Section II.

The Seven Land Commission Tracts in Lower Richland County
A. The Adams Tract
Historic Appearance

The Adams tract comprised roughly 482 acres located southwest of the township of Gadsden. This tract had belonged to the plantation of J. P. Adams, and, according to the original survey plats of the South Carolina Land Commission, the land was largely uncultivated and forested with mostly old growth pine. The tract was bordered on the northwest by Cedar Creek, one of the four main tributaries of the Congaree River in Lower Richland County. The Indigo Branch flowed into Cedar Creek and ran through the original seven parcels of the Adams tract from east to west. Both early settlers and the large-scale planters that arrived in the area in the late eighteenth century experimented with indigo in the low-lying swamp region along the Congaree, lending this waterway its name.\(^{72}\)

The tract was bounded on the west and south by the plantation of J. Weston and on the north and east by the remainder of the J.P. Adams plantation. The original survey plat maps include plans for the undeveloped “road to Gadsden,” the present day Old Bluff Road. Located two miles east of the Adams tract, the town of Gadsden rose following the completion of the South Carolina Railroad in 1842 which connected Charleston with the capital of Columbia. Gadsden, little more than a rail depot, had established a post office by 1851.\(^{73}\)

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The Adams tract comprised 482 acres and was originally divided into seven parcels. These parcels were purchased from the South Carolina Land Commission between June 1870 and December 1874. Of the seven original purchasers, only three were able to secure a deed. The size of the parcels ranged from 44 to 67 acres. None of these original purchasers could be traced to modern descendents. The Adams tract has been subdivided to such an extent over time that no current parcel maintained a significant portion of the original Land Commission parcel.

Current Appearance

The land that was once the Adams tract is bound on the north by Old Bluff Road, just east of the entrance to Congaree National Park. Garrick Road is the only modern day street to enter the historical tract, running north-south along the eastern boundary.

The South Carolina Land Commission parcels of the Adams tract have been subdivided into numerous small properties, though the original parcel boundaries remain basically extant. The land, though privately owned, is mostly uninhabited and undeveloped. Dense pine forest along the border of Congaree National Park covers this land. Despite its location along the swamp boundary, the soil is characteristic of the Sandhills region, which would explain the predominance of pine. The Indigo Branch is no longer extant, and the land of the current tract is devoid of the numerous ponds and pools that characterize Congaree swampland. Compared to


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much of the surrounding region, the Adams tract does not appear fertile, and one wonders whether the “Indigo Branch” was in fact a misnomer.
B. The Back Swamp Tract
Historic Appearance

The Back Swamp tract comprised approximately 380 acres located a mile and a half west of the town of Hopkins. The tract was originally part of the larger Back Swamp Plantation owned by James Hopkins. Not surprisingly, the original South Carolina Land Commission survey plats designate the property as swamp land. Much of the northern part of this tract had already been cultivated as rice fields at the time of the Land Commission survey.

The survey plats show the Back Swamp Creek running from north to south through the western half of the tract on its way to Cedar Creek. The tract was bordered on the north and east by the remainder of the James Hopkins’ plantation, on the west by the land of Paul Chappell, and on the south by the Myers estate. The original survey plats indicate a slave cemetery located in the northeast corner of the tract.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The Back Swamp tract contained 377.55 acres and seven original parcels. Although one parcel was sold, none of the land was ever deeded, indicating that any land purchases were forfeited.

Current Appearance

Although the Back Swamp Creek still exists, it would seem that the land has lost much of its swampy characteristics, as aerial photographs show dirt roads and grass fields with scattered forest along the creek bed.

Back Swamp Road skirts the northern border of the tract, and current property lines bear no relation to the partitions of the South Carolina Land Commission. The slave cemetery indicated in the original Land Commission survey is currently located on the property of Theodore Jenkins.
C. The Diseker Tract
Historic Appearance

The Diseker tract, comprised of roughly 440 acres, was located one mile northeast of the Hopkins tract. The original South Carolina Land Commission survey plats show the land to have been largely uncultivated with sparse oak and pine forest. Plans for what would become Horrell Hill Road are shown on these plats. The tract was bordered on the east by the Cedar Grove Plantation of John Reese. The Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad, completed in 1870, skims the southwestern corner of this tract.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The Diseker tract contained 440 acres divided into nine original parcels, ranging in size from 20 to 44.5 acres. Parcels were purchased between August 1870 and November 1875. There were thirteen original purchasers, demonstrating that some of these parcels were subdivided. Five of these purchasers succeeded in acquiring a deed from the South Carolina Land Commission. Presumably the rest of the land was forfeited. None of these original purchasers could be traced to modern descendents. The Diseker tract was subdivided to such an extent that no current parcel maintained a significant portion of the original Land Commission parcel.

Current Appearance

Today the Diseker land is residential and has been subdivided into numerous small property holdings. Principal streets running through Diseker land include Horrell Hill Road (north of the CSX rail line), Crossing Creek Road, and Motley Road. Development in this area is suburban in nature rather than rural, lying between the township of Hopkins and Garners Ferry Road (U.S. 378).

74 As mentioned in a previous footnote, deed research indicates that 449.25 acres were actually sold in the 440-acre Diseker tract. The discrepancy of 9.25 acres might be the result of the resale of lots, inaccurate surveying, or careless record-keeping.
D. The Hickory Hill Tract
Hickory Hill Tract, Richland County, South Carolina
1. Overview of the Hickory Hill Tract

Historic Appearance

The Hickory Hill tract comprised roughly 712 acres between Tom’s Creek and Griffins Creek, an area lying approximately one mile to the southeast of the present day town of Eastover. Stoeber’s 1872 Geological and Agricultural Map of Richland County designated this area as containing “good” land. Soil in Hickory Hill has loamy clay characteristic of the upper coastal plain interspersed with the more common sandy soil of the Sandhills which dominates much of Lower Richland County. The flat and fertile land perhaps explains the relative success of this tract.

Tom’s Creek formed the western border of this tract and the original South Carolina Land Commission survey plat shows partial cultivation with pockets of dense oak and pine forest. The Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad was completed in 1870 and runs through the northern part of the Hickory Hill tract along already established property lines. The construction of this railroad gave rise to the town of Eastover and employed many freed African Americans, just as the earlier South Carolina Railroad had given rise to the towns of Hopkins and Gadsden. Eastover developed into a regional hub, and presumably the town offered commerce and postal service for the inhabitants of Hickory Hill.

The fertile soil may have made possible the cultivation of a greater variety of crops. Small scale farmers in this region would have cultivated corn, peas, beans, and sweet potatoes. Out of the seven tracts in this study, only Hickory Hill still demonstrates active and widespread agricultural activity.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The Hickory Hill tract contains 712 acres divided amongst 38 parcels. Twenty-eight land purchases were made from June 1870 until as late as October 1878. Only thirteen deeds were secured from the South Carolina Land Commission. The size of the parcels ranges from 13 acres to 52.75 acres.

Current Appearance

Hickory Hill, located twenty-five miles southeast of Columbia, presents a far more rural setting today than the other historical tracts in this study. There is a vast stretch of farmland and uncultivated private land separating Eastover from the metropolitan area of Columbia. Many of the current property lines demonstrate unbroken provenance with property purchased from the South Carolina Land Commission during the 1870s.

The aptly named Hickory Hill Road runs north-south through the western part of the historical tract, maintaining the integrity of many, but not all, of the original parcel divisions. There are several small subdivisions along this road in the northern portion of the historical tract. The area

75 Moore, Columbia and Richland, 172.
retains a rural aspect, with scattered homes enjoying a sense of isolation due to the alternation of cultivated fields and undeveloped pine forest.

2. The Renty Drayton Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The Renty Drayton parcel is located at the current address of 1500 Hickory Hill Road. There are no extant buildings on the property.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

In 1879, Renty Drayton received the title for Lot 23 of Hickory Hill from the State of South Carolina. For $150, he purchased 36.5 acres of usable farmland. Renty was a former slave

76 Deed Book M, page 324, Richland County Register of Deeds. Deeds spell the name Renty Drayton although the spelling on the gravestone is Rentie Draton.
who worked for Richard Singleton prior to emancipation. Renty purchased his land later in life, when he was around fifty-four years of age. Farming was a family enterprise for Renty and his wife, Sarah. By 1880, Renty, Sarah, and several of their eight children were actively working the land. Even through the 1880s and 1890s, when several other Land Commission purchasers were losing their holdings, the Draytons managed to hold onto their lot. To this day, Renty Drayton is listed as the owner of the land, even though both Sarah and Renty have passed away. According to the staff at the Richland County Register of Deeds office, a parcel of land will remain in an owner’s name, even posthumously, until the title is reviewed in Probate Court.

Renty’s great-granddaughter, Susie Drayton Cureton, currently maintains the land. Susie remembers living on the parcel while she was growing up as a child. Susie’s father farmed the land for most of his life. Her family resided on one half of the property, and her Aunt Rosa Monday’s family lived on the other half. For the past fifteen to twenty years, Susie has rented out the land to

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78 Census, 1880.
local farmers. Although she now resides in Columbia, Susie still frequently attends St. Phillip AME Church, the site where Renty and Sarah are now buried.\(^7^9\)

Not only has the land remained in the Drayton name, but its physical appearance has remained largely intact and untouched. Currently comprised of over 30 acres, the Drayton lands are mostly cleared for farming, with the exception of a tree line on the western perimeter. The lands are divided in half by Drayton Head Road, and its borders still are recognizable to the original Hickory Hill Lot 23.\(^8^0\)

### 3. The Isaiah Fay Family Parcels

**General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses**

Hickory Hill tract Lot 1 has not remained intact, but has been subdivided into seven parcels. Although the original Lot 1 is not intact, descendants of Isaiah Fay do own some of the subdivided lots.\(^8^1\) Two of the properties are located on the west side of Hickory Hill Road. One of the subdivided pieces has a physical address of 1720 Hickory Hill Road. Hickory Hill Lot 15 has also been subdivided from its original acreage. The only parcel thought to remain in the family is 140 Alice Johnson Road.

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\(^7^9\) Susie Drayton Cureton, interview with Sarah Scripps, April 9, 2009.

\(^8^0\) Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.

\(^8^1\) Isiah is another common spelling of Isaiah Fay’s name, but for the sake of continuity, the spelling Isaiah will be used in this report. This also applies to the spelling of Isiah Fay, Jr. as Isaiah Fay, Jr.
The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Isaiah Fay received the deed to the Hickory Hill tract Lots 7 and 15 on February 24, 1875.\textsuperscript{82} An accidental state error occurred when Fay first purchased his lands. Though the state granted Fay Hickory Hill Lot 7, he was mistakenly issued a deed for Hickory Hill Lot 1 and settled the land. In 1878, the state conveyed Hickory Hill Lot 7 to Nancy Desaussure. Isaiah Fay was legally granted Lot 1 in April of 1886.\textsuperscript{83} Eventually, Lot 7 was conveyed to Nancy Desaussure by Isaiah Fay.\textsuperscript{84} In subsequent years, Isaiah’s land would pass onto some of his sons: Isaiah Jr., Champion, Mallie, and Wesley Fay.

In the United States Census of 1880 Isaiah was near thirty-five years of age, living with his wife Matilda Fay, and their ten children. Isaiah’s seventy-year-old mother, Diana Fay, was also a household member. Isaiah’s occupation was listed as a farmer. Matilda and the older children worked as farmhands.\textsuperscript{85} By the 1900 census, Isaiah and Matilda were the parents of fourteen.

\textsuperscript{82} Deed Book J, page 626, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{83} Deed Book P, page 574, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{84} Deed Book R, page 44, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{85} Census, 1880. In this record Isaiah Fay is found as \textit{Isaih Fay}. 
children, ten of whom were still living. Residing with them was their son, Mallie, daughter, Annie, and a ten-year-old granddaughter, Lula Jenerette. Isaiah was again listed as a farmer. He owned his farm, which was mortgaged.\textsuperscript{86}

\textbf{Isaiah Fay Family Parcel Lot 15.} The land currently owned by descendants of Isaiah Fay is outlined in blue. \textit{Courtesy of Richland County GIS.}

Though most of the tracts have been subdivided, family descendants of Isaiah Fay still reside on much of the lands. For example, Champion Fay heirs-at-law are the registered owners of a parcel located off of Hickory Hill Road. A descendant, Harriette Jenerette owns the 2.3 acres parcel at 1720 Hickory Hill Road. The Malley Fay estate owns land on the west side of Hickory Hill Road.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Census, 1900.} In this record Isaiah Fay is found as \textit{Isah Fay.}

\textsuperscript{87} Malley Fay is sometimes seen as Mallie Fae, as on his gravestone.
4. The William H. Hodge Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The parcel is situated on the south side of Timbleside Road, adjacent to the subdivided lot of Oliver Tucker (also part of the original Land Commission parcel) at 218 Timbleside Road, in Eastover. Three large buildings are located on the larger parcel, with the remainder of the land consisting primarily of large, uncultivated fields. Oliver Tucker’s property, located on the northwest corner of the original lot, has two buildings including a three bedroom home built in 1940.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

William Hodge received a deed for Hickory Hill Lot 2 from the Sinking Fund in 1881, paying $102.50 for 20.5 acres. Although census records provide several listings of “William Hodge/Hodges,” it is most likely that William Hodge was born in Lower Richland County in 1851.88 His

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88 According to the 1870 federal census, William Hodges was an eighteen-year-old farmer who lived with his father, Charles. Other people by the name of William Hodges are found in 1880 and 1900 federal census data. However, Land Commission purchases indicate that a Charles Hodges first purchased the land, and William Hodge received the deed, making William most likely the son of Charles. Both “Hodge” and “Hodges” are seen in the records, but this report uses William Hodge as his name due to the fact that the Land Commission deed is awarded to William.
father, Charles Hodges, was a former slave who worked for Grace W. Davis prior to emancipation. Charles was the first person to attempt to purchase Lot 2 of Hickory Hill, beginning payments on the property in 1870 when he was sixty years old. Ultimately, however, it was Charles’s son, William, who received the deed. By 1880, William and his wife, Malia, had at least seven children living with them on the land. Neither William nor Malia could read or write.

The heirs of William Hodge have maintained ownership of the land to this day. In addition, Hodge lands were subdivided only once, providing a family member, Oliver Tucker, with one acre of the land in 1964. Surprisingly, when the land was divided, the deed stated that “this

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Hodge. To view William Hodge’s deed from the Sinking Fund, see Deed Book P, page 365, Richland County Register of Deeds.
90 Although other records do not confirm a definite familial relationship between Oliver Tucker and the Hodge family, the heirs of William Hodge’s estate, including one heir named Ben Tucker, gave Oliver Tucker one acre of land in exchange for “love and affection,” which suggests a close relationship. See Deed Book 391, page 293, Richland County Register of Deeds.
acre is a portion of the twenty-one acres of land registered in the Clerk of Court in the name of William H. Hodge. Grantor and date are not known by the grantees of this deed." This statement perhaps

Current Hodge family parcel. Although most of the Hodge parcel consists of uncultivated fields, several houses are also located on the property. Courtesy of Sarah Scripps.

suggests that although the land has remained in the Hodge family for several generations, the heirs of William Hodge are unaware of the parcel’s origins with the Land Commission. Currently, the lands of the Hodge family remain in use as a family residence, with large portions still consisting of open fields.

5. The Hercules Smith Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The current parcel is a portion of the original Lot 8 from the Hickory Hill tract. It is split in half by Hickory Hill Road.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Hercules Smith purchased two lots from the Hickory Hill tract from the South Carolina Land Commission in 1872. He bought Lot 8 in its entirety and half of Lot 10 for $346, a total of 34.60 acres. Hercules’s land was bordered by that of Isaiah Fay, who owned Lot 7 and later by that of

91 Deed Book 391, page 293, Richland County Register of Deeds.
Nancy Desaussure who acquired that same parcel in 1886.\textsuperscript{92} James Walker owned the remaining half of Lot 10.\textsuperscript{93}

A former slave, Hercules Smith had belonged to plantation owner James Uriah Adams.\textsuperscript{94} His birth year was estimated to be 1835. Hercules and his wife Mollie were said to have been very industrious people.\textsuperscript{95} They afforded the purchase of the lots from the Land Commission after years of saving money.

Hercules also owned Lot 20 of Hickory Hill for a time. He purchased the parcel of 24 acres from John Carter in 1878.\textsuperscript{96} Carter acquired the lot from the state the previous year.\textsuperscript{97} In 1897, 

\textsuperscript{92}Deed Book U, page 586, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{93}Deed Book K, page 255, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{94}Middleton, “List of Former Slaves.”
\textsuperscript{95}Billie Viola Woodard, interview with Morgen Young and Nate Johnson, March 27, 2009.
\textsuperscript{96}Deed Book L, page 547, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{97}Deed Book K, page 616, Richland County Register of Deeds.
Hercules sold half an acre to St. Phillip AME Church in Eastover. The $270 cost of the land was paid by the congregation of the church and the lot was deeded to the trustees, which included other original Land Commission purchasers such as Isaiah Fay and Cain Green.  

Hercules and Mollie used the acreage as a farm as early as 1880. According to census records, Hercules worked as a farmer and his wife and several of his children labored as farmhands. The Smiths had eleven children, but only five survived to adulthood. Twenty years later, Hercules owned the farm free of mortgage. Hercules continued to farm the land until his death, sometime between 1900 and 1910. After Hercules’ death, Mollie continued to own and work the farm. She eventually remarried a man by the name of Jenerette.

Hercules and Mollie raised their son Hercules, Jr. to become an active leader in Lower Richland County. Hercules, Jr. learned to read and write, indicating that his parents, despite their own illiteracy, recognized the value of education and instilled similar values in him. It was probably this upbringing that inspired Hercules, Jr. to become a schoolteacher in his adulthood. In 1891, he passed an examination to teach the third grade and, later, he sought to improve his teaching skills through a summer seminar at Benedict Institute in Columbia. He was simultaneously involved in Lower Richland politics, until the revised South Carolina Constitution of 1895 placed severe restrictions on African-American political rights. In fact, just four months before the constitution passed, Hercules, Jr. had helped to nominate Republican delegates to the Constitutional Convention. He and three other African Americans, including his brothers-in-law Joseph Sherman Collins and Hampton W. Woodard, represented Eastover during the nomination process.

When the Eastover men’s political careers ended in disappointment, they turned to their family farms in Lower Richland County for economic success. Joseph Sherman Collins, in particular, accumulated an impressive amount of land from which he generated significant wealth. He had married Hercules, Jr.’s sister, Rinah Smith, in 1886, and had three children with her. Following the tradition of Rinah’s parents, education was stressed in the family. Daughters Kate and Gertrude went on to serve as public school teachers in Lower Richland and Arthur became a prominent dentist in Columbia. As Eastover’s first black postmaster and a “thrifty” individual, Joseph saved enough money to purchase 138.91 acres from Amie S. Weston of Wateree Plantation in 1901 and began a large-scale farm. Between 1909 and 1923, he used income from the farm to purchase more land from white planters, including 626.27 more acres

98 Deed Book AA, page 307, Richland County Register of Deeds.
99 Census, 1880.
100 Census, 1900.
101 Census, 1910.
102 Woodard interview.
103 Census, 1900.
104 [Columbia] The State, October 13, 1891; August 18, 1900.
105 The State, August 10, 1895, p. 8.
106 Census, 1900.
107 Census, 1910; Woodard interview.
108 Woodard interview; Deed Book AE, page 447, Richland County Register of Deeds.
from Weston and 139 acres from “Captain” Bradford, who ran a local railroad company.\textsuperscript{109} Joseph used the land to farm crops such as corn, soybean, rye, and barley, besides operating a store and cotton gin on the property.\textsuperscript{110}

![Headstones of Hercules (note the alternative spelling) and Mollie Smith. Hercules and his wife are buried at St. Phillip AME Church in Eastover. The church is located on half an acre of Smith’s land, which he sold to trustees of the church in the late nineteenth century. Courtesy of Morgen Young.]

Rinah inherited some of her own land, as well. When her father Hercules passed away, his original Land Commission lot was subdivided into smaller parcels, from which Rinah received a 7.29 acre parcel. Furthermore, when Joseph passed away in 1924, he passed the titles of all of his land to her.\textsuperscript{111} Rinah had difficulty maintaining Joseph’s farm, however, and called on her son, Arthur Joseph Collins, for his assistance. Born in 1889, Arthur was well-educated and a professional dentist. He had earned a bachelor’s degree at Claflin University in Orangeburg and later received his D.D.S. degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1913. He returned to Columbia afterwards and opened a dentist’s office downtown at 1510 Main Street.\textsuperscript{112} Despite his professional status as a dentist, Arthur answered his mother’s request, agreeing to work on the farm in between appointments with patients. Joseph had taught Arthur how to farm as a young boy and Rinah had always stressed the historic importance of the land, so he did not

\textsuperscript{109} Woodard interview; Deed Book BL, page 444; Deed Book BB, page 203; Deed Book BO, page 357; Deed Book AV, page 478; Deed Book BZ, page 529; and Deed Book CJ, page 198, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{110} Woodard interview.
\textsuperscript{111} Deed Book 282, page 129, Richland County Register of Deeds.
Rinah Collins. Collins maintained ownership of a portion of her father’s original purchase from the Land Commission. She understood the historic significance of the land and deeded acreage to her grandchildren to ensure it always remained in the family. Courtesy of Billie Viola Woodard.

question his obligation to continue the farm. A local newspaper reported that he worked the fields “with boyish cheerfulness.”

Out of all the family land, Rinah considered the 7.29 acre parcel from Hercules to be her “prized piece of land.” She conveyed the 7.29 acres to Arthur and his sisters, Katie C. Scott and Gertrude C. Woodard, in 1954, asking them never to sell the land if possible. To ensure its survival in the family, Rinah deeded portions of the land to her grandchildren. The land passed from Arthur to his sister Gertrude. Gertrude operated the land with her husband. The couple lived on a 500-acre portion near Eastover, located off Joe Collins Road. The family continued to hold ownership of portions of the original Hickory Hill lots but lived and worked on the land acquired by Joseph Sherman Collins. The Woodards diversified the farm, raising goats, cattle, pigs and most recently poultry on the property. Their son Joseph Woodard Sr. inherited the farm.

113 The Light, June 6, 1925, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. Arthur Collins was also active as a member of the NAACP Columbia branch, according to the NAACP papers, South branch department files, reel 19, page 00329, Thomas Cooper Library.
114 Woodard interview.
115 Deed Book 282, page 129, Richland County Register of Deeds.
116 Woodard interview.
117 Woodard interview.
Joseph married Billie Viola. The Woodards had four children, all of whom inherited shares of the land from Rinah and Joseph Collins. Billie stressed the pride her children hold in the land. The farm where Billie Woodard currently resides, though not an original purchase from the Land Commission, still maintains historical significance in Lower Richland County. Deemed a Century Farm by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, it has been owned and operated by the same family for nearly 125 years. Currently, the Woodards operate Vale Woodard, Inc. on the land. Billie and her children have no intention of selling this farm, nor the remaining portion of the Hickory Hill lot. Billie maintained she would always “hold onto the land.”

The original parcel purchased by Hercules Smith from the Land Commission remains in the same family, now owned by one of Smith’s great-great-grandchildren. Ownership of the land passed from Arthur Collins to Gertrude C. Woodard in 1965, and then to Joseph C. Woodard in 1978. Joseph C. Woodard, Jr. acquired the property in 1990. Joseph Woodard Jr. maintains

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118 Woodard interview.  
119 Woodard interview.  
120 Deed Book D31, page 731, Richland County Register of Deeds; Richland County Assessor’s website.  
121 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
ownership of the property and leases it out for agricultural purposes.\textsuperscript{122} The parcel is a portion of Lot 8 of the Hickory Hill tract purchased by Hercules Smith in 1872. It has remained as a farm and in the same family for over 130 years.

\textsuperscript{122} Woodard interview.
E. The Hopkins Tract
Hopkins Tract, Richland County, South Carolina
1. Overview of the Hopkins Tract

Historic Appearance

Ownership of the roughly 1,830 acres which comprised the Hopkins tract passed through a variety of families before being sold to the South Carolina Land Commission by Julius Huguenin in 1870. The tract was bounded on the east by the Cabin Branch (of Cedar Creek), and its fork with the Horsepen Branch marked the southeastern corner of the tract. The Horsepen Branch meanders through the southwest section of Hopkins tract and was used to demark property boundaries in the original South Carolina Land Commission survey plats.

The South Carolina Railway, which ran through the heart of Hopkins tract, instigated growth in the region. Completed between Charleston and Columbia in 1842, the railroad spurred the town of Hopkins Turnout, so named for the turntable that was used prior to the completion of the Columbia segment. The construction of the railroad employed many whites and free blacks, and the turnout lived on as a rail depot. During Reconstruction, newly freed men and women purchased Hopkins tract land from the South Carolina Land Commission, forming a new community alongside the rail depot that was the foundation for the present-day town of Hopkins. Amidst the emerging community, the land was largely put to agricultural use.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The Hopkins tract was comprised of 1,830 acres divided among 43 parcels. Hopkins land was purchased from the South Carolina Land Commission between May 24, 1872 and January 17, 1884. Of the forty original purchasers, fourteen individuals received a deed for the land. The parcels ranged in size from 10 to 105 acres, with an average of 42.25 acres.

Current Appearance

The modern town of Hopkins, situated on the outskirts of Columbia, is centered on the land of the Hopkins tract. Lower Richland Boulevard marks some of its southwestern boundary, while the Cabin Branch still denotes the eastern boundary. The current Hopkins Elementary School sits in the middle of the historic tract. Horrell Hill Road marks the western and northern boundary.

Dense urban growth has come to characterize the western part of the historical tract, notably along Horrell Hill Road and Crosshill Road and surrounding Hopkins Elementary School. Though nearly all of the original Land Commission parcels have been subdivided into numerous sections, many of these partitions maintain the integrity of the original property divisions. Some of the original properties remain wholly undivided.

Despite the concentrated population, there are several fields under cultivation and some large areas of cleared land, tillable soil, and mixed pine and oak forest, notably in the eastern and northern portions of the historic tract.
2. The Hagar Alston Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The current physical address is 1349 Crosshill Road. A house built in the last twenty years stands on the property.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Hagar Alston purchased Lots 6 and 23 of the Hopkins tract in 1879. She bought 43.75 acres for a total cost of $131.20. The following year she was granted a deed for the land from the State of South Carolina. At the time of purchase, her immediate neighbor to the first lot was Sailor

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123 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
124 “Land Commission Records,” South Carolina Department of Archives and History.
125 Deed Book, M390 1880, Richland County Register of Deeds.

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Foose, who owned Lot 7.\textsuperscript{126} Amanda Edmonds bordered Hagar’s second lot, having purchased Lot 22 in 1876.\textsuperscript{127}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Johnie and Earnestine Alston. Johnie and Ernestine on their wedding day. Israel Alston stands to the immediate right of the minister. \textit{Courtesy of Marie Adams.}}
\end{figure}

Hagar was born in February 1835 and her husband Brazil in 1822.\textsuperscript{128} Both were owned at one time by the Chappell family, a Lower Richland plantation family.\textsuperscript{129} Paul Green Chappell owned Brazil, while Hagar belonged at one time to his grandfather Hicks Chappell.\textsuperscript{130} Upon Hicks Chappell’s death in 1836, he left Hagar and two other slaves five dollars annually.\textsuperscript{131}

Hagar and Brazil were farming their land as early as the 1880s. At the time, the Alstons were raising eight children. By 1900, Brazil died and Hagar was left a widow.\textsuperscript{132} She, however,

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{126} Deed Book, M307 1879, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\bibitem{127} Deed Book, P151 1884, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\bibitem{128} \textit{Census},1880.
\bibitem{129} Marie Adams interview with Morgen Young, March 30, 2009.
\bibitem{131} Montgomery, “Richland Loses Old Friend.”
\bibitem{132} \textit{Census},1900.
\end{thebibliography}
maintained ownership of her original parcels of land. Hagar was unable to read or write, yet all of her children still living with her were literate. Her eldest son worked as a miller of grits, while others of working age served as farm laborers on their mother’s farm.

By 1910 Hagar Alston owned her land free of mortgage.\textsuperscript{133} Her occupation, according to census records, was listed as “own income” and her land described as a farm. Two grandchildren occupied her household, Fred and Nellie Alston. Fred worked as a farm laborer on her land. Her neighbors included her sons Israel and Sam Alston. Both men worked as farmers on rented lands.

Hagar was a successful woman farmer who was very involved in the community. She donated lumber that built the Hopkins meeting hall in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{134} African-American men in the community gathered often in that hall to discuss community affairs. Many Alstons resided in the Hopkins community, and Hagar’s son Cyrus worked at the Gorman Brothers’ store.\textsuperscript{135} Hagar Alston died on September 10, 1919.\textsuperscript{136} She lived her entire life in Lower Richland.

\textbf{Hopkins meeting hall.} Hagar Alston donated lumber for the construction of the community’s meeting hall. Her success as a woman in Hopkins was recognized by many. \textit{Courtesy of John B. Barber, Jr.}

Following her death, Lot 6 of Hagar’s land passed to her son Israel. He operated it as a farm, planting such crops as cotton, potatoes, and sugar cane.\textsuperscript{137} He was known as a very successful

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item 133 \textit{Census, 1910.}
\item 135 Adams interview with Young.
\item 136 South Carolina Death Records, 1821-1955.
\item 137 Marie Adams, “Israel Alston History,” \textit{St. John Baptist Newsletter.}
\end{thebibliography}
farmer in the community. He later ran a successful trucking business and further distinguished himself as an entrepreneur in Hopkins. Israel married Portia Barber, herself a descendent of an original Land Commission purchaser. Portia was the daughter of John Benjamin and Mamie Holley Barber and a granddaughter of Samuel and Harriet Barber. Israel and Portia had one child, Johnie B. Alston.

Following his father’s death in 1957, Johnie inherited the land. He understood the historical significance of the land and often spoke of it to his family. For a time, he ran a farm on the property. He worked most of life as a building contractor, constructing the current house that stands on the property. Following his death in 2007, his wife Ernestine inherited the property. She currently resides at 1349 Crosshill Road in Hopkins. This property still occupies most of the original Lot 6 of the Hopkins tract, with only a few portions carved out of the original boundaries. She has no intention to sell the land, acknowledging its rich history and desiring to maintain its ownership within her family.

3. The Harriet Barber Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

This parcel is generally bounded by Old Creek Road, Gene Drive, and Sulton Johnson Road, with Lower Richland Boulevard and Barberville Loop running through the original parcel. Current addresses in this parcel include 105, 111, 116, and 117 Barberville Loop; 6401 and 6417 Lower Richland Boulevard; and 115 Old Creek Road.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Reverend Samuel Barber, a former slave, made the first payment on the land in 1872, and his wife, Harriet Barber, also a former slave, received the deed to 42.5 acres, Hopkins Lot 35, from the State of South Carolina, in 1879. Reverend Barber was a minister, a farmer of corn and cotton, and a well digger. It is said that he was freed prior to emancipation due to his skill as a well digger. Harriet was a farm laborer and laundress. It is likely that the Barbers earned the money used to purchase the property from these occupations. Sam and his sons built the home that still stands today, known as the Harriet Barber House, at 116 Barberville Loop, around 1880, with additions made in subsequent decades. The property was likely divided prior to Sam and Harriet’s death and gifted to their children, who then passed the properties on, further dividing

138 Adams interview with Young.
139 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
140 Ernestine Alston interview with Morgen Young. March 25, 2009.
141 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
142 Alston interview.
143 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
144 Southeast Rural Community Outreach Ministries, Harriet Barber House Homepage, n.d., http://www.harrietbarberhouse.org; Richland County, South Carolina, Mesne Conveyance, Grantee Index, 1865-1927.
the parcels, to their heirs. At least one large parcel was sold to the unrelated McCracken family, probably prior to 1910. The land was and is relatively flat with deciduous and pine trees and tillable soil suitable for farming. The Horsepen Branch and Cabin Branch of Meyers Creek fork to the southeast of the property within walking distance. The land was farmed until the 1960s.  

Reverend Samuel Barber founded St. John Baptist Church near Hopkins. Half-brothers Sam Jr. and John Barber raised their families and farmed on the property in the early to mid-1900s. John became a Baptist minister and educator. Sam Jr. was also a well digger and beekeeper. At least three more houses were built on land bounded by the original parcel by 1930. A smokehouse stood near the Harriet Barber House until the 1980s, used in its earlier years to store smoked hams, drying onions, feed corn, and canned goods.  

146 Adams interview with Bedell.
148 Adams interview with Bedell.
149 Adams interview with Bedell.
Harriet Barber House, late 1940s. Naomi Daniels Jackson holding Johnny Barber's daughter, WeTonia. The young boy is Sandy Hagood. *Courtesy John B. Barber, Jr.*

Harriet Barber House, 1970s. John and Mamie Barber's sons, Sandy, Ulysses, Melvin, Johnny and Odell standing in front of the smokehouse that was torn down in the 1980s. *Courtesy of Marie Adams.*
The next two generations of descendants were predominantly educators, having received their primary education at segregated schools in Hopkins as children and secondary education at Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia. Several sons migrated to Detroit, Michigan, following military service, where they worked in the automotive industries. Only one son, Ulysses, remained in South Carolina and graduated from Allen University. His daughters graduated from Hopkins High School in Hopkins and Benedict College in Columbia. One daughter received her masters degree from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the other daughters received masters degrees from the University of South Carolina.\(^{150}\)

For his commitment to education in the Lower Richland community, John and Mamie’s son, Ulysses R. Barber, received awards and honors, including Richland One Teacher of the Year and having the auditorium at the Hopkins Middle School named after him. His daughters, Marie Adams and Mary Kirkland, are actively involved in the preservation of the history in this region, spearheading efforts to restore the Harriet Barber House and forming South East Rural Community Outreach.

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Reverend John Barber.} He and his wife Mamie raised eleven children in the Harriet Barber House. In addition to farming the property, he was a public school teacher for about forty-five years and a Baptist preacher for over sixty years. \textit{Courtesy of Marie Adams.}
\end{quote}

\(^{150}\) Adams interview with Bedell.
The Amanda Goodwin Edmonds Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The original outer border of Hopkins Lots 21 and 22 is intact, bounded by Edmonds Farm Road on the south and Horsepen Branch Lane on the west. The current street addresses include 1042, 1054, and 1060 Edmonds Farm Road, all currently owned by the Edmonds family.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Amanda Goodwin Edmonds purchased a 32 acre lot, Lot 22, in Hopkins for $64.00 and received a deed to the land in 1884 from the Sinking Fund Commission. Amanda’s father, John Wilson, had already purchased two adjoining lots to Amanda’s, Lots 16 and 21, totaling 41 acres. John Wilson purchased these lots for $164.00 and received a deed from the Sinking Fund Commission in 1881. Amanda was a member of the St. John Baptist Church and her marriage to Daniel Edmonds was apparently a second marriage, as four children are listed as Goodwins and stepchildren of Mr. Edmonds on the 1880 census. The Edmonds household also included a

151 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
forty-year-old woman, Harriet Banna, and her nine-year-old daughter who were listed as servants on the 1880 census.\footnote{Census, 1880.}

The Edmondses were listed as farm workers through the 1930 census and in November 1935, with Amanda’s death at the age of eighty-two, the land was passed on to her children: sons Douglas, McDaniel, John, and Allen, and daughters Charity Sims and Francis Blakely. The inheritance also included the 41 acres purchased by her father John Wilson, Lots 21 and 16, of which Amanda was listed to be the lawful heir of and for which she had paid taxes for some fifty odd years.\footnote{Deed Book DZ, page 463, Richland County Register of Deeds.} In 1942, Douglas bought out his brothers and sisters for $5.00 and took sole possession of 16 acres of his grandfather’s original 41 acres.\footnote{Deed Book FD, page 386, Richland County Register of Deeds.} Again in 1946, Douglas bought

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Amanda_Goodwin_Edmonds_Family_Parcel}
\caption{Amanda Goodwin Edmonds Family Parcel. The land currently owned by descendants of Amanda Edmonds is outlined in blue. \textit{Courtesy of Richland County GIS.}}
\end{figure}
out his brothers and sisters for $1.00 and took sole possession of his mother Amanda’s original 32.06 acre lot, Lot 22.  

[Image of Headstone]

Headstone of Douglas Edmonds from the Zion Benevolent Church Cemetery. Douglas Edmonds was the son of Amanda Goodwin Edmonds and was deeded the land, along with his brothers and sisters, upon his mother’s death. Courtesy of Nate Johnson.

In 1948, to perhaps ease the burden of so much land, lots were subdivided between multiple families, the Smiths, Richardsons, and Middletons. Today 1060 Edmonds Farm Road includes 6.28 acres of the original Lot 22 purchased by Amanda Edmonds’s father John Wilson. In addition, 1042 Edmonds Farm Road is a portion of Douglas’s land deeded to his son, Wilbert Sr., in 1971 and Wilbert Jr. in 1972 for $5.00, “love and affection.”

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155 Deed Book GL, 386, Richland County Register of Deeds.
156 Deed Book D217, 801, Richland County Register of Deeds.
157 Deed Book D239, 818, Richland County Register of Deeds.
Edmonds Farm Road street sign. Street sign of Edmonds Farm Road in Hopkins where many members of the Edmonds family still reside on land originally purchased from the Land Commission by Amanda Goodwin Edmonds. Courtesy of Keri Fay.

5. The Noah Garrick Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

There is no current address for the property. The land is located approximately at 180 Sulton Johnson Road, near the southeastern end of the road.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

Noah Garrick bought Lot 36 of the Hopkins tract from the South Carolina Land Commission in 1879. The lot contained exactly 25 acres, costing him $100.¹⁵⁸

Noah was about thirty-four at the time of the purchase. He and his first wife Mary married directly after the Civil War in 1866 and had four children together, just two of whom lived into adulthood. The small family all helped to farm the 25 acres of land.¹⁵⁹ Noah was successful enough to purchase nearly 60 more acres from adjacent lots. Of the new acreage, he gave about 45 acres to his half-brother Sulton Johnson and kept 15 acres for himself, increasing his holdings to 40 total acres.¹⁶⁰ As Noah aged well into his sixties and his children moved away from Hopkins, he maintained the farm along with his second wife Betty.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Deed Book M, page 308, Richland County Register of Deeds.
¹⁵⁹ Census 1900.
¹⁶⁰ Alma Garrick Macer, interview with Nate Johnson, April 17, 2009; La’Nona Garrick Rivera, interview with Nate Johnson, April 17, 2009.
¹⁶¹ Census, 1910; Rivera interview.
Noah was able to continue the farm probably due to his son Stepney. Stepney moved to downtown Columbia as an adult, yet he continued to assist with the business end of his father’s farm. In 1896, he and his wife Annie married and had four children together, named Julian, Annie, Herdicine, and Stepney, Jr. Stepney was listed as a “teamster” on the 1900 census, meaning that he carted goods—possibly produce from Noah’s farm and other Lower Richland farms—for sale at local markets.\textsuperscript{162}

By 1920, Stepney and his son Julian purchased two lots on Wheat Street in downtown Columbia from Cecelia Goodwin and her daughter, Marion G. Dickson.\textsuperscript{163} Stepney may have known the two women generally from Hopkins—where they also were from—or more specifically from Zion Benevolent Church in Hopkins, where both families were parishioners.\textsuperscript{164}

\vspace{1cm}
\textsuperscript{162} Census, 1900.
\textsuperscript{163} Deed Book CA, page 263, Richland County Register of Deeds; Deed Book CA, page 351.
\textsuperscript{164} Both Stepney Garrick and Cecelia Goodwin are buried at Zion Benevolent Church, 201 Meeting House Road, Hopkins, South Carolina. For Cecelia Goodwin’s obituary, see Columbia’s \textit{The Light}, June 6, 1925, page 4.
In any case, Stepney and Julian soon opened a grocery store at 1330 Wheat Street, where they likely sold produce from Noah’s farm.\textsuperscript{165}

Noah passed away on October 9, 1925.\textsuperscript{166} His third wife, Minerva, left the title of his 40-acre farm to Stepney and Stepney’s sister-in-law Pauline. Pauline lived in Jersey City, New Jersey, however, so Stepney looked after the farm on his own.\textsuperscript{167} Neither Stepney nor any subsequent generations lived on the land in Hopkins. Instead, they leased it to other families. These families usually agreed to care for the property rather than pay rent to the Garricks.\textsuperscript{168}

Stepney passed away in 1954, leaving the 40 acres to his adult children, who collectively held title to the land.\textsuperscript{169} Stepney, Jr. was mostly responsible for continuing the farm at this time. Every Thursday, he traveled with his children down to Hopkins to check on the farm. He raised hogs and chickens on the land, and kept a goat for milk. He farmed mostly vegetables, including cucumbers, watermelons, tomatoes, string beans, and black-eyed peas. After experimenting with cotton once, he found that the crop exhausted the soil of its minerals and did not try planting it again. Stepney, Jr. also dug a well on the property and installed a pump, which delivered ice-cold water that was “crystal clear” and “as sweet as sugar,” according to the memory of his daughter Alma.\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{DeathCertificate.png}
\caption{\textbf{Death certificate of Noah Garrick.} After Noah passed away in 1925, the Garrick family ceased to live in Hopkins. They held onto the land, however, and continued to use it for agricultural purposes. \textit{Courtesy of Alma Garrick Macer.}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Columbia, South Carolina City Directory, 1926} (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1926).
\textsuperscript{166} Macer interview.
\textsuperscript{167} Deed Book CP, page 194, Richland County Register of Deeds; Rivera interview.
\textsuperscript{168} Macer interview. One of the families who rented were the Barbers, though it is unclear what their relation was to the Barbers mentioned previously in this report.
\textsuperscript{169} Deed Book 157, page 342, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\textsuperscript{170} Macer interview.
A wood-frame, two-bedroom house stood on the property, raised above the ground on cinder blocks. It is not clear how old the house was, but it dated at least to Stepney, Sr.’s time. It had a kitchen and living room with a large fireplace between the two. There was no modern plumbing inside -- a pump fed water to the sink and an outhouse was the only private facility.\(^{171}\) The building no longer stands today.

Stepney, Jr. and his siblings heavily anchored themselves in Columbia’s black community, becoming especially prominent within the city’s educational system. Both Annie and Herdicine were schoolteachers who married other educators. Annie was the founder and principal of Bethel School. She married Theodore J. Hanberry, the dean of Benedict College and a prominent member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). By 1971, Annie was promoted to supervisor of County School District No. 2. Herdicine taught at several schools over her lifetime and was married to Benjamin R. Harrison, a lifelong teacher at Booker T. Washington High School. Stepney, Jr. taught history classes in Chester before becoming a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service. His wife Mary was a teacher at Booker T. Washington and C.A. Johnson in Columbia and Webber High School in Eastover.\(^{172}\)

The 40 acres in Hopkins eventually passed to Frederick H. Garrick, son of Stepney, Jr., in 1973. In 2009, Frederick still held title to the original 25 acres that his great-grandfather Noah purchased from the state 130 years ago. Three large sheds stand on the property and a few acres are still used for farming, though most of the acreage is described as “timber land.” Nobody resides there today. Its original boundaries are preserved entirely intact. The property serves not

\(^{171}\) Macer interview.

\(^{172}\) *Columbia, South Carolina City Directory, 1954* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1954); *Columbia, South Carolina City Directory, 1971* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1971); NAACP papers, South branch department files, reel 19, page 00499; Macer interview. For brevity’s sake, this list of schools where the Garricks worked is incomplete.
just as an exceptional example of the legacy of Reconstruction, but also as an example of land in Lower Richland County maintained by a family living in downtown Columbia.  

6. The William Harris Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The current physical address is 6411 Cabin Creek Road.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

William Harris purchased the 55 acre Hopkins tract Lot 14 in 1872 for $275.00. William Harris was listed as a laborer in the 1880 census. Harris was born in 1840 and was forty years old

173 Richland County Tax Assessor’s website.
174 South Carolina Land Commission records
in 1880. A widower, he was the father of two school-aged children. William Harris is not found in any other census records.\textsuperscript{175} A 1927 plat map from a court case involving a neighbor’s estate made reference to the Estate of William Harris, so it is assumed that he was deceased by the mid-1920s.\textsuperscript{176} Chain of title research shed little information on sales history of the land. The present owner is listed as the William Harris Estate. Contact with the family has been limited, but it is believed that the family owning and occupying the land today are descendants of William Harris. The land today retains its original boundaries.

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{estate_of_william_harris}
\caption{Estate of William Harris Estate. A plat map for the Miley Harris estate in 1927 shows the location of the William Harris estate immediately to the south. \textit{Courtesy of the Richland County Register of Deeds}.}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

7. The Ephraim Neal Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The parcel is bordered by Ault Road, Cedar Creek, and the Southern Railroad tracks.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

After moving from the home of his parents, Jim and Tena DeVeaux on the Neal Plantation of Eastover, Ephraim Neal purchased the first 40 acres of the total 74 acres of land within the Hopkins tracts from Abigail Swygert in 1881.\textsuperscript{177} In order to purchase the last 34 acres, Ephraim

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{175} Census, 1880.
\item \textsuperscript{176} James C. Covington, \textit{Plat of the Estate}, April 7, 1927, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Tena Deveaux is also listed on the grantor index as the purchaser of half of Lot 26 in the Hickory Hill tract. The second half of Lot 26 was purchased by Peter Deveaux, Ephraim’s brother. According to family tradition, Ephraim Neal gave one acre of land to St. John Baptist Church after buying the land from Swygert. However, the deed does not specify whether or not Swygert was the one who gave/sold the land to the church. According to deed book M323, in 1879 Abigail purchased 75.5 acres from the state for $188 for Lots 30 and 31 of the Hopkins tract.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
farmed, cut lumber, and cleared trees for the railroads.¹⁷⁸

**Neal Family Parcel.** The land currently owned by descendants of Ephraim Neal is outlined in blue. *Courtesy of Richland County GIS.*

As time passed, Ephraim gifted his land to his sons, J.W. and Green B. This land remained intact until 1909 when the brothers gave 24.67 acres to another brother, Weston Peter Neal. The land remained divided in this matter until 1947 when the heirs of Weston Peter Neal’s estate gave 4 acres to his nephew, Choatte, and sister-in-law, Clara Neal. The heirs of J.W. Neal’s estate (his sons, Jessie, John, Fred, and Earl) gave one acre to St. John Baptist Church, which is still in existence today.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Deed Book A, page 304-05, Richland County Register of Deeds.

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This land is only one of several property purchases by Swygert from the state and the Sinking Fund in 1870s and 80s. According to deed book N596, in 1881 Swygert sold Ephraim Neal 74.5 acres for $188, minus one acre sold to St. John's Church in Hopkins. It would make sense that it was Ephraim, considering it was his church and Swygert was white and thus not likely a member; Deed Book A, page 304-05, Richland County Register of Deeds.
Map of Neal Parcel. A hand-drawn map of the purchased by Ephraim Neal. **Courtesy of Deborah Scott Brooks.**

St. John Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina. A portion of the land owned by St. John was donated by the Neal Family. **Courtesy of Deborah Scott Brooks.**
Ephraim and his wife, Eliza Eikerenkeotter settled on these Hopkins tracts to raise their five children, James, Jessie W., Weston P., Joseph, and Green Berry. As times were hard during the Great Depression, the Neal family lived together in the family home for many years past the 1930s. These arrangements were important to them as they were known for wanting to preserve the sanctity of communities and families. This is possibly why Jessie W. built an L-shaped home on the family land next to his father and Choatte Rufus Neal (C.R.) purchased about forty acres in an adjacent parcel that has remained in the in family since 1911. For years, distant relatives remember sitting on the large porch of the L-shaped home listening to music played on a graphaphone.\textsuperscript{180}

\textbf{Father and son pastors.} J.W. Neal and W.H. Neal each served a term as pastor of St. John Baptist Church. \textit{Courtesy of Deborah Scott Brooks.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{180} Deborah Scott Brooks, “Plowing, Praying, Paying, and Poisoning: The Lower Richland Family Thrives”, \textit{The Columbia Star}, Feb 2009.}
F. The Hunt Tract
Hunt Tract, Richland County, South Carolina
Historic Appearance

The Hunt tract comprised 774 acres that had been included within the bankrupt estate of Alfred Hunt. J.P. Leslie, commissioner of the South Carolina Land Commission in 1870, purchased the property himself before transferring it to the Land Commission. The Congaree River forms the southern border of the Hunt tract, while Cedar Creek forms the eastern and northern borders. The original Land Commission survey plats shows the “Bed of Old” river forming the western border, a waterway that is not extant. The original survey plats also indicate numerous streams and creeks meandering throughout the tract. Due to the diffused nature of the water and its location next to the Congaree, the land is presumed to be floodplain. This environmental situation might explain the lack of land purchases.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The 774 acres of Hunt tract were divided into 21 parcels. The South Carolina Land Commission records indicate that only two individuals purchased land in the Hunt tract. Legislator Aesop Goodson bought Lots 16 and 17, comprising 75.5 acres for $226.00 in 1880. Jerry Williams bought Lot 15, comprising 47.5 acres, for $142.50 in 1870. Neither purchaser completed payment.

Current Appearance

The historic Hunt tract is now located within the boundaries of Congaree National Park along the Congaree River. It has never been developed.
G. The O’Hanlon Tract
Historic Appearance

The O’Hanlon tract comprised approximately 5,165 acres. The tract was located at a bend in the Congaree River just past the point where Raeford’s Creek (today Mill Creek) enters. It was the largest of the Land Commission tracts in Lower Richland County, extending from the Congaree River to near the present day Old Bluff Road, a distance of over two miles. Unlike the other tracts, O’Hanlon was situated at a significant distance from both the railroads and from the other tracts, perhaps explaining its relative lack of success in sustaining the permanent inhabitation of families. This low-lying area would have largely been floodplain, and numerous creeks and small ponds are shown on the original survey plats.

Parcels Purchased by African Americans

The O’Hanlon tract contains 5,164.5 original acres divided into at least 170 original parcels. Land was purchased from the South Carolina Land Commission between January 1870 and May 1887. Though there were about seventy-eight original purchasers; only fifteen of those completed making payments and secured a deed for their land.

Current Appearance

Although eighty-four individuals attempted to purchase land in the O’Hanlon tract, only four deeds were ever received, and today any significant trace of the lots they once owned has been all but erased. Currently the land is primarily divided into several large parcels of land owned by the Clarkson Family Trust, the Mill Creek ASC General Partnership, the Little Clayton PTRN ASC, and William Thomas Koon. Highly fragmented records make it impossible to determine exactly when the land passed from the purchasers from the Land Commission into the hands of these current property holders, but it is safe to say that the majority of the land was consolidated by the mid-twentieth century.