.htm.

²⁷ National Park Service, "Battle of Fort Sumter, April 1861 (U.S. National Park Service)," March 30, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/battle-of-fort-sumter-april-1861.htm>.

²⁸ Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), xi.

²⁹ Orville Burton and Wilbur Cross, *Penn Center: A History Preserved* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 9; National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 4.

Figure 4.
Map of Sea Island Plantations, South Carolina



THE SEA ISLANDS OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Source: Letters from Port Royal
Written at the time of the Civil
War, Elizabeth Ware Pearson.

Source: Pearson, Elizabeth Ware.
Letters From Port Royal Written At the
Time of the Civil War. Boston: W.B.
Clarke company, 1906.

KEY TO MAP OF THE SEA ISLANDS OF SOUTH CAROLINA	
PLANTATIONS.	
Cherry Hill (T. A. Coffin)	16
Coffin's Point (T. A. Coffin)	12
Corner (J. B. Fripp)	5
Eustis	2
Alvirah Fripp (Hope Place)	18
Edgar Fripp	20
Hamilton Fripp	10
J. B. Fripp (Corner)	5
Capt. John Fripp (Homestead)	8
Capt. Oliver Fripp	22
Thomas B. Fripp	9
Fripp Point	11
Frogmore (T. A. Coffin)	19
Rev. Robert Fuller ("R.'s")	4
Hope Place (Alvirah Fripp)	18
Dr. Jenkins	21
Mary Jenkins	28
Martha E. McTureous	14
James McTureous	15
Mulberry Hill (John Fripp)	17
The Oaks (Pope)	3
Oakland	6
Pine Grove (Fripp)	13
Pope (The Oaks)	3
"R.'s" (Fuller)	4
Smith	1
Dr. White	27
BRICK CHURCH (Baptist)	24
WHITE CHURCH (Episcopal)	23
ST. HELENA VILLAGE	7
FORT WALKER	26
FORT BEAUREGARD	25
CAMP OF THE FIRST SOUTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEERS (COLONEL HIGDONSON)	1

No longer under the whip and eye of enslavers, the formerly enslaved reasoned that freedom had come. Immediately they began living as free men and women, doing as they pleased. Freedpeople took what they wanted from the plantations they built. They smashed cotton gins, which were symbols of slave labor. They helped themselves to the food they had planted and marked off plots of plantations as their own acres. Soon members of the U.S. army joined in taking the spoils of war. In response, some former planters returned in the darkness of night and set fire to their cotton houses to keep Federal forces from harvesting the crop.³⁰

Military officials realized they needed to restore order. Valuable cotton needed to be harvested and the formerly enslaved needed education. Land and labor issues needed to be settled. Soon, questions arose concerning whether the formerly enslaved could or would fight Confederates in battle. Much of the responsibility of establishing order fell to the U.S. Department of Treasury, the federal agency charged with overseeing abandoned Confederate property including enslaved people. The official position of Black men and women on the island had not yet been determined. No longer enslaved, but not yet legally free, the U.S. government classified them as contraband of war, to be used at the military's discretion.³¹

Seeking an economic and humanitarian answer to the challenges, Salmon Chase, Secretary of the Treasury Department, assigned Edward Pierce, a young Massachusetts lawyer, as special agent to Port Royal. Pierce arrived on St. Helena, choosing the Oaks Plantation House, the former plantation of J.J.T. Pope as his headquarters. Located on the west side of St. Helena, the Oaks was the first plantation reachable on the island by boat from Beaufort, making it a strategic location as a command post.³²

Pierce was described as “a man of strong antislavery convictions..[who had] more experience with ‘contrabands’ than anyone.”³³ With the aid of the Educational Commission, the National Freedmen's Relief Association, Port Royal Relief Committee, the American Missionary Association, and other northern benevolent societies, Pierce recruited superintendents to revive and manage the cotton plantations and inspire teachers with a missionary zeal to educate the formerly enslaved as preparation for freedom. Together, the federal government, northern land agents, teachers, and the formerly enslaved forged a new economic, political, and social order in a rehearsal for freedom.

³⁰ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, Pages 16–17.

³¹ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 4.

³² E. Thomas Sims and Sherry Piland, “‘The Oaks,’ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form” (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, August 22, 1988), <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/beaufort/S10817707042/S10817707042.pdf>.

³³ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, Page 21.

Labor and Land

Port Royal and St. Helena Island were sites of early experiments by the Federal government to support land ownership and paid labor for Black men and women.

One of the first orders awaiting Pierce was the management of free labor on area plantations under Federal control. Freedpeople and superintendents differed on how to work, whom to work for, and how to pay workers. The Federals wanted freedpeople to bring in the cotton crop of 1861 for shipment to the North where it could be ginned and sold, with proceeds going to the United States Treasury to finance the war.³⁴ Freedpeople no longer wanted to plant cotton, a bitter reminder of slavery. They also wanted to be paid as they worked, prior to full harvest of the crop, and asked for wages higher than what the agents offered. Laura Towne, a northern teacher who dedicated her life to educating St. Helena's freedpeople, noted in her diary on April 24 and April 27, 1862:

The cotton agents promised last year and now are just paying for the cotton picked on their promise, one dollar in four—the rest in orders on their stores, where they sell molasses at fifteen cents a pint and soap and salt in proportions. They... take it hard that they must work at cotton again this year, especially as it must be to the neglect of their corn upon which they have the sense to feel that their next winter's food depends... They do not understand being paid on account, and they think one dollar an acre for ploughing, listing, or furrowing and planting is little, which of course it is.³⁵

Edward Philbrick, one of the northern recruits, took a keen interest in controlling land and supervising freedpeople who picked cotton for wages for the federal government. Philbrick also noted freedpeople's reluctance to work in the cotton fields:

April 11- People all start for the cotton field in good humor. Driver is called off by Mr. S [the cotton agent] to furnish him with a crew; while he is absent from the field, the people mostly women and children say among themselves, "Here are twenty-four of our husbands and brothers gone to work for their own selves, what's the use of our working for our driver...—let's go to work for ourselves, too," and away they scatter...Some go catching crabs, some go planting corn on their own hook. All leave the field early.³⁶

³⁴ Rosengarten, *Tombee: A Portrait*, 60.

³⁵ Towne, "Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884," 16–17.

³⁶ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 81–82.

Freedpeople exhibited their agency regarding the value of their labor. They staged a rebellion at Coffin Point, refusing to work in cotton fields for four hours. They insisted on only planting and harvesting corn. They threatened to break into the corn house if they were not provided with food. The standoff ended when Philbrick gave in to freedpeople's demands, giving them a plot of land to grow provisions and a separate plot to grow cotton. He also paid laborers for each step of cultivating cotton, which gave freedpeople a measure of self-reliance.³⁷

The Treasury Department was also responsible for selling property abandoned by fleeing Confederates. In June 1862, Congress passed legislation that allowed for the "collection of the direct tax in insurrectionary districts." The Act established the U.S. Direct Tax Commission and authorized seizure and auction of property when owners failed to pay taxes within 60 days of notification of delinquency. Land sold at public auction was not to exceed 320 acres.³⁸ The Tax Commissioner and General Rufus Saxton debated whether land should be set aside for Black heads of households. As a result of this act, celebrated freedman Robert Smalls would later emerge as the highest bidder at a tax auction for a property in Beaufort.

In the predawn hours of May 13, 1862, Smalls, enslaved and living in Charleston, commandeered the Confederate Warship, *Planter*. He delivered the *Planter* to a fleet of Federal ships anchored outside Charleston Harbor, freeing himself and others onboard. For capturing the *Planter*, Smalls received a Congressional reward of \$1,500.00 and became a war hero. In an 1863 tax sale, Smalls used the \$605 of his reward to purchase a home on Prince Street in Beaufort where he and his mother were once enslaved by Henry McKee.³⁹ The house remained with the Smalls family until the early 1950s. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974. In 2023, the National Trust for Historic Preservation purchased the house.

On January 17, 1863, editors of *The Free South* reported that the U.S. Tax Commission would sell confiscated lands on St. Helena to the highest bidder at an auction scheduled for February 11, 1863. Northern teachers and Federal officials sympathetic to freedpeople objected to the sale being open to all bidders. They believed freedpeople should be given some preference in the disposition of lands that they had toiled on under slavery. Without safeguards, speculators might outbid freedpeople at auction.⁴⁰ Their petition was heard, and on February 6, 1863, Congress amended the act. President Lincoln empowered the tax commission to reserve land for government use and charitable, educational or police purposes, with a significant part of land reserved for freedpeople.⁴¹

³⁷ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 82–83.

³⁸ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 200–201.

³⁹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 34, 99.

⁴⁰ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 211–12.

⁴¹ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 214.

The first land sale on the island took place March 9, 1863. Of the 76,775 acres, 60,296 were set aside for the government. Individuals purchased 16,479 acres at an average of \$1.00 an acre. Several plantations, totaling about 2,000 acres, were purchased by a group of freedpeople.⁴² Several freedpeople on Marion Chaplin's place at the east end of St. Helena "clubbed together and bought their plantation."⁴³ For \$7,000, Philbrick, with financial backing of additional northern men, bought 11 cotton plantations equaling 8,000 acres and leased two others from the government, in effect controlling one-third of St. Helena Island.⁴⁴ He would sell the land to Black islanders in 1865 for \$5.00 an acre, a price below true value but four dollars higher than the price he paid.⁴⁵

In a land sale in September of that year, President Lincoln set aside a further 16,000 of its 60,000 acres for freedpeople. These acres constituted specific plantations, divided into 20-acre lots and sold at \$1.25 an acre.⁴⁶ General Saxton, who oversaw the Port Royal Experiment on behalf of the military, preferred that all the government's acres be available to freedpeople, but he failed in circumventing the President's instructions.⁴⁷ Although freedpeople could not choose from all available government-owned land, the acres that were set aside allowed them to become self-sufficient landowners. By 1865, some 347 freedpeople had purchased land on St. Helena.⁴⁸ Land sales on the island continued until 1890, allowing Black farmers to become landowners.

The federal government continued its effort to provide those who were formerly enslaved with land. In March 1865, Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was patterned after the Port Royal Experiment, but on a much larger scale.⁴⁹ Through an office in Beaufort, the Bureau issued rations, provided medical care, supervised labor contracts between planters and freedpeople, and worked with benevolent societies to establish schools in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena. The Freedmen's Bureau branch was in the Old Beaufort College Building at Newcastle and Craven streets in Beaufort.⁵⁰

⁴² Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 214–15.

⁴³ Rosengarten, *Tombee: A Portrait*, 263.

⁴⁴ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 215.

⁴⁵ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 310.

⁴⁶ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 275.

⁴⁷ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 275.

⁴⁸ Rosengarten, *Tombee: A Portrait*, 263.

⁴⁹ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 7.

⁵⁰ SC Picture Project, "USC Beaufort," SC Picture Project, November 21, 2016, <https://www.scpictureproject.org/beaufort-county/usc-beaufort.html>.

The Freedmen's Bureau was also granted authority to give legal title to land promised to freedmen under General William T. Sherman's special Field Order Number 15. The field order, issued January 1865, granted former slaves roughly 400,000 acres of confiscated Confederate land on the coastline from Charleston, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. The land was divided, giving each family up to 40 acres. The promise of land was short lived. In the fall of 1865, President Andrew Johnson rescinded the order and allowed Confederates whom he pardoned to reclaim their abandoned lands.⁵¹ The Bureau was tasked with giving freedpeople the heartbreaking news. However, most freedpeople in the Port Royal area, including St Helena, were spared the disappointment and retained their lands since they purchased the acres under the tax law of 1862.

With their new wages, freedpeople needed a place where they could deposit and save their funds. In March 1865, Congress chartered the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company (Freedman's Bank) an outgrowth of efforts to provide a savings institution for Black soldiers of the Civil War. In 1866, bank officers at the headquarters in New York opened a branch in downtown Beaufort on Bay Street⁵² as shown in Figure 5. It was one of 37 branches established primarily in southern states. Thousands of freedpeople, free people of color, white men and women, churches, clubs, burial societies, associations, and organizations deposited their funds in the Beaufort branch. Mismanagement by the institution's trustees on a national level and the economic downturn in 1873 led to the failure of the Freedman's Bank. Beaufort depositors lost an estimated \$100,000 when the bank closed its doors in 1874.⁵³

Education

Part of the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park since 2017, Brick Church (also known as Brick Baptist Church) on St. Helena Island is significant as one of the first schools in the south for formerly enslaved men, women, and children. Following Emancipation, education was as important to freedpeople as landownership. In April 1862, Laura Towne arrived at the Sea Islands. Educated in Pennsylvania as a homeopathic physician and teacher, Towne joined about 20 others sponsored by the Port Royal Relief Committee. Towne soon decided to work on St. Helena teaching young children at the Oaks Plantation House, the headquarters of the Port Royal Experiment. Her life-long friend and fellow educator Ellen Murray joined her in June of that year. Together, with nine students, they began teaching.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Henry Louis Gates Jr., "The Truth Behind '40 Acres and a Mule,'" *The Root*, January 7, 2013, <https://www.theroot.com/the-truth-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule-1790894780>.

⁵² John Davis, Jr., "Bankless in Beaufort: A Reexamination of the 1873 Failures of the Freedmen's Saving Branch at Beaufort, South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* Vol. 104, No. 1 (January 2003): 26–27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27570611?seq=7>.

⁵³ Davis, Jr., "Bankless in Beaufort", 46.

⁵⁴ History of American Women, "Laura Towne," History of American Women, November 7, 2011, <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2011/11/laura-towne.html>.

Figure 5.
Freedman's Bank in Beaufort, South Carolina



Source: Hubbard & Mix, photographer. Freedman's Bank Beaufort So. Ca. South Carolina United States Beaufort, 1863.
[Beaufort, S.C.: Hubbard & Mix, practical photographers, between and June 1866] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016645520/>.

The school quickly outgrew the Oaks Plantation House, numbering 80 students by September 1862 (Figure 6). Towne and Murray moved classes to Brick Church. Built by the enslaved in 1855 for a white congregation, Brick Church illustrates its legacy through small fingerprints imbedded in several bricks that suggest the use of enslaved children in shaping the earthen blocks.⁵⁵ While white congregants allowed the enslaved to attend services at the church, they were relegated to the balcony, where they stood, out of sight of whites on the main floor.⁵⁶ Freedpeople assumed control of Brick Church after enslavers fled the island and the church became a center of education, worship, community, and political meetings on the Island.

Early days of instruction were an adjustment for teachers and students. Towne described the children as having:

no idea of sitting still or giving attention of ceasing to talk aloud. They lay down and went to sleep, they scoffed and struck each other. They got up by the dozens, made their curtsies and walked off to the neighboring fields for blackberries, come back to their seats with a curtsy when they were ready. They evidently could not understand me, and I could not understand them, and after two hours and a half of effort I was thoroughly exhausted.⁵⁷

In October 1862, Charlotte Forten a free Black woman from an influential abolitionist family in Philadelphia, joined Towne and Murray. Freedpeople were initially uncertain about the brown-skinned, educated Forten, but she won their hearts when they heard her play the piano. Forten noted how eager the children were to learn. Forten always included Black heroes in her teaching. She spoke of John Brown and the “noble” Toussaint Louverture, writing in her diary, “It is well that they sh’ld know what one of their own color c’ld do for his race. I long to inspire them with courage and ambition and high purpose.”⁵⁸ Forten also taught night classes for adults on the Island, giving those who had been enslaved most of their lives an opportunity to learn to read and write. Forten left Penn School in the latter part of May 1864, due to poor health.

Within two years, classes outgrew space at Brick Church. In 1864, a three-room, prefabricated building that was meant to serve as a schoolhouse arrived on St. Helena, a gift of the Freedman’s Aid Society (Association) of Pennsylvania (Figure 4). The schoolhouse was assembled adjacent to Land’s End Road, now Martin Luther King, Jr., Highway, across from Brick Church. Towne named the school in honor

⁵⁵ Brick Baptist Church, “Brick Baptist Church,” Brick Baptist Church, 2005, <http://www.brickbaptist.com/history.html>.

⁵⁶ Brick Baptist Church.

⁵⁷ Towne, “Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884,” xv.

⁵⁸ Forten, *Journal of Charlotte L. Forten; with an Introd. and Notes by Ray Allen Billington*, 133.

Figure 6.
Prefabricated Penn School Building



Source: Hubbard & Mix, photographer. Miss Laura Town's i.e. Towne's school, St. Helena Island, South Carolina. South Carolina United States Saint Helena Island, 1863. [United States: Publisher not identified, between -June 1866] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015646740/>.

of William Penn, a Quaker leader who oversaw the founding of Pennsylvania. In 1864, Hasting Gantt, a freedman and entrepreneur, sold a 58-acre tract of land to the school.⁵⁹ Gantt sold an additional 61 acres to Penn School in 1902 and made provisions in 1905 to donate his remaining 10 acres to the school upon his death as described in Beaufort County Deed Book 24:345 and Book 27:61.⁶⁰

Children at Penn School were advancing well by the summer of 1865. Towne wrote in her diary:

Our school does splendidly, though I say it. The children have read through a history of the United States and an east physiology, and they know all the parts of speech, and can make sentences, being told to use a predicated, verb, and adverb. Ellen's class is writing composition. We are going to have a grand school exhibition before we close, with dialogues, exercises in mathematics, in grammar, geography, spelling, reading, etc., etc.⁶¹

From its founding, private donors supported Penn School including the Philadelphia Relief Association and the Benezet Society of Germantown, Pennsylvania. Towne's family also sent funds and Towne often worked without pay. In 1877, during a hostile political era in Beaufort, St. Helena residents were "forbidden to raise money for school purposes...or any school tax."⁶² Despite financial challenges, Penn School continued serving the community. In 1882, Penn School established Darrah Hall. Named in memory of Towne's sister, Sophia Towne Darrah, the hall was originally on what was known as "The Green" at "The Corners," an area at the intersection of what is now US Highway 21 and Martin Luther King Jr. Road (originally Land's End Road). The Corners was the site of several cultural and economic entities and organizations important to the community including the Corner Store and Corner Packing Shed, the Knights of Wise Men Lodge, and the York Bailey house. A graduate of Penn School, Bailey was the first African American physician on St. Helena Island.⁶³

Fire resulting from the great 1893 hurricane destroyed the original Darrah Hall. The hurricane obliterated structures across St. Helena Island and the Beaufort District and left an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 dead. Darrah Hall was quickly rebuilt in 1893 or 1894 and moved to a different location on

⁵⁹ Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 25.

⁶⁰ Beaufort County Registrar, "Beaufort County Register of Deeds," Beaufort County Register of Deeds, 2020, <https://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/register-of-deeds/index.html>.

⁶¹ Towne, "Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884," 163.

⁶² Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 39.

⁶³ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, "Historic Structure Report: Darrah Hall, Reconstruction Era National Historical Park," National Park Service, December 2, 2019, 15, <http://npshistory.com/publications/reer/hsr-darrah-hall.pdf>.

“The Green,” an open central space of the Penn School’s campus.⁶⁴ In the 1950s, it was moved to its current location “on the edge of campus” at Penn Center and is the oldest building on the campus.⁶⁵

Education was paramount to Black parents in Beaufort and Port Royal. In a contract approved by the Freedmen’s Bureau, a freedwoman gave up her son to be educated and raised by a white benefactor as doing so was beyond her means (Figure 7). In 1867, the board of the Beaufort County School District purchased Block 31 in Beaufort (the current site of USC Beaufort) to construct a public school for Black children. African American men prominent during Reconstruction served on the school’s Board of Directors, among them Robert Smalls.⁶⁶ The 1905 Sanborn map, (Figure 8), shows the “colored” public school north of the “white” public school, each bounded by Carteret, Greene, New, and Washington streets.

The Superintendent of Education files found in the South Carolina Freedmen’s Bureau Records document the Hooper School in Port Royal. A photograph, circa 1860 -- 1870, (Figure 9) identifies the building as Old Fort School at Port Royal. In 1898, Boston school teacher Rachel Crane Mather opened a school in Port Royal that would bear her name. Supported by the Woman’s [sic]. American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Mather School originally served as a boarding school for elementary-aged African American girls. It expanded its mission after Reconstruction, eventually becoming a co-ed institution.⁶⁷

Camp Saxton Site

The Camp Saxton Site is nationally significant as an intact portion of the Federal camp occupied from November 1862 to January 1863 by one of the first Black regiments mustered into service during the Civil War. It also was a site of the ceremony and public reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all those enslaved in areas that were in rebellion against the United States.

Upon its military victory at Port Royal, the Federal government established the U.S. Department of the South, with headquarters at Hilton Head, South Carolina, at the entrance to Port Royal Sound. In March 1862, Major General David Hunter was placed in command to ensure Federal control over the area. In May of that year, Hunter added to the complex issues of the Port Royal Experiment when he announced a proclamation declaring that the enslaved in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina were free.

⁶⁴ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, “Darrah Hall.” 15.

⁶⁵ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, “Darrah Hall.” 15–21.

⁶⁶ Muriel Washington Smalley et al., “Robert Smalls High School Reunion Papers,” n.d., 1, <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1676474571/beaufortk12scus/osgawlf2qxin2r8btn2a/RSHSReunionpages.pdf>.

⁶⁷ National Park Service, “The Mather School (U.S. National Park Service),” November 16, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/places/mather-school.htm>.

Figure 7.
Mother Gives Child to be Educated

WINDSOR

This agreement made and entered into by and between Rose Manigault (a colored woman), party of the first part and Nelson R. Seouel party of the second part (white), both of the town of Beaufort State of South Carolina, Witnesseth:

That the party of the first part being desirous that her son named Edward Portius a colored boy of about fifteen years of age should be brought up, cared for and educated in a Christian family that he may become an honest and useful member of Society and of the Church and being unable from want of means and of education to do this for her son, now hereby solemnly and fully agrees that she will give up and yield up unto the said Nelson R. Seouel all charge and control of every description of her said son Edward Portius (formerly a slave and owned by the Rev. Stephen Elliott) until he becomes twenty one (21) years old: the said Nelson R. Seouel to exercise full power and authority and control over the said Edward Portius as if he were his own son.

And the said Nelson R. Seouel hereby fully agrees to receive as above the said Edward Portius to care for him, clothe him and educate him in the common branches of the English language, to treat him kindly and to make him as far as possible a useful member of Society.

Witness our hands and seals on this First day of August A.D. Eighteen hundred and Sixty Six.

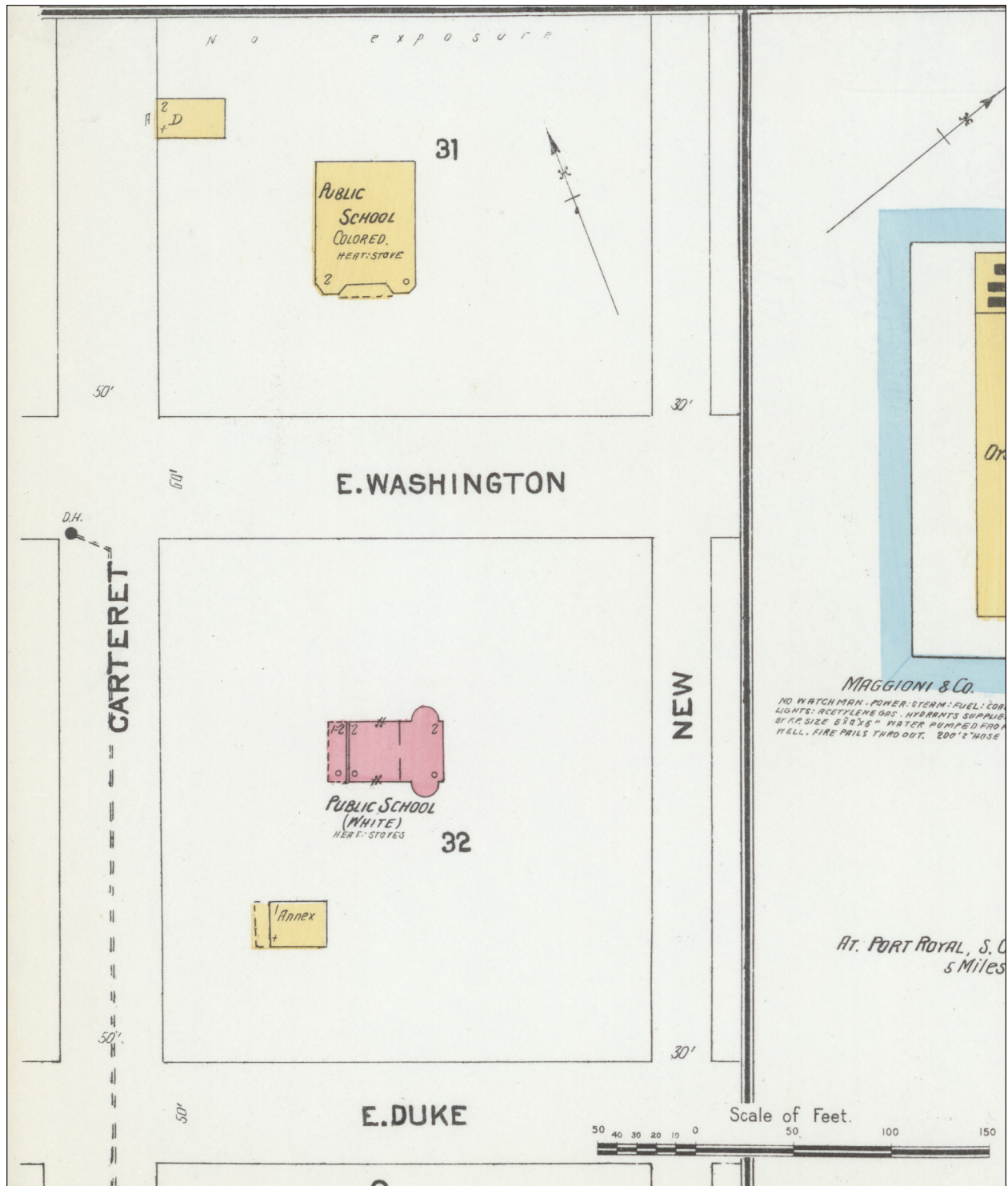
Witness.

E. R. Champney
Nathan Ritter

Rose Manigault
mark
Nelson R. Seouel

Source: Ancestry.com The National Archives in Washington, DC; Washington, DC, USA; Records of the Field Offices For the State of South Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872; NARA Series Number: M1910; NARA Reel Number: 59.

Figure 8.
1905 Sanborn Map Showing Separate Schools for Black and white Students



Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina. Sanborn Map Company, Jun, 1905. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn08117_005/.

Figure 9.
Old Fort School at Port Royal



Source: Low Country Digital Library. n.d.

The proclamation was issued without the knowledge or authorization of President Abraham Lincoln. Hunter then made the unilateral decision to raise a regiment of Black men to fight for the Federal cause.⁶⁸

To Hunter's dismay, freedmen on St. Helena did not readily come forth to enlist. Some were farming and providing for their families, or had heard rumors that the "Yankees" would sell them to Cuba. Others had a distrust for the government, which had been slow in paying wages. When the men did not enlist, Hunter sent troops to round-up all able-bodied men between ages 18 and 45 and bring them to his Hilton Head headquarters. Some men fled and hid. Their wives wailed as the roundup was reminiscent of Black men being captured and sold.⁶⁹

Eventually, Hunter conscripted enough men to establish a 500-man unit. An irate Congressman from Kentucky, questioned if indeed Hunter had raised a regiment of Black men "fugitive or captive." Hunter wrote in response that "No regiment of fugitive slaves has been or is being organized in this department. There is, however, a fine regiment of loyal persons whose late masters are fugitive rebels—men who everywhere fly before the appearance of the national flag..."⁷⁰

Lincoln revoked Hunter's proclamation of freedom and refused to acknowledge or approve payment for the Black regiment. Having failed to gain the president's support, Hunter disbanded all but one company of the regiment in August 1862.⁷¹

President Lincoln assigned General Saxton to serve under Hunter's supervision. Throughout the summer of 1862, northern public opinion became more favorable to using Black troops and Lincoln was prepared to exercise the power bestowed in the Militia Act of July 1862 to "employ as many persons of African descent as he may deem necessary to suppress the rebellion."⁷² With the act signed into law, Secretary of War General Edwin Stanton authorized Saxton to "arm, equip and receive into service, volunteers of African descent, their number not to exceed 5,000."⁷³

⁶⁸ Power and Wright, "'Camp Saxton Site,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," Section 8, Page 6.

⁶⁹ Towne, "Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884," 37, 107.

⁷⁰ Joseph T. Wilson, *Black Phalanx; a History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1175-1812, 1861-'65* (American Publishing Company, 1888), 152, <https://ia600702.us.archive.org/16/items/blackphalanxhist00wils/blackphalanxhist00wils.pdf>.

⁷¹ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 189.

⁷² University of Maryland, "The Second Confiscation Act, July 17, 1862," Freedmen and Southern Society Project, November 30, 2023, <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/conact2.htm#:~:text=And%20be%20it%20further%20enacted%2C%20That%20all%20slaves%20of%20persons,captured%20from%20such%20persons%20or.>

⁷³ Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 191.

Saxton quietly began recruiting Black men, using more humane tactics than Hunter. He relied on freedman Prince Rivers, a sergeant from Hunter's original regiment, to persuade other freedmen to enlist. Saxton reminded the men of Robert Smalls, who had returned to Beaufort and was earning \$50 a week operating a store for freed people. Smalls told Hunter he was going to enlist in a Black regiment, stating, "How can I expect to keep my freedom if I am not willing to fight for it? ...Yes I should enlist if I were making a thousand dollars a week."⁷⁴

By mid-November 1862, Saxton reported that 550 men had enlisted in his regiment. The regiment trained and drilled at Camp Saxton. Named for the general, the camp utilized the Old Fort, (named because it contained the remnants of Fort Frederick) the former cotton plantation of John Joyner Smith, an antebellum Beaufort District enslaver.⁷⁵

Saxton persuaded Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a prominent Boston abolitionist and then captain in the newly formed 51st infantry, to lead the Black regiment. The new regiment was designated the First South Carolina Volunteers (Colored). They were the first officially authorized Black regiment regularly mustered into the United States Army.⁷⁶ Their recognition came two months before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation

Crowds of all types came to Camp Saxton on Port Royal, January 1, 1863, to witness the momentous occasion of the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. Black men and women of Beaufort and St. Helena Island, now landowners or at least working for wages, arrived. The northern missionaries came, perhaps hoping to hear the spirituals and praises that slavery's shackles had been broken. Teachers Laura Towne, Ellen Murray, and Charlotte Forten were present. Military officers arrived.

It is likely that Harriet Tubman, the "Moses" of her people, stood among the crowd. On July 17, 1863, *The Boston Weekly Commonwealth* reported that when Tubman heard of Port Royal's capture by Federal forces, she traveled to Port Royal to serve as a nurse and a spy, gathering military intelligence. Tubman would become the first woman to lead an armed military operation in the United States. On June 2, 1863, under the command of Union Colonel James Montgomery, Tubman led 300 Black soldiers of the Second South Carolina Volunteer Infantry in the Combahee Ferry Raid, rescuing more than 700

⁷⁴ Forten, *Journal of Charlotte L. Forten; with an Introd. and Notes by Ray Allen Billington*, 138.

⁷⁵ Power and Wright, "'Camp Saxton Site,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," Section 8, Pages 7-8.

⁷⁶ Power and Wright, "'Camp Saxton Site,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," Section 8, Page 7.

enslaved men, women, and children along the Combahee River.⁷⁷ Susie King, wife of Edward King, a non-commissioned officer with the First South Carolina Volunteers regiment, attended the Emancipation Day ceremonies. Secretly learning to read while enslaved, King (later Taylor) became a nurse, teacher, and friend to the First South Carolina Volunteers.⁷⁸ She later penned her experiences, becoming the only African American woman to publish her memories of the Civil War.⁷⁹

Black men and women in Beaufort area were safely behind Federal lines. However, still they were not officially free. While the Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862 freed all people enslaved in the Confederate territories occupied by the U.S. Army, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, issued on January 1, 1863, notionally changed the status of 3.5 million enslaved people in Confederate territories to free.⁸⁰ Although true freedom for all enslaved would come in 1865 with ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the Proclamation captured the hearts and imaginations of millions. The Emancipation Proclamation also officially announced the acceptance of Black men in the U.S. Army and Navy, acknowledging their right to fight for their own freedom.⁸¹

Saxton chose to mark the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation with a grand celebration. Barrels of molasses, loaves of bread and nearly a dozen oxen were split and cooked in anticipation of the 5,000 attendees.⁸² Men constructed a stage for dignitaries to view the event and for the band of the Eight Maine, a guest army band.⁸³ The First South Carolina Volunteers stood close to the platform. Black men and women filled the spaces in the vast grove of oak trees stretching from the Smith Plantation to the Beaufort River.

The ceremony opened with a prayer followed by Dr. William H. Brisbane's reading of the Proclamation. A South Carolina enslaver turned abolitionist, Brisbane had freed those whom he had enslaved years before. Events were centered around what would become known as the "Emancipation Oak" which remains on Camp Saxton Site. The site of the Oak is considered hallowed ground. Reverend Mansfield French of the American Missionary Association, presented Colonel Higginson and the First South Carolina Volunteers with two flags: the flag of the United States and the regimental colors, both

⁷⁷ National Park Service, "Combahee River Ferry & Harriet Tubman Bridge (U.S. National Park Service)," February 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/places/combahee-river-ferry-harriet-tubman-bridge.htm>; National Park Service.

⁷⁸ National Park Service, "Susie King Taylor (U.S. National Park Service)," November 15, 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/people/susie-king-taylor.htm>.

⁷⁹ National Park Service, "Susie King Taylor".

⁸⁰ National Park Service, *About Reconstruction Era (National Park Service)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service), accessed June 13, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/reconstruction/about.htm>.

⁸¹ National Archives, "The Emancipation Proclamation," National Archives, January 28, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation>.

⁸² Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, 195.

⁸³ Higginson, "Army Life in a Black Regiment By Thomas Wentworth Higginson ...," 40.

donated by abolitionists from New York and Connecticut.⁸⁴ The regimental flag, donated by the abolitionists in New York, was embroidered with the name of the regiment and the words "The Year of Jubilee has come!"⁸⁵

As Reverend French ended his presentation, and before Colonel Higginson could respond, the voice of an elderly person rose unexpectedly from the crowd singing "My Country Tis of Thee." Two women joined in. Higginson recorded in his diary, "Firmly and irrepressibly the quavering voices sang on, verse after verse; others of the colored people joined in; some whites on the platform began, but I motioned them to silence. I never saw anything so electric. It made all other words cheap. It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed."⁸⁶

Higginson presented the regimental colors to Sargeant Prince Rivers, who openly vowed to defend the colors with his life. He then presented the regimental colors to Corporal Robert Sutton. Sutton spoke, saying, "there is not one in that crowd, but had a sister, brother or some relation among the rebels still....that they should not be content until all their people were well off, [even] if they died helping them."⁸⁷

The celebration continued with speeches, songs, and a dress parade by the First South Carolina Volunteer (Figure 10). Forten commented of the day's event:

It was a brilliant sight—the long line of men in their brilliant uniform, with bayonets gleaming in the sunlight....It seemed to me nothing c'd be more perfect. To me it was a grand triumph—that Black regiment doing itself honor in the sight of white officers, many of whom doubtless 'came to scoff.' It is typical of what the race, so long down-trodden and degraded, will yet achieve on this Continent."⁸⁸

Political Advancement

Nowhere else in the South did Black men become the dominant force in gaining self-governance during Reconstruction than in South Carolina. It was the only state in the South to have a Black majority in the legislature, with Beaufort County leading the way.⁸⁹ During Reconstruction, South Carolina had the largest number of Black elected officials of any state.

⁸⁴ Power and Wright, "'Camp Saxton Site,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," Section 8, Page 11.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Ware Pearson, ed., *Letters from Port Royal, Writting at the Time of the Civil War [1862-1868]* (Boston, Massachusetts: Clarke, 1906), 130, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/24722/24722-h/24722-h.htm>.

⁸⁶ Higginson, "Army Life in a Black Regiment By Thomas Wentworth Higginson ...," 40–41.

⁸⁷ Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal, Writting at the Time of the Civil War [1862-1868]*, 131.

⁸⁸ Forten, *Journal of Charlotte L. Forten; with an Introd. and Notes by Ray Allen Billington*, 156.

⁸⁹ Giselle White-Perry, "In Freedom's Shadow," National Archives, August 15, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/fall/greaves.html>.

Figure 10.
First South Carolina Volunteers



Source: Brady, Mathew B., Approximately, photographer. 1st U.S. colored infantry. United States, None. [Between 1861 and 1865] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004673345/>.

After the Civil War, Congress focused on reuniting the nation and protecting the rights of formerly enslaved men and women. This called for dramatic changes to the constitutions of states that had seceded from the United States. In 1865, South Carolina submitted a constitution for reentry. The constitution denied voting rights to qualified freedmen and returned many of the former Confederate leaders to power. The state constitution also included Black Codes that strictly regulated the lives of those who were formerly enslaved. Congress rejected the constitution as it did little to change the status quo.⁹⁰

When South Carolina and other southern states were slow in forming constitutions recognizing the rights of freedmen, Congress passed Reconstruction Acts (1867 to 1868). The Acts outlined terms for readmission into the United States. Southern states, except Tennessee, were divided into five districts and placed under military control. Each state was required to write a new constitution, to be approved by a majority of voters. Voters were to elect delegates to a constitutional convention. All male citizens, except former Confederate leaders, over the age of 21 were permitted to participate in state constitutional conventions. State constitutions were required to provide for universal male suffrage, without regard to race or former condition. Congress required each state to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. New state constitutions had to be approved by the U.S. Congress.⁹¹

On November 19 and 20, 1867, South Carolina voters went to the polls to vote “For a Convention” or “Against a Convention.” Those who voted in favor of a convention also selected delegates from their respective voting districts. Of the state’s 127,761 registered voters, 63 percent were African American males, the majority if not all were members of the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln. Most registered white voters, overwhelmingly Democrat, stayed away from the polls. They hoped to defeat the constitution by ensuring that less than 50 percent of registered voters participated in the vote. More than 90 percent of registered Black males voted, thwarting the plan of white Democrats.⁹² The 1868 Voter Registration Volume for the St. Helena Precinct in Beaufort County lists the names of men on St. Helena’s Island who had registered to vote (Figure 11).

⁹⁰ Cole Graham, “Constitutions 1669-1988,” *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (blog), July 21, 2022, 1669–1988, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/constitutions/>.

⁹¹ Charleston County Public Library, “The South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868,” Charleston County Public Library, March 2, 2018, <https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/south-carolina-constitutional-convention-1868>.

⁹² College of Charleston Special Collections, “Freedoms Gained and Lost,” The Constitutional Convention of 1868 – Special Collections, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://speccoll.cofc.edu/freedoms-gained-and-lost/the-constitutional-convention-of-1868/>.

Figure 11.
1868 Voter Registration, St. Helena Island Precinct

<i>St. Helena Parish Reg. Precinct</i>		<i>Beaufort</i>
<i>Description</i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Colored</i>	<i>Blake. Hector</i>	
	<i>Brown. Aaron</i>	
	<i>Brown. Dick</i>	
	<i>Brown. Abram</i>	
	<i>Bush. Sam</i>	
	<i>Broughton. Robert</i>	
	<i>Bright. Solomon</i>	
	<i>Belian. Moses</i>	
	<i>Brown. June</i>	
	<i>Brown. Reclin</i>	
	<i>Bowles. Bryan</i>	
	<i>Brown. Tony</i>	
	<i>Brown. Mark</i>	
	<i>Brown. Abram</i>	
	<i>Bowles. Eugene</i>	
	<i>Brown. Tony. C. G.</i>	
	<i>Bowles. David</i>	
	<i>Bradley. Dick</i>	
	<i>Brown. Heane</i>	
	<i>Brown. Paris</i>	
	<i>Blake. Game</i>	
	<i>Brown. Ismael</i>	
	<i>Brown. Idy</i>	
	<i>Brown. Hannay</i>	
	<i>Barnicell. Thomas</i>	
	<i>Black. Simon</i>	
	<i>Brown. Richard</i>	
	<i>Brown. James. Mr. G.</i>	
	<i>Brown. Sandy</i>	
	<i>Bowles. Moses</i>	

Source: College of Charleston Special Collections <https://speccoll.cofc.edu/freedoms-gained-and-lost/the-constitutional-convention-of-1868/>

Due to their participation in the election, Black Republicans were instrumental in deciding delegates who would craft the new state constitution. Of the 124 delegates elected statewide, 76 were Black and 48 were white. Eight men from Beaufort County were elected as delegates, six of whom were Black: Robert Smalls, J.J. Wright, W.J. Whipper, Loudon S. Langley, and Francis E. Wilder.⁹³ Wilder's racial identity remains undetermined. He is described on his Freedman's Bank register of signature form as having "white complexion."

South Carolina delegates met in Charleston on January 14, 1868. For 53 days, delegates hammered out a new state constitution that encompassed revolutionary changes. The state constitution removed racial and property ownership barriers to voting. Women gained rights to control their own wealth and to get divorced. The constitution created a public education system open to all. No one could be imprisoned because of debt. The constitution made provisions for the deaf and blind, and overturned Black Codes.⁹⁴ In April 1868, voters accepted the new constitution, and in July of that year, South Carolina was readmitted into the United States.

During Reconstruction, Black men in South Carolina were elected to several public offices. In the U.S. Congress, South Carolina led all states, northern and southern, with eight Black representatives: Richard Cain, Robert C. De Large, Robert Elliott, Joseph Rainey, Alonzo J. Ransier, Robert Smalls, Thomas E. Miller, and George Washington Murray. On the state level, Richard H. Gleaves and Alonzo J. Ransier were elected Lieutenant Governor, with Ransier later serving as a U.S. Congressman. Francis Cardozo served as secretary of state and later state treasurer. Voters elected Henry Hayne to succeed Cardozo as secretary of state. Hayne also was elected to the state land commission, as was Robert C. DeLange. Renty Greaves was elected county commissioner of Beaufort County. Jonathan J. Wright was elected to the state supreme court. Robert Elliott and Samuel J. Lee served as speakers of the house.⁹⁵ Many others were elected to office at the local level.

Despite the impressive number and offices held by Black officials, political gains by African Americans in South Carolina during Reconstruction were short-lived. Violence and intimidation against African Americans became the order of the day. During the 1876 gubernatorial campaign, the "Red Shirts," a white paramilitary group armed with rifles and clubs, arose in full force. The Red Shirts threatened Black

⁹³ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 116–17.

⁹⁴ College of Charleston Special Collections, "Freedoms Gained and Lost."

⁹⁵ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 118.

voters, broke up Republican meetings, whipped freedpeople, and assassinated Black leaders. In July 1879, in what became known as the Hamburg massacre, the “Red Shirts” gathered 100 or more armed men to ransack Black homes and shops, capturing 25 Black militiamen and killing five in cold blood.⁹⁶ More than 90 Red Shirts were indicted. None were convicted.⁹⁷ Following the massacre, the state supreme court named Democrat Wade Hampton the winner in South Carolina’s tight gubernatorial race. The violence effectively kept Black men from the polls.

In national politics, Congress declared Rutherford B. Hayes the victor in the contested 1876 presidential election. In return for the southern vote needed for his win, Hayes pulled troops out of the South, leaving Black men and women to the hostilities of whites. This is reflected in a rapid decrease in voting numbers. In 1880, approximately 58,000 African Americans voted but by 1888 only about 14,000 cast ballots.⁹⁸

In 1895, South Carolina officials led by Democrat U.S. Senator Benjamin Tillman, former governor of South Carolina, met to rewrite the state constitution. Of the 162 delegates, 156 were Democrat and only six were Black Republicans. R.B. Anderson represented Georgetown County and Beaufort County sent Robert Smalls, W.J. Whipper, Thomas E. Miller, Isaiah Reed, and James Wigg. Wigg was noted in a *Palmetto Post*, January 10, 1895, news article as a large landowner from St. Helena, and later a merchant in Beaufort and a School Commission member.⁹⁹

With Democrats in control and Federal troops withdrawn, delegates fashioned a constitution that effectively rescinded the rights of formerly enslaved Black people. Throughout the constitutional convention, the Black delegates spoke out against the disenfranchisement of Black voters and appealed to white delegates for a sense of fairness. Each speech and resolution was heard. Each failed to gain the needed support from the body of delegates. At the end of the convention, the delegates were asked to affix their signatures to the final document. The five African American delegates from Beaufort did not sign.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 127–28.

⁹⁷ The Charleston Museum, “The Charleston Museum | News and Events ‘Waving the Bloody Shirt:’ Reconstruction Era Violence and Political Identity,” 2024, <https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/news-events/waving-the-bloody-shirt-reconstruction-era-violence-and-political-identity/>.

⁹⁸ Hyman S. Rubin III, “Eight Box Law,” *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, July 26, 2022, <https://www.sencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/eight-box-law/>.

⁹⁹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 166.

¹⁰⁰ South Carolina ETV Commission, “The Constitution of 1895 | History of SC Slide Collection | Knowitall.Org,” Knowitall.org, 2024, [https://www.knowitall.org/photo/constitution-1895-history-sc-slide-collection#:~:text=When%20the%20convention%20met%20in,away%20from\)%20African%2DAmericans.](https://www.knowitall.org/photo/constitution-1895-history-sc-slide-collection#:~:text=When%20the%20convention%20met%20in,away%20from)%20African%2DAmericans.)

The 1895 state constitution was adopted without popular referendum or support. Under the new constitution, Black Codes resurfaced as Jim Crow laws. Voting rights were extended to men with property assessed at \$300.00 or more and to those who could read and write portions of the state constitution. A poll tax was also put into effect requiring voters to pay \$1.00 to cast a vote.¹⁰¹ In effect, the 1895 Constitution nullified the Fifteenth Amendment, stripping Black men of their constitutional right to vote. Black political power in South Carolina soon ended.

Benjamin Tillman, U.S. senator from South Carolina who boasted about his participation in the Hamburg massacre, described how white Democrats suppressed the Black vote and seized power: “We have done our level best. We have scratched our heads to find out how we could eliminate every last one of them. We stuffed ballot boxes. We shot them. We are not ashamed of it.”¹⁰²

The Reconstruction Era is often portrayed as a catastrophic error, a foolish and corrupt effort to place northern carpetbaggers and African Americans over fundamentally loyal white Southerners. Novels by Thomas Dixon and the film *Birth of a Nation* (1915) perpetuated this narrative.¹⁰³ Robert D. DeLarge, a delegate to the 1868 state constitutional convention, member of the State House of Representatives and a U.S. Representative from South Carolina, wrote in his report to the 42nd Congress that graft and bribery spread in the state. He asserted that the “worst feature of corruption in South Carolina is that members of both parties and men of all classes are involved in it, and that public abhorrence of corruption, which is the safeguard of popular government, seems wanting or dormant.”¹⁰⁴

Miller, who served in the U.S. Congress from 1888 to 1891, recounted the accomplishments of the Reconstruction legislatures in which African Americans served:

We were eight years in power. We built schoolhouses, established charitable institutions, built and maintained the penitentiary system, provided for the education of the deaf and dumb, rebuilt the jails and courthouses, rebuilt the bridges and reestablished the ferries. In short, we had reconstructed the State and placed it upon the road to prosperity, and at the same time, by our acts of financial reform transmitted to the Hampton Government an indebtedness not

¹⁰¹ College of Charleston Special Collections, “Freedoms Gained and Lost,” D. D. Wallace, “The South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1895,” *The Sewanee Review* 4, no. 3 (1896): 356.

¹⁰² Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 42.

¹⁰³ Downs and Masur, “The Era of Reconstruction 1861- 1900,” 88.

¹⁰⁴ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860 to 1880* (New York N.Y.: The Free Press, 1998), 423.

greater by more than \$2,500,000 than was the bonded debt of the state in 1868 before Republican Negroes and their white allies came into power.¹⁰⁵

Scholar and sociologist W.E.B. DuBois concluded in his study of United States Reconstruction: "It seemed fairly clear that what South Carolina wanted was not reform, even in its narrower sense; that what it was attacking was not even stealing and corruption. If there was one thing that South Carolina feared more than bad Negro government, it was good Negro government."¹⁰⁶

By the turn of the century, African American men in South Carolina had lost the right to vote, and much of their freedom. Nevertheless, they forged ahead, determined to regain political power and tilling the ground for the twentieth-century fight for human and political rights.

Into the Twentieth Century

African Americans in Beaufort and on St. Helena entered the twentieth century determined to hold the nation to its promises of citizenship and freedom. Penn School continued to educate children on St. Helena, and Towne and Murray remained at the school until their deaths. Towne passed away on St. Helena in 1904 and was buried with her family in Philadelphia's Laurel Cemetery. A memorial marker in her honor stands in the Brick Baptist Church cemetery. Murray died in 1908. Hundreds attended her service, held in Darrah Hall. She was buried at the Brick Baptist Church Cemetery. Forten died on July 23, 1914. She was buried in Harmony Memorial Park in Washington, D.C. A stone was erected in Forten's memory near the entrance to the Brick Baptist Church later in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷

In 1902, Susie King Taylor, educator and friend to the First South Carolina Volunteers, published *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33D United States Colored Troops Late 1st S.C. Volunteer*. In her memoir, she recalled of the valor of the men of the First South Carolina, the horrors of war, and reflected on the violence and failures of Reconstruction, writing, "Was the war in vain? Has it brought freedom, in the full sense of the word, or has it not made our condition more hopeless?"¹⁰⁸

In 1901, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, now Hampton University, sponsored Penn School. That year, the school was renamed Penn Normal Industrial and Agricultural School. The school modeled its curriculum after the Hampton Tuskegee Model, which emphasized agriculture.

¹⁰⁵ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860 to 1880*, 428.

¹⁰⁶ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860 to 1880*, 428.

¹⁰⁷ Rich Condon, "Penn School's Founders at Rest (U.S. National Park Service)," National Park Service Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, December 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/penn-schools-founders-at-rest.htm>.

¹⁰⁸ Susie King Taylor, "Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33d United States Colored Troops Late 1st S.C. Volunteers.," Documenting the American South, 1902, 61, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/taylorsu/taylorsu.html>.

Practical agriculture courses were taught in addition to Penn's regular courses in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Hampton Institute sponsored the school until 1917. In the 1900s, two other northern white women, Rossa Cooley and Grace House, directed the school. School leaders built the Cope Shop in 1912 to house classes in wheelwrighting, blacksmithing, basketry, carpentry, and cobbling. Penn School staff dedicated the building at the school's 50th anniversary in 1912. Penn School students, alumni, former US Congressman Robert Smalls, and veterans of the First South Carolina Volunteers attended the celebration.¹⁰⁹

African American education progressed in Beaufort. In 1925, the Beaufort County School Board built a new school for Black students. Located in an area bounded by Ribaut Road and Boundary Street, just west of the historic "Dixon Village," the new facility was named Robert Smalls High School in honor of the celebrated statesman.¹¹⁰ The Mather School at Port Royal served the African American community for a century, graduating its last class in 1968. Today, it is the Technical College of the Lowcountry.¹¹¹

In land ownership and employment, residents on St. Helena Island fared better than many African Americans in the South in the early twentieth century. The typical Black farmstead of the first generation of freedmen included a small frame house that was modestly furnished and a vegetable garden.¹¹² On November 24, 1929, the *Sunday Record* (Beaufort) reported that African Americans on St. Helena owned more homes than in other sections of the state and everyone grew crops and owned farm animals.

Islanders were never forced into sharecropping, although some rented land. Truck farming that shipped produce north, allowed many farmers to retain a portion of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Others found employment at phosphate mines and the oyster industry. Nature dealt the hardest blows to St. Helena and its farmers. Cotton crops of 1903, 1904 to 1905, 1910 and 1911 were disappointing. Environmental and natural disasters continued to plague the area with the Hurricane of 1911 and the coming of the boll weevil in 1919 resulting in heavy losses.

In 1927, residents of St. Helena joined thousands in celebrating the opening of the bridge from the town of Beaufort to Lady's Island. From Lady's Island, a ferry transported residents, visitors, and their automobiles to St. Helena. Soon, a more affluent community emerged in Land's End on the southern peninsula of St. Helena Island. In the 1920s, developers placed advertisements in the *Beaufort Gazette*

¹⁰⁹ Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 52.

¹¹⁰ Washington Smalley et al., "Robert Smalls High School Reunion Papers."

¹¹¹ National Park Service, "The Mather School."

¹¹² National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Page 7.

announcing waterfront lots for \$300.00 (Figure 12). The bridge that brought more whites to the Island also provided islanders with easier access to the mainland. Many young people ventured from the island for wider opportunities.¹¹⁴ Citing cost and an average curriculum, Penn School officials closed the institution in 1948. Beaufort County School System began transporting Island children to Beaufort to attend high school.¹¹⁵ That year, the institution was redefined as a community agency, known as Penn Community Services. In 1950, it became Penn Center. The Center trained midwives, opened the first day care center on the Island for African American children, and developed a community health clinic.¹¹⁶

Brick Church Baptist has remained in use since 1856. Records at Beaufort Baptist Church indicate that in May 1884, congregant Lewis Reeve Sames of Texas arranged for the transfer of the property to Beaufort Baptist Church, the mother church. This church leased the Brick Baptist back to its African American congregations for \$120.00 per year. In 1954, the congregants signed a lease agreement for 25 years. The church suffered damage to the roof during Hurricane Grace in 1959. Beaufort Baptist Church transferred the property to the congregation in 1973 with the stipulation that if the church discontinued to function as a church, ownership would revert to the mother church. The Brick Church congregants took out a loan of \$100,000 for renovation to the church and facilities. In 2000, a release of a revisionary clause was recorded at the Registrar Mesne Conveyance. With this, Beaufort Baptist Church no longer stood to receive the property should it cease to serve as a church.¹¹⁷

Politically, African Americans in the Port Royal area, St. Helena, and all of South Carolina suffered setbacks under the 1895 state constitution. In a January 26, 1939, article, *Beaufort Gazette* covered State Representative Calhoun Thomas as he recounted the end of Black political leadership. Thomas noted that Beaufort had its last African American councilman in 1908, its last African American policeman in 1912, and its last African American postman in 1913. Thomas remarked that African Americans “at the present are satisfied,” but he expressed concern of a “movement on foot by labor unions affiliated with the C.I.O. to organize farm labor in Beaufort County.”

Determined to overcome obstacles, the African American community in South Carolina remained vigilant. One of the earliest Civil Rights cases in the state began in 1948, with *Brown v. Baskin*, which led to desegregated state political parties and an end to all-white primaries in South Carolina. In 1949, parents in Clarendon County asked the school board to provide school buses for Black children. In legal appeals and with the assistance of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund

¹¹⁴ National Park Service, *Historic Resources of St. Helena Island, c. 1740-1935*, Section E, Pages 8-9.

¹¹⁵ Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Penn Center, “Timeline of Penn Center History,” 2023, <https://www.penncenter.com/history-timeline>.

¹¹⁷ John Bennett et al., “Historic Structure Report: Brick Baptist Church in Reconstruction Era National Historical Park,” Historic Structure Report (Charleston, S.C.: Clemson University/College of Charleston Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, 2020), 20, Reconstruction Era National Historical Park.

Figure 12.
St. Helena Real Estate

A Chance

Read what Mr. N. L. Willet, Agricultural Agent C. & W. C. Ry., of Augusta, Ga., has to say about St. Helena Island, Fort Fremont, Bay Point and Lands End and the glories of an old world which will unfold itself when made accessible by the completion and opening of the new Beaufort Bridge, which will be about the first of April.

Mr. Willet tells the true story; his knowledge was gained by personal observation of this wonderful section; think well on what he says about the beauty and grandeur of Port Royal Sound, Beaufort River and the Atlantic Ocean as viewed from Lands End.

It is inevitable that the Southern peninsula of St. Helena Island, Lands End, is destined to soon become the playground of middle Georgia and South Carolina—as well as one of the most desirable locations on the coast for either summer or winter homes—being only twelve miles or, thirty minutes run by automobile from Beaufort or, an afternoon's drive from any point in the State.

Whether viewed from the standpoint of investment, a recreation place, a permanent home site, a summer or winter cottage—the rare opportunity herein presented to acquire a lot at a nominal cost is worthy of your thought.

We are offering for the brief period of thirty days only—TWENTY water front lots at \$300.00 and TWENTY inside lots at \$100.00 each. These lots are 50 feet wide and range from 125 to 250 feet deep—all are on high and dry sand bluff fronting a hard sand beach—which is 300 feet wide and one mile long—overlooking Port Royal Sound, Beaufort River and the Atlantic Ocean.

Not more than two water front and two inside lots will be sold to any one person at the price herein named. After this first installment of lots is taken—not another one will be sold for less than 100 per cent above the price herein asked.

The Peoples Bank, Beaufort, S. C., is Trustee for this Company; a certified check for the price of the lot, made payable to this bank as Trustee, will have to accompany each application. The bank will hold such funds in escrow until application is passed on, not to exceed thirty days, after which time, deed will be delivered or money refunded.

Exchange of lots may be made within sixty days from date of purchase, without extra cost, for any unsold water front or inside lot.

A map of the property may be seen and information obtained at the office of T. R. Webb, LaFayette Building, Beaufort, S. C., where selection of lot may also be made, or, a blue print of the property and a map of the surrounding country will be mailed on application to the undersigned.

Respectfully,

Lands End Land Company

Trower Cravens
Beaufort, South Carolina

Source: The Beaufort Gazette, Feb 10, 1927, 5 Newspapers.com.

Where the Land Ends, and the Water Begins

THE BREEZES BLOW AND GOOD FISHING STARTS ROAD HAS BEEN OPENED TO LANDS END—FOLLOW ROAD SIGNS

LANDS END SUBDIVISION
St. Helena Island, S.C.
Surveyed by Arthur O. Christensen
For Trower Craven Jan. 19, 1926.

For Information, See T. CRAVENS or T. R. WEBB

Source: Beaufort Gazette, Aug 4, 1927, 3.

the case, known as *Briggs v. Elliott*, ultimately challenged the constitutionality of segregation. *Briggs* was one of five cases combined with *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that separate public schools were unconstitutional.¹¹⁸

Student demonstrations nationwide accelerated in the 1960s and further challenged segregation. High school students and college students at South Carolina's historically Black colleges and universities staged sit-ins and peaceful protests. In 1963, students won a landmark case in *Edwards et al. v. South Carolina* when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that arresting students who refused to disperse when marching in front of the state house violated their First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment rights. In February 1968, highway patrolmen opened fire on 200 unarmed students at South Carolina State University. Three young men were shot and killed by patrolmen, and 28 people were wounded in what became known as the Orangeburg Massacre.

Throughout the 1960s, Penn Center served as a place of rest and strategy for human and Civil Rights organizations. Groups including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Peace Corps, World Peace Foundation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee met and shared housing facilities at the Center.¹¹⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., often visited Penn Center, staying in Gantt Cottage, a frame cottage built by students in the 1940s on the southeastern section of Penn School National Historic Landmark District. Dr. King's arrival dates were kept secret from all on the Island, including Penn Center staff, to ensure his safety.¹²⁰ Because Dr. King also came to the Center for rest, Penn Center constructed a cabin for him on the marsh. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, before the cabin was completed and it is referred to today as the Martin Luther King Cabin.

In June 2015, South Carolina and the nation grieved when a white gunman opened fire and killed Reverend Clementa Pinckney, a former state senator, and eight parishioners in a mass shooting at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston. In 2022, the reconstructed Porter's Chapel A.M.E. Church was renamed Pinckney-Porter's Chapel in honor of Reverend Pinckney. According to the congregation, Porter's Chapel was initially founded on Parris Island but moved to Port Royal around 1901. Reverend Pinckney served as pastor of Porter's Chapel from October 1996 to March 1998. Attendance at Porter's

¹¹⁸ Brown Foundation, "Brown Case - Briggs v. Elliott | Brown Foundation," Brown Foundation, 2023, <https://brownvboard.org/content/brown-case-briggs-v-elliott>.

¹¹⁹ Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 73.

¹²⁰ Burton and Cross, *Penn Center*, 88.

Chapel A.M.E. began to dwindle in 2004 and the church fell into a state of disrepair. Efforts to move and rebuild the deteriorating building from its original location at 1518 Old Shell Road in Port Royal began around 2016.¹²² Pinckney-Porter's Chapel was rebuilt at its current site between 2020 and 2022 (Figure 13).

From 1861 to 1900, formerly enslaved men, women, and children and their descendants tasted freedom in the Federal government's Port Royal Experiment and in African American leadership during Reconstruction. Political representation, land speculation, and equal justice remain at the forefront of conversations in Beaufort County and throughout the nation. African Americans persevere in their struggle for Civil Rights and to experience the fulfillment of the promises of Reconstruction. In the words of Beaufort's Robert Smalls, Reconstruction-era state legislator and U.S. Congressman, "My people need no special defense, for the whole history of them in this country proves them to be the equal of any people, anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life."¹²³

¹²² Stephen Fastenau, "In Church Where Pinckney's Voice Resonates, a Need to Know More," *The Island Packet*, September 1, 2016, <https://www.islandpacket.com/news/local/community/beaufort-news/article98121197.html>.

¹²³ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 225.

Figure 13.
Pinckney-Porter's Chapel



Source: NSA

Chapter 4. Survey Results

REER's discontinuous operational boundary comprises 65 acres, 16 of which are under federal jurisdiction. Three of the six resources within REER's operational boundaries are managed through cooperative agreements. NPS purchased Darrah Hall and the Old Beaufort Firehouse in 2017 and acquired Beaufort Bible Chapel in December 2023. The Camp Saxton Site is managed in partnership with the U.S. Navy, SCDNR, and Beaufort County.¹²⁴ Resources within REER's operational boundary have been exceptionally well-documented through HSRs, CLRs, and the park's GMP.

In September 2023, NSA historians surveyed six resources in REER's operational boundary. These six resources contained a total of 14 buildings, structures, or objects including restrooms, storage buildings, and cemeteries (Table 2 and Appendix A). Four resources appeared in previously recorded data: the Old Beaufort Firehouse, Darrah Hall, Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery, and Camp Saxton. Each of the previously recorded properties were listed in the NRHP either individually or as part of a district. The Old Beaufort Firehouse is listed as a contributing resource in the Beaufort Downtown Historic District, while Darrah Hall and the Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery are listed as contributing resources to both the Penn Center National Register Historic District and the Penn School National Historic Landmark District. Camp Saxton is listed individually in the NRHP as both an above-ground and archaeological resource. The Camp Saxton Site shares a parcel with the 1732 Fort Frederick. Listed in the NRHP in 1974, Fort Frederick lies within REER's legislated boundaries but outside of its operational boundaries and is managed by SCDNR.

Sites in this chapter are presented by NRHP status beginning with the park's sole unassessed resource, Beaufort Bible Chapel, and followed by resources that stand within, or contribute to, a NRHP-listed historic district including the Old Beaufort Firehouse, Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery, and Darrah Hall. Sites that contribute to a NRHP-listed district were assessed for individual potential for the NRHP. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the individually NRHP-listed Camp Saxton.

¹²⁴ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report 85% Draft," Cultural Landscape Report (Beaufort, South Carolina: National Park Service, Interior Region 2: South Atlantic-Gulf Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division, May 2023), Page 86.

Table 2. Historic Resources in REER

SC Survey Number	Resource	Date of Construction	Address	Current NRHP Status	NRHP Recommendation
5646	Beaufort Bible Chapel	1959	913 West Street, Beaufort	Beaufort Historic District (Non-contributing)	Recommended Not Eligible
5646.01	Beaufort Bible Chapel Storage Building	2011-2013	913 West Street, Beaufort	Beaufort Historic District (Non-contributing)	Recommended Not Eligible
0908	Old Beaufort Firehouse	1912	706 Craven Street, Beaufort	Contributing to the Beaufort Historic District	Recommended Not Individually Eligible, Remains Contributing to the Beaufort Historic District
0038.15	Brick Baptist Church	1855	85 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District	Recommended Individually Eligible; Remains Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District
0038.18	Brick Baptist Church Cemetery	c. 1820	85 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District	Recommended Individually Eligible; Remains Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District
0038.03	Darrah Hall	1882/1893	Penn Center Circle, West	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District	Recommended Individually Eligible; Remains Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District
N/A	Darrah Hall Restrooms	1994-2005	Penn Center Circle, West	N/A	Recommended Not Eligible and Non-contributing to the National Register and Landmark districts
N/A	Darrah Hall Storage Shed	2020	Penn Center Circle, West	N/A	Recommended Not Eligible and Non-contributing to the National Register and Landmark districts
N/A	Darrah Hall Hiking Trail	2023	Penn Center Circle, West	N/A	Recommended Not Eligible and Non-contributing to the National Register and Landmark districts
0019	Camp Saxton Site/Smith Plantation	1734, 1758-1861, 1862, 1946	18 Pinckney Boulevard	NRHP-Listed	Remains NRHP-Listed
N/A	Camp Saxton Site Magnolia Avenue	1758-1861	18 Pinckney Boulevard	NRHP-Listed	Remains NRHP-Listed
N/A	Camp Saxton Site Live Oak Grove	1758-1861	18 Pinckney Boulevard	NRHP-Listed	Remains NRHP-Listed
N/A	Camp Saxton Site Dry Pond	1758-1861	18 Pinckney Boulevard	NRHP-Listed	Remains NRHP-Listed
5647	Pinckney-Porter's Chapel	1901; Rebuilt 2020	27 Pinckney Boulevard	N/A	Recommended Not Eligible

Four of the 14 buildings documented in this study were determined not eligible for NRHP listing as they were not 50 years of age and did not meet Criteria Consideration G. These include the Darrah Hall Restrooms (constructed 1994-2005), the Darrah Hall Storage Shed (constructed in 2020), and the Darrah Hall Hiking Trail (2023). The circa 1901 Pinckney-Porter's Chapel (reconstructed 2020-2022) is recommended not eligible for the NRHP due to significant alterations completed during the removal of the building from its original site and its reconstruction.

In December 2023, REER acquired the Beaufort Bible Chapel at 913 West Street. Constructed in 1959, this one-story building was previously owned by the Southern Gospel Association. Though the building stands within the Beaufort National Register Historic District the building has not been evaluated for NRHP eligibility and was not identified as a contributing resource in the 304-acre district's NRHP nomination, completed in 1969 and revised in 2001. As such, the building was evaluated for NRHP eligibility as part of this study.

NSA historians revisited the resources and documented each with digital photography. Facility Management Software System (FMSS) data was collected for each resource and SC-SHPO forms were updated. Updated assessments and summaries of previous scholarship are presented in the following chapter.

Newly Evaluated Resource:

Beaufort Bible Chapel

SC Survey Site Number: 5646

Street Address: 913 West Street

PIN or Parcel Number: R120 004 000 0310 0000

Construction Date: 1959

National Register Recommendation: Not eligible; remains non-contributing to the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District (Listed 1969)

Ownership Status: NPS purchased the building and parcel in December 2023

Setting: Beaufort Bible Chapel is located at the northeast corner of West Street and Washington Street in a residential area about one-half mile from Beaufort's downtown. The church faces west towards West Street and occupies a 0.552-acre parcel. A picketed wood fence surrounds the parcel, roughly following the parcel line. The church building is framed by grassy clearings to the north and south and the south lawn is currently used for parking. Three non-historic concrete driveways grant access to the property; one extends from Washington Street at the southern parcel boundary while the other two travel east from West Street. These driveways are located between 30 and 45 feet north and south of the building's façade. The 1959 church shares the parcel with a circa 2017 shed and community garden (Figure 14).

Figure 14.
Beaufort Bible Chapel Site Map



Basemap: Bing Aerial Imagery (2024)

Historical Summary: Deeds for this property can be traced to 1852 when Edmond Rhett purchased the property from the U.S. Government.¹²⁵ Since then, ownership of the property has changed numerous times. From 1852 until at least 1906, two houses occupied the lot; however, by the time of the publication of the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, both were demolished.

The 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Beaufort illustrates an empty lot at the northeast corner of West and Washington streets. In 1958, the Southern Gospel Association purchased the parcel for \$800, constructing and dedicating the Beaufort Bible Chapel by 1959.¹²⁶

T. Michael Flowers founded the Southern Gospel Association in the late 1950s. Originally from Barbados, Flowers began teaching in Canada and Detroit before being summoned to Savannah in 1955 to start a Black Youth for Christ organization. While there, he became involved with a Bible camp in Beaufort led by Julius Dennis. When Dennis began working at a local shipyard, Flowers became leader of the Bible camp and traveled from Savannah to Beaufort every Tuesday and Sunday. The Bible Camp continued to grow and in 1959 Beaufort Bible Chapel was built to house the camp's activities and congregation. According to an interview, when Flowers took over the Bible camp, he was met with some opposition from other church leaders in Beaufort Bible Chapel. He expressed some discontent with the lack of leadership within the church, stating that "Beaufort is growing but not like the other assemblies." As of 1995, Flowers checked-in on the chapel in Beaufort on occasion but expressed concern regarding the future of the church.¹²⁷

In 2008, Beaufort Bible Chapel purchased the property at 913 West Street from the Southern Gospel Association for \$1. As the congregation continued to dwindle, the church finally ceased operations in 2021 and sold the property to Paul Keyserling for \$650,000. The Keyserlings donated the property to the United States Government in December of 2023.¹²⁸

Description: Beaufort Bible Chapel is a one-story, front-gable church with asphalt shingles covering the roof. Resting on a slab foundation, this building is of concrete block construction and is clad in brick veneer laid in a running bond with vinyl siding cladding the gable ends. A circa 1950 photograph of the church indicates that the original eight-over-eight wood sash windows have been replaced with simulated, divided-light vinyl sash and one-over-one wood sash windows (Figure 15). Six windows line

¹²⁵ 1836 Deed from U.S. Government to John Franz.

¹²⁶ Amanda Bentz, "Bible Chapel History" (Unpublished Manuscript, Beaufort, South Carolina, n.d.).

¹²⁷ Bentz, "Bible Chapel History."

¹²⁸ Bentz, "Bible Chapel History."

Figure 15.
1950s photo of Beaufort Bible Chapel



Source: Lucille Hassell Culp Collection, Low Country Digital Library.

the side elevations of the church's historic core. A partial-width, gable-front porch was added to the façade circa 2009 (Figure 16a). Supported by square vinyl columns, the one-story porch shelters the main entrance and is framed by two windows. Although the doors are not original to the building, they appear to be historic paneled wood doors with four lights. Colonial Revival stylistic elements surround the front door including fluted pilasters and a broken triangular pediment (Figure 16b). A half-moon vent is centered in the façade's gable field.

Between 1994 and 2005, Beaufort Bible Chapel was enlarged with two concrete block additions – one extending from the east side of the original church and one extending north, creating the church's current L-shaped footprint. Windows in the northeast wing are paired, six-over-six wood sash (Figure 17a). T1-11 siding clads the gable end. Three windows are situated along the north elevation, two, two-over-two aluminum sash and one, one-over-one aluminum sash window. The rear wing is accessed by a replacement, fiberglass door that is sheltered by an extended eave, modified around 2019 (Figure 17b).

The building's main entrance provides access to the former sanctuary. A generally open space, the former sanctuary has added popcorn ceilings, wood paneled walls, and wood flooring. The pulpit is located on the eastern wall of the sanctuary (Figure 18a). Behind the sanctuary is a hyphen that leads to the additions. This hallway contains a restroom, an exterior door, and drop-down access to the attic. Another hallway leads to office spaces in the back of the building (Figure 18b).

A circa 2017 front gable shed stands near the southeast corner of the building. Resting on wood slats atop stone or concrete block piers, this rectangular shed is clad in T1-11 siding and has a pair of wood doors on the south side (Figure 19a).

Evaluation: Properties can be eligible for listing in the NRHP if they are associated with an event or pattern of events that have contributed to the broad patterns of history at the local, state, or national level. Beaufort Bible Chapel was evaluated for significance under Criterion A in the areas of religion and social history. Beaufort Bible Chapel is one of many churches constructed in Beaufort in the mid-twentieth century and research did not reveal any significant historic events associated with the church. Therefore, the property does not rise to the level of significance required for individual listing in the NRHP. Therefore, Beaufort Bible Chapel is recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A.

Figure 16.
Site 5646, Beaufort Bible Chapel



A. Façade, Looking East



B. Front Entrance, Looking East

Figure 17.
Site Number 5646, Beaufort Bible Chapel



A. Rear Addition, Looking North



B. Addition on North Elevation, Looking South

Figure 18.
Site Number 5646, Beaufort Bible Chapel



A. Interior Main Room, Looking East



B. Hyphen Behind Sanctuary, Looking North

Properties can also be eligible for listing in the NRHP if they are associated with person or persons that have made significant contributions to our past at the local, state, or national level. The Beaufort Bible Chapel congregation was founded by Julius Dennis and Michael Flowers. Archival research did not indicate that either of these individuals are historically significant within local, state, or national contexts; furthermore their association with the Beaufort Bible Chapel would not best communicate their impact. Therefore, Beaufort Bible Chapel is recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B.

Beaufort Bible Chapel was evaluated under Criterion C for its significance in architecture. This front-gabled church features muted elements of the Colonial Revival style, a common church type and style observed in Beaufort County and the state of South Carolina. The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a style, period, or method of construction, and does not possess significance for its design or materials. The church building has several non-historic alterations, including a front porch gable portico, two rear additions, and replacement fenestration. Beaufort Bible Chapel, is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C and remains a non-contributing resource in the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District.

Integrity: A property may be eligible for listing in the NRHP if it possesses significance and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Beaufort Bible Chapel remains in its original location in a residential neighborhood, which strengthens its integrity of location and setting.

Beaufort Bible Chapel has diminished integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. Beaufort Bible Chapel's integrity of design has been affected by the three additions that changed the building's overall footprint and appearance from West Street. The resource's integrity of design is also impacted by the addition of synthetic replacement materials including vinyl siding, vinyl windows, and the circa 2009 replacement of the front porch. Additionally, the building also lacks integrity of association and feeling as it is no longer used for religious purposes and has been converted into offices. While the alterations to the building follow the expected pattern of changes over time that churches experience, these changes and the new use of the building diminish the overall integrity of the Beaufort Bible Chapel.

Resources in NRHP-listed Districts:

Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/Old Beaufort Firehouse

SC Survey Site Number: 0908

Street Address: 706 Craven Street

PIN or Parcel Number: R120 004 000 0982 0000

Construction Date: 1912

National Register Recommendation: Not individually eligible; remains a contributing resource in the Beaufort National Register Historic District (Listed 1969/Revised 1986 and 2001)

Ownership Status: NPS purchased the building and parcel in 2017

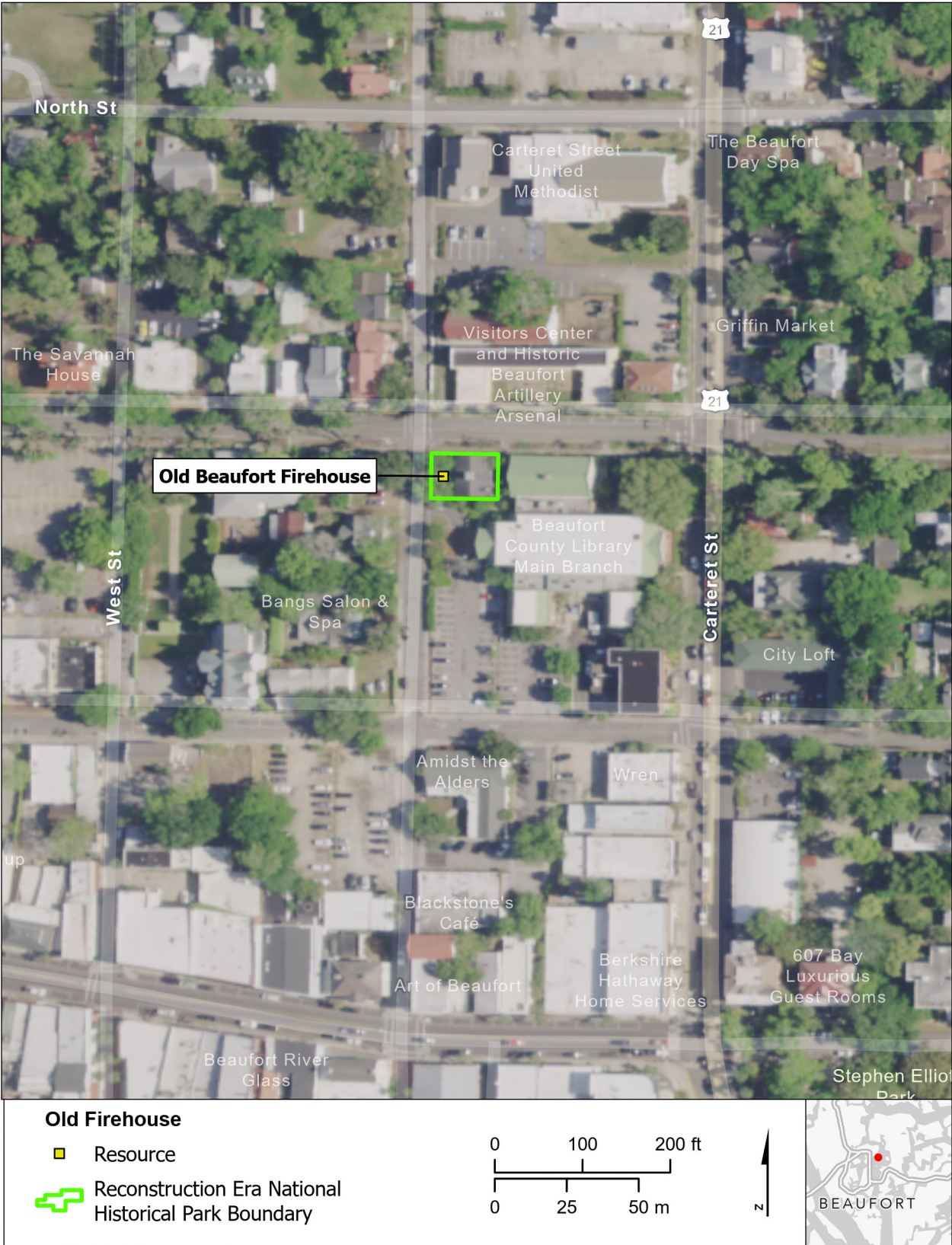
Setting: The former Beaufort Municipal Meat Market and Firehouse is situated in downtown Beaufort on the corner of Craven and Scott streets. Located in a historically hybridized commercial and residential area, the firehouse is approximately 30 feet north of the Beaufort Public Library and about 60 feet south of the Beaufort History Museum, located within the 1798 Arsenal (Figure 19). The building is fronted by a cast concrete courtyard with landscaped beds and a central brick water feature (Figure 20).

Historical Summary: Built to house a municipal meat market, 706 Craven Street is one of two almost identical buildings constructed in the 700 block of Craven Street around 1900. The market's sister building, 702 Craven Street, occupies the northwest corner of Craven and Carteret streets and was originally built as the city's firehouse. As the city of Beaufort expanded during the Reconstruction Era, the shopping and governmental centers of Beaufort shifted north from the city's waterfront. Mayoral candidate, W.F. Sanders, led the city's charge to construct a new meat market and fire station to serve Beaufort's growing population (Figure 21a). In 1911, the city set out to construct two identical buildings that would comply with the "high standards so characteristic of Beaufort."¹²⁹ Initially, city officials and Sanders proposed construction of two Colonial Revival buildings but were criticized for the high cost of construction at \$11,000. The selected designs exhibit identical exteriors with varied interiors. The arched openings at the meat market were filled with decorative iron grills that allowed for ventilation in the interior of the market. Air circulated through the grills and was vented through a cupola at the center of the roof.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, "Darrah Hall." "Reconstruction Era National Historic Park: Old Firehouse Historic Structure Report," Historic Structure Report (Atlanta, Georgia: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2019), Reconstruction Era National Historical Park.

¹³⁰ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, "Old Firehouse Historic Structure Report."

Figure 19.
Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/ Old Beaufort Firehouse

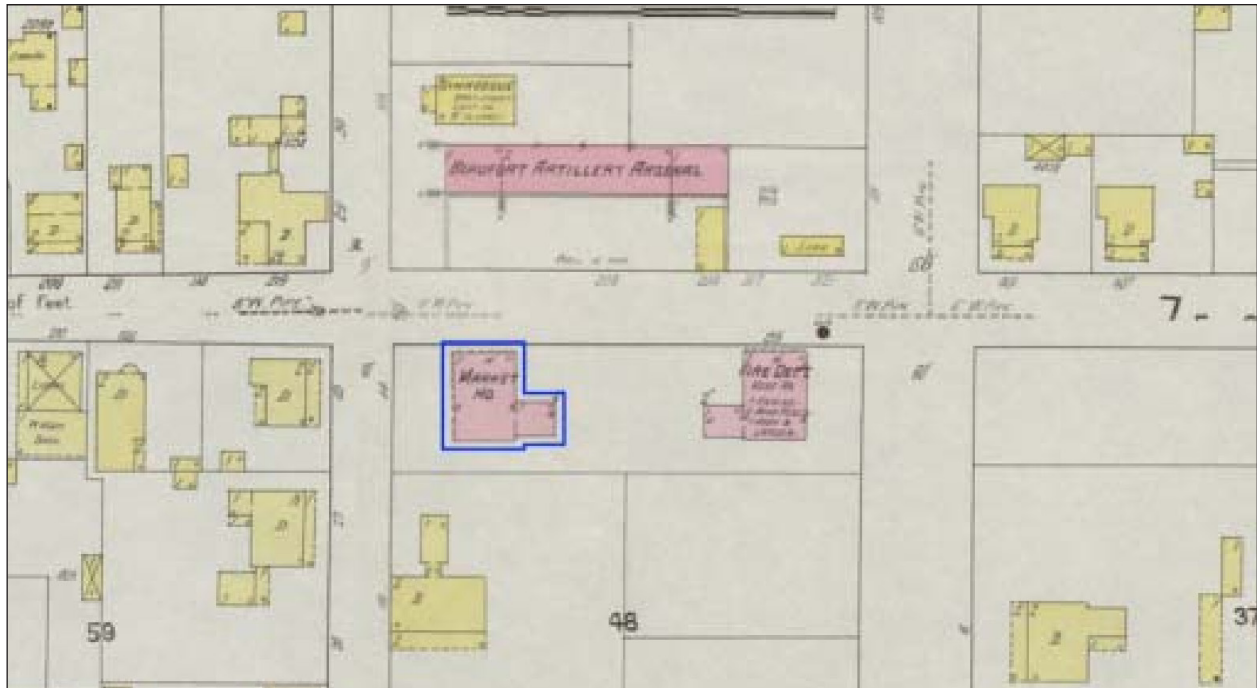


Basemap: Bing Aerial Imagery (2024)

Figure 20.
Site Number 0908, Old Firehouse, Courtyard and Water Feature, Looking South



Figure 21.
Site Number 0908, Old Firehouse



A. 1912 Beaufort Sanborn Map

Source: University of South Carolina Sanborn Fire and Insurance maps, Beaufort 1912, sheet 7.



B. 1924 Beaufort Sanborn Map

Source: University of South Carolina Sanborn Fire and Insurance maps, Beaufort 1924.

By completion of the 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the building at 706 Craven Street housed the city's fire station and was home to the Washington Steam Fire Engine Company No.2. Its sister building, the original fire station at 702 Craven, housed Beaufort's City Hall. The 1924 Sanborn map captures alterations made during the building's conversion from meat market to firehouse including the addition of an exterior gasoline tank to the southeast corner near Scott Street and a metal-clad addition on the south side of the building (Figure 21b). The building continued to house Beaufort's fire station until the late 1970s when reports of building failures including faulty electrical wiring, falling bricks in an arched doorway, and rodent infestations led the city to deem the building unsafe and decommission the building in 1980.¹³¹

The Beaufort County Library System purchased the former firehouse in 1987 with plans to expand the library's downtown location. This plan was short lived, and the building was not renovated. In 1992, Billy and Paul Keyserling purchased the firehouse from the county. At the time of the Keyserlings' purchase, the building was in a state of disrepair with the roof and second-floor deck in a state of collapse. Between 1992 and 1993, the Keyserlings renovated the building, converting it to commercial use. For over 20 years, the former meat market and firehouse was used as a coffee shop, bookstore, restaurant, and event space. On January 10th, 2017, the Keyserlings donated the firehouse to NPS for \$1 for use by the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park.¹³²

Description: The Old Firehouse is a one-and-one-half story building of common bond brick construction with a stone foundation. Clad in asphalt shingles, the roof has a lateral gable with a wood-frame cupola located centrally atop the roofline and a brick chimney near the southeast corner of the building. The north elevation fronts Craven Street and is defined by a single, central arched opening that likely housed the building's former Craven Street entrance. The former entrance has been enclosed with a single pane of glass and is flanked by two, original six-over-six wood sash windows with brick jack arches. While each of these three windows has a stone keystone, only the double hung windows have stone sills. A circular window is centered within the gable end with four cast-stone keystones (Figure 22a). The south elevation is identical to the north elevation (Figure 22b). Structural tie rods are visible on the north and south elevations.

¹³¹ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA. "Old Firehouse Historic Structure Report."

¹³² Panamerican Consultants, Inc, "Old Firehouse Historic Structure Report."

Figure 22.
Site Number 0908, Old Firehouse



A. North Elevation, Looking South



B. South Elevation from Library, Looking North

The building's west façade is symmetrical, defined by three large, fixed paned windows with brick Roman surrounds. The building's main entrance is located within the central arch and has a singular commercial glass door with a metal frame (Figure 23a). The east elevation is not symmetrical, the south end is sheltered by a shed roof canopy that shelters a fiberglass door with a six-light transom. Two six-over-six, double-hung wood sash windows are located on the north end of the east elevation (Figure 23b).

On the interior, the firehouse retains its original open-air design with minimal partition walls or division between the first floor and the mezzanine. The first floor currently houses the Park's giftshop and interpretive exhibits on the south and west sides, while the north end has been partitioned to create space for offices and break rooms. A three-foot wide, steel-frame staircase provides access to a second-floor mezzanine that houses additional office space and storage. The main floor contains approximately 1,304 square feet and the mezzanine contains about 662 square feet. In the center of the building, the interior space expands from the main floor to the roof and cupola (Figure 24).

Evaluation: In 2001, the former Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/Firehouse was identified as a contributing resource in NRHP-listed Beaufort National Register Historic District.¹³³ This section evaluates the building for individual significance for the NRHP under Criteria A, B, and C.

The former Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/Firehouse is associated with twentieth-century expansion of the city of Beaufort, however, the building is one of many constructed during this era and is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for community planning and development. Archival research did not reveal that the building is associated with an individual of particular historical significance and is therefore not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B. The former Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/Firehouse was evaluated for the NRHP under Criterion C for its significance in architecture. While the design of the building is unique, and the building is one of two nearly identical buildings constructed by the city government in the early twentieth century, significant alterations including the replacement of the original windows and doors have detracted from its material integrity. While the building does not rise to the level of significance required for individual listing in the NRHP under Criterion C, it does convey the look and feel of a historic commercial building and remains a contributing resource in the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District.

¹³³ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, "Old Firehouse Historic Structure Report."

Figure 23.
Site Number 0908, Old Firehouse



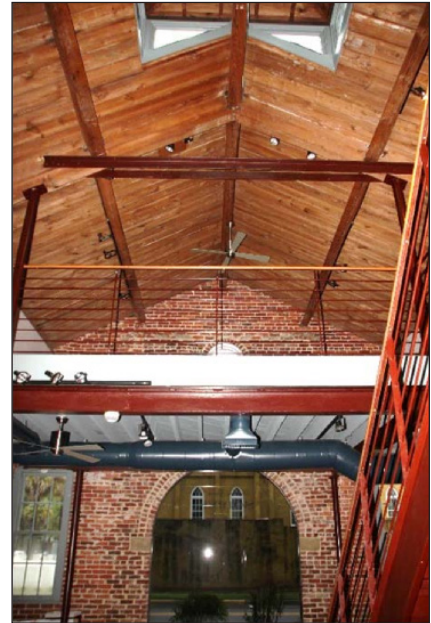
A. West Elevation and Front Entrance, Looking East



B. East Elevation, Looking Southwest

Figure 24.
Site Number 0908, Old Firehouse

A. Interior Mezzanine, Looking North



B. Interior Interpretive Area,
Looking South

C. Interior Space, Looking North



Integrity: A resource may be eligible for listing in the NRHP if it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The former Beaufort Municipal Meat Market/Firehouse remains in its original location in a historically commercial area of Beaufort, strengthening its integrity of location and setting. While the building has undergone significant renovations during its change in use, it retains key features that communicate its original design. Elements such as the building's stonework on the foundation, arches, and common brick bond exterior strengthen its integrity of workmanship, however, alterations including enclosure of the original entrances, and replacement of original windows and doors have negatively impacted the building's material integrity. Although the firehouse conveys the look and feel of a commercial property and retains the open interior from its time as a firehouse, its integrity of association and feeling have been impacted by various changes in use and addition of non-historic materials.

Brick Baptist Church

SC Survey Site Number: 0038.15

Street Address: 85 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, St. Helena Island

PIN or Parcel Number: R300 016 000 0095 0000

Construction Date: Circa 1855

National Register Recommendation: Recommended individually eligible for the NRHP; remains a contributing resource in the Penn Center National Register Historic District and the Penn School National Historic Landmark District

Ownership Status: NPS holds an easement on the Brick Baptist Church property that includes the building and surrounding one-acre.

Setting: Brick Baptist Church is located on Martin Luther King Dr. on St. Helena Island, seven miles east southeast of Beaufort and one-half mile south of the Frogmore community at the intersection of Martin Luther King Dr and U.S. Highway 21/Sea Island Parkway. The church is centered on a 2.64-acre property with an east facing façade. Two cemeteries are located on the property south and southeast of the building (SHPO Site Number 0038.18). The church shares the parcel with a wood-frame house and the 1984 Clarence Johnson Fellowship Hall and educational building, however, the church and cemetery are the only properties within REER's one-acre operational boundary (Figure 25).¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Brick Baptist Church, "Brick Baptist Church" 2005. <http://www.brickbaptist.com/history.html>.

Figure 25.
Brick Baptist Church Site Map



Basemap: Bing Aerial Imagery (2024)

Historical Summary: The oldest surviving church on St. Helena Island, Brick Baptist Church was constructed in 1855 on John W. Fripp's Corner Plantation. Though funded by wealthy white plantation owners, enslaved people constructed the building. The brick church likely replaced a frame chapel dating to circa 1820. Several burials in the associated graveyard predate the church's construction. There are currently two cemeteries on the property (Figure 26a). The northernmost cemetery appears to have been designated for the circa 1820 church's congregations, while the southeastern section of the cemetery postdates the Civil War. Although enslaved people constructed the church, services were segregated, and plantation owners only allowed a select group to attend services. People of African descent were required to sit in the balcony where they could hear the sermon but could not be seen by the white parishioners below.¹³⁵

A majority of St. Helena Island's plantation owners fled the island at the outbreak of the Civil War, leaving enslaved workers behind. At that time, the church closed its doors and remained shuttered until 1862, when it was reopened by Federal troops to a predominantly Black congregation. Very soon after, the Penn School began hosting classes of between 40 and 80 students at the church. As interest in the Penn School soared, the number of students rapidly increased to 140 and school leaders purchased land across the street for the foundation of the Penn School campus. Once the campus was able to offer classroom space in 1864, Brick Baptist Church was vacated and returned to its original function and continues operations today.¹³⁶

NPS provided deed research that yielded the following information. In 1954, the congregation of Brick Baptist Church signed a 25-year lease agreement with Beaufort Baptist Church stipulating that the congregation would pay \$1 per year for use of the building. In 1973, Beaufort Baptist Church transferred the property to the Brick Church congregation with the condition that the building must continue to function as a church or Beaufort Baptist Church would retake ownership. In 1994, the church acquired a loan for church renovations. Shortly after in 2000, Brick Baptist Church added a revisionary clause to the lease agreement stating that Beaufort Baptist Church could no longer reclaim the property if it ceased function as a church to allow the NPS to add this facility to the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Bennett et al., "Brick Baptist Church HSR," 11.

¹³⁶ Bennett et al., "Brick Baptist Church HSR," 16.

¹³⁷ Bennett et al., "Brick Baptist Church HSR," 20.

Figure 26.
Site Number 0038.15, Brick Church



A. Southwest Oblique, Looking Northeast



B. Cemetery, Looking South

Description: The design of this Federal style church is attributed to local architect, Franklin Talbird.¹³⁸

Measuring approximately 51 feet by 37 feet, this two-story church has a side-gable roof and is of five-to-one common bond brick construction. It rests on a brick foundation and five bays extend along the north and south elevations, each containing nine-over-nine, wood sash windows. Bays are delineated by brick pilasters that extend from the foundation to the sawtooth brick cornice (Figure 26b).

In keeping with the Federal style, the north and south elevations are symmetrical. A door is present on the central bay on each of the supported elevations, each sheltered by an added cloth awning. The church's main entrance is centrally located on the east façade and retains a double-leaf door sheltered by an awning. Single-leaf doors flank the entrance (Figure 27a). A cast concrete accessibility ramp extends east from the church's main entrance, wrapping the southeast corner of the building. The west elevation is almost identical to the east elevation, with the exception of a window in place of the entrance (Figure 26a).

Upon entering the church vestibule, steps to the left and right lead to the sanctuary's U-shaped balcony which is supported by Tuscan wood columns. The main floor of the church is divided into three sections of pews separated by two aisles (Figure 27b).

The adjacent cemetery contains approximately 45 burials marked with cross, tomb, block, and pediment monument types. Eight markers at the northeast corner of the cemetery are surrounded by a low tabby wall. Five burials are located in the Fripp family plot at the northwest corner of the cemetery, which is surrounded by wrought iron fencing resting on cast concrete piers.

Evaluation: Brick Baptist Church is a contributing resource in the Penn Center National Register Historic District (NR 74001824) and Penn School National Historic Landmark District. The 1974 NRHP nomination states that the district possesses significance in the areas of education, politics, social history, and Black American history and establishes a period of significance extending from 1855 to 1951. On December 2, 1974, the Penn Center National Historic Landmark District was designated an NHL.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Brick Church Cultural Landscape Report 85% Draft," Cultural Landscape Report (Beaufort, South Carolina: National Park Service, Interior Region 2: South Atlantic-Gulf Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division, May 2023), Page 25.

¹³⁹ South Carolina Department of Archives and History, "National Register Properties in South Carolina: Penn Center Historic District, Beaufort County (St. Helena Island)," Government Agency, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, accessed June 4, 2024, <http://nationalregister.sc.gov/beaufort/S10817707020/>.

Figure 27.
Site Number 0038.15, Brick Church



A. Northeast Oblique, Looking Southwest



B. Church Interior, Looking East

According to the Penn Center Historic District NHRP nomination, Brick Baptist Church derives its primary significance in social history from its association with anti-slavery activism and the Reconstruction era.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the church is a physical representation of the religious and social hierarchy of the antebellum south. Features including the balcony's high walls that prevented white parishioners seated on the main level from seeing enslaved individuals in the balcony and the church's segregated cemeteries demonstrate this social and religious separation. Furthermore, the church is significant as a gathering place for the formerly enslaved population during Reconstruction and was pivotal in the creation of the Penn School, serving as early classroom space and holding significance for education. Therefore, Brick Baptist Church is recommended as individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A.

As part of this analysis, Brick Baptist Church was evaluated for individual significance for the NRHP under Criterion B. While the church is associated with John W. Fripp, a major nineteenth-century landowner and planter on St. Helena Island, the church does not best represent his impact or productive life and does not derive its primary significance from an association with an individual. Therefore, Brick Baptist Church is not recommended individually eligible under Criterion B.

Under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, Brick Baptist Church is a unique local example of a Federal style church. While the windows and roofing materials are not original to the building, features including the brick pilasters, cornice, and massing are original and convey the building's significance and design. While the interior materials have been modified, the floorplan is unaltered. The design of the Brick Baptist Church is attributed to Beaufort architect, Thomas Talbird. While a notable local architect, the church does not derive its primary significance from its association with Talbird and is not the best representation of his broader impact on the architecture of Beaufort. Brick Baptist Church is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C as a unique and exceptionally intact example of Federal architecture.

The recommended NRHP boundary includes the entirety of the 2.64-acre property, however, only the buildings within REER's ownership including the church itself and cemetery are recommended as contributing to the resource's eligibility. While cemeteries are not usually considered eligible for the

¹⁴⁰ Sheire, "'Penn Center Historic District,' National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form."

NRHP, cemeteries can be recognized under Criteria Consideration D if they derive their primary significance from association with historic events. The cemetery at the Brick Baptist Church meets this criteria consideration.¹⁴¹

Integrity: A resource may be eligible for listing in the NRHP if it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery remain in their original location on St. Helena Island, strengthening the site's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The site remains well-preserved in a primarily rural area of St. Helena within the Penn School National Historic Landmark District. While the building has undergone minor renovations, it retains key stylistic features that communicate its original design and significance as a Federal example of a rural chapel including brick pilasters, corbeled brick cornice, and fenestration.

Darrah Hall

SC Survey Site Number: 0038.03

Street Address: Penn School National Historic Landmark District, near Frogmore on South Carolina Highway 37, St. Helena Island, Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, South Carolina

Pin or Parcel Number: R300 016 000 0463 0000

Construction Date: Circa 1893

National Register Recommendation: Recommended individually eligible for the NHRP; contributing resource in the Penn Center National Register District and the Penn School National Historic Landmark District

Management Status: NPS purchased Darrah Hall in 2017

Setting: Darrah Hall is a contributing resource in the 1974 Penn School National Historic Landmark District, a 47-acre district located approximately one mile south of Frogmore on St. Helena Island. The Penn Center comprises several buildings and structures set in a campus of turfed lawn and trees, spanning both sides of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. A gravel road leads west from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to Darrah Hall, which is situated at the south end of Penn Center campus. The area immediately adjacent to Darrah Hall consists of a grass lawn, with wooded areas to the north, south, and west. A circa 2000 restroom building is located north of Darrah Hall. Paved accessible parking spaces are situated directly south of the restroom. A paved concrete sidewalk, 6 feet wide, leads from the restroom to the east porch of Darrah Hall (Figure 28).

¹⁴¹ National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2002), <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/Index.htm>.

Figure 28.
Darrah Hall Site Map



Historical Summary: Established in 1862 by the American Missionary Association as part of the “Port Royal Experiment,” the Penn School was an integral part of the “plan for the education, welfare and employment of former slaves.”¹⁴² Initially operated by Laura Towne and Ellen Murray, Penn School provided an academic and practical education for the freed children of St. Helena Island. Owners of expansive cotton and rice plantations fled St. Helena Island during the Civil War, leaving behind the workers they enslaved. Abolitionist and educator, Laura M. Towne (1835-1907) originally headquartered the school at the Oaks Plantation House. In June 1862, Towne was joined by Baptist educator, Ellen Murray (1834-1908). As demand for classes increased, the school quickly outgrew the Oaks Plantation House and by September 1862, classes were moved to Brick Baptist Church. Continued growth led to a need for a designated school building and the Penn School’s first instructional building was constructed across the road from Brick Church and dedicated in 1864.¹⁴³

In addition to academics, the Penn School’s curriculum provided practical training in agriculture and the trades, following the models of Tuskegee and Hampton institutes. Several buildings including the original Darrah Hall were constructed by students as educational exercises. Named for Laura Towne’s sister, Sophia Towne Darrah, the first Darrah Hall was completed around 1882 outside of the current boundary of the Penn School campus in a section of the island known as “The Green in The Corners” (Figure 29a).¹⁴⁴ A sizable, two-story gathering hall, the original building was destroyed by fire following the hurricane of 1893. Displaced by the hurricane, residents of St. Helena Island sought shelter in Darrah Hall which led to overcrowding and an accidental fire. The second iteration of Darrah Hall was built within a year at the center of the Penn School Campus near Lathers Hall (Figure 29b).

Previous studies speculate that the second iteration of Darrah Hall was constructed with salvaged materials from the original building. The reconstructed building continued the building’s original operations, hosting events such as plays and meetings.¹⁴⁵ A circa 1900 photograph illustrates early modifications to the second iteration of Darrah Hall. Between the building’s construction around 1894 and 1904, a full-width porch was added to the east façade.. In addition to the porch, a diamond-shaped window was added to the façade’s gable field, along with a mounted flagpole at the roofline (Figure 30a). A second circa 1900 photograph, depicts the building as it appears today with a circular window in the gable field (Figure 30b).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, “Darrah Hall.”

¹⁴³ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA. “Darrah Hall.”

¹⁴⁴ WLA Studio, “Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Darrah Hall Cultural Landscape Report 85% Draft,” Cultural Landscape Report (Beaufort, South Carolina: National Park Service, Interior Region 2: South Atlantic-Gulf Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division, May 2023), Page 57.

¹⁴⁵ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA, “Darrah Hall.”

¹⁴⁶ Panamerican Consultants, Inc, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc, and WFT Architects, PA. “Darrah Hall.”

Figure 29.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. 1882 Photograph of Original Darrah Hall

Source: "Penn School Papers, #3615, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



B. 1901 Photograph of Darrah Hall

Source: Image 001Id: "Beside Darrah Hall," Penn School Papers #3615.

Figure 30.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. Historic Photograph of Darrah Hall with Front Porch and Diamond Window
Source:Image 0053rc: Darrah Hall, Penn School Papers #3615, No Date.



B. Historic Photograph of Darrah Hall Circular Window
Source:Image 04596lb: Leaving Darrah Hall, Penn School Papers #3615, No Date.

Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, Darrah Hall served as a gathering place for students at Penn School, hosting exhibit halls, clubs, and school events; in addition to events for the wider community. The Penn School's YMCA branch met at Darrah Hall, as well as local farming organizations. In 1925, the school constructed Frissell Hall as its new community gathering center. Boasting a kitchen, dining room, auditorium, stage, and library, Frissell Hall replaced the smaller, single-room Darrah Hall. Around 1965, Darrah Hall was moved to its current location and was repurposed to house an indoor basketball court and cooperative tomato-packing house (Figure 31a). By the mid-1970s, Darrah Hall was primarily used as a storage facility and, by the early 1990s, had fallen into a state of disrepair.¹⁴⁷

In 1994, Penn Center undertook a \$5.5 million rehabilitation project that sought to renovate buildings around the campus. At this time, Darrah Hall was in a state of collapse and was considered a top priority. Darrah Hall was reconstructed by timber frame expert, Tommy Grahm, who utilized over 90 percent of the building's original materials.¹⁴⁸ At this time, the building was oriented east-west and the standalone restroom building was constructed north of the hall.

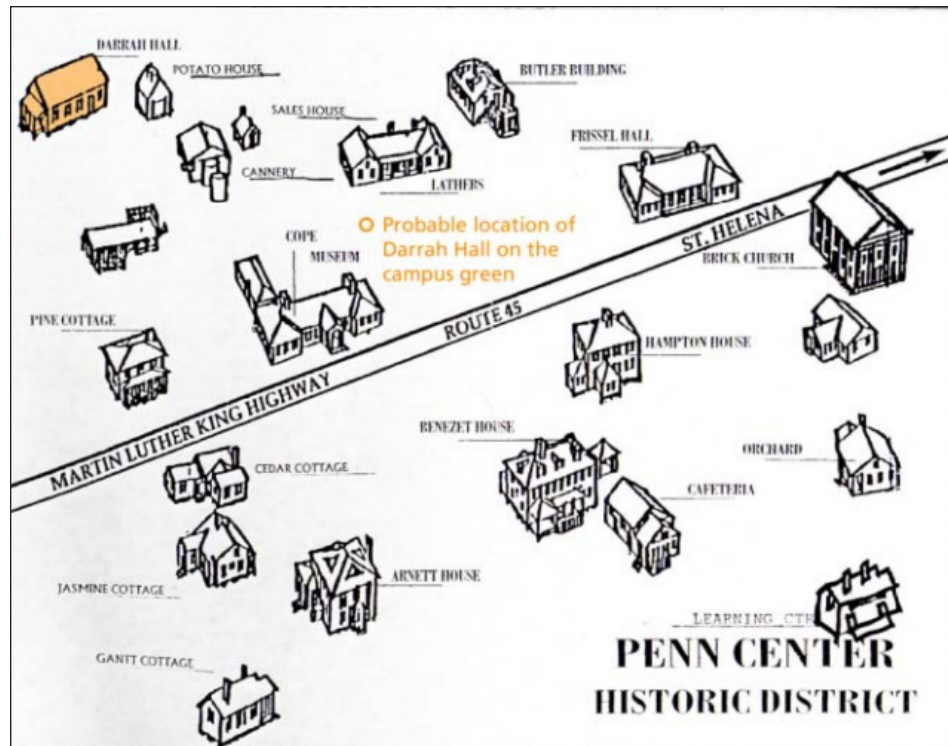
Description: Today's Darrah Hall is a one-story, wood-frame building that rests on a brick pier foundation. While the roof is covered with asphalt shingles, the building is clad in weatherboard with wood shakes populating the façade's gable field. Windows throughout are six-over-six wood sash, and the east-facing three-bay façade is sheltered by a full-width, shed-roof porch supported by plain, slender wood columns. The porch is accessed by a set of wood stairs with metal railings. Wood lattice conceals the porch foundation. The main entrance is centered on the façade and has a pair of period, circle-top paneled wood doors with a three-light transom. The entrance is framed by six-over-six wood windows (Figure 31b).

The north and south elevations each have five bays, four of which have six-over-six wood windows with vertical-board wood shutters on one side. On the south elevation, a secondary entrance is sheltered by a single-bay, shed-roof porch supported by square wood posts (Figure 32a). An accessibility ramp extends from grade up to a small porch on the north elevation (Figure 32b). The gable field of the west elevation features a historic, diamond-shaped window with stained glass panes. Plywood clads the lower third of the west elevation (Figure 33a).

¹⁴⁷ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Darrah Hall Cultural Landscape Report," Page 65.

¹⁴⁸ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 68.

Figure 31.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. Map of Penn Center Historic District

Source: Penn Center Historic District
Walking Map, No Date.



B. Façade, Looking West

Figure 32.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. Southwest Oblique, Looking Northeast

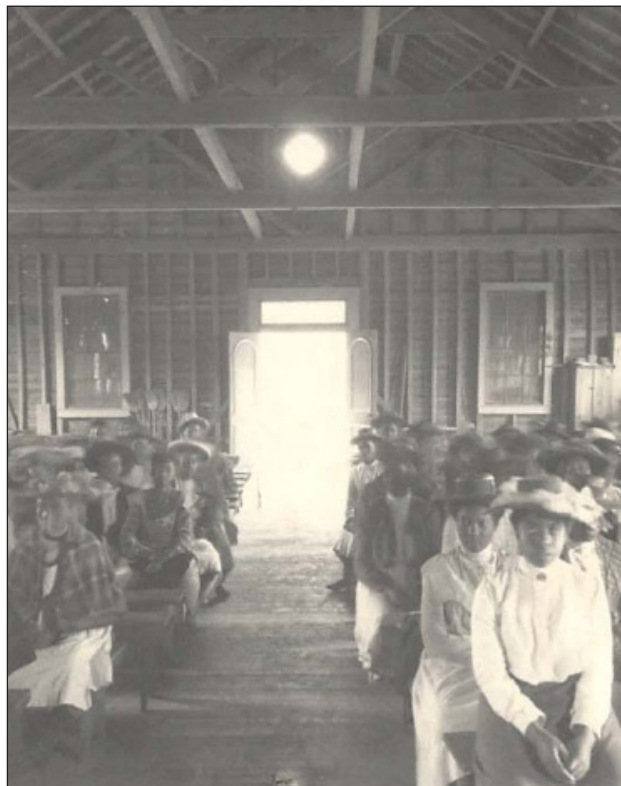


B. Northeast Oblique, Looking Southwest

Figure 33.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. Rear Elevation, Looking North



B. 1904 Interior Photograph, Looking East

Darrah Hall's interior remains an open space. A series of 1904 photographs depict a women's convention inside Darrah Hall, providing insight into the building's historic interior. One photograph depicts the building's front door, and the circular window is visible along with an exposed truss system (Figures 33b and 34a). The interior of Darrah Hall appears much as it did in this 1904 photograph with an open truss system and original wood floors (Figures 34b and 35b).

Evaluation: Darrah Hall is a contributing resource in the Penn Center National Register District and the 1974 Penn School National Historic Landmark District. The district's period of significance extends from 1850 to 1924.

Resources can be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A if they are associated with broad patterns of history at the local, state, or national level. Darrah Hall is one of the first buildings constructed by the Penn School as part of the Reconstruction-era initiative to provide a thorough academic and practical education to formerly enslaved individuals. For this reason, the resource is significant under Criterion A in the area of education and social history.

Resources can be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B if they are associated with the lives of significant people. Archival research did not reveal that the building is associated with a single individual of particular historical significance, so it is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B.

Resources can be eligible for the NRHP if they embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or possess high artistic value. Initially constructed by students in 1882 and reconstructed in a second location around 1895, Darrah Hall is not representative of a specific architectural style or method of construction. The multi-purpose building is defined by its large open meeting hall and its traditional, gable-front form is commonly observed in community buildings throughout the region. As such, Darrah Hall is not individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C for architecture.

Integrity: A resource may be eligible for listing in the NRHP if it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Originally built in 1864 and reconstructed around 1882, Darrah Hall now sits at its third location on the Penn School campus. While the building continues to communicate its original use and retains integrity of feeling and association by remaining on the campus, alterations have impacted its integrity of materials and workmanship. Though thoughtfully restored in the mid-1990s using historic materials, multiple moves and the building's reconstruction and reorientation on the site have negatively impacted its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

Figure 34.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. 1904 Interior Photograph, Looking West



B. Roof Structure

Figure 35.
Site Number 0038.03, Darrah Hall



A. Entrance and Floors, Looking West



B. Interior Interpretive Space, Looking West

While reconstructed buildings are usually not eligible for the listing in the NRHP, Criteria Consideration E states that reconstructed buildings, when accurately executed, presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived, can be eligible.¹⁴⁹ Darrah Hall is a key element of the Penn School National Historic Landmark District. Constructed by students, it is one of the oldest extant buildings in the district and is a physical representation of the Penn School's mission to provide an academic and practical education to formerly enslaved individuals. Although Darrah Hall has been moved multiple times and reconstructed twice, the building has been thoughtfully restored with original and period-appropriate materials. Therefore, Darrah Hall is eligible for individual NRHP listing under Criteria Consideration E.

Darrah Hall is the only building on the site recommended eligible for the NRHP.

Darrah Hall remains a contributing resource to the Penn Center National Register Historic District and the Penn School National Historic Landmark District.

NRHP-Listed Resources:

Camp Saxton Site

SC Survey Site Number: 0019

Street Address: 601 Old Fort Road, Port Royal

Pin or Parcel Number: R110 009 000 0079 0000

Construction Date: 1734, 1758-1861, 1862, 1946

National Register Status: Camp Saxton Site (NRHP-listed, 1994), Fort Frederick (NRHP-listed, 1974)

Management Status: Camp Saxton Site is managed in conjunction with the U.S. Navy, SCDNR, and Beaufort County

Camp Saxton Site contains 11 of REER's 65 acres (Figure 36). Parcels containing the site largely correspond to those delineated by the U.S. Navy in the 1940s, and SCDNR in the 2010s.¹⁵⁰ Presently, the portions of Camp Saxton Site owned by REER are characterized by their proximity to the U.S. Naval Hospital and supporting residences, constructed between 1946 and 1970, and areas of dense vegetation. The site's eastern boundary is formed by the Beaufort River and the tract is adjacent to the 1732 Fort Frederick, listed in the NRHP in 1974 and owned and maintained by SCDNR (Figure 37).

¹⁴⁹ National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation."

¹⁵⁰ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 4.

Figure 36.
Camp Saxton Site Map



Figure 37.
1863 Fort Ruins



Source:Cooley, Sam A, photographer. Ruins of the Old Spanish Fort, Smith's plantation, Port Royal Island, near Port Royal S.C. Photograph, 1863. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015649005/>

Listed in NRHP in 1995, Camp Saxton Site (NR 94001581) derives its primary significance as the camp site of the U.S. military's first African American regiment and for its role in the Port Royal Experiment (1862 - 1865). The NRHP boundary contains six acres, and the site is listed in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in the areas of " Ethnic/Black Heritage."¹⁵¹ While the site previously functioned as a large-scale cotton plantation owned by Captain John Joyner, known as Smith Plantation, the site's period of significance is defined as 1862-1863, the years in which it was occupied by the first African American regiment and later named for Brigadier General Rufus Saxton. As discussed in the CLR, widespread development did not occur at Smith Plantation during the Reconstruction. Federal troops gained control of Smith Plantation in December 1861. Cotton farming continued through labor contracts and key site features, including the plantation house, dwellings for the formerly enslaved workers, and a praise house, remained extant and were used by the Federal government (Figures 39-41).¹⁵² Today, the SC-SHPO records three site features associated with the former Smith Plantation/Camp Saxton including the Magnolia Allee, Live Oak Grove, and Dry Pond (Figure 42).

The CLR indicates that while the Camp Saxton site as a whole does not retain most of the aspects of integrity necessary for NRHP-listing due to the mid-twentieth development of the site by the U.S. Navy, the retention of the Live Oak Grove, Dry Pond, and Magnolia Allee strengthen the site's integrity of feeling and association.¹⁵³ Though the U.S. Navy made significant alterations to the site between 1946 and 1970, including the removal of almost all of the extant late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century buildings on the site at the time of their acquisition, the site retains its connection to the Beaufort River and an overall ability to convey its historic association with Reconstruction and the Port Royal Experiment (Figure 45 and 46).¹⁵⁴ As no buildings or structures from the site's period of significance remain, the CLR and GMP propose a treatment plan that emphasizes retention of the site's historic character through preservation of the landscape and reducing future modifications by placing restrictions on new construction and limiting site improvements to minimal actions such as vegetation management.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 35.

¹⁵² WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 32.

¹⁵³ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 153.

¹⁵⁴ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 81.

¹⁵⁵ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 5.

Figure 38.
1864 Smith Plantation Map



Source: Map of the Smith Plantation at Fort Frederick, Port Royal Island, approved by James W. Abert, May 26, 1864, RG77, Civil Works Maps File, I-33-3, National Archives

Figure 39.
1863 Photograph of Smith Plantation



Source: Cooley, Sam A., Publisher, Sinclair, E. W, photographer. View on Smith Plantation, near Beaufort, S.C. / photographed by E.W. Sinclair, for Sam. A. Cooley, photographer Tenth Army Corps. South Carolina United States Port Royal, None. [Beaufort, S.C.: sam. a. cooley, tenth army corps., between 1862 and 1864] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2015649007/>

Figure 40.
1862 Photograph of Smith Plantation Slave Quarters



Source: Getty Museum Collections. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, *Slaves*, J. J. Smith's Plantation, near Beaufort, South Carolina. 1862.
<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1045Q2#full-artwork-details>

Figure 41.
1863 Photograph of Sink Hole



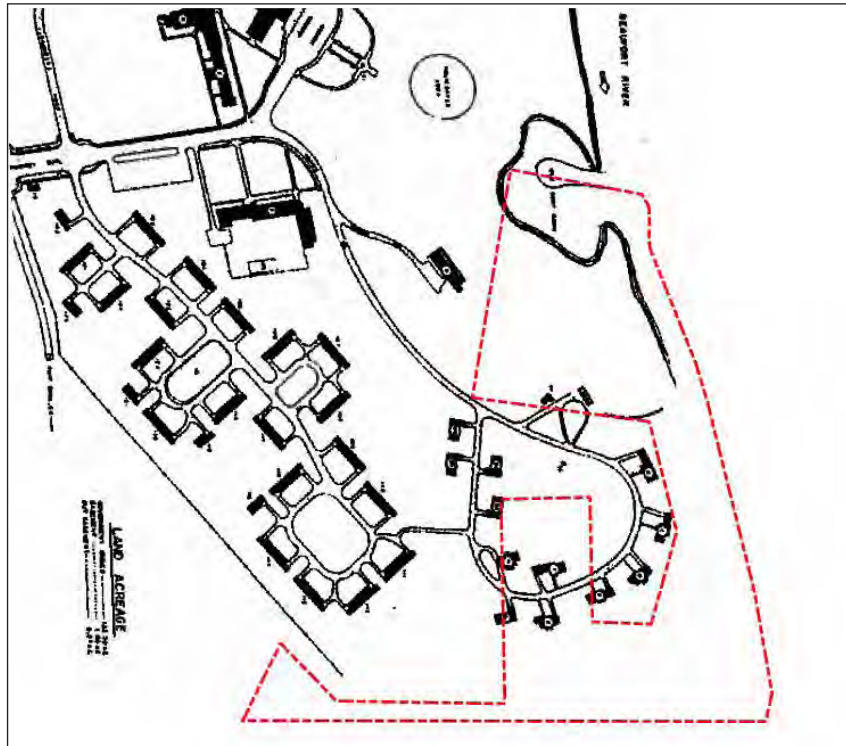
Source: Cooley, Sam. "Smith Pl. (Port Royal Id) (Garden in Dry Alligator Pond)." Western Reserve Historical Society, <https://wrhs.saas.dgicloud.com/islandora/object/wrhs%3A23820>.

Figure 42.
Historic Maps of Site



A. 1945 Survey Map

Source: Naval Hospital Beaufort Archives via Ron Marcell.



B. 1961 Site Plan

Source: Naval Hospital Beaufort Archives via Ron Marcell, Thomason & Associates, "Intensive Survey of Historic Properties Naval Hospital Beaufort," 1996.

Chapter 5. Summary and Recommendations

HRS Summary

In June 2023, the National Park Service (NPS) contracted New South Associates (NSA) to complete a Historic Resource Study (HRS) for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park (REER) in Beaufort County, South Carolina. An HRS is a multi-faceted management document designed to aid resource managers in park planning and interpretation of historic resources. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) names NPS as the responsible entity in identifying and planning for the protection of cultural resources in national parks. An HRS aids in this mission by collating past documentation and assessments to present a baseline review of all known historic resources on the Park's property and the historic contexts through which these resources can be evaluated for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. In addition to providing a comprehensive assessment of all buildings, structures, objects, and sites within REER, the document incorporates additional scholarship with a renewed focus on formerly underrepresented groups or themes.

In September 2023, NSA historians surveyed six resources in REER's operational boundary. These six resources contained a total of 14 buildings, structures, or objects including restrooms, storage buildings, and cemeteries.

One individually NRHP-listed site, the Camp Saxton Site, and portions of two NRHP-listed historic districts overlap REER's operational boundary: the Beaufort National Register Historic District and the Penn Center National Register Historic District. Additionally, two of REER's resources are located within National Historic Landmark (NHL) Districts. Darrah Hall and Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery are contributing resources in the Penn School National Historic Landmark District, designated in 1974. In addition to NRHP-listing, these properties have been determined nationally significant and designated NHLs by the Secretary of the Interior.

As a result of this study, four of the 14 buildings documented were determined not eligible for NRHP listing as they were not 50 years of age and did not meet Criteria Consideration G (Appendix A). These include the Darrah Hall Restrooms (constructed 1994-2005), the Darrah Hall Storage Shed (constructed in 2020), and the Darrah Hall Hiking Trail (2023). The circa 1901 Pinckney-Porter's Chapel (reconstructed 2020-2022) is recommended not eligible for the NRHP due to significant alterations completed during the removal of the building from its original site and its reconstruction.

In consultation with NPS, NSA completed intensive NRHP eligibility evaluations for a select number of resources including the newly-acquired Beaufort Bible Chapel, the Old Beaufort Firehouse, Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery, and Darrah Hall. Recommendations are as follows:

- Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery are recommended individually eligible for NRHP listing under Criteria A and C in the areas of social history and architecture.
- Darrah Hall is recommended eligible for the NRHP as an individual resource under Criterion A in the area of social history.
- Brick Baptist Church and Cemetery and Darrah Hall retain their status as contributing resources in the Penn Center National Register District and Penn School National Historic Landmark District.
- Beaufort Bible Chapel is recommended not eligible for NRHP listing, individually or as part of a district.
- The Old Beaufort Firehouse is recommended not eligible for individual NRHP listing but remains a contributing resource in the Beaufort National Register Historic District.

Recommendations

Resources within the REER boundary have been exceptionally well-documented through CLRs, HSRs, and the GMP. As such, NSA does not recommend an additional baseline inventory for above-ground historic resources. The data produced in Appendix A provides all of the information needed to update the NPS Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) and Facility Management Software System (FMSS). Mapping and geospatial data should be integrated into future planning efforts.

WWII Era Resources at Camp Saxton Site:

As outlined in the Camp Saxton Site's CLR, REER's operational boundary is adjacent to and slightly overlaps the Harris Road residential node, developed by the U.S. Navy in the mid-twentieth century. Following the groundbreaking of the Naval Hospital in 1946, the U.S. government demolished most of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings extant on the Camp Saxton Site. Between 1946 and 1966, the U.S. Navy constructed 62 new buildings, including seven one-story Ranch houses on the Harris Road Loop that encircles the Dry Pond at the Camp Saxton Site.¹⁵⁶ These single-family houses were followed by 30 duplexes built just west of the Harris Road Loop in 1956. Five of the original seven houses were demolished in 1970 and only one dwelling, Building 140, the 1965 Post Commander's

¹⁵⁶ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 82.

Residence, stands within the REER operational boundary.¹⁵⁷ The house is assessed in the CLR and continues to serve its original purpose. The house is not managed or interpreted by REER.

To date, REER has no formal plans to acquire the mid-twentieth-century residential buildings constructed for the U.S. Navy. If acquired, these buildings should be evaluated for NRHP-eligibility.

Archaeological Investigations:

NSA recommends thorough archaeological investigations at Camp Saxton Site. As outlined in the CLR, the Camp Saxton Site has not undergone an extensive archaeological investigation. About 45 percent of the overall Naval Hospital tract has been shovel tested with an emphasis on undisturbed areas. In 1981, Stanley Smith, in an effort to locate the colonial-era French Charlesfort, placed 35 test units across the Naval Hospital Property. Fort Frederick (38BU102) was recorded during this effort. In 1995, Thompson and Associates conducted a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey of the 129-acre Naval Historical site. Since then, studies have been limited or have focused on the colonial-era Fort Frederick. A comprehensive survey of the REER Camp Saxton Site boundary is recommended.¹⁵⁸

Pinkney-Porter's Chapel

Pinckney-Porter's Chapel (former Porter's Chapel A.M.E) was moved to the Naval Hospital tract in 2020 and is operated by REER. Constructed around 1901, the original church building was rebuilt at its current site between 2020 and 2022. The introduction of new materials and the building's change in use have detracted from its integrity of feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and association, rendering it ineligible for the NRHP at this time. While reconstructed historic buildings are usually not considered eligible for the NRHP, Pinckney-Porter's Chapel should be reevaluated for NRHP eligibility as a commemorative property when it reaches 50 years of age at its current site.

¹⁵⁷ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Page 84.

¹⁵⁸ WLA Studio, "Reconstruction Era National Historical Park: Camp Saxton Cultural Landscape Report," Pages 118–19.

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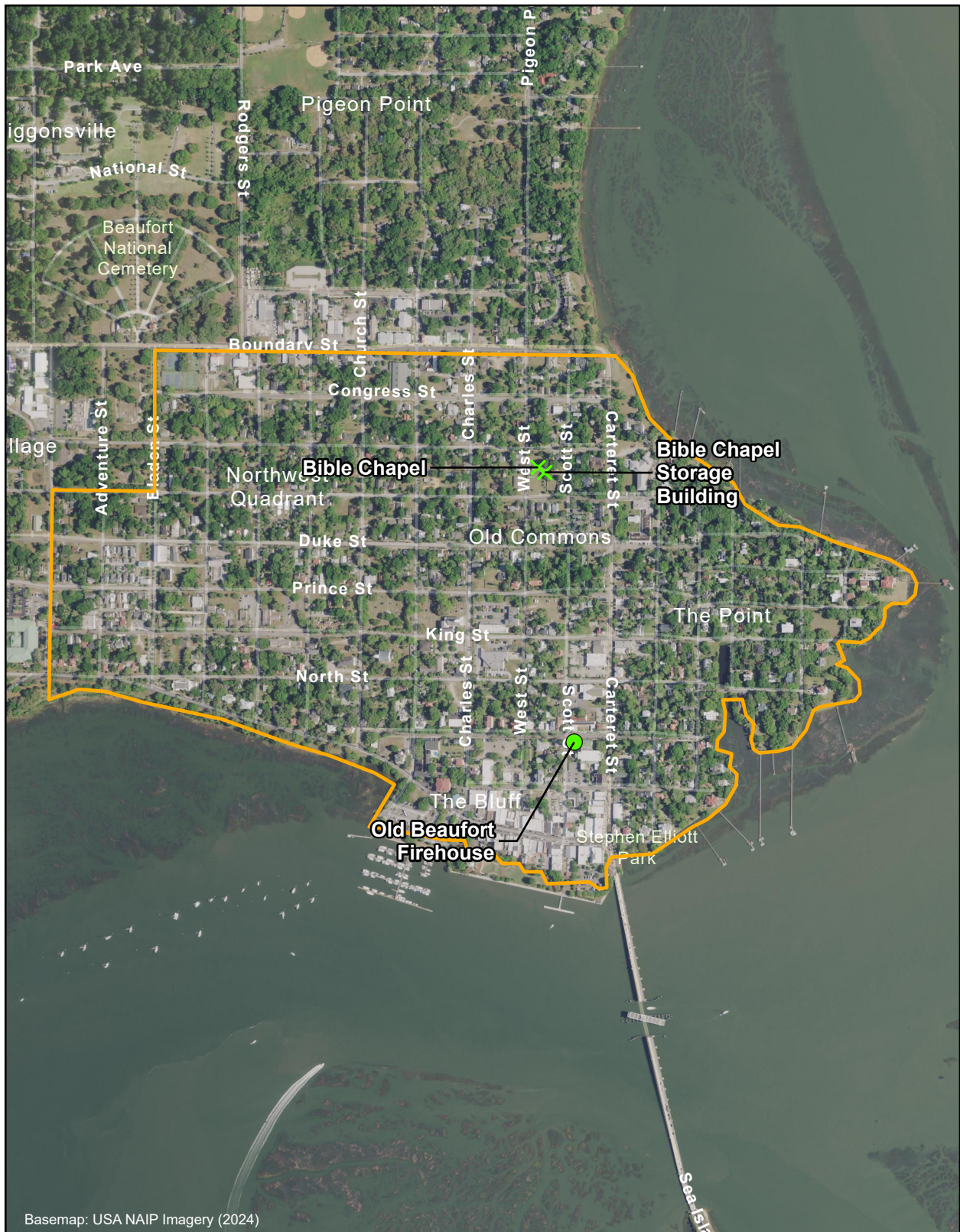
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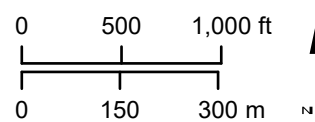
Appendix A: Survey Results

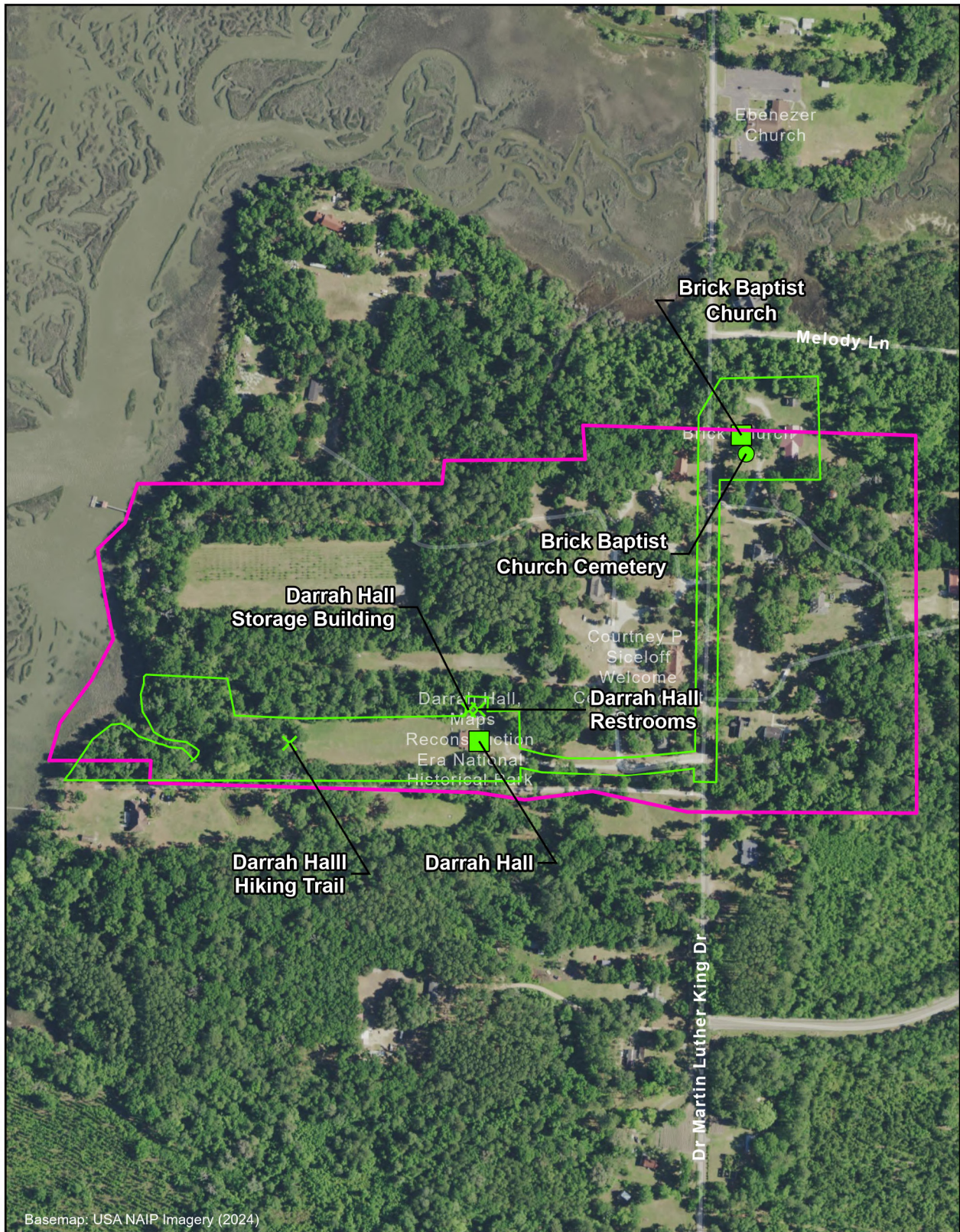
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	0038.15; S10817707040; (alternate numbers: 182 0038.15; 13 0038.15)	85 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	Brick Baptist Church	St. Helena Baptist Church (Brick Church); Penn Center Historic District (0038)	Individually Eligible	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District	32.38972	-80.57603	Good	Visitation, weather	1855			Religion	Religion	Brick	Brick		
	0038.18; S10817707040	85 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	Brick Baptist Church Cemetery	Penn Center Historic District	Not Individually Eligible	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District	32.389564	-80.575984	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	c. 1820			Cemetery	Cemetery	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	0038.03; S10817707040		Darrah Hall	Penn Center Historic District	Eligible	Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District	32.38717	-80.57863	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	c. 1893			Recreation/Culture	Education	Brick Pier	Weatherboard	Asphalt shingles	
	N/A; S10817707040		Darrah Hall Restrooms	Penn Center Historic District	Not Eligible		32.387436	-80.578639	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	1994-2005 concrete pad			Recreation/Culture	Recreation/Culture	Cement	Other (Fiber Cement)	Asphalt shingles	
	N/A; S10817707040		Darrah Hall Storage Building	Penn Center Historic District	Not Eligible		32.38743	-80.578733	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	1994-2005 concrete pad			Recreation/Culture	Recreation/Culture	Wood Pier	Other (Fiber Cement)	Asphalt shingles	
	N/A; S10817707040		Darrah Hall Hiking Trail	Penn Center Historic District	Not Eligible		32.38716	-80.5805	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	2023			Recreation/Culture	Recreation/Culture	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	0019, 38BU0163 (archaeology site number); S10817707057	18 Pinckney Boulevard	Camp Saxton/Smith Plantation	Camp Saxton Site	NRHP-Listed	Contributing			Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	c. 1732; c. 1862; c. 1940-1970	c. 1732; c. 1862; c. 1940-1970	This polygon represents an expanded boundary for the Camp Saxton site that encompasses Civil War-era artifacts as well as a possible site for the Smith Plantation house, as determined during a Phase I & II in 2002. Note that it is distinct from and larger than the NRHP boundary for Camp Saxton. It is adjacent to the NRHP boundary and archaeological site for Fort Frederick (site numbers 025-611, 38BU1100) and slightly overlaps the NRHP boundary for the Naval Hospital Beaufort Historic District.	Military Facility	Military Facility	N/A	Tabby	N/A	
	N/A; S10817707057	18 Pinckney Boulevard	Camp Saxton Magnolia Avenue	Camp Saxton Site	NRHP-Listed	Contributing			Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	c. 1790?; pre-1860s			Military Facility	Domestic	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	N/A; S10817707057	18 Pinckney Boulevard	Camp Saxton Live Oak Grove	Camp Saxton Site	NRHP-Listed	Contributing			Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather				Military Facility	Domestic	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	N/A; S10817707057	18 Pinckney Boulevard	Camp Saxton Dry Pond	Camp Saxton Site	NRHP-Listed	Contributing			Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	pre-1860s			Military Facility	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	908	706 Craven Street	Old Beaufort Firehouse	Beaufort Municipal Meat Market; Beaufort Historic District	Not Individually Eligible	Contributing to the Beaufort Historic District	32.43256	-80.67067	Good	Visitation, weather	1912	1993		Government	Government	Stone	Brick	Asphalt shingles	
	5646	913 West Street	Bible Chapel	Beaufort Historic District (Non-Contributing)	Not Eligible	Non-contributing	32.43746	-80.67143	Good	Vegetation, weather	1959	?		Government	Religion	Cement	Concrete Block	Asphalt shingles	
	5646.01	913 West Street	Bible Chapel Storage Building	Beaufort Historic District (Non-Contributing)	Not Eligible	Non-contributing	32.43737	-80.67129	Good	Vegetation, weather	2011-2013			Government	Religion	Wood Pier	Wood (Other)	Asphalt shingles	
	5647	27 Pinckney Boulevard	Pinckney-Porters Chapel	Camp Saxton Site	Not Eligible	Non-contributing	32.38833	-80.6855	Good	Vegetation, visitation, weather	c. 1901	Rebuilt 2020		Religion	Religion	Concrete Block	Vinyl	Standing Seam Metal	

Appendix B: Resource Maps and Photographs



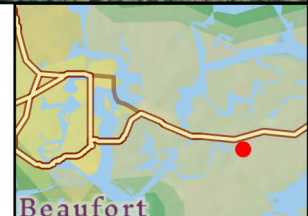
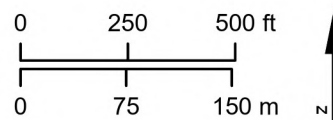
- ✕ Not Eligible, Non-contributing
- Not Individually Eligible, Contributing
- Beaufort NHRP Historic District





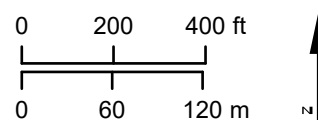
Basemap: USA NAIP Imagery (2024)

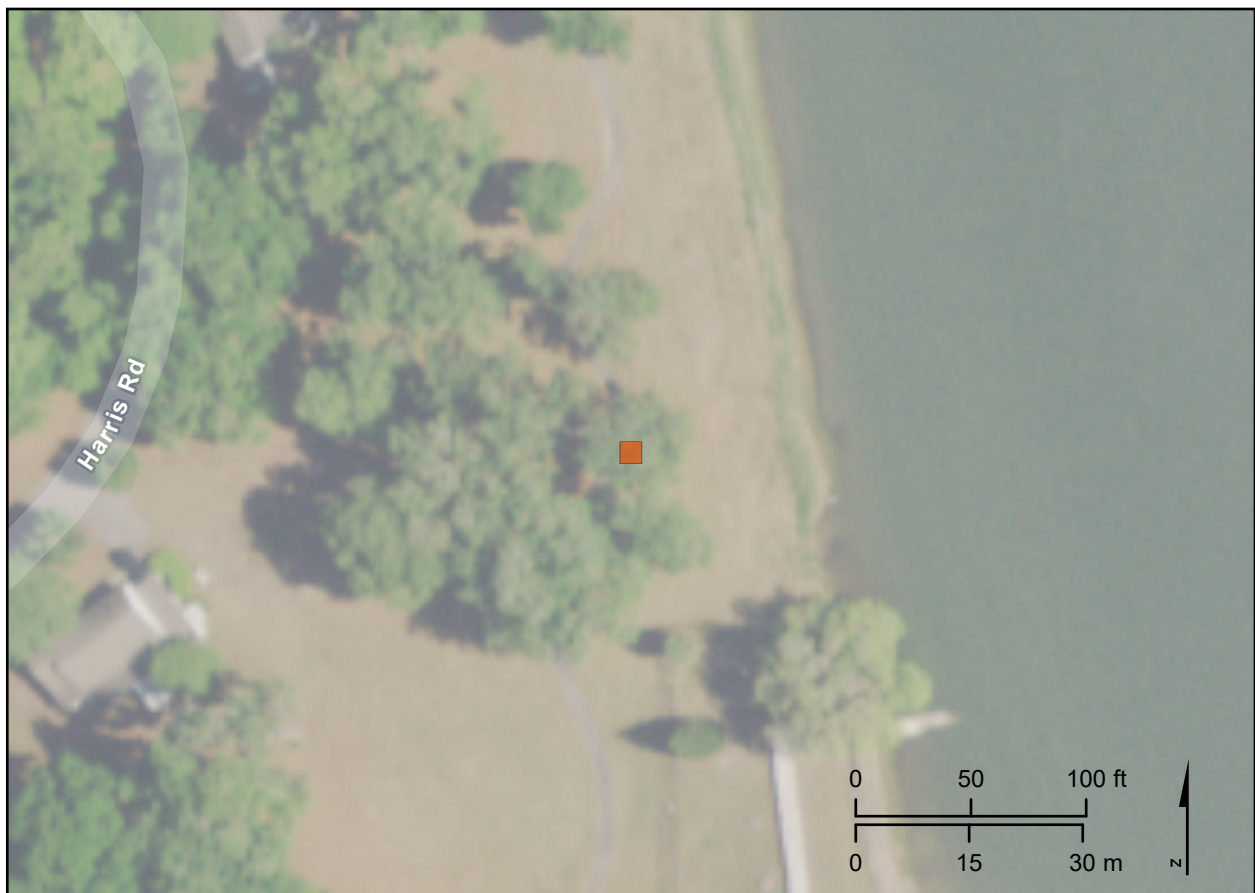
- Individually Eligible, Contributing
- ✕ Not Eligible, Non-contributing
- Not Individually Eligible, Contributing
- ⬢ Reconstruction Era National Historical Park Boundary
- ⬢ Penn Center NHRP Historic District





- ▲ NRHP-Listed, Contributing
- x Not Eligible, Non-contributing
- Camp Saxton NHRP Historic District





0019, 38BU0163 (archaeology site number); S10817707057

Camp Saxton/Smith Plantation

NRHP-Listed, Contributing

 Resource Location



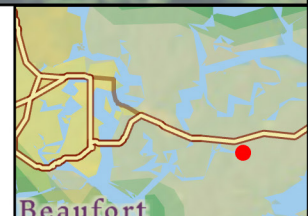


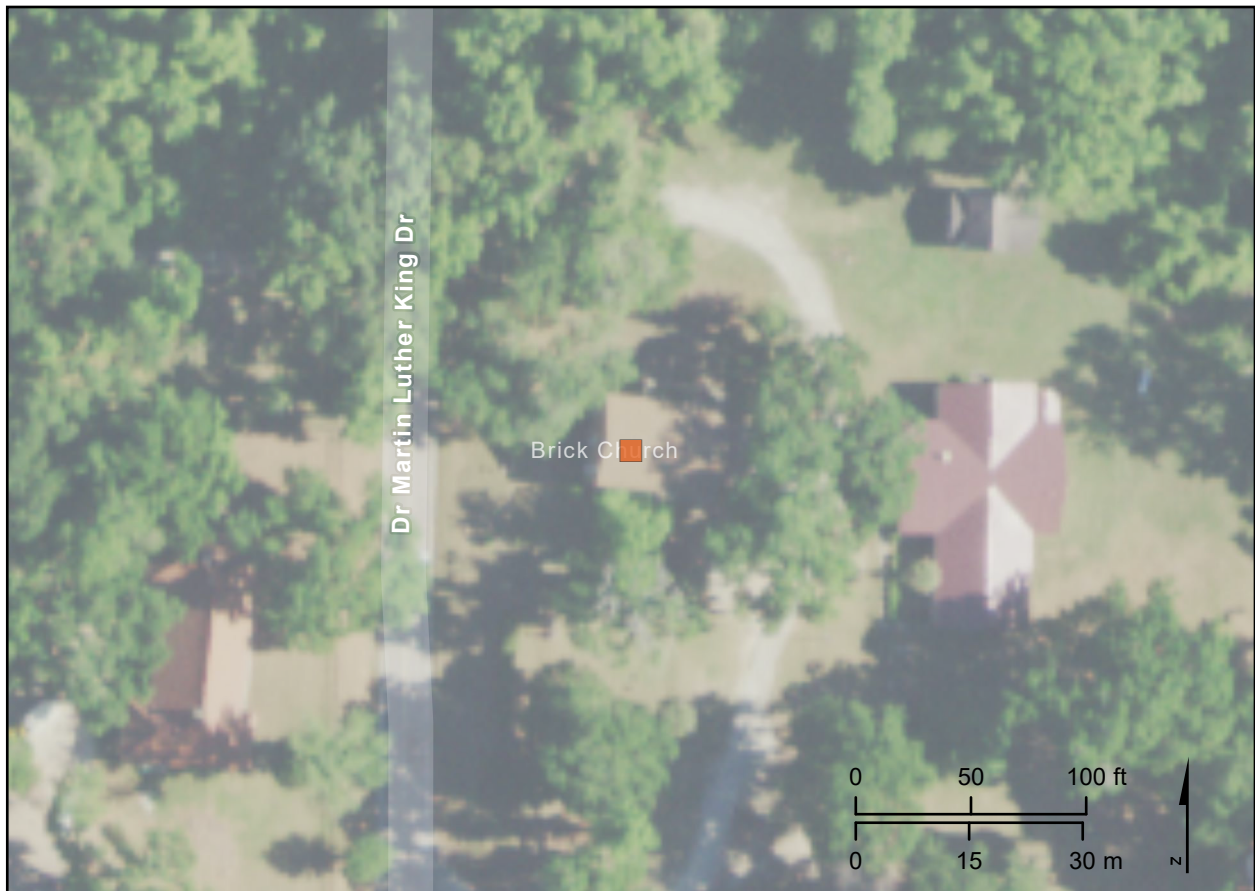
0038.03; S10817707040

Darrah Hall

Individually Eligible, Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District

Resource Location





0038.15; S10817707040; (alternate numbers: 182 0038.15; 13 0038.15)

Brick Baptist Church

Individually Eligible, Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District

■ Resource Location





0038.18; S10817707040

Brick Baptist Church Cemetery

Not Individually Eligible, Contributing to the Penn Center Historic District

■ Resource Location





5646

Bible Chapel

Not Eligible, Non-contributing

Resource Location





5646.01

Bible Chapel Storage Building

Not Eligible, Non-contributing

■ Resource Location





908

Old Beaufort Firehouse

Not Individually Eligible, Contributing to the Beaufort Historic District

■ Resource Location





N/A

Pinckney-Porters Chapel

Not Eligible, Non-contributing

Resource Location





S10817707040

Darrah Hall Restrooms

Not Eligible

Resource Location





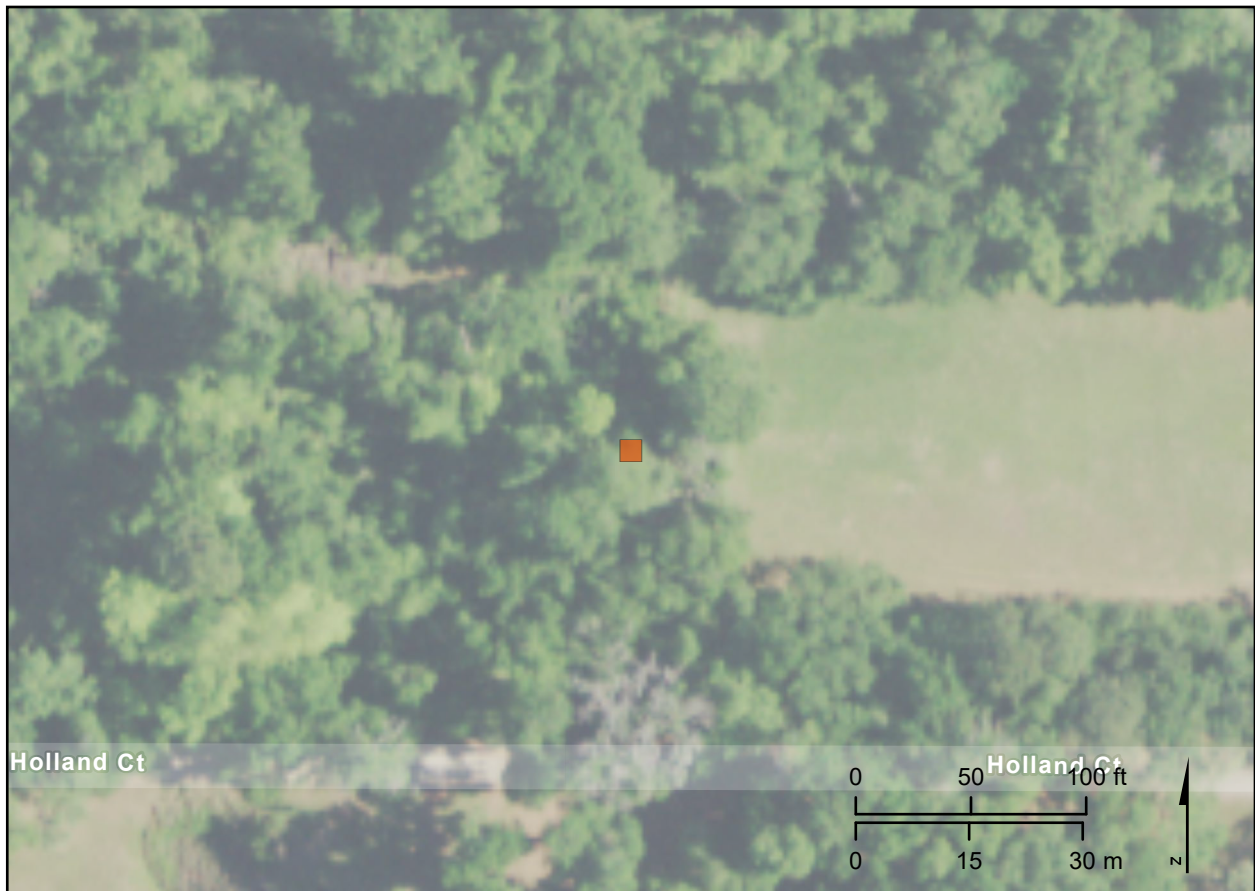
S10817707040

Darrah Hall Storage Building

Not Eligible

 Resource Location





S10817707040

Darrah Hall Hiking Trail

Not Eligible

■ Resource Location





S10817707057

Camp Saxton Magnolia Avenue

NRHP-Listed, Contributing

 Resource Location





S10817707057

Camp Saxton Dry Pond

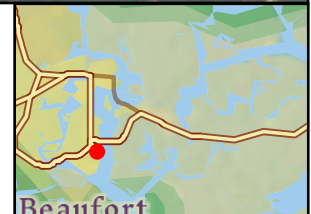
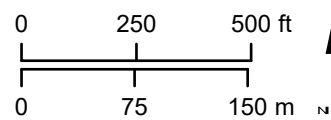
NRHP-Listed, Contributing

 Resource Location





- ▲ NRHP-Listed, Contributing
- ✕ Not Eligible, Non-contributing
- Camp Saxton NHRP Historic District
- Reconstruction Era National Historical Park Boundary



Appendix C: Interview Transcript

Marie Gibbs:

This on? Testing 1, 2, 3. Testing 1, 2, 3.

Testing, testing, testing. So you covered a lot, as you said you would, in the introduction.

Velma Fann:

Yes.

Marie Gibbs:

I wanted to talk with you maybe about your family just a little bit and your history. And like I said, I'd like to submit this to the National Park Service in the hopes that they will use it or [perhaps] not. It will be at least a record of it. So would you please... Just a second. Making sure I catch you in here. [inaudible 00:00:59]. Yeah. Would you please state and spell your name for us?

My name is Dr. Marie Gibbs. M-A-R-I-E, G-I-B-B-S.

Velma Fann:

Good. And what is your position here at the Penn Center?

Marie Gibbs:

At the Penn Center, I am the York W. Bailey Museum Docent and Program Development Coordinator.

Velma Fann:

And for those persons who are unfamiliar with the Penn Center, can you give us a brief introduction? A little bit about the center itself.

Marie Gibbs:

Penn Center is the first school in America for newly emancipated people, that started in 1861... '62 because of the Civil War. It was started by three women: Laura Town, a Unitarian from Philadelphia; Ellen Murray, a Quaker from Canada; and 10 months later comes a black woman, Charlotte Fulton, who joined these ladies in starting a school because the Southern planters or slave owners fled the island due to the Civil War coming this way.

This island was captured by the Union Army, which caused the slave owners to fled and they left or abandoned 10,000 people living on this island who had to learn how to survive. Thanks to our founders, Laura Town who came first and got permission to set up the Port Royal Relief Fund Society that raised money to bring teachers from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to educate these newly emancipated people. That was called the Port Royal Experiment. One, to find out if these people could transition to freedom and have a sustainable life.

Velma Fann:

Now are you a native of Beaufort or St. Helena Island?

Marie Gibbs:

I'm a native of St. Helena's Island, a longtime resident of St. Helena's Island.

Velma Fann:

And how far back can you trace your lineage on this island?

Marie Gibbs:

My lineage can go back three generations.

Velma Fann:

Give me your father, your grandfather--

Marie Gibbs:

My great-grandfather, my grandfather, and my father.

Velma Fann:

Did any of them work on any of the plantations, either as free people or enslaved here?

Marie Gibbs:

My great-grandfather was enslaved on St. Helena's... on one of these plantations. I don't know the name of the plantation, but after that period my grandfather was able to acquire land. Benjamin Mack acquired land, that land that we have today, that I live on today, that's been passed down from generation to generation. But they instilled in us as children how important land was. So that's why every time family members would pass away, they would bequest or pass that land on to the other generation.

With that land, my father, great man, he instilled in us how important land was. He would take us, when a surveyor came to survey a land, would make sure we were out there with them to see where the land was. And as I got older, I realized he was educating us in land and the importance of it. He said, "Land is like money in the bank, y'all." He would pick the soil up. "They're not making this anymore, this is it." So we knew.

My dad had a small truck farm. We worked on that farm. Everything we did was a lesson. We had math in the fields. We had to count the boxes in the field and find out how much money we was going to make. We learned integrity on working in the fields. One day, we worked all day. The price went out of the market. And my dad looked at the man and said, "Before I sell you my tomatoes, I'll give to my pigs." And he did. That told us integrity.

And responsibility. After the season was over, the children were to pick money for 4th of July... pick the crops for 4th of July. And when he took it to sale, we had to pay him for gas. That's responsibility. The fruits of our labor. After the season was over, he'll put all the money on the table. We all counted it together as a family. It was showing us the fruits of our labor, even though we know the money had been counted already.

Velma Fann:

That's beautiful. That's beautiful. I know that at the beginning there was one of the black regiments that was raised from this area. Did you have any people that were part of that?

Marie Gibbs:

The 54th?

Velma Fann:

Well, first South Carolina.

Marie Gibbs:

I don't recall that. I don't recall anyone from my family being a part of that, but a lot of my family went military. But I don't recall that unit.

Velma Fann:

Okay. And that was earlier. That was during the Civil War that that happened?

Marie Gibbs:

Yeah.

Velma Fann:

We talked a little bit about the 1893 hurricane.

Marie Gibbs:

Mm-hmm.

Velma Fann:

Tell us how it affected this island.

Marie Gibbs:

When the storm came, the thing about it, it came at night. And there was no way of knowing that a storm was coming on this island, so people were not prepared. And when it struck, at night, people... there were a lot of trees in a line here. I can imagine running like ants trying to... Because when that storm hit, the houses were gone. They were makeshift cabins. They would tie themselves in the line, a line is where trees are, with ropes and wait the storm out there while the winds were crashing. Then the sun came up. The wind had diminished. And what they saw when they woke up, they got up the next morning, when they could see. There were bodies on the ground. 2,000 lives were lost. The bodies that were on the ground. They used the wood from the makeshift casket to build casket for those who had passed away.

Then because there were no bridges here, there was no help for us coming on this island. So we had to do what we always do, try to make it on our own. So as the debris came up, they built houses from the... They built that whole house, rebuilt, on the bank, high grounds where debris had settled. People here were resilient people because even after that they survived. I'm here as living proof. We made it through all of that. We call it... It's a Jim Crow storm because you had to start all over again. Got to start from all over again and rebuild. I'm so proud of the people here. They are resilient people. No matter what, they came through.

Velma Fann:

And your grandfather, he was alive at that time? Is that correct?

Marie Gibbs:

He was 10 years old.

Velma Fann:

Wow.

Marie Gibbs:

He was 10 years old at that time. Then we had family reunions. He wrote a poem about that. Oh, shoot.

Let me turn this off. He wrote a poem about that incident that happened. He wrote a poem that he reads every family reunion that we have in the book that he share with. It's the legacy, keeping it going and find out, telling people. It's telling people where you start, it's not what you're going to end. And whatever happens, you can get over it and survive and be resilient. He always say, "Have courage. It's going to take courage, perseverance, and endurance to make it."

Velma Fann:

You mentioned the bridge that came was completed in 1927.

Marie Gibbs:

Mm-hmm.

Velma Fann:

How did that change the island?

Marie Gibbs:

Well, by the time the bridge came, we were already self-sufficient, self-reliant people when the bridge came. So as far as we are concerned, didn't change us. Because when people came over here, we were ready. They were buying our goods and services. We barely went across the bridge. We weren't accustomed to going over there. So when we started going over there, it was like a different world. And seeing white people for the first time, some people did. Then I grew up in the Jim Crow South time. Myself, I remember the different water fountains. And going over there, seeing "White" and "Colored," I had no idea what colored was. But I knew water was white, so I drank the white water. Because I knew I wanted water. It was white. Because on this island, self-sufficient people, when you don't need someone and don't depend on someone, you're good. You're good.

Velma Fann:

Talk about the Penn School and education.

Marie Gibbs:

Mm-hmm.

Velma Fann:

Who in your family attended the Penn School?

Marie Gibbs:

My uncle Tommy came here. He came a tailor. Because there were like seven of them. He was a baby. Because with the Port Royal Experiment and the people having land, they had to work the land to prove that they could work and be successful to keep their land going. So they kept the oldest children home to work the land. So my uncle went, it was a baby in the family. And the older siblings worked on the farm, their own farm.

Velma Fann:

Oh. Did you attend Penn School?

Marie Gibbs:

No, no, I didn't attend. I went to St. Helena.

Velma Fann:

What was the importance of Darrell Hall?

Marie Gibbs:

Well, Darrah Hall our- God. Darrah Hall was our Gymnasium. I thought I did this. Sorry. Darrah Hall was our Gymnasium, and we had all our programs in that. It was significant for the community events in the afternoon. As kids growing up, we'll go in Darrah Hall and play basketball in the gymnasium. And our programs would be held because there was a stage there. And community, after late evening events was there too. So it served as a community hub for entertainment and sports. I put it that way.

Velma Fann:

Now. Who built Darrah Hall?

Marie Gibbs:

Darrell Hall was built... Right off my hand, I couldn't tell you. I could tell you. Cheat sheet.

I can see when Darrah Hall... It was built in 1905. It's the oldest building on this campus. And in Darrah Hall, they held a lot of plays, and it was built in 1882. It's a memorial to Sophie Towne Darrah to honor her. Yeah, that's why it was built. And we still have the plays there, the mystery play.

Velma Fann:

Oh yes?

Marie Gibbs:

We still do it.

Velma Fann:

Okay.

Marie Gibbs:

Because when Darrah Hall became a Reconstruction Era monument, in the contract we can still do what we done in the past. There was a good idea they did that. So when our events comes up, whatever we want to do, we can have it there.

Velma Fann:
Excellent.

Marie Gibbs:
Yeah.

Velma Fann:
And the Brick Church, tell us about the Brick Church.

Marie Gibbs:
The Brick Church was built in 1855 by enslaved people as a church for the White slave owners. And when the Black slave went to the church, the slave went to the church, they stood in the balcony with a shield in front of them so they could not see the people on the bottom. They were telling them how they need to obey their masters and stuff like that. If you have a chance to go to the building, on the bricks there are small fingerprints of children. We had to handle those hot bricks at that time. So that was the church for the slave masters. They attended that church and allowed the slave to come and stand in the balcony so it can really teach them about how to be a slave.

Velma Fann:
Does the church have a congregation now?

Marie Gibbs:
The church is still operating. A black congregation. It opens every Sunday and Wednesday. And meetings there too. Yes.

Velma Fann:
When we were coming in, I saw what looked like a lodge, maybe a masonic lodge.

Marie Gibbs:
Oh, on the corner?

Velma Fann:
Yes.

Marie Gibbs:
Yeah, it's now a masonic lodge, but someone lived there up a little minute. It was a beauty salon. A lot of things have been there, but now it's a lodge now. Yeah.

Velma Fann:
Now I know during the sixties we had civil rights leaders who came to St. Helena.

Marie Gibbs:
Mm-hmm.

Velma Fann:

When I look at the history, if I look at perhaps between the '30s and the '50s, what was happening here? Some people may think, well, because you're isolated, you were not involved in politics on Beaufort. You just kind of stayed over here. Is that a true assessment or a false assessment?

Marie Gibbs:

False assessment. This island was very... Oh, we stood up back then. We had leaders who attended meetings, who fought for me. And today I'm standing on their shoulders fighting for my generation behind me. This community has always been fighters because we... The land we had, that's all we had. When you have something you know is yours, you're going to fight for that. People like Gloria Pops, Joe Stevenson, those are the people who fought for us.

Then when developers start coming, when Dr. Island and other people's faces are coming, they put together a CPO plan, coastal protection overlay plan to stop that from happening on this island. Well, I can say one thing. This island has always fought, and Penn Center has been the meeting place for a community to get together as a hub for planning and strategizing events to protect the people and community and making sure that we had a seat at the table.

Velma Fann:

Were there benevolent orders here? Eastern Star, Masons or other groups here?

Marie Gibbs:

Yeah, they're still here today.

Velma Fann:

Oh, okay.

Marie Gibbs:

We have Eastern star, Mason fraternities. We all have that now. Yeah, yeah. All those benevolent groups are still here today and functioning as community, helping the community, trash collecting, coming to events. If we need something, we'll call them the volunteers. So they're still involved in a vital part of this community.

Velma Fann:

And what about praise houses? Are there praise houses here?

Marie Gibbs:

We still have one praise house right now, but in growing up on this island, there was a praise house on every plantation. As a child, religion is big in this community. You go to Sunday school in the morning, church started maybe 12 o'clock, 12 or 3, still in church. In the evening, it's praise house. My grandfather was a deacon on ward, so I had to go to praise house. And the praise house, you learn how to read the Bible, you learn how to interpret the commandments, you learn how to the proverbs, you learn how to read church and you learn your manners and respect. All that was done in the praise house on this island. We have one praise house standing now, the Coffin Point praise house in Coffin Point now. And that's a replica how praise used to be.

Velma Fann:

Is there anything that you would like others to know about life on the island? I know we can read... Someone told me you can read the facts, but you need to tell the story.

Marie Gibbs:

Okay. For me, I've been here almost over 70 years. Life in this island is no place like home. I visited... I've traveled worldly, and for me, where can you find fresh air? Where can you find beautiful majestic oak trees? Where can you find a backyard you can walk in and [inaudible 00:17:27] that's your land. Where can you go in? Where can you go and stand up on the other side of the road, look behind your house and see water. That's your land. Where can you go and see that? Where can you raise your children and not worried about them being shot on the street and you have an island of people who know you collective looking out for your children. Where can you find that? There's no place like living on St. Helena's Island, South Carolina.

Velma Fann:

And in closing, I thought of one thing. I understand that there's a very strong connection with St. Helena and West Africa that people may have even made that journey.

Marie Gibbs:

Mm-hmm.

Velma Fann:

Can you make that connection for us?

Marie Gibbs:

Yes, yes, yes. The people coming from West Africa, different regions. Most of the people came from Sierra Leone, Africa, west Africa, here. All of our customs traditions are the same. We have a relationship with them. At our heritage celebration, they come down every year to celebrate together.

Our family from America come together. Last time they came, we had a rice cook off. We said the losers will be the one with rice left on the table.

So we have a very connection with our people there. And some of us don't know what part of Africa we came from, but I can tell you, I had a guest from Senegal coming to the museum last year. He looked at Marie and said, "your family's from Guinea." So right away I Google Guinea, I want to see how my people look. I said, "Man, these people look good. This my people."

So that's our connection with our food ways, our folk ways, our music, how we worship, how we sing, how we love. The love and humility we show to one another. It's not that we see somebody, you can feel the spirit, you can feel your people. You know that's yours.

So we have a feeling. I've been fortunate to travel to Ghana. Boy, my people. Soon as you jump the plane, your sense of home comes over you. So that's our people. We may not know, but West Africa is where we are descendants from.

Velma Fann:

And could you bid us for farewell or give us the blessings in the Gullah dialect?

Marie Gibbs:

Okay, I want to do this, reading this here. I been tell the story a long time, so I glad for see you and hope to see you again. So come again.

Velma Fann:

Thank you so very much.

Marie Gibbs:

You're welcome. Hope you can use some of those parts.