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

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.
Foose, who owned Lot 7. Amanda Edmonds bordered Hagar’s second lot, having purchased Lot 22 in 1876.

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

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. She, however,

126 Deed Book, M307 1879, Richland County Register of Deeds.
127 Deed Book, P151 1884, Richland County Register of Deeds.
128 Census, 1880.
129 Marie Adams interview with Morgen Young, March 30, 2009.
131 Montgomery, “Richland Loses Old Friend.”
132 Census, 1900.
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{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{133} Census, 1910.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Adams interview with Young.
\item \textsuperscript{136} South Carolina Death Records, 1821-1955.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Marie Adams, “Israel Alston History,” \textit{St. John Baptist Newsletter}.
\end{itemize}
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.¹⁴⁶

Reverend Samuel Barber founded St. John Baptist Church near Hopkins.¹⁴⁷ 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.¹⁴⁸ 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.¹⁴⁹

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.\(^\text{150}\)

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.

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. *Courtesy of Marie Adams.*

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150 Adams interview with Bedell.
4. 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.\textsuperscript{151}

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

\textsuperscript{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.\(^\text{152}\)

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.\(^\text{153}\) 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.\(^\text{154}\) Again in 1946, Douglas bought

\(^{152}\text{Census, 1880.}\)

\(^{153}\text{Deed Book DZ, page 463, Richland County Register of Deeds.}\)

\(^{154}\text{Deed Book FD, page 386, Richland County Register of Deeds.}\)
out his brothers and sisters for $1.00 and took sole possession of his mother Amanda’s original 32.06 acre lot, Lot 22.  

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.”

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.
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.\(^{162}\)

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.\(^{163}\) 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.\(^{164}\)

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\(^{162}\) Census, 1900.
\(^{163}\) Deed Book CA, page 263, Richland County Register of Deeds; Deed Book CA, page 351.
\(^{164}\) 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 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.\footnote{165}

Noah passed away on October 9, 1925.\footnote{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.\footnote{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.\footnote{168}

Stepney passed away in 1954, leaving the 40 acres to his adult children, who collectively held title to the land.\footnote{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.\footnote{170}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{DeathCertificate.png}
\end{center}

**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. *Courtesy of Alma Garrick Macer.*

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{165} *Columbia, South Carolina City Directory, 1926* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1926).
\item \footnote{166} Macer interview.
\item \footnote{167} Deed Book CP, page 194, Richland County Register of Deeds; Rivera interview.
\item \footnote{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.
\item \footnote{169} Deed Book 157, page 342, Richland County Register of Deeds.
\item \footnote{170} Macer interview.
\end{itemize}
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{171} Macer interview.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Columbia, South Carolina City Directory, 1954} (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1954); \textit{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.¹⁷³

6. The William Harris Family Parcel

General Boundaries or Current Street Addresses

The current physical address is 6411 Cabin Creek Road.

William Harris Family Parcel Lot 1. The land currently owned by descendants of Isaiah Fay is outlined in blue. Courtesy of Richland County GIS.

The Unbroken Provenance of the Parcel

William Harris purchased the 55 acre Hopkins tract Lot 14 in 1872 for $275.00.¹⁷⁴ 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. 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. 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.

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. Courtesy of the Richland County Register of Deeds.

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. In order to purchase the last 34 acres, Ephraim

175 Census, 1880.
176 James C. Covington, Plat of the Estate, April 7, 1927, Richland County Register of Deeds.
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.
farmed, cut lumber, and cleared trees for the railroads.178

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

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.
179 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 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.¹⁸⁰

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