

4409

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mosquito Beach Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



2. Location

Street & number: Mosquito Beach Road

City or town: Charleston State: SC County: Charleston

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<u>Elizabeth M. Johnson</u>	<u>8/5/2019</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

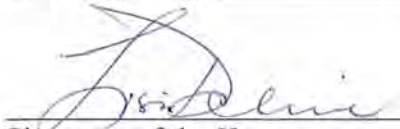
Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____


Signature of the Keeper

9/23/19
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District

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Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

OTHER/cinderblock

OTHER/plywood apron walls

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, CINDERBLOCK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Mosquito Beach Historic District is located on an approximately .13-mile strip of high ground situated between Elijah Creek and King Flats Creek, a tidal marsh that serves as the southern border of Sol Legare Island. The district is in the immediate vicinity of the local municipalities of Charleston, James Island, and Folly Beach, South Carolina. Outstanding features of Mosquito Beach Historic District include its retained viewshed and rural landscape, as well as the survival of midcentury structures representative of the area's recreational peak during the Jim Crow era. The buildings, although simple and vernacular in nature, retain original finishes and detail, and their arrangement within the preserved landscape of Mosquito Beach, as well as the surviving remnants of the boardwalk, still reflect the original intent for the strip: a place of socializing and congregation. Alterations made to the district's contributing buildings are limited to structural and cosmetic repairs after damaging hurricanes, which includes the destruction of the area's boardwalk and pavilions. Through the survival of the boardwalk and pavilion piers, however, the structures' original footprints and placement are still discernable and contribute to the overall historic character and retained spatial relationships between the buildings, structures, and landscape.

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Narrative Description

The Mosquito Beach Historic District is located on the south side of Sol Legare Island and is accessed by the island's main thoroughfare, Sol Legare Road. Sol Legare Island, an unincorporated section of Charleston County, is 2.5 miles long and runs parallel with the nearby coastline of Folly Beach. Surrounded by tidal marsh or wetlands, the island lies in the heart of the federally-recognized Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, an area that extends along the southeast coast, and is representative of a Lowcountry freedmen settlement community through its preserved narrow, rural residential lots laid out in 1880.

Sol Legare Island was historically part of a large plantation owned by Solomon Legare (1797-1878) during the antebellum period. After the Civil War, the island was parceled into narrow farming lots that extended from King Flats Creek to Holland Island Creek. In the 1880s, the lots were purchased by several black farmers, whose residency transformed the island into an early freedmen settlement. Most of the farming parcels are still under the ownership of the original farming families. The lots, most of which have retained original property boundaries (Figure 1), have dictated the residential and rural development of the island and many contain late nineteenth and early twentieth century dwellings, which are situated along Sol Legare Road.

Mosquito Beach serves as the southern boundary for three of the above-mentioned farming lots and can only be accessed by Mosquito Beach Road, a secondary thoroughfare extending from Sol Legare Road over Elijah Creek. Historically, the strip of high ground known as Mosquito Beach was occupied by natural vegetation and maritime forest, most of which was removed during the late nineteenth century cultivation of the island. Mosquito Beach was first improved in the 1920s through the establishment of an oyster factory at its western edge. After the factory's closure in the 1930s, residents continued to congregate along the marsh. Development began to expand along Mosquito Beach Road in the 1940s with the construction of a store and restaurant at the eastern edge. By the 1960s, Mosquito Beach served as a community recreational gathering place with beach pavilions, music venues and restaurants in both the marshes and along Mosquito Beach Road. Today, the district contains buildings constructed between the 1940s and 1970s, with no structure dating later than the 1990s.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Buildings

Running north to south, Mosquito Beach Road bisects the historic district and features four contributing buildings on the north side of the road that survive as key components in the development of Mosquito Beach, including a hotel, club and "juke joints." The buildings range in construction from concrete block to plywood and date from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Most of the buildings are one story and contain open floor plans, with the exception of the 1964 two-story Pine Tree Hotel. The buildings vary in size from approximately 877 square feet to approximately 2,700 square feet. All structures are situated on the north side of Mosquito Beach Road and face King Flats Creek. The buildings retain original character-defining features, such

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as overall floorplans and exterior finishes. Besides Pine Tree Hotel, the other three contributing buildings have historically served as restaurants and “juke joints” for the patrons of Mosquito Beach and are still used as such.

1. Pine Tree Hotel, 2221 Mosquito Beach Road, 1964 – Building

The Pine Tree Hotel is a two-story frame building completed in 1964 as lodging for Mosquito Beach patrons and constructed by owner and carpenter Andrew “Apple” Wilder (1922-1984).¹ It is three-by-five bays with a central entry at the south (primary) façade. The building is capped with a hipped roof and is clad in vertical plywood apron walls. Exposed rafter tails line the eaves. A door occupies the central bay at the façade’s second story and is evidence of the structure’s original central-protruding two-story porch, an element removed after damages caused by Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Irma in 2017. All fenestration has been boarded with plywood, also a result of the recent hurricane activity. Beneath the plywood are the building’s original four-over-four wooden sash. A wooden belt course stretches along all elevations between the first and second stories. The rear (north) elevation also contains a central entry at the second level, which is capped by a portico with a shed roof and accessed by a wooden stair. The rear elevation is void of fenestration and contains an additional entry at the first story’s northern bay. The building sits on cinder block piers.

Although the building is in poor condition and all fenestration is covered, the structure retains its original footprint and overall physical composition. The structure has not undergone significant alterations, as most of the changes are repairs from damages occurring during Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and Hurricane Irma in 2017. The interior finishes have also been damaged from the hurricanes, but significant surviving elements include the original floorplan and remnants of the building’s original wood flooring and vinyl/asbestos tiling.

2. Laura’s Snack Bar, 2225 Mosquito Beach Road, c. 1965 – Building

Laura’s Snack Bar, formerly known as the Lake House Club and today known as Island Breeze, was constructed by 1965 most likely as a one-story, three-by-three bay tavern made of cinderblock and capped with a front-gabled roof.² The building contained a central entry flanked by square bays. By the 1970s, a similar, yet recessed, three-by-three bay cinderblock addition was added to the east elevation, and by 1988, a single bay addition was added to the rear (north) elevation, which today houses restrooms. After Hurricane Hugo in 1989, a full-width screened porch was added to the primary (south) facade. The porch was capped with a shed roof beneath the original west gable while the east gable was extended over the porch. A one-story addition capped with a shed roof was also added to the historic core’s rear (north) elevation, which today houses the restaurant’s kitchen.

In addition to the original entrance, access inside the structure is granted through a door centrally located beneath the east gable at the façade and a central door at the addition’s rear (north)

¹ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

² “Tavern Owner Posts Bond on Three Charges,” 9 August 1965, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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elevation. Significant interior features include the building's original plywood apron interior walls, concrete floor and the open dance floor and stage within the historic core.

3. D&F's, 2229 Mosquito Beach Road, c. 1970 – Building

D&F's is a one-story, cinder block structure constructed c. 1970 and was originally operated by Donald and Frances Roper as a juke joint and dance club. The building replaced an earlier small, wooden pavilion that operated as an outdoor restaurant by Manchi and Nucca Roper. The pavilion was destroyed by Hurricane Gracie in 1959. The current building measures three-by-six bays and is capped with a front gable roof with wide overhanging eaves. The gable is fronted by a stepped parapet sheathed in metal and vertical wooden boards at the façade. The structure's primary (south) bays, which includes a central entry, are recessed beneath the parapet. The entry is flanked by paired, single pane windows fronted by iron grates. A secondary, off-center entry is located at the east elevation. Upon entering the building, there is a full-width, one-bay deep room that is occupied by a bar and lounge. This front room grants access to the rest of the building, which contains an open floor plan with an enclosed kitchen parallel to the east wall. The building is internally supported by equidistant, thin iron columns. Significant interior elements include the building's original wooden bar, concrete floor, wood paneling within the front room, kitchen and DJ booth and retained overall floorplan. The most significant alteration was the addition of a small open-air porch at the northeast (rear) corner in the late twentieth century.

4. Jack Walker's Club, 2231 Mosquito Beach Road, c. 1954 – Building

Jack Walker's Club, also known as P&J's and today as the Suga Shack, is a one-story frame building constructed between 1943 and 1954. The structure is six-by-six bays and clad in vertical plywood. It is capped with a low, front gable roof with overhanging eaves. The building contains ribbon fenestration at the west and south (primary) elevations with wooden, top-hung casement coverings. The primary entry is centered at the south facade. A full-width wooden deck stretches across both the primary and west elevations. The building sits on a timber sill and raised on cinder block piers. The most significant alteration was the addition of a one-bay, one-story extension at the northeast (rear) corner clad in wooden clapboard, most likely added to house a bathroom. Significant interior elements include the building's original flooring, interior bar and retained open floor plan.

Sites

Three groupings of wooden piers in King Flats Creek survive adjacent to the buildings on the south side of Mosquito Beach Road and are remnants of Mosquito Beach's mid-century dance pavilions. The first pavilion, the Harborview Club, was destroyed by Hurricane Gracie in 1959. Irvin Singleton's Pavilion and the Boardwalk Club were destroyed in Hurricane Hugo in 1989. All pavilions were open-air, single-story wooden structures accessed by a short wooden boardwalk that extended from Mosquito Beach Road.

5. Harborview Club, c. 1953 – Site

Andrew "Apple" Wilder, Jr. (1922-1984) constructed a dance pavilion in King Flats Creek directly across from a popular store owned by Joe Chavis (b. 1908) in c. 1953. An early 1950s photograph depicts the pavilion as a single story, open-air structure on wooden piers with a hipped roof and exposed rafters. Aerials confirm it had a square footprint and sat slightly angled

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northeast on the south side of Mosquito Beach Road on the property of Wilder's cousin, John Lafayette. The pavilion was destroyed by Hurricane Gracie in 1959 and never rebuilt. All that remains are the pavilion's foundation piers, which are present in the marshes of King Flats Creek at both low and high tide.

6. Boardwalk Club, c. 1963 – Site

After the destruction of the Harborview Club, Wilder constructed a larger open-air dance pavilion by 1963 directly south of the previous pavilion's location on property he purchased in 1959.³ At the time of the pavilion's completion, it had a capacity of 800 people.⁴ According to an oral history with Cassandra Singleton Roper, the pavilion's west side was open, while the east side was enclosed with a triple-pile floorplan containing a bedroom, bar and kitchen with a back deck. In 1989, the building was boarded up and described as containing an open-floor plan "with some plywood siding" and a "narrow deck with single and double entry openings" along the west elevation, accessed by a "walkway from parking area" (Figure 2).⁵ Later that year, the pavilion was destroyed by Hurricane Hugo. All that remains are the pavilion's foundation piers, which are present in the marshes of King Flats Creek at both low and high tide.

7. Irvin Singleton's Pavilion, c. 1960 – Site

Irvin Singleton constructed a similar, open-air pavilion with a square footprint after Hurricane Gracie. Although not much is known about the appearance of this pavilion, it has been described as identical to Wilder's Harborview Club and Boardwalk Club. The pavilion was destroyed by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. All that remains are the pavilion's foundation piers, which are present in the marshes of King Flats Creek at both low and high tide.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

8. 2217 Mosquito Beach Road, c. 1984 - Building

There is one non-contributing resource within the Mosquito Beach Historic District. 2217 Mosquito Beach Road was constructed after 1984 and is a one-story, one-by-one bay plywood building with a low-pitched gable roof. A one-by-two bay addition at the rear (north) elevation creates an overall L-shaped footprint. The building features a wooden belt course, single-pane fenestration and offset entries at the primary (south) and rear elevations.

³ Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book W68, Page 185, Charleston County, SC.

⁴ "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area," 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵ Preservation Consultants, Inc., "James Island and Johns Island Historical Survey," Site #249 0020, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1989.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

Period of Significance

1953-1970

Significant Dates

1953
1963
1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Mosquito Beach Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level as a significant and well-preserved cultural, commercial and recreational epicenter for the coastal black community in the Charleston area during Jim Crow segregation.⁶ The survival of the buildings, sites and overall character of the strip embody the empowerment and entrepreneurship, as well as the sustainment of culture and tradition, displayed by African Americans during a time of systemic oppression, and exists as tangible evidence of the widespread segregation of recreational space in the decades leading up to and during the Civil Rights era. In Charleston County, the property was one of six “black beaches” accessible to the African-American community in 1960. Of the five black beaches, which included Seaside Beach on Edisto Island, Frasier Beach on Seabrook Island, Peter Miller’s Pavilion along Wallace Creek, Riverside Beach along the Cooper River in Mount Pleasant, and Mosquito Beach, Mosquito Beach survives as the best representative example. The other historically black beaches have either lost contributing buildings due to natural disasters, neglect, or as historian Andrew Kahrl explains, “fallen prey to developers in search of property... and skyrocketing property taxes that accompanies the rise of vacationing and tourism along the coast.”⁷ Mosquito Beach was also the only gathering place for black citizens to socialize on James Island prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mosquito Beach is a vitally important and living historic resource to Sol Legare, James Island and Charleston County. It is representative of Charleston’s Jim Crow and civil rights movement era segregation and the history of African-American communities in the Lowcountry. Preservation of this space and documentation of its historical and cultural significance not only complements the sentiments of the surrounding community, but also supports larger scale planning efforts and community engagement already underway in this area.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A: ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

The high ground known as Mosquito Beach remained largely undeveloped until the first decades of the twentieth century. Prior to the 1920s, the “strip” solely served as the southern portion for

⁶ The 2016 Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update determined Mosquito Beach eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for community planning and development, black ethnic heritage and entertainment/recreation as an historic recreational area developed by African Americans from c. 1935 to 1970. The survey named Mosquito Beach as “an important aspect of the Sol Legare community, as well as the Lowcountry’s African American community” in that it provided “a place for African Americans to socialize and recreate for decades.” The survey also stated that Mosquito Beach, together with other Lowcountry settlement communities, is significant for the collective representation of “social organization and settlement patterns.”

⁷ Jackson, Harvey, H., ed, “Beaches, Black, Jim Crow era,” *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Vol. 16, Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi, 2011. 46.

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three postbellum farming lots owned by black farmers Nelson Left, Edward Green and John Lafayette. The Green, Left and Lafayette families were three of nearly one hundred black truck-farming families on James Island throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many of whom still retain ownership and use of the lots today.⁸ In 1922, Beaufort oyster merchant and Savannah-native George Creighton Varn (1862-1931) signed a ten-year lease with the descendants of Nelson Left for two acres at the west end of today's Mosquito Beach strip with the intention of establishing an oyster factory.⁹ With Varn's death in 1931, the factory permanently closed, but the property, locally known as "The Factory," continued to serve as an informal gathering place for the surrounding community.

Although only occupying a portion of Mosquito Beach, The Factory had a significant impact on life and community development on Sol Legare Island. In addition to the constant cool breezes and views at high tide, many claim the impetus for socializing on Mosquito Beach after the oyster factory closed was Chavis' store. Local "creek fisherman" and farmer Joe Chavis (1888-1936) with his son Joe Chavis Jr. (b. 1903) operated a small store as early as the 1930s on the Lafayette property near the northeast bend of what is today known as Mosquito Beach Road.¹⁰ Current residents believe Chavis established this store on the property to cater to the oyster factory workers, yet many continued to congregate there after the factory's closure. Wilhemina Singleton, who worked at the oyster factory, remembered cooking red rice and fried fish for Chavis at his store after the factory closed.¹¹ Singleton said Mosquito Beach "was nothing" at this time, but Chavis' sale of seafood, beer, and wine, both during and after the factory's operation, turned the sparse marsh-front landscape into a casual, after-work hang out.¹²

A 1939 aerial of Mosquito Beach shows the strip as remaining largely undeveloped with two dirt roads providing access to the property from the main Sol Legare Island (Figure 7). Although the aerial is unclear, there appears to be an L-shape structure at the western edge of the island on the Left estate and a square building in the marsh, accessed by a defined ridge or walkway. Both are most likely remnants of a factory complex. Chavis' store is also most likely captured in the aerial, centered in a cleared lot on the eastern edge of the strip. Today, that property is empty.

In August of 1940, a Category 2 hurricane hit the South Carolina coast just south of Mosquito Beach. Many residents whose family members worked and lived near the oyster factory claim the hurricane destroyed the structures present on Mosquito Beach at this time, including the workers' housing, shucking sheds and Chavis' store.¹³ Oral histories state that after the hurricane Chavis Jr., known on Sol Legare Island as "King Pin," "Lil Bubba," and eventually "Ol Joe," opened the Seaside Grill in a newly constructed "beautiful two-story frame house on the John

⁸ Kahrl, Andrew H, *The Land was Ours*, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2012. 180.

⁹ 1920 U.S. Federal Census

¹⁰ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹¹ "Mosquito Beach Buzzing with Plans to Restore the Area," 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Joseph Chavis," Death Certificate, #12183, 1936, South Carolina, Death Records, 1821-1965

¹² "Seashore Farmers' Lodge No. 767," #07001043, National Register of Historic Places, nomination.

¹³ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Brittany V. Lavelle Tulla.

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Lafayette estate” that acted as both a residential and commercial space.¹⁴ With living quarters on the second floor, the structure had a ground-story store with a “jukebox, pool table, and menu of fresh steamed clams and crabs.”¹⁵ Chavis Jr.’s store, which he operated until the mid 1980s, is most likely pictured in a 1943 topo of Mosquito Beach (Figure 7) with another store most likely owned by the Chavis family. Chavis Jr.’s store was ultimately destroyed in 1984 by a fire, which also took the life of his wife Mittie, then 73-years-old and blind.¹⁶

It is with the opening of the Chavis Jr.’s store after the 1940 hurricane that Mosquito Beach’s popularity as a social and recreational hub for the area’s black citizens amplified, spurred by systemic racial segregation and an increased national desire for “seaside leisure” in the postwar period. Prior to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, most entertainment and recreational venues in Charleston, including public beaches, parks, restaurants, bars and music halls, prohibited black citizens. Because of this, Mosquito Beach gradually transformed from The Factory, a convenient gathering place, to an essential refuge where local black citizens could swim (at high tide), fish, and boat safely, while freely enjoying fresh seafood, music, drinks, and each other’s company.

Chavis Jr.’s store was joined in the early 1950s by at least three other establishments, all of which were operated by the black farming families who owned the land: the Harborview Club, Manchi & Nucca’s pavilion, and Jack Walker’s Club. The Harborview Club, a large wooden pavilion and boardwalk over King Flats Creek across from Chavis’ store, was opened in 1953 by Andrew “Apple” Wilder, Jr. (1922-1984), first cousin of Chavis and Lafayette, after “an army buddy told him about a similar venture of his which had become a success.”¹⁷ Apple Wilder managed the Harborview Club with his wife Laura, a former oyster factory shucker who served as the Harborview Club’s cook and accountant (Figures 9 & 10). To many, Laura was considered the backbone of the business.¹⁸

The c. 1953 Harborview Club is first depicted in a 1954 aerial, which also shows a mostly undeveloped Mosquito Beach strip with dirt pathways (Figure 11). A 1950s photograph of the pavilion also survives, picturing several members of the Walker, Lafayette, Chavis and Wilder families posed on the pavilion’s boardwalk that connected the building with the rest of the Mosquito Beach strip (Figure 12). Hanging on the pavilion are two promotional signs for Ballantine Ale and possibly Tiger Beer. Benches appear on the pavilion’s west side, while the east side (not pictured) was enclosed with a triple-pile floor plan, including a bedroom for

¹⁴ 1940 U.S. Federal Census; New South Associates, “Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update,” Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department, 105; undated history, “Cubby’s History Document,” private collection.

¹⁵ “At 87, the King of Mosquito Beach Still Reigns,” 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC; New South Associates, “Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update,” Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department, 105; undated plat, “Cubby’s History Document,” private collection.

¹⁶ “James Island woman killed in house fire,” 29 December 1984, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁷ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen; “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁸ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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workers, bar and kitchen with a back deck.¹⁹ In the kitchen, cook Lucy Wilder Washington often cooked ham, franks, red rice and chicken.²⁰

The earliest Mosquito Beach memory of Cassandra Singleton Roper was walking “across the creek” that separated Mosquito Beach from the rest of Sol Legare Island in the early 1950s as an eight-year-old to dance on Sundays at Harborview Club shortly after it opened.²¹ Many children danced for money at the pavilion. Roper was often accompanied by her friends, who collected money from the patrons in the pavilion as she danced to the “piccolo,” a name the children called the juke box.²² According to Roper, dancing at the pavilion was most often the impetus for good behavior as a child. Many residents of Sol Legare Island remember being allowed to visit Mosquito Beach as a child only on Sundays if they obediently attended school and church, as well as completed their weekly chores, which for eight-year-old Roper included shelling beans.²³ Sol Legare native Russel C. Roper also recalled picking and shelling beans with his grandparents before he was allowed to “cross the creek” to the strip.²⁴ Children were instructed to return home at sunset by either crossing the creek that separated the strip from Sol Legare Island or, if the tide was high, along a dirt pathway.²⁵

In addition to the Harborview Club, the 1954 aerial shows Manchi & Nucca’s, an open-air wooden pavilion on the Left estate that also had a jukebox and served local seafood, vegetables and Gullah Geechee cuisine cooked by Manchi Walker.²⁶ Next door, Jack Walker’s Club, often referred to as a “piccolo joint,” was a night club owned by farmer and fisherman Jack Walker (b. 1911) and was also called P&J’s after Jack and his father Perry (b. 1887).²⁷ Chavis Jr.’s store was joined at this time by “Uncle Jimmy’s Club,” a wooden “juke joint” also pictured in the 1954 aerial and operated by Jimmy Lafayette (b. 1928), Lafayette’s son and Chavis’ first cousin.²⁸

As the area became more popular, the name “The Factory” gave way to the current moniker, “Mosquito Beach,” so named for the year-round infestation of mosquitos. In 1958, a plat was produced for the central lot of Mosquito Beach in preparation for its sale (Figure 13). While no structures were depicted on the property, a small square structure was marked “Mosquito Beach” on the neighboring Lafayette estate and was most likely the Harborview Club. Shortly thereafter, the *News & Courier* called the Harborview Club “a crowded night spot,” recording “about 125 persons...in the small building” during the late-night hours one evening in August of 1958.²⁹

¹⁹ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²⁰ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

²¹ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²² In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²³ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²⁴ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²⁵ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²⁶ In person interview with William G. Wilder, January 2018, interviewed by author.

²⁷ Frazier, Eugene Sr., *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners*, History Press: Charleston, 2010. 127.

²⁸ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

²⁹ “One Dies, Another Held in Gunfight,” 29 August 1958, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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As one of five black beaches in the Charleston Lowcountry at this time, Mosquito Beach was mostly a destination for local James Island citizens (Figure 14). Yet, local newspapers often cited downtown residents as patrons of the beach as well.³⁰ Mosquito Beach was not listed in *The Green Book*, a national publication intended to provide “the Negro traveler” with information that helped them avoid “running into difficulties, embarrassments” and to make “trips more enjoyable,” but still welcomed both white and black patrons from all over the southeast who most often were visiting family or friends.³¹ Local newspaper reports from the summer of 1958 confirm the presence of a few visitors from as far away as New York City and Florida, an indication of Mosquito Beach’s expanding role as a recreational destination for black citizens beyond the Charleston area.³²

Music performances, events or advertisements for the clubs and pavilions on Mosquito Beach were not published in Charleston’s major newspapers and many oral histories claim that formal published advertisements were not needed, as word of mouth was a powerful tool for the black communities and had been since the days of slavery.³³ From the retelling of family histories to the retention of cultural traditions, word of mouth, as explained by Sol Legare native Ernest Parks, “was credible and it was a bloodline...a beautiful thing...to keep our customs alive.”³⁴ As many residents recalled, Mosquito Beach was the place “to see and be seen,” and it was assumed that most local residents would appear frequently on the strip throughout the summer months.³⁵ Sol Legare residents remember every business on Mosquito Beach as consistently “jam packed with folks of all ages” every weekend. One of the only advertisements that appeared in major Charleston newspapers during the mid-century was in 1961, when an ad highlighting “lots for Colored” on “Sol Legare, Mosquito Beach” was published.³⁶

Weekdays were quiet on Mosquito Beach, as crowds most often began to appear on Friday afternoons after everyone finished on the farms.³⁷ In addition, buses brought people in from downtown and other parts of the Charleston Lowcountry on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, as Mosquito Beach became “the dating scene” and “where folks met” throughout the 1950s and 1960s.³⁸ Between the dancing and the social atmosphere, Wilder explained it as the epitome of “the birds and the bees.”³⁹

³⁰ “One Dies, Another Held in Gunfight,” 29 August 1958, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

³¹ Green, Victor and George I. Smith, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, New York: Green & Smith, 1937. Introduction.

³² “Girl, 7, Is Drowned at James Island,” 1 August 1958, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC; “Man Drowns in Creek Near Folly,” 3 July 1962, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

³³ “The Green Book,” The New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed December 2018, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book/#/?tab=about>.

³⁴ In person interview with Ernest Parks, 2012, interview by Corie Hipp, private collection.

³⁵ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

³⁶ Advertisement, 30 January 1961, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

³⁷ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

³⁸ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen; In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

³⁹ In person interview with William G. “Cubby” Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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Easter Sunday (the beginning of the social season at Mosquito Beach), Labor Day, and the Fourth of July were the busiest times of year for Mosquito Beach and a time when patrons “strutted down the strip” to “show off” their finest wardrobes.⁴⁰ Because of this, Russel C. Roper started a “camera shop to take pictures” with a Polaroid camera of couples as they walked between establishments or danced at the pavilion.⁴¹ Later, he received a license as a peddler, selling soda and hamburgers out of a trailer behind Uncle Jimmy’s Club.

On Labor Day, there were dance contests, boat races, and a live broadcast at the pavilion by radio station WPAL, Charleston’s first radio station directed toward African-American listeners.⁴² On the Fourth of July, Pepsi-Cola brought drinks and promotional banners, while Budweiser made t-shirts with a mosquito drinking a beer (Figure 15).⁴³ The pavilion, however, was more than just a place to dance and eat. Russel C. Roper recalled sitting on the pavilion’s railing for hours to “catch a cool breeze” listening to the music before using the rear deck to “dive off” into the water.⁴⁴

Although Hurricane Gracie, which flooded both King Flats Creek and Holland Island Creek, destroyed many buildings on Mosquito Beach in 1959, including the Harborview Club and Manchi & Nucca’s, an aerial four years later depicts Mosquito Beach at its prime (Figure 16). With the Harborview Club in ruins, Apple Wilder purchased the property immediately west of the Lafayette property in 1959 from William Hinson, a white real estate mogul who purchased several pieces of land on Sol Legare Island in the early twentieth century.⁴⁵ The property was described as “6 acres of highland and 9 acres of marsh” and with its purchase, Mosquito Beach became an entirely black-owned strip.⁴⁶

The 1964 aerial shows Mosquito Beach Road lined with two pavilions and four structures: Jack Walker’s Club, Pine Tree Hotel, Uncle Jimmy’s Club and Chavis’ store. The two pavilions included a new establishment constructed by Apple Wilder on his property, the Boardwalk Club, and a second, smaller pavilion owned by Irvin Singleton. As a carpenter, Apple Wilder constructed the new pavilion on his property himself, designing it to reflect the former Harborview Club in both floorplan and appearance.⁴⁷ Like the former pavilion, the Boardwalk Club was open air and comprised of benches with tables, a kitchen, and space to dance. However, the new pavilion was much larger and was built to accommodate 800 patrons.⁴⁸ As with the Harborview Club, Apple Wilder managed the new pavilion while his wife Laura, known

⁴⁰ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation

⁴¹ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁴² Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation.

⁴³ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁴⁴ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁴⁵ Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book R24, Page 24, Charleston County, SC.

⁴⁶ “Eva Mikell,” 27 August 2003, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC; P64-288

⁴⁷ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁴⁸ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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regionally for her fried chicken, red rice, and yams, served as the cook. As a teenager, Cassandra Singleton Roper, Laura's daughter and Apple's stepdaughter, served as a waitress and bartender on the weekends and remembers sleeping in the pavilion's bedroom after a long shift, which often ended in the early hours of the morning.⁴⁹ During her time as a waitress, Roper also recalled moonshine as a "big thing," often serving it "in a small glass called a quarter shot" at the pavilion throughout the early 1960s.⁵⁰ Oral histories reveal that moonshine was both made on Sol Legare Island and served at Mosquito Beach constantly, a trend that most likely started as a money-making operation after the oyster factory closed. In a 2018 interview, Wilder referred to Apple Wilder as a "big time bootlegger," who most likely used the money he made on illegal moonshine to start his businesses on Mosquito Beach.⁵¹

By Labor Day of 1964, Apple Wilder completed the two-story Pine Tree Hotel directly across Mosquito Beach Road from the Boardwalk Club as an element in his larger "plan for improvement" of Mosquito Beach. Prior to this, many people who traveled into Mosquito Beach slept in cars.⁵² Laura Wilder oversaw the maintenance of the hotel. In a 2018 interview, Cassandra Singleton Roper referred to the hotel as "really a refuge," and remembered helping her mother strip the beds and gather the dirty towels before bringing the hotel's laundry back to their house to clean.⁵³ As a teenager, Russel C. Roper, Apple's nephew, cleaned the floors.

At this time, the St. James, or James Hotel, on Spring Street in downtown Charleston, as well as a few boarding houses scattered throughout the city, were some of the only places traveling black citizens could stay. As a result, the Pine Tree Hotel offered accommodations for those traveling from elsewhere in South Carolina, or for locals to "just shack it up."⁵⁴ The hotel had approximately fourteen rooms, each equipped with a cot, nightstand and a lamp, and cost about \$10 or \$15 a night. With seven rooms on each floor, there were two community bathrooms and a downstairs kitchen.⁵⁵ Behind the Pine Tree Hotel, many Mosquito Beach patrons also remember bumper cars owned by a man named "Bobby." While working at the hotel, Russel C. Roper also worked for Bobby and remembered people paying up to \$3 to \$5 to ride the bumper cars and "wreck up themselves." The bumper cars only lasted a few years on Mosquito Beach.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area," 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵⁰ "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area," 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵¹ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation

⁵² In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen; In person interview with William G. "Cubby" Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁵³ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁵⁴ "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area," 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵⁵ In person interview with William G. "Cubby" Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁵⁶ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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That summer, the *News and Courier* called Mosquito Beach “a popular Negro recreation area” and described its location as “somewhat of a paradox.”⁵⁷ The article described the beach as “an ideal picnic spot” containing “a few scattered buildings,” “picnic benches nestled in oak groves,” “a large pavilion jutting out over the water” and “occasional music by a live group on weekends and a juke box” for the younger patrons. While the young generation mostly preferred the pavilion, the article confirmed that the older population was often seen in “three smaller establishments” or in the “quieter confines of the picnic areas.”

Sol Legare native Susan Chavis wrote in 2015 of the role of Mosquito Beach during the early 1960s:

It was to give African Americans a place to enjoy themselves by ‘strutting’ up and down the area, catching a breeze, listening to a variety of music, shaking a leg, and buying some of the best soul and southern food, and just enjoying each other without the pressures of dividing lines.

While business at Mosquito Beach increased on Wednesdays and on weekends, the water activity mostly occurred on Sundays with sponsored boat races with guests “from as far away as Georgetown and Savannah.”⁵⁸ Russel C. Roper remembered Mosquito Beach in the early 1960s as the “place to be,” as they “had no place else to have fun on Sundays.”⁵⁹ During the day on the weekends, the gentlemen would “clean up” and play cards while the women cooked. At night, everyone ate, drank and danced.⁶⁰

Although Mosquito Beach was neither part of the nationally-known Chitlin Circuit nor registered in *The Green Book* like other larger beach resorts in North Carolina, Florida and Myrtle Beach, it was a local mecca for homegrown musicians. Historian Andrew Kahrl described the south’s black beaches as “bawdy,” and “raucous,” where “the sound of jazz and R&B drifted out onto the waters,” “flasks of moonshine passed from coat pockets to hands,” and where “pairs of dice bounced off hard surfaces.”⁶¹ Edward Wilder remembered dancing to blues music and doing the shag, traveling from one building to the next on the Mosquito Beach strip.⁶² Chavis Jr. was known to often play the blues “on a metal washboard with a fork and knife” outside his Seaside Grill while patrons danced on a floor right outside the door.⁶³

In addition to juke boxes and the live broadcasts of WPAL, disc jockeys and performers commonly made appearances on Mosquito Beach. Many credit disc jockey Bob Nichols as integral to the development of Mosquito Beach, as he “would draw the crowds...every weekend”

⁵⁷ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵⁸ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁵⁹ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁶⁰ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation

⁶¹ Kahrl, 14.

⁶² In person interview with Edward Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁶³ “At 87, the King of Mosquito Beach Still Reigns,” 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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(Figure 17).⁶⁴ Nichols became the first disc jockey of WPAL in 1949 when the station was still white-owned and broadcasting mostly country music. William Saunders, president of the WPAL radio in the 1990s, deemed Nichols as “the first African-American in a full-time capacity in South Carolina with a white station.”⁶⁵ Nichols, who often brought a drummer with him to accompany the tracks, broadcast his catch phrase, “I can see you out there,” from the pavilion of Mosquito Beach nearly every weekend.⁶⁶ Patrons also remember hearing nationally-known harmonica player Jimmy Reed, deemed “the most copied blues or soul singer” in 1967, “horn blower” John Ford, and after Nichols left WPAL in 1979, new WPAL disc jockey Frankie “The Big Bopper” Green.⁶⁷ Most musicians played within the area’s clubs or at the pavilion, but often would perform on an open bed of a tractor trailer positioned on the strip’s empty lots, most commonly between today’s Island Breeze and D&F’s.⁶⁸

Some performers visited Mosquito Beach on Friday and Saturday evenings, the nights when children were typically not present at Mosquito Beach, including Margo Mayes and her Powder Box Review, an act that traveled all over the southeast and was known to the Sol Legare residents as “Shake-a-Plenty.” One resident remembered riding a horse to Mosquito Beach’s pavilion to see Shake-a-Plenty perform in what was referred to by locals as “a girlie-boy act.”⁶⁹ The act consisted of a 9-foot boa constrictor named Unga and a “semi-strip” act where Unga would “twine” around Mayes.⁷⁰ During the summer of 1970, Unga died of suffocation on the way from Columbus, GA to the Charleston Lowcountry, but Mayes told the *Evening Post* she “already placed an order for a 10-foot boa constrictor” hoping it would arrive before she completed her “engagement at Mosquito Beach.”⁷¹ In later years, The Lady Chablis, a popular transgender club performer and actress headquartered in Savannah and celebrated in John Brendt’s book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, also frequently performed on Mosquito Beach.⁷²

In 1965, a formal plat of Mosquito Beach was produced for the survey and identification of Mosquito Beach Road (Figure 18). The plat depicted the legal property lines of the Lafayette, Wilder and Left estates, as well as the location of the Boardwalk Club. In the years following, however, activity at Mosquito Beach began to dwindle as attendance at many black beaches and recreational centers declined across the nation following the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1970,

⁶⁴ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁶⁵ “Radio’s Robert Nichols dead at 76,” 13 August 1993, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁶⁶ “Radio’s Robert Nichols dead at 76,” 13 August 1993, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁶⁷ “For Frankie ‘The Big Bopper’ The Beat Goes On,” 25 April 2018, *The Charleston Chronicle*, Charleston, SC; “Record Review,” 8 October 1967, *State*, Columbia, SC.

⁶⁸ In person interview with William “Cubby” Wilder, March 2019, interviewed by Brittany V. Lavelle Tulla.

⁶⁹ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation; “Mystery of Snake Is Finally Barred,” 4 July 1970, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

⁷⁰ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation; “Mystery of Snake Is Finally Barred,” 4 July 1970, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

⁷¹ Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation; “Mystery of Snake Is Finally Barred,” 4 July 1970, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

⁷² Oral Histories of Mosquito Beach, October 2018, conducted by Michael Allen and Historic Charleston Foundation

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the *Evening Post* called Folly Beach “a mecca for Negroes,” as black patrons outnumbered the white.⁷³

New professional and educational opportunities for black citizens also resulted in the decline of activity on the property, as many younger residents left Sol Legare Island to attend college, start employment or experience life in another state. Ernest Parks, for example, grew up on Sol Legare Island as a fifth-generation member of the Wilder family. By the early 1970s, he left the island to attend Tennessee State in Nashville, TN and afterwards moved to California, New York and Atlanta, before returning to Sol Legare Island at an older age.⁷⁴

Despite this common migration, two new buildings were erected on Mosquito Beach Road within the first years of the 1970s: D&F’s and the Lakehouse Club, “a real restaurant” specializing in seafood that Apple Wilder intended to open as early as 1964 (Figures 19-21).⁷⁵ Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Mosquito Beach continued to serve as a gathering place for the residents of James Island, yet it never again regained the popularity it had in the 1950s and early 1960s. Today, three music and food establishments remain: Island Breeze (located in the former Lakehouse Club), D&F’s and the Suga Shack (located in the former Jack Walker’s Club).

Author Eugene Frazier in his book *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners* outlines the importance of exposing today’s patrons of Mosquito Beach to the strip’s history:

For many African Americans, it is hard to imagine how far this island has come. It has left them with a legacy of both the joy and the pain of living in a time and place wrought with hardship but somehow still intermingled with the happiness that comes from a community built on family, love, strength and honor. It is a legacy that is impossible to forget.⁷⁶

CRITERION A: ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

Prior to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Mosquito Beach became less a convenient gathering place for local workers and more a community beacon during segregation. The families of Sol Legare Island owned their land and maintained a self-sustaining economy based on seafood and truck farming, but as black citizens, their social, political and recreational rights significantly diminished once leaving the island (Figure 22). As early as 1895, South Carolina’s Constitution laid the ground work for the state’s segregation laws, calling for separate schools for black and white children.⁷⁷ Within the next decade, Charleston’s trolleys, railroad coaches,

⁷³ “Few Tourists Visit Local Beaches,” 14 August 1972, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; “Black Beaches in the Lowcountry: Riverside Became a Refuge Amid Segregation,” 12 August 2001, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁷⁴ In person interview with Ernest Parks, 2012, interview by Corie Hipp, private collection.

⁷⁵ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁷⁶ Frazier, Eugene Sr., *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners*, History Press: Charleston, 2010. 12.

⁷⁷ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 448.

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textile mills, waiting rooms, water fountains and stairways became segregated spaces. According to historian Walter Edgar in his book *South Carolina: A History*, “a black woman could push a white baby around Colonial Lake but could not sit on any of its benches.”⁷⁸ After visiting Charleston at the turn of the twentieth century, a North Carolina journalist stated that he would “rather be an imp in Hades than a Negro in South Carolina.”⁷⁹

The segregation also extended into municipal amenities, such as public pools and recreational lakes, as well as waterways and beaches. According to Charleston County native Augustus Ladson in 1937:

In the hot summer days when the sun sends its burning rays on the man and beast alike, when birds forget their merry tunes but linger near any quantity of water that they may dip their bodies during the sultry hours of the day, the only relief Negroes got, was when a heavy cloud hid the sun’s face behind its black lining.⁸⁰

Due to the segregation of beaches, pools and waterways, Charleston black citizen Mamie Garvin Fields resorted to swimming at this time in a “horse hole,” a ditch filled with runoff water from the street:

The law said no, you children musn’t swim in the Cooper River, and no, you musn’t swim in the Ashley River or Colonial Lake. If you do, the cops will arrest you, and you never know where the cop will carry you off to. But the summertime gets very hot, and very humid, so the bolder ones would disobey their parents and cool off in one of the rivers, or they would go on into the dirty water of the Horse Hole.⁸¹

This unequal access to public parks and beaches, referred to by historian Andrew W. Kahrl as an “environmental injustice,” was an integral element in the recreational development of Mosquito Beach.⁸²

The “environmental injustice” spurred by segregation was especially evident in the post-World War II period, as the national desire for “recreational leisure” and the amount of time spent on lakes or beaches for recreation and/or vacation by Americans increased significantly.⁸³ As the coast of South Carolina became a destination for many, the state’s public beaches became some of the most segregated spaces in the south, spurring what author W.E.B. Du Bois called “the colored problem of summer.”⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 449.

⁷⁹ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 450.

⁸⁰ “S-260-264-N,” Project 1885, Interview of Augustus Ladson, Works Progress Administration Federal Writers’ Project on African American Life in South Carolina, Library of Congress, 1937.

⁸¹ Kahrl, Andrew W., *The Land was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 12-13.

⁸² Kahrl, 12.

⁸³ Kahrl, 12-13.

⁸⁴ Jackson, Harvey, H., ed, “Beaches, Black, Jim Crow era,” *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Vol. 16, Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi, 2011. 42.

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For the residents of Sol Legare Island, the popular Folly Beach was situated directly across the marsh from the Mosquito Beach property (the tree line of Folly Beach is visible from strip) but like all public beaches in Charleston at that time, it was only open to the white population. Sol Legare native Cassandra Singleton Roper remembered never going to Folly Beach except for the times she went for a job, stating “there was no reason for black folks to go to Folly Beach other than to work.”⁸⁵ Common jobs included housekeeper, restaurant worker and custodian. Russel C. Roper also worked there and remembered that it was critical “to leave Folly Beach at a certain time” to catch the bus:

If those white people catch you walking on the side of the road coming back home, they would throw a ball at you...some of those people got slapped, they pull up on the side of the road and just slap at you. That’s why I say that time was rough.⁸⁶

Segregation at public beaches and parks spurred an increase in black-owned and operated beaches and recreational areas in South Carolina. Nationally, securing coastline property for the black community, however, began as early as the 1890s, as Charles Douglas, son of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, assisted in the purchase of a stretch of beach along the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay to establish Highland Beach in 1892. During the 1930s and 1940s, the southern region of the United States also saw several coastal properties emerge as black beaches, most on black-owned property and/or secluded in hidden, undeveloped areas.⁸⁷ In the 1930s, the City of Charleston established Riverside Beach along the Cooper River in Mount Pleasant. In 1941, due to the beach’s unsanitary conditions and harsh terrain, local black businessmen P.J. Greene and Herbert Frazier leased the beach from the city and improved the conditions, establishing a dance hall, bathhouse, pavilion and recreational fields.⁸⁸ Local residents operated food stands out of their kitchens, local black baseball teams competed on the fields and White’s Paradise, the beach’s premier club that has since been demolished, hosted well-known deejays and musicians, including a young James Brown.⁸⁹ Similarly, in 1934, entrepreneur George W. Tyson purchased forty-seven acres along the coastline just south of North Myrtle Beach, SC and established Atlantic Beach, set with nationally-known entertainment and recreation venues.⁹⁰

Although buses were available to transport residents to seaside or marsh-front locations, such as Riverside Beach and Atlantic Beach, many Sol Legare residents, often required to sit in the back of the buses, recalled the trips as “tedious,” “long,” and “exhausting.”⁹¹ Although not a typical beach, the marshes of Mosquito Beach were nearby and secluded, the land was owned by the

⁸⁵ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁸⁶ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

⁸⁷ Jackson, 42.

⁸⁸ Kahrl, 198; “Riverside Beach/White’s Paradise,” Historic Marker, 5th Avenue, Mount Pleasant, SC, erected by the Town of Mount Pleasant, 2003.

⁸⁹ Kahrl, 198.

⁹⁰ Gibson, Jamesha, “Atlantic Beach: Historic African-American Enclave in South Carolina.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, 12 March 2015, <https://savingplaces.org/stories/atlantic-beach-historic-african-american-enclave-in-south-carolina#.XC5H5y2ZPws>

⁹¹ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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area's black farmers, and, with the establishment of the Chavis family stores by the 1940s, it offered a safe place to freely swim (at high tide), fish, and boat while enjoying drinks, seafood, and music. The midcentury management and development of Mosquito Beach was a direct result of the pursuit for social, cultural, and recreational pleasures of a segregated population.

While Mosquito Beach provided a safe haven from the pervasive discrimination surrounding Sol Legare Island, its location, terrain, and environmental characteristics are representative of the segregation of natural resources at this time.⁹² Mosquito Beach is a tidal marsh with no sand frontage, and at low tide, swimming or water play is impossible. In 1964, the *News & Courier* called the beach "a strip more akin to a dirt road."⁹³ Of the five black beaches present in the Charleston area in the early 1960s, a few were tucked away in black communities along marshes or rivers, while others were set aside by the city or county, such as Riverside Beach in Mount Pleasant and Seaside Beach on Edisto Island. Yet all were often "remote, inaccessible or environmentally hazardous."⁹⁴ Similar to Mosquito Beach, Peter Miller's Pavilion was a tidal marsh on Wallace Creek, but was about twenty-two miles from the coastline. While beachfront, Seaside Beach was rock-strewn, and Riverside Beach, established by the City of Charleston along the Cooper River, was comprised of thick marsh and adjacent to the area where the city dumped its sewage.⁹⁵ Unlike Seaside and Riverside, Mosquito Beach was black-owned and isolated within a well-established neighborhood that managed both the buildings and landscape, and encouraged congregation, out of sight from any major roadway or nearby community. Frasier Beach, now a five-acre parcel owned by the non-profit Rural Mission, had a similar topography to Mosquito Beach as a tidal marsh on an isolated roadway not far from the waterfront of Seabrook Island. However, most of the buildings of these Lowcountry black beaches have been lost, with the exception of Mosquito Beach.

The name "Mosquito Beach" is also indicative of the conditions in which many black beaches emerged and the resilience of their patrons. The earliest found reference of the name was in a 1955 newspaper article recording the death of 37-year-old Alonzo Nelson, who the *News & Courier* confirmed "spent the night at Mosquito Beach."⁹⁶ Six years later, Sol Legare Island was deemed the "largest mosquito breeding area in Charleston County."⁹⁷ Max A. Askey Jr., manager of the Charleston County Mosquito Abatement Program who recorded mosquito activity throughout Charleston County in the early 1960s, said it wasn't unusual to get "high counts in midsummer in places like Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island and James Island," but "one of the most infested places in the metropolitan area was aptly named Mosquito Beach." As a result of Askey's record of mosquitos on Mosquito Beach, a referendum was passed to create the county abatement program he managed.⁹⁸ Although it is unknown who first named the area Mosquito Beach, elder Sol Legare residents concur it earned its moniker from its mosquito-

⁹² Kahrl, 4.

⁹³ "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area," 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁹⁴ Jackson, 43.

⁹⁵ Kahrl, 143.

⁹⁶ "Man is Fatally Hurt as Car Overturns on River Road," 5 June 1955, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁹⁷ "Mosquito Fighters End 1st Project," 20 December 1961, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

⁹⁸ "Big Buster Has Seen Progress in His 25 years of War on Pests," 28 March 1988, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

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infested marshes as early as the 1940s.⁹⁹ Despite these conditions, a segregated population continued to congregate along the infamous waterfront, which became an epicenter for cultural expression through food, music and recreation.

The Supreme Court's early 1950s ruling in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, stating separate educational facilities were not equal, paved the way for universal integration, yet personal attitudes and social norms throughout the Charleston area mostly remained unchanged. The black population remained restricted from parks to beaches, public restrooms to public spaces, and restaurants to theaters. With the postwar "rush to the sea" and the increase of beachside congregation for pleasure and relaxation, the Mosquito Beach property continued to be more than just a place to cool off during the weekends.¹⁰⁰ Local property owners, such as the Walkers and Wilders, took it as an opportunity to create additional restaurants and music venues for a community that was prohibited from socializing elsewhere. By the mid 1950s, the Harborview Club dance pavilion, the Seaside Grille, Jack Walker's Club, and Manchi & Nucca's pavilion hosted live performers and local deejays while serving fresh seafood, fried chicken, and moonshine on Mosquito Beach every weekend.

Amidst the progression of development on Mosquito Beach, the Civil Rights movement raged on. According to historian Walter Fraser in *Charleston! Charleston!*, at the beginning of the 1960s, Charleston "was a city of thoroughly segregated neighborhoods, transportation systems, public schools, colleges and parks, churches, theaters, restaurants and even shopping districts."¹⁰¹ Despite the local courts removing segregation from public facilities in 1960, segregation kept, as Cheraw's *Chronicle* editor stated, "the races apart."¹⁰²

On July 6, 1963, Charleston's *Evening Post* reported "a group of eight young Negro men 'waded-in'" in front of the Folly Plaza on Folly Beach, just a few miles from Mosquito Beach.¹⁰³ According to the article, "the white people in the area left the water immediately" and "a gathering crowd of white persons" followed the young men down the street, while police "kept the groups well separated."¹⁰⁴ The Folly Beach wade-in was part of a larger movement of protests by the black citizens of Charleston throughout 1963 and 1964, which included silent marches throughout downtown Charleston, sit-ins in the city's commercial districts and other wade-ins at municipal swimming facilities.¹⁰⁵

The following summer, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, which prohibited, among many other things, "discrimination in public accommodations and

⁹⁹ In person interview with William G. "Cubby" Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹⁰⁰ Jackson, Harvey, H., ed, "Beaches, Black, Jim Crow era," *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Vol. 16, Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi, 2011. 42

¹⁰¹ Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 411.

¹⁰² Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 413-414.

¹⁰³ "8 Negroes 'Wade In' At Folly" 6 July 1963, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁰⁴ "8 Negroes 'Wade In' At Folly" 6 July 1963, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁰⁵ "8 Negroes 'Wade In' At Folly" 6 July 1963, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston!*, 416.

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protected constitutional rights in public facilities and public education.”¹⁰⁶ Its impact, however, was not felt immediately in the Charleston Lowcountry. Throughout the summer of 1964, the *Evening Post* continued to document black activity on nearby, and technically desegregated, Folly Beach, including outrage over former all-white restaurants serving black patrons and large crowds chasing black citizens from the beachfront.¹⁰⁷ Cassandra Singleton Roper, who grew up in Sol Legare but moved to New York City for school in the 1950s, returned to Mosquito Beach around this time and stated: “I didn’t know what segregation was until I came back to James Island and I went to school the first day.” Roper said it took her “several weeks” to acclimate to being with only black people “in every aspect of life.”¹⁰⁸

One week after the signing of the Civil Rights Act, a group of black men from Mosquito Beach visited Folly Beach and were “surrounded immediately by a group of several hundred white persons,” who followed the men to the water’s edge before police escorted them back to their cars.¹⁰⁹ One of the men, Russel C. Roper, recalled making the decision to go to Folly Beach after sitting underneath a tree eating watermelon in Mosquito Beach’s picnic area along Elijah Creek on a hot summer day during low tide, a time when swimming is impossible.¹¹⁰ After the incident, police reported “no abusive language nor saw blows struck” but that one black man had a bloody nose.¹¹¹ According to Roper, the men were harassed with abusive language as they parked their car on Front Street and approached the shore. He recounted the experience:

They walked behind us...we had to take our belts off as the only way to defend ourselves, and one of my friends fell down on the side of shore...and when he fell down, the white people kicked him in the face and broke his nose.¹¹²

Folly Beach Police Chief Julian Bunch told reporters that many black families, however “walked on the beach” that day without incidents. Although returning safely to Mosquito Beach, Roper recalled all of their gas tanks had been purposely filled with soil, damaging the inner-workings of their cars.¹¹³

Efforts to desegregate the area’s beaches through visitation and wade-ins continued, and by 1970, many of the beaches and swimming areas in Charleston County slowly acclimated to the 1964 act, which ultimately diminished Mosquito Beach’s activity.¹¹⁴ Although two new establishments were erected on Mosquito Beach in the first few years of the 1970s, including D&F’s and the Lakehouse Club (now known as Island Breeze), the gradual integration of black

¹⁰⁶ “Civil Rights Act,” Public Law 88-352, 78 Stat, 241, 2 July 1964, http://library.clerk.house.gov/reference-files/PPL_CivilRightsAct_1964.pdf (accessed February 2019).

¹⁰⁷ “Area Police Keep Tension Under Control,” 6 July 1964, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁰⁸ “Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area,” 1964 July 30, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁰⁹ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹¹⁰ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹¹¹ “Negroes Visit Folly Beach; One Arrested,” 13 July 1964, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

¹¹² In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹¹³ In person interview with Russel C. Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹¹⁴ Stephen Lewis Cox, “The History of Negro State Parks in South Carolina, 1940-1963,” MA Thesis, the University of South Carolina, 1992. 80-82, 84-85, 107-108.

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citizens into formerly white-only spaces in Charleston left Mosquito Beach a shadow of its former self.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

EARLY HISTORY

Historically, the property served as the southern boundary of the large, nineteenth-century Savannah Plantation owned by Solomon Legare (1797-1878), the man for which Sol Legare Island is named.¹¹⁵ Savannah Plantation, one of over a dozen plantations on James Island during the antebellum era, is first depicted on an 1825 map titled “Charleston Harbour and the adjacent coast and country, South Carolina” (Figure 26). The map confirms that the Mosquito Beach property was an undeveloped strip of high ground adjacent to several farming lots. A group of buildings are also present nearby along the current trajectory of today’s Sol Legare Road. These structures most likely served as dwellings for Legare’s enslaved workforce, which possibly included Philip, described as “five feet, six or eight inches high” who spoke “rather quickly” and was recorded as working on Legare’s plantation on James Island during this period.¹¹⁶

By the early 1850s, Legare maintained over 800 acres in the vicinity of James Island, where he cultivated corn and produced some of area’s largest collection of ginned cotton.¹¹⁷ A decade later, however, Savannah Plantation became the setting for significant Civil War activity. During the first half of 1862, United States infantry traveled from Battery Island, south of Mosquito Beach, towards the planter village of Secessionville, north of Sol Legare Island, traversing the acres of Savannah Plantation.¹¹⁸ The 1863 “Map of Charleston and its Defenses” denotes a skirmish occurring on the plantation lands, at “Legare,” on June 6, 1862 (Figure 27). The map confirms that the 1825 farming lots remained intact, as well as the group of buildings, which were then recorded as flanking a formal road most likely known today as Sol Legare Road. Mosquito Beach remained mostly undeveloped at this time, with a possible single structure documented at the southwestern edge. Activity continued on Savannah Plantation through 1863, as it remained a camp for several troops, including the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

An article in the *Charleston Mercury* at this time reported Legare’s retreat from his James Island property to Orangeburg, SC, potentially due to the wartime activity. The newspaper confirmed that Legare brought most of his enslaved workers, including the “negro family” of Philip, who had previously been sold to J. Dunbar of Bennettsville, SC. Philip escaped Dunbar’s plantation in August of 1864.¹¹⁹ With Legare’s transport of his slaves to Orangeburg, it is unlikely that the

¹¹⁵ Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book V16, Page 48, Charleston County, SC.

¹¹⁶ Frazier, Eugene Sr., *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners*, History Press: Charleston, 2010. 11; “One Hundred Dollars” 17 August 1864, *Charleston Mercury*, Charleston, SC.

¹¹⁷ 1850 U.S. Federal Census

¹¹⁸ Edgar, Walter, ed., “Battle of Secessionville,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 2006. 853.

¹¹⁹ “One Hundred Dollars” 17 August 1864, *Charleston Mercury*, Charleston, SC.

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current Sol Legare residents descend from those enslaved by Legare on the property. As the farming and fishing industries later attracted freedmen from all over James Island to Sol Legare Island in the postbellum period, many current residents most likely descend from those enslaved on plantations surrounding Legare's property.

In December of 1874, Legare sold his 250-acre Savannah Plantation to Charles Seele. The property was described as bounding north on "Hollowing Island" (today known as Holland Island) Creek and the south on "Dickens Island" (today known as Dixon Island), confirming that this conveyance included the Mosquito Beach strip.¹²⁰ After his purchase, Seele subdivided the plantation into narrow farming lots that extended from King Flats Creek to Holland Island Creek, a configuration that would dictate the residential and rural pattern of the island for the next century. At this time, the Mosquito Beach property served as the southern portion for three farming lots, which were immediately sold to black farmers Nelson Left, Edward Green, and John Lafayette. The Green, Left, and Lafayette families were three of nearly one hundred black truck-farming families on James Island at this time. Descendants of Left and Lafayette still own these original farming lots today.¹²¹

With these conveyances, Mosquito Beach transformed from an outlying boundary of a coastal plantation to the southern edge of three black-owned farms. Lafayette purchased the eastern section of Mosquito Beach as part of a 20-acre farming lot (Figure 28).¹²² Green purchased a 15-acre property directly to the west and Left acquired 75 acres that encompassed the western end of Mosquito Beach and extended both north and west on Sol Legare Island.¹²³ The current residents of Sol Legare Island refer to these original free settlers, as well as their contemporaries, as "Sol Legarians."

Left, Green and Lafayette were part of a larger population of freedmen who settled in the rural outskirts of the Charleston peninsula. Although most of Charleston's black population lived in the city proper during the postbellum period, many black residential enclaves were established along the creeks and marshes of the surrounding islands. Sol Legare Island became one of many settlements that emerged on James Island, John's Island, Edisto Island and Mount Pleasant that evolved into autonomous communities in the wake of the Civil War.¹²⁴ According to the National Park Service's 2012 Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan, this was due to a number of factors: the vast amount of former plantation lands for sale and suitable for small-scale truck farming, the falling prices of land, and the ability to sell the abundant seafood found in the surrounding marshes and creeks.¹²⁵ Ernest Parks, a native of Sol Legare, claim these farmers moved to the island not necessarily to flee from the lands they were

¹²⁰ Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book V16, Page 48, Charleston County, SC.

¹²¹ Kahrl, Andrew H, *The Land was Ours*, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2012. 180.

¹²² Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book P17, Page 220, Charleston County, SC.

¹²³ Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book P17, Page 215, Charleston County, SC; Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book P17, Page 218, Charleston County, SC.

¹²⁴ Fraser, Walter J., *Charleston! Charleston!*, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 1992. 336.

¹²⁵ Paul Brockington, et. al., "Rural Settlement in the Charleston Bay Area," South Caroline Department of Highways and Public Transportation: Columbia, 1985. 51-59.

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previously enslaved on but rather to “make a way for themselves,” “live off the land...to live off the sea” and to establish “their own communities at any costs.”¹²⁶

In August of 1880, a Washington, D.C. black newspaper, *People’s Advocate*, published an article titled “The Sea Islands: The Progress of the Population,” explaining the emergence of black farmers in in the Lowcountry:

Day labor is becoming scarce, owing to the improvement in the condition of the laborers. Colored men who, ten years ago worked as field hands for fifty cents a day, now own their own lands and earn a comfortable support from them...On John’s Island, the colored people own 4,300 acres, on James Island, 1,600 acres...The colored people as a general thing, do not accumulate much money, but they seldom live beyond their means...

The article concluded that as “a fact” most black farmers on the islands carried “the cultivation of their land to a higher perfection than did their masters before the war,” deeming it “most encouraging for the future of the South, the progress of the colored people and the solution of the race problem.”¹²⁷

The cultivation of former plantation lands by black farmers was widespread throughout South Carolina. In 1880, 78% of the farmers in the state were black.¹²⁸ Although the Sol Legare farms were substantially smaller than most in the state (the average farm in South Carolina was approximately 143 acres), the rectangular lots allowed farmers such as Lafayette, Green, and Left to produce a diverse array of crops, such as okra, green beans, watermelon, tomatoes, cantaloupe, and corn, while fishing the creeks and marsh to capitalize on the ample seafood, such as oysters, fish, and crab.¹²⁹ The Sol Legare farms were also unique in that they were both owned and operated by the farmers. In contrast, only 50% of the farms in the entire state of South Carolina were owned by those who cultivated them.¹³⁰

Throughout the end of the nineteenth century, Lafayette, Green, and Left continued to buy additional farming lots throughout James Island, including lots across King Flats Creek on Dixon Island, and most likely cleared undeveloped areas within their lots for optimal cultivation. For example, in 1895 Burt G. Wilder, a surgeon for the 55th Massachusetts during the Civil War, returned to Sol Legare Island where he was stationed during the wartime years. In his diary, he commented on the transformation of the land, which included the removal of a large tree he distinctly remembered but was since “cut down by Nelson Left, who bought the place 13 years before” his return.¹³¹

¹²⁶ In person interview with Ernest Parks, 2012, interview by Corie Hipp, private collection.

¹²⁷ “The Sea Islands: The Progress of the Population,” 21 August 1880, *People’s Advocate*, Washington, D.C.

¹²⁸ Edgar, Walter, *South Carolina: A History*, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 1999. 450.

¹²⁹ Oral history with Alonzo Lafayette; Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 450.

¹³⁰ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 450.

¹³¹ Richard M. Reid, ed., *Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment: The Civil War Diary of Burt G. Wilder*, University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, 2010. 163.

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According to James Island historian Eugene Frazier, Sol Legare Island was primarily accessible via boat prior to 1899, making the marsh-front farm lots of Sol Legare efficient for the transportation of crops.¹³² With only a one-lane wooden bridge across Wappoo Creek providing access to the city proper, it is unknown whether the farmers mostly sold produce locally or transported the crops to the downtown markets. In 1910, however, sixty-five-year-old Lafayette was recorded as both a farmer and store keeper on James Island, suggesting that there was a system established for the selling of crops on the property.¹³³ It is unclear where the store was located, but by 1915, the farmers of Sol Legare created the Seashore Farmer's Lodge No. 767 (NRHP #07001043) nearby as a social and economic gathering space for the both local farmers and general community. This structure served as a cultural epicenter for the Sol Legare settlement until the establishment of Mosquito Beach a few decades later.

OYSTER FACTORY, 1923-1931

George Creighton Varn, a Beaufort oyster merchant, established an oyster factory on the future site of Mosquito Beach in 1923.¹³⁴ By this time, Varn already owned Varn & Platt Co., a Savannah-based company specializing in the processing of oysters, and operated many factories along the coast of South Carolina.¹³⁵ On the leased property, Varn was permitted to "erect buildings and install machinery," as well as "anything else consistent to the installation, maintenance and manufacture of oysters."¹³⁶

With an economy steeped in agriculture and seafood, this area of James Island most likely presented as a fruitful investment for Varn. One year after his lease of the Mosquito Beach land, Varn established the Unity Oyster Company of Charleston with a mission to "manufacture and sell oysters, crabs and vegetable products" on the site, as well as "agricultural and road products." Varn served as president, secretary and treasurer.¹³⁷ The Unity Oyster Company of Charleston on the Left estate would ultimately be the catalyst for social and recreational activity on Mosquito Beach.¹³⁸

By Varn's 1922 lease, the establishment of oyster factories and canneries grew significantly along the coast; the first decades of the twentieth century seeing the highest numbers in oyster production in South Carolina's history. At this time, approximately 3,500 people, mostly woman and black citizens, were employed in the state's 16 canneries and 31 shucking houses, producing several million bushels of oysters by the mid-1920s.¹³⁹

¹³² Frazier, Eugene Sr., *A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners*, History Press: Charleston, 2010. 11.

¹³³ 1910 U.S. Federal Census

¹³⁴ 1920 U.S. Federal Census

¹³⁵ "Savannah, Georgia," city directory, 1913-1914, www.ancestry.com (accessed November 2018); 1910 U.S. Federal Census

¹³⁶ 1920 U.S. Federal Census

¹³⁷ "New Furniture Co. for Columbia Given Charter by State," 6 September 1923, *Columbia Record*, Columbia, SC.; Charleston Register of Deeds, Deed Book B30, Page 185, Charleston County, SC.

¹³⁸ 1920 U.S. Federal Census

¹³⁹ Burrell, Victor G, Jr., *South Carolina Oyster Industry: A History*, self-published, 2003. 9, 12; Moran, J., "Oyster Commercial Landings in South Carolina (1880-1996)," South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Office of Fisheries Management, 1980.

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The oyster industry, however, flourished as early as the 1880s in South Carolina, with approximately 50,000 bushels of oysters processed in “shucking houses” in Charleston and Port Royal, SC in 1880 alone.¹⁴⁰ By the late 1890s, many oyster factories were established in other Lowcountry marshes in places like Murrells Inlet, Mount Pleasant and Bulls Bay. At Bulls Bay, J.W. Magwood built an oyster shucking house on pilings over the marsh, as well as vernacular-style dormitories for shuckers on the high ground during the oyster season.¹⁴¹ In 1906, due to the rudimentary status of the refrigerator and the increase of unsanitary conditions in processing oysters, the Pure Food and Drug Act required a more standardized and regulated way of handling and shipping oysters, leading to an increase in formal canneries across the eastern seaboard.¹⁴²

Wilhelmina Singleton, a Sol Legare native and former Varn factory worker at Mosquito Beach, told the *News and Courier* in a 1990s interview that Varn mostly hired James Island residents to work at the factory, yet recalled many workers coming from other parts of the Lowcountry. In addition, she remembered “about six or seven young black men and an elderly black woman” brought by Varn from another oyster factory to teach the local men how to harvest the oysters and the women how to shuck.¹⁴³ One of these local men included the father of Sol Legare native William G. “Cubby” Wilder, who remembers his father recalling his experience working on a flat-bottom barge in King Flats Creek to collect the oysters. Wilder’s mother worked at the factory as a shucker.¹⁴⁴ After visiting an oyster factory in Beaufort in the 1920s, *News and Courier* reporter Chlotilde R. Martin described the conditions most likely endured by Singleton and Wilder’s parents:

For the “oystering,” however profitable, and however savory the product, is not a process to appeal to the fastidious. As a matter of fact, only the strong of the human race can ever persuade themselves beyond the last hundred yards to an oyster factory. There is a smell that reeks to heaven and is about as effective as a spiked wall. It is a tenacious sort of smell, clinging to the end of one’s nose for miles after the oyster factory is left behind.¹⁴⁵

For workers who did not already reside on Sol Legare Island, Singleton remembered Varn constructing “three cottages on Mosquito Beach Road” for them to stay in during the oyster season.¹⁴⁶ Wilder recalled “a lot of little huts” on the Left estate where his aunt and uncle, also workers of the factory, resided well into the 1940s.¹⁴⁷ Although no images have been located that capture the work or appearance of Varn’s Unity Oyster Company of Charleston and no physical evidence of the factory remains today, Lewis Hine (1874-1940) of the National Child Labor

¹⁴⁰ Burrell, 6.

¹⁴¹ Burrell, 7; Preservation Consultants, Inc., “Historical and Architectural Survey of Charleston County, South Carolina,” Charleston City Council, 1992. 50.

¹⁴² Kondratas, Ramunas, Ph.D., “Images from the History of the Public Health Service; A Photographic Exhibit,” United States Department of Health and Human Services, art exhibit, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Washington, D.C., 1994.

¹⁴³ “In the neighborhood,” 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁴⁴ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

¹⁴⁵ “Beaufort Plant Cans 400 Cases of Oysters Each Day,” 25 January 1932, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁴⁶ “In the neighborhood,” 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁴⁷ In person interview with William G. Wilder, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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Committee (NCLC) photographed the working conditions of one of Varn's factories in Bluffton, SC a decade prior. In addition to capturing the exploitation of children at Varn's factory, Hine photographed workers' housing, the interior of the factory and the shuckers at work, commenting that black workers were employed "more than the whites" (Figures 3-6).¹⁴⁸ Hines' images provide a glimpse into the possible living and working conditions of the men, women and children who first worked on Mosquito Beach and the types of buildings that possibly first occupied the land. Today, a c. 1929 A.S. Varn & Son Oyster and Crab Factory, now known as the Pin Point Heritage Museum, survives outside of Savannah, GA, also serving as representation of the type of structure likely seen on Mosquito Beach at this time.

In 1925 through 1928, Charleston County seized Varn's Sol Legare property, including the equipment of the Unity Oyster Company of Charleston, and in August of 1929, "the factory, equipment and supplies" of the company were sold to the Seaside Cannery for \$1,050.¹⁴⁹ By 1930, the factory most likely continued production under the Seaside Cannery, as many Sol Legare residents, including 21-year-old Joe Shavers, 21-year-old Lucious McKelvey and 22-year-old Jeffery West, were recorded as "oyster factory" laborers in the 1930 U.S. Federal Census. The factory closed in 1931.

1984-PRESENT

In 1984, a plat of Mosquito Beach was produced and recorded six commercial structures, including the Board Walk Club, one "residence" (the Pine Tree Hotel), one dual commercial/residential space (Chavis' store), two stables and a garage (Figure 29). In addition to the Boardwalk Club, other commercial establishments included Jack Walker's Club, D&F's, Lakehouse Club, Uncle Jimmy's Club and an unknown business. That same year, however, Apple died and the Boardwalk Club permanently closed (Figure 30).¹⁵⁰ The *News and Courier* later credited Apple Wilder's death as the period during which Mosquito Beach officially "began to lose its prominence as an entertainment center."¹⁵¹ In addition, Chavis' store was destroyed by fire in 1984, killing his wife Mittie while he was out fishing.¹⁵²

Five years later, a 1989 survey of historic resources on James Island identified the Board Walk Club incorrectly as the "Mosquito Beach Oyster Factory," but described it as "a large open building over marsh" with a "walkway from parking area" and a "narrow deck with single and double entry openings" (Figures 31-33).¹⁵³ Hurricane Hugo in September of 1989 ultimately destroyed the pavilion and today only its pilings survive.

¹⁴⁸ Hines, Lewis, "Varn and Platt Canning Co.," 1913, National Child Labor Committee Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁴⁹ "Notice of Sheriff's Sale," 5 August 1929, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Auction Sales," 7 August 1929, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵⁰ Undated plat, "Cubby's History Document," private collection.

¹⁵¹ "Mosquito Beach Buzzing with Plans to Restore the Area," 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵² "James Island woman killed in house fire," 29 December 1984, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵³ Preservation Consultants, Inc., "James Island and Johns Island Historical Survey," Site #249 0020, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1989.

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Following Hurricane Hugo, the Mosquito Beach Business Association was founded to revive the property and, according to Wilder in 2001, “to save an old relic.”¹⁵⁴ Of the seven commercial structures documented in 1984, only three were open in 1990, including Perry’s Place (formerly known as P&J’s or Jack Walker’s Club), D & F’s and the Lakehouse Club.¹⁵⁵ In March of 1990, the *News and Courier* called Mosquito Beach “a colorful misnomer that many people in the Charleston area have heard but cannot quite place,” and stated that many buildings “have fallen into a state of disrepair.”¹⁵⁶ In 1991, descendants of Apple Wilder requested to rebuild the pavilion, but the Committee of the South Carolina Coastal Council denied the request due to infrastructure challenges, describing the area as a former “traditional summertime gathering for blacks.”¹⁵⁷ Mosquito Beach was omitted from a cultural resource survey of Charleston County in 1992.

In 1993, the Mosquito Beach Business Association set to “recapture and revitalize” the area’s heritage, to portray Mosquito Beach in a positive image and “as a rich cultural experience for everyone.”¹⁵⁸ The next year, a *Post and Courier* article titled “Mosquito Beach Tries to Reclaim Safety,” reported that two murders, one robbery, eight aggravated assaults, two burglaries, four larcenies, four stolen vehicle reports and one arson occurred in a short amount of time. The newspaper stated that “some have suggested tearing down the strip of night spots” and described it as “an area prevalent in drug dealing and underage drinking.”¹⁵⁹ Alonzo Lafayette, then manager of the Lakehouse Club, told the newspaper that its violent reputation was historically uncommon for Mosquito Beach, as it used to be “a family spot,” “a place to bring a picnic basket for the kids and dance under the moonlight at the open air Harborview Pavilion” and where the “scents of soul food and seafood followed visitors as they met up with old friends and relatives.”¹⁶⁰ Yvonne Rogers, vice president of the Mosquito Beach Business Association, also told the newspaper that they were prepared to “fight like the devil” to save Mosquito Beach.¹⁶¹ Seven years later, a 2001 article described Mosquito Beach as having “an image problem” due to consistent significant violence.¹⁶²

For the last three decades, Sol Legare Island residents have continued to fight for the revival of the original Mosquito Beach. In 2014, Wilder told the *Post and Courier* that old residents like him “remember those days” where “people were [there] to have fun.”¹⁶³ On the reputation of Mosquito Beach at the turn of the twentieth-first century, Wilder claimed he didn’t “want that

¹⁵⁴ “Mosquito Beach association wants to revive 1930s hot spot by rebuilding creek pavilion,” 12 August 2001, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵⁵ “Mosquito Beach Buzzing with Plans to Restore the Area,” 22 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵⁶ “Sol Legare,” 15 March 1990, *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵⁷ “Coastal Pavilion Not Allowed,” 20 September 1991, *Augusta Chronicle*, Augusta, GA.

¹⁵⁸ “Letter to the Editor: Mosquito Beach,” 30 August 1993, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁵⁹ “Mosquito Beach tries to reclaim safety,” 12 December 1994, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁶⁰ “Mosquito Beach tries to reclaim safety,” 12 December 1994, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁶¹ “Mosquito Beach tries to reclaim safety,” 12 December 1994, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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¹⁶³ “Violence threatens history on waterfront; Mosquito Beach under fire after shooting death,” 23 May 2014, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

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history to be lost because of the youngsters who now...bring violence.”¹⁶⁴ In a 2018 interview, Cassandra Singleton Roper credited the lack of understanding by the younger generations on the historic role of Mosquito Beach as the obstacle to revitalization, as “the privileges they have now were not even allowed” during her generation.¹⁶⁵

In 2016, Mosquito Beach was deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in an updated survey of Charleston County. Although Chavis’ store and Uncle Jimmy’s Club no longer survive, and the Pine Tree Hotel has been boarded up, Jack Walker’s Club, D&F’s and Island Breeze, which occupies the Lakehouse Club building, are still open on Mosquito Beach and face the marsh where the pilings of the past pavilions still stand.

¹⁶⁴ “Violence threatens history on waterfront; Mosquito Beach under fire after shooting death,” 23 May 2014, *Post and Courier*, Charleston, SC.

¹⁶⁵ In person interview with Cassandra Singleton Roper, October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen.

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1929 August 7 "Auction Sales"

1964 July 6 "Area Police Keep Tension Under Control"

1964 July 13 "Negroes Visit Folly Beach; One Arrested"

1970 July 4 "Mystery of Snake Is Finally Barred"

1972 August 14 "Few Tourists Visit Local Beaches"

1988 March 28 "Big Buster Has Seen Progress in His 25 years of War on Pests," 28 March 1988

News & Courier/Post & Courier, Charleston, SC.

1929 August 5 "Notice of Sheriff's Sale"

1932 January 25 "Beaufort Plant Cans 400 Cases of Oysters Each Day"

1955 June 5 "Man is Fatally Hurt as Car Overturns on River Road"

1958 August 1 "Girl, 7, Is Drowned at James Island"

1958 August 29 "One Dies, Another Held in Gunfight"

1961 Dec. 20 "Mosquito Fighters End 1st Project"

1962 July 3 "Man Drowns in Creek Near Folly"

1963 July 6 "8 Negroes 'Wade In' At Folly"

1964 July 30 "Mosquito Beach is Popular Retreat For Negro Citizens in this Area"

1965 August 9 "Tavern Owner Posts Bond on Three Charges"

1984 Dec. 29 "James Island woman killed in house fire"

1990 March 15 "Sol Legare"

1990 March 22 "In the Neighborhood"

1990 March 22 "Mosquito Beach Buzzing with Plans to Restore the Area"

1990 March 22 "At 87, the King of Mosquito Beach Still Reigns"

1993 August 13 "Radio's Robert Nichols dead at 76"

1993 August 30 "Letter to the Editor: Mosquito Beach"

1994 Dec. 12 "Mosquito Beach tries to reclaim safety"

2003 August 27 "Eva Mikell"

2001 August 12 "Black Beaches in the Lowcountry: Riverside Became a Refuge Amid Segregation"

2001 August 12 "Mosquito Beach association wants to revive 1930s hot spot by rebuilding creek pavilion"

2014 May 23 "Violence threatens history on waterfront; Mosquito Beach under fire after shooting death"

2018 April 25 "For Frankie 'The Big Bopper' The Beat Goes On"

People's Advocate, Washington, D.C.

1880 August 21 "The Sea Islands: The Progress of the Population"

State, Columbia, SC

1957 June 26 "Price of Vindictiveness"

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston Co., SC

Name of Property

1961 May 31 "State NAACP Leader Calls for War on Segregation"
1967 October 8 "Record Review"

County and State

ORAL HISTORIES

Cassandra Singleton Roper

October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen (on behalf of Historic Charleston Foundation)

Edward Wilder

October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen (on behalf of Historic Charleston Foundation)

Ernest Parks

2012, interview by Corie Hipp, private collection.

William G. Wilder

March 2019, interviewed by Brittany V. Lavelle Tulla

William G. Wilder

October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen (on behalf of Historic Charleston Foundation)

Russel C. Roper

October 2018, interviewed by Michael Allen (on behalf of Historic Charleston Foundation)

PRIMARY RECORDS

1850, 1910-1940 U.S. Federal Census

Charleston Register of Deeds, Charleston County, SC

Deed Book V16, Page 48

Deed Book P17, Page 215- 220

Deed Book R24, Page 24

Deed Book B30, Page 185

Deed Book W68, Page 185

Hines, Lewis

"Varn and Platt Canning Co.," 1913, National Child Labor Committee Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Kondratas, Ramunas, Ph.D.

"Images from the History of the Public Health Service; A Photographic Exhibit," United States Department of Health and Human Services, art exhibit, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Washington, D.C., 1994.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Corie Hipp, documented Mosquito Beach in 2015

William G. "Cubby" Wilder, resident of Sol Legare Island and descendant of original Mosquito Beach patrons

William Roper, resident of Sol Legare Island and descendant of original Mosquito Beach patrons

PUBLISHED

Edgar, Walter

South Carolina: A History, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 1999.

Edgar, Walter, ed.

The South Carolina Encyclopedia, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 2006.

Green, Victor and George I. Smith

The Negro Motorist Green Book, New York: Green & Smith, 1937.

Fraser, Walter J.

Charleston! Charleston!, University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, 1992.

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston Co., SC

Name of Property

County and State

Frazier, Eugene Sr.

A History of James Island Slave Descendants & Plantation Owners, History Press: Charleston, 2010.

Jackson, Harvey, H., ed.

“Beaches, Black, Jim Crow era,” *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Vol. 16, Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi, 2011.

Kahrl, Andrew H

The Land was Ours, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2012.

Moran, J.

“Oyster Commercial Landings in South Carolina (1880-1996),” South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Office of Fisheries Management, 1980.

Reid, Richard M., ed.

Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment: The Civil War Diary of Burt G. Wilder, University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, 2010.

Smyth, William D.

“Segregation in Charleston in the 1950s: A Decade of Transition,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 92, No. 2, Charleston: The South Carolina Historical Society, 1991.

STATE/COUNTY/CITY SURVEYS

New South Associates

“Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update,” Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department, 2016.

Preservation Consultants, Inc.

“James Island and Johns Island Historical Survey,” Site #249 0020, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1989.

UNPUBLISHED

Paul Brockington, et. al.

“Rural Settlement in the Charleston Bay Area,” South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation: Columbia, 1985.

Cox, Stephen Lewis

“The History of Negro State Parks in South Carolina, 1940-1963,” MA Thesis, the University of South Carolina, 1992.

Gibson, Jamesha

“Atlantic Beach: Historic African-American Enclave in South Carolina.” National Trust for Historic Preservation, 12 March 2015, <https://savingplaces.org/stories/atlantic-beach-historic-african-american-enclave-in-south-carolina#.XC5H5y2ZPws>

Parks Desegregation Files

Records of the SC Forestry Commission, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

“Poinsett State Park Historic District,” #16000311, National Register of Historic Places, nomination.

Poinsett State Park Files

1940-1965, S 162026, Records of the State Commission of Forestry, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Mosquito Beach Historic District
Name of Property

Charleston Co., SC
County and State

“Riverside Beach/White’s Paradise”
Historic Marker, 5th Avenue, Mount Pleasant, SC, erected by the Town of Mount Pleasant, 2003.

Sauls, Brad
“Letter of Eligibility,” 3 May 2016, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

“Seashore Farmers’ Lodge No. 767,” #07001043, National Register of Historic Places, nomination.

Works Progress Administration
“S-260-264-N,” Project 1885, Interview of Augustus Ladson, Works Progress Administration Federal Writers' Project on African American Life in South Carolina, Library of Congress, 1937.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.36

Mosquito Beach Historic District
Name of Property

Charleston Co., SC
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 32.674109° | Longitude: -79.981857° |
| 2. Latitude: 32.673569° | Longitude: -79.983130° |
| 3. Latitude: 32.673295° | Longitude: -79.982975° |
| 4. Latitude: 32.672928° | Longitude: -79.983824° |
| 5. Latitude: 32.672283° | Longitude: -79.983923° |
| 6. Latitude: 32.672094° | Longitude: -79.980617° |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated historic district is shown as the heavy red line marked on the accompanying Charleston County GIS map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries roughly follow the boundaries of four tax parcels: 3301000025, 3301000026, 3301000027, and 3301000065. This area contains the historic resources that historically defined Mosquito Beach from 1953 to 1970.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Brittany V. Lavelle Tulla
organization: BVL Historic Preservation Research
street & number: 2115 Oyster Reef Lane
city or town: Mount Pleasant state: SC zip code: 29466
e-mail BRITTANY@BVLHistoricPreservationResearch.com
telephone: (732) 996-7745
date: April 2019

Mosquito Beach Historic District
Name of Property

Charleston Co., SC
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mosquito Beach Historic District

City or Vicinity: James Island

County: Charleston

State: South Carolina

Photographer: Brittany Lavelle Tulla; Corie Hipp; Historic Charleston Foundation

Date Photographed: September 2017; September 2018; March 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston Co., SC

Name of Property

County and State

- 1 of 53: Entrance to Mosquito Beach from Sol Legare Road, looking west, photo taken by Historic Charleston Foundation, September 2017
- 2 of 53: Mosquito Beach Road, looking south, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018
- 3 of 53: Looking north at Sol Legare Road from Mosquito Beach Road, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018
- 4 of 53: Looking northeast towards Sol Legare Road and the entrance to Mosquito Beach, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018
- 5 of 53: Looking west at the Lafayette property (empty lot) from the bend in Mosquito Beach Road, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018
- 6 of 53: Looking west along Mosquito Beach Road, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018.
- 7 of 53: View looking east towards the entrance of Mosquito Beach from the Lafayette estate, photo taken by author September 2018
- 8 of 53: View looking southeast towards marsh from Lafayette estate, photo taken by author September 2018
- 9 of 53: View looking northeast along Mosquito Beach Road towards the Lafayette estate and the former location of Chavis' store, photo taken from approx. former location of c. 1953 Harborview Club, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 10 of 53: 10 View looking north from the approx. former location of the c. 1963 Boardwalk Club, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 11 of 53: View looking northeast along Mosquito Beach Road, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 12 of 53: View looking northwest along Mosquito Beach Road from the approx. former location of the c. 1953 Harborview Club, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 13 of 53: View looking northeast along Mosquito Beach Road from Island Breeze, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 14 of 53: View looking north, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 15 of 53: View looking north at Suga Shack, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 16 of 53: View looking northeast along Mosquito Beach Road from Suga Shack, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 17 of 53: Ruins of the Singleton pavilion, looking southwest over King Flats Creek, photo taken by author September 2018
- 18 of 53: Ruins of the Harborview Club (background) and the Boardwalk Club (foreground) at low tide, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2018
- 19 of 53: Ruins of the c. 1953 Harborview Club, looking south over King Flats Creek, photo taken by author September 2018
- 20 of 53: Boardwalk Club ruins at high tide, looking southwest, photo by Corie Hipp
- 21 of 53: Ruins of c. 1963 Boardwalk Club, looking southwest over King Flats Creek, photo taken by author August 2018
- 22 of 53: South (primary) facade of the Pine Tree Hotel, photo taken by author September 2018
- 23 of 53: 23 East elevation of the Pine Tree Hotel, photo taken by author September 2018
- 24 of 53: Rear elevation of the Pine Tree Hotel, photo taken by author September 2018
- 25 of 53: West elevation of the Pine Tree Hotel, photo taken by author September 2018
- 26 of 53: South elevation of Island Breeze, photo taken by author August 2018
- 27 of 53: East elevation of Island Breeze, photo taken by author March 2019
- 28 of 53: North (rear) elevation of Island Breeze, photo taken in 2015 by Corie Hipp

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston Co., SC

Name of Property

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- 29 of 53: Southwest corner of Island Breeze, looking northeast, photo taken by author March 2019
- 30 of 53: North elevation of D&F's, photo taken August 2018 by author
- 31 of 53: North elevation of D&F's, looking northeast, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 32 of 53: East elevation of D&F's, photo taken August 2018 by author
- 33 of 53: East elevation detail of D&F's, looking northwest, photo taken August 2018 by author
- 34 of 53: West elevation of D&F's, looking northeast, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 35 of 53: South (primary) elevation of the Suga Shack, photo taken by author August 2018
- 36 of 53: West elevation of the Suga Shack (fenestration open), photo taken by author August 2018
- 37 of 53: West elevation of the Suga Shack (fenestration closed), photo taken by author August 2018
- 38 of 53: Detail of west elevation of the Suga Shack, photo taken by author August 2018
- 39 of 53: North elevation of the Suga Shack, photo taken by author August 2018
- 40 of 53: View looking north along first floor corridor of the Pine Tree Hotel, photo taken by Corie Hipp, 2015
- 41 of 53: South (front) enclosed porch looking west, photo by author August 2018
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- 43 of 53: View looking south towards Mosquito Beach Road from the enclosed porch of Island Breeze, photo taken author August 2018
- 44 of 53: Front room of Island Breeze, looking northwest towards bar and kitchen, photo taken by Historic Charleston Foundation, August 2018
- 45 of 53: Interior southwest corner of Island Breeze, photo taken by author March 2019
- 46 of 53: Rear interior northwest corner of Island Breeze, photo taken by author March 2019
- 47 of 53: Interior front room of D&F's, looking northwest, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 48 of 53: Interior front room of D&F's, looking northeast, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 49 of 53: Interior front bar of D&F's, looking south, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 50 of 53: Interior main room of D&F's, looking northwest, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 51 of 53: Interior main room of D&F's, looking east at kitchen, photo taken March 2019 by author
- 52 of 53: Rear of D&F's interior, looking southwest (towards front), photo taken August 2018 by author
- 53 of 53: Interior of Suga Shack, view looking at eastern wall, photo taken by author September 2018

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Figure 2: 1989 photograph of Boardwalk Club Pavilion (before Hurricane Hugo), courtesy of William "Cubby" Wilder

Figure 3: "A crowd of negro oyster shuckers," Bluffton Varn & Platt Canning Co., 1913, Lewis Wickes Hine, Library of Congress

Figure 4: "Housing conditions of white workers in Varn & Platt Canning Co.," Bluffton, SC, 1913, Lewis Wickes Hine, Library of Congress

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston Co., SC

Name of Property

County and State

Figure 5: "Housing conditions of white workers in Varn & Platt Canning Co.," Bluffton, SC, 1913, Lewis Wickes Hine, Library of Congress

Figure 6: "One of the smallest negro oyster shuckers that I found on the Atlantic Coast," Bluffton Varn & Platt Canning Co., 1913, Lewis Wickes Hine, Library of Congress

Figure 7: 1939 aerial of Mosquito Beach, James Island, University of South Carolina digital collection

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Figure 10: Laura Wilder, private collection

Figure 11: 1954 aerial of Mosquito Beach, James Island, University of South Carolina digital collection

Figure 12: c.1953 photograph of Harborview Club, private collection

Figure 13: 1958 plat, Plat Book L, Page 113, Charleston County Register of Deeds

Figure 14: undated, Post & Courier, Charleston, SC

Figure 15: detail of Budweiser promotional t-shirt for Mosquito Beach, private collection

Figure 16: 1963 aerial of Mosquito Beach, James Island, University of South Carolina digital collection

Figure 17: Photograph of Bob Nichols, 13 August 1993, Post & Courier, Charleston, SC.

Figure 18: 1965 Plat of Mosquito Beach, Charleston County Public Works Department

Figure 19: 1970s photograph of a man in the kitchen of the Lake House Club, private collection of Robert Wilder Cook

Figure 20: 1970s photograph of the front façade of the Lake House Club, private collection of Robert Wilder Cook

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Figure 22: c.1940 photograph of James Island near Mosquito Beach, A History of James Island by Eugene Frazier, Sr.

Figure 23: 1963 advertisement, from the collection of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Charleston, SC

Figure 24: "Sit-ins and Boycotts of the 1960s," Civil Rights Photography Folder, from the collection the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Charleston, SC

Figure 25: 1963 photograph, Civil Rights Photography Folder, from the collection the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Charleston, SC

Figure 26: 1825 Mill Atlas of South Carolina, University of South Carolina digital collection

Figure 27: 1863, Map of Charleston and its Defenses, (w/ approx. location of Mosquito Beach), Library of Congress

Figure 28: undated photograph of James Lafayette on his Sol Legare Island farm (exact location unknown), A History of James Island, Eugene Frazier, Sr.

Figure 29: 1984 plat of Mosquito Beach and surrounding property, private collection of William "Cubby" Wilder

Figure 30: July 1989 photograph (before Hurricane Hugo) of the Boardwalk Club, "James Island and Johns Island Historical Survey," South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC

Mosquito Beach Historic District
Name of Property

Charleston Co., SC
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Figure 31: 1989 interior photograph of damage at the Boardwalk Club after Hurricane Hugo, private collection of William “Cubby” Wilder

Figure 32: 1989 interior photograph of damage around bar at the Boardwalk Club after Hurricane Hugo, private collection of William “Cubby” Wilder

Figure 33: 1989 interior photograph of the Boardwalk Club after Hurricane Hugo, private collection of William “Cubby” Wilder

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

SEE T.

2.0 AC.(C) HIGH
0.7 AC.(C) MARSH

R

25

300 S

LEGARE

ROAD

Nelson Left estate

578 S



2.1 AC.(C)
MARSH

305 S

26

BEACH

167



1.2 AC.(C)
HIGH

Andrew Jackson Wilder

325 S

330

545 S
210 S



1.9 AC.(C)
MARSH

MOSQUITO

CR

C

C

27

John Sawyer estate

330

450 S

968

70

288

SOL

165

70

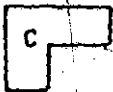


100'

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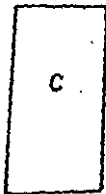
BEACH ROAD

167



Nelson

Lot



12 AC (C)
HIGH

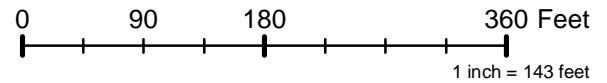
Mosquito
Beach
Historic
District

Sketch Map:
Inventory of
Resources





Charleston County SC



Note: The Charleston County makes every effort possible to produce the most accurate information. The layers contained in the map service are for information purposes only. The Charleston County makes no warranty, express or implied, nor any guaranty as to the content, sequence, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of any of the information provided. The County explicitly disclaims all representations and warranties. The reader agrees to hold harmless the Charleston County for any cause of action and costs associated with any causes of action which may arise as a consequence of the County providing this information.

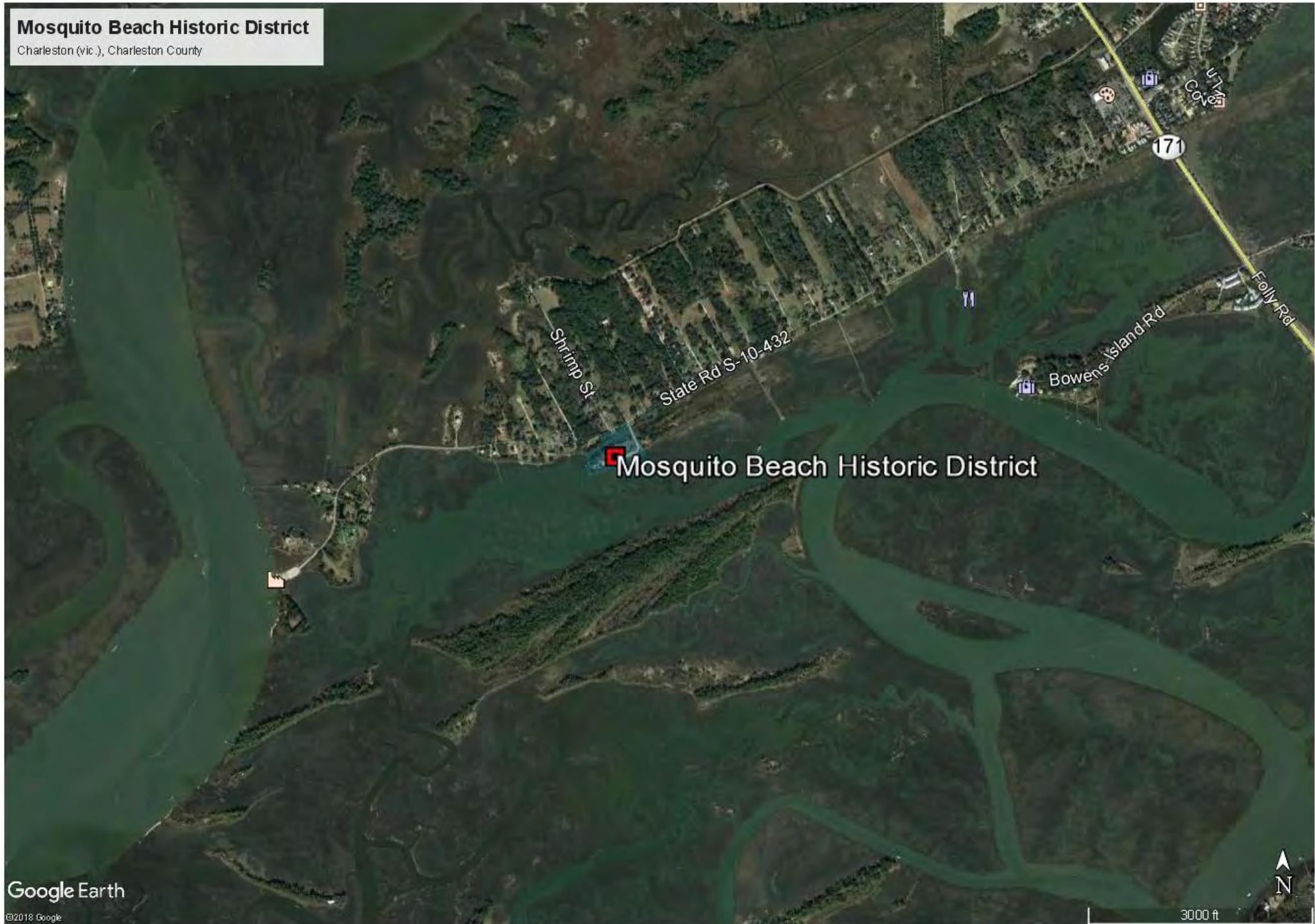
Author: Charleston County SC
Date: 8/2/2019

Mosquito Beach Historic District
Charleston (vic.), Charleston County



Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston (vic.), Charleston County



Google Earth

©2018 Google

3000 ft

Mosquito Beach Historic District

Charleston (vic.), Charleston County











SOL LEGAR

MOSQUITO BEACH RD



















ISLAND BREEZE

OPEN
MONDAY
THROUGH
SUNDAY





















NO
TRESPASSING





PROPERTY OF
JIPSS

PROPERTY OF
JIPSS

PROPERTY OF
JIPSS

PROPERTY OF
JIPSS

NO TRASH
NO BULKY
STOP

BSR 914345
2017 11/08

PROPERTY OF
JIPSS



ISLAND BREEZE
2225

WED-SUN
PM
OPEN

NO
PARKING



NO
PARKING
ANYTIME


ISLAND BREEZE
Restaurant & LOUNGE







DEF

125



DEF









1229

GRAND

TR



SSHACK











OPEN
BUD
LIGHT

Margarita
ULTRA
SUMMER FROZEN DRINKS
Margarita
Strawberry Daiquiri
Pina Colada
MAMA'S MAMA
BUD LIGHT BEER



ISLAND BREEZE
RESTAURANT
&
ENTERTAINMENT
COMING
SOON!
FOOD TRUCK
SUNDAY'S

**BUD
LIGHT**



24 HOUR SURVEILLANCE CAMERA



FROM
**SAND
BARS**
TO
BEACH

OXTRIL \$15.00
JERK
CHICKEN - \$11.00
JERK
PORK - \$10.00
SHRIMP - \$10.00
OYSTER - \$10.00
FISH - \$8.00
JAMAICAN
BEEF PATTY - \$3.00













Budwe
LIG

NO
SMOKING










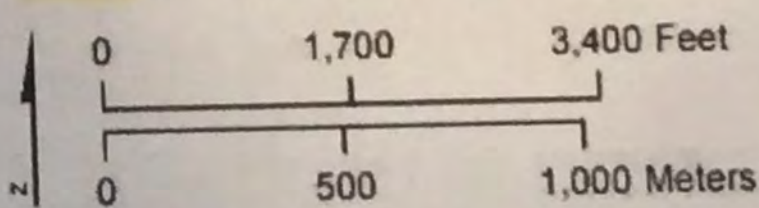






Sol Legare

 Community Parcels





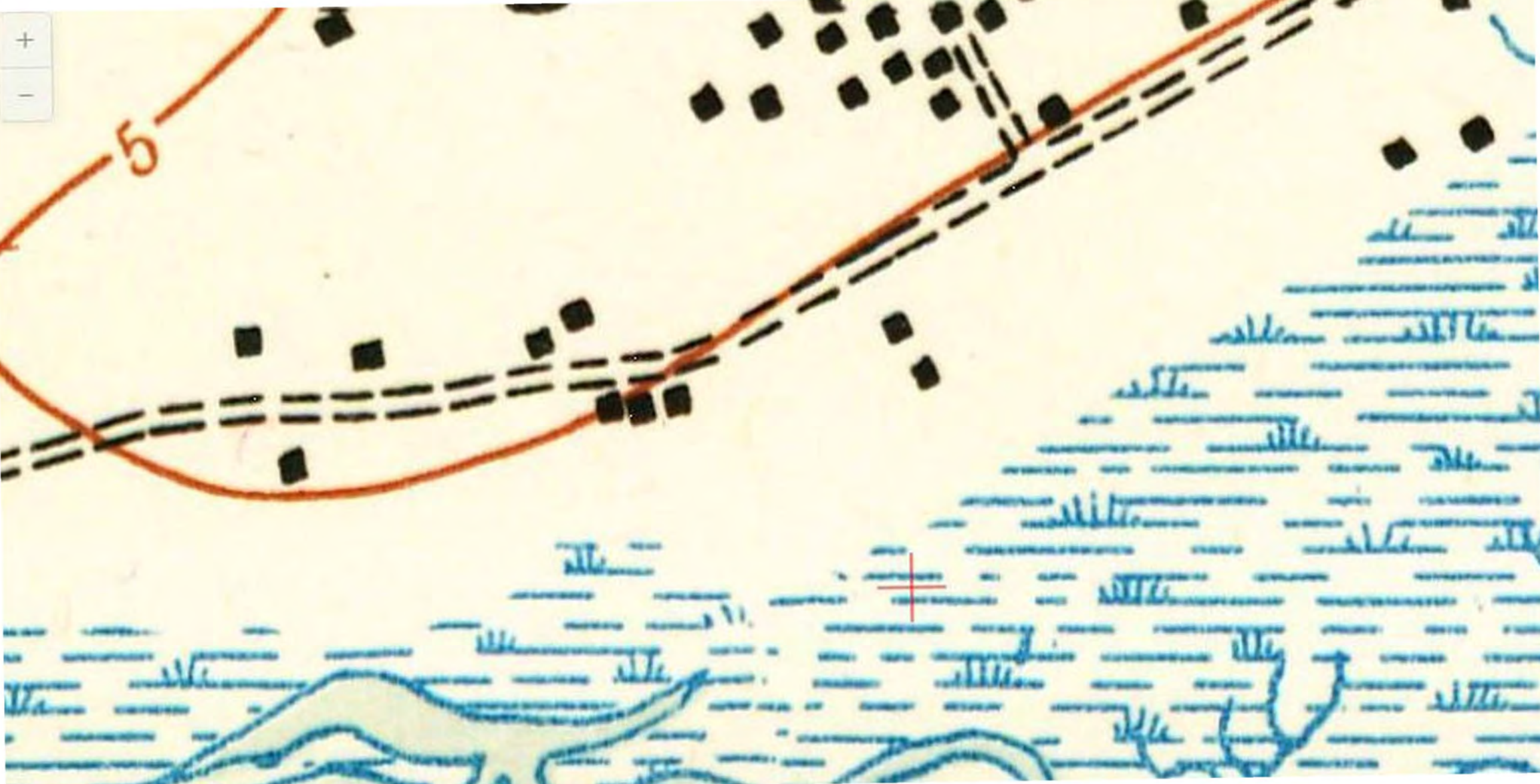








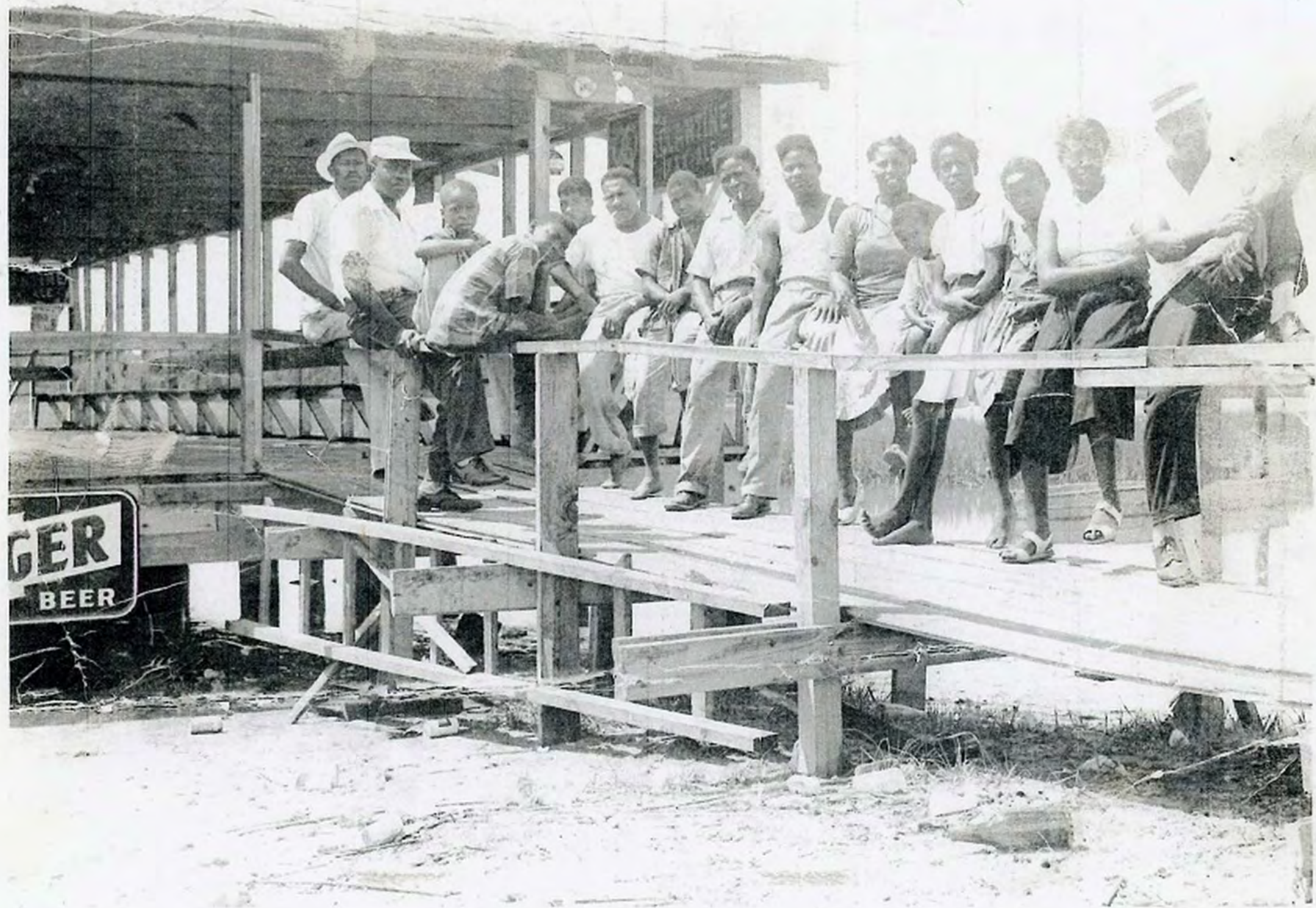




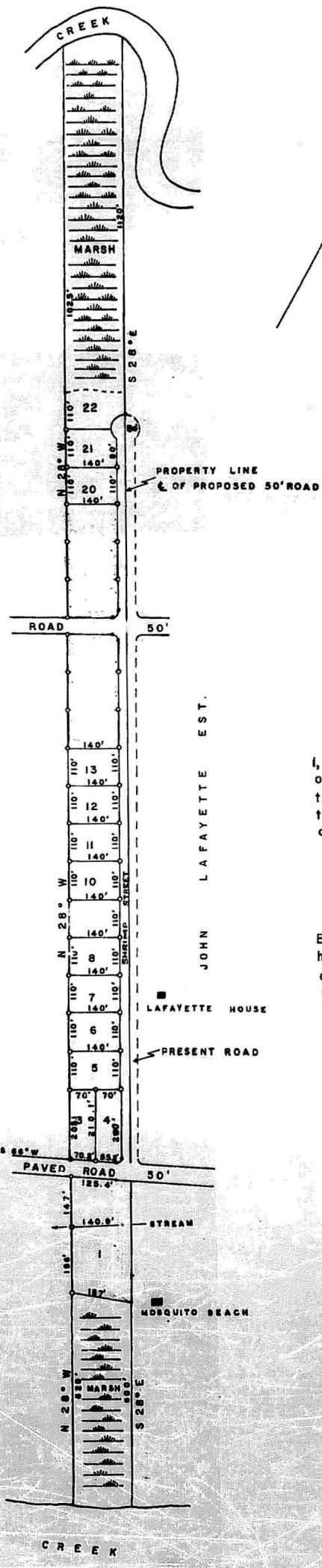








Charleston, South Carolina
 Office of Registrar General
 1208 Old Exchange Building
 115, East Trade Street
 Charleston, S.C.
 Registered and Licensed
 10/22/27 H. M. Baker
 William H. Mikell
 Registrar General
 3/10/58



I, Tommy E. Ayers, a Registered Surveyor of the State of South Carolina, hereby certify that I have checked the survey shown on this plat, that said plat shows the true dimensions of said property.

Jan. 9, 1958

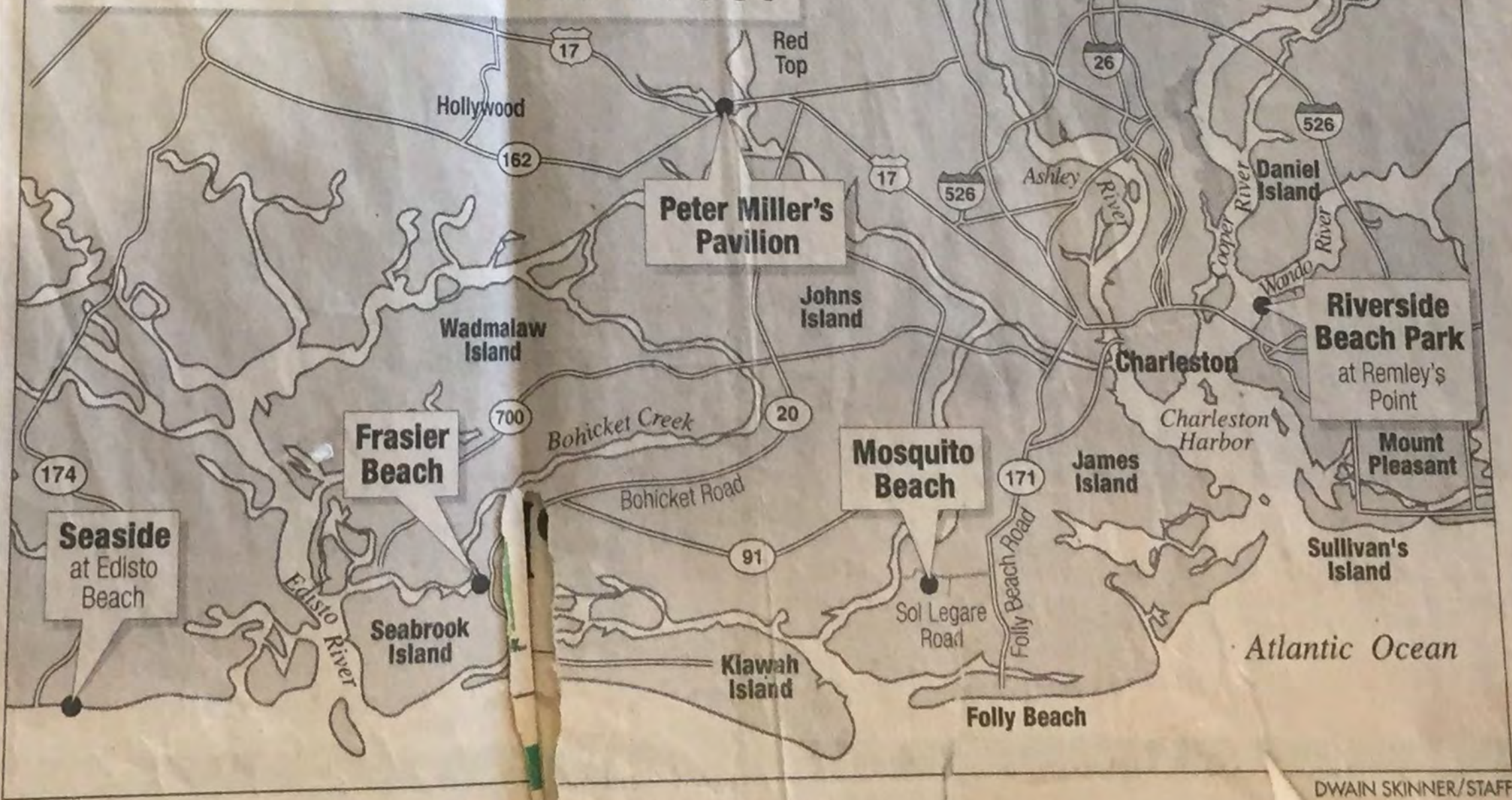
Tommy E. Ayers REG. SURVEYOR NO. 1759

By the recording of this plat, I, William H. Mikell hereby dedicate all streets, rights of way, and other public areas as shown to the use of the public forever.

William H. Mikell

PLAT OF
 TRACT OF LAND SUBDIVIDED FOR
 WILLIAM H. MIKELL
 LOCATED ON SOL LEGARE ISLAND
 CHARLESTON COUNTY SOUTH CAROLINA
 CONTAINING 6.4 AC. HIGH LAND 8.8 AC. MARSH
 SURVEYED BY
 CHECKED & APPROVED BY Tommy E. Ayers REG. L.S.
 SCALE 1" = 200' JAN. 1958

Black beaches in the 1960s









P.I. = 4+33.0
 D = 20' ft.
 R = 100.0'
 L = 175.1'



== PLAT SHOWING ==

A 80' ROAD RIGHT OF WAY, KNOWN AS MOSQUITO BEACH ROAD, SITUATE ON JAMES ISLAND, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA.

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

A. Hearn

2 MARCH '65

MARCH, 1965

SCALE: 1" = 100'

Charleston County Council
 Public Works Department

Robert S. Hill 3/19/65
 Robert S. Hill, Director
 C.E. & L.S. S.G. No. 728

11/10
 2
 4
 char county
 11/2
 49
 44
 65
 44

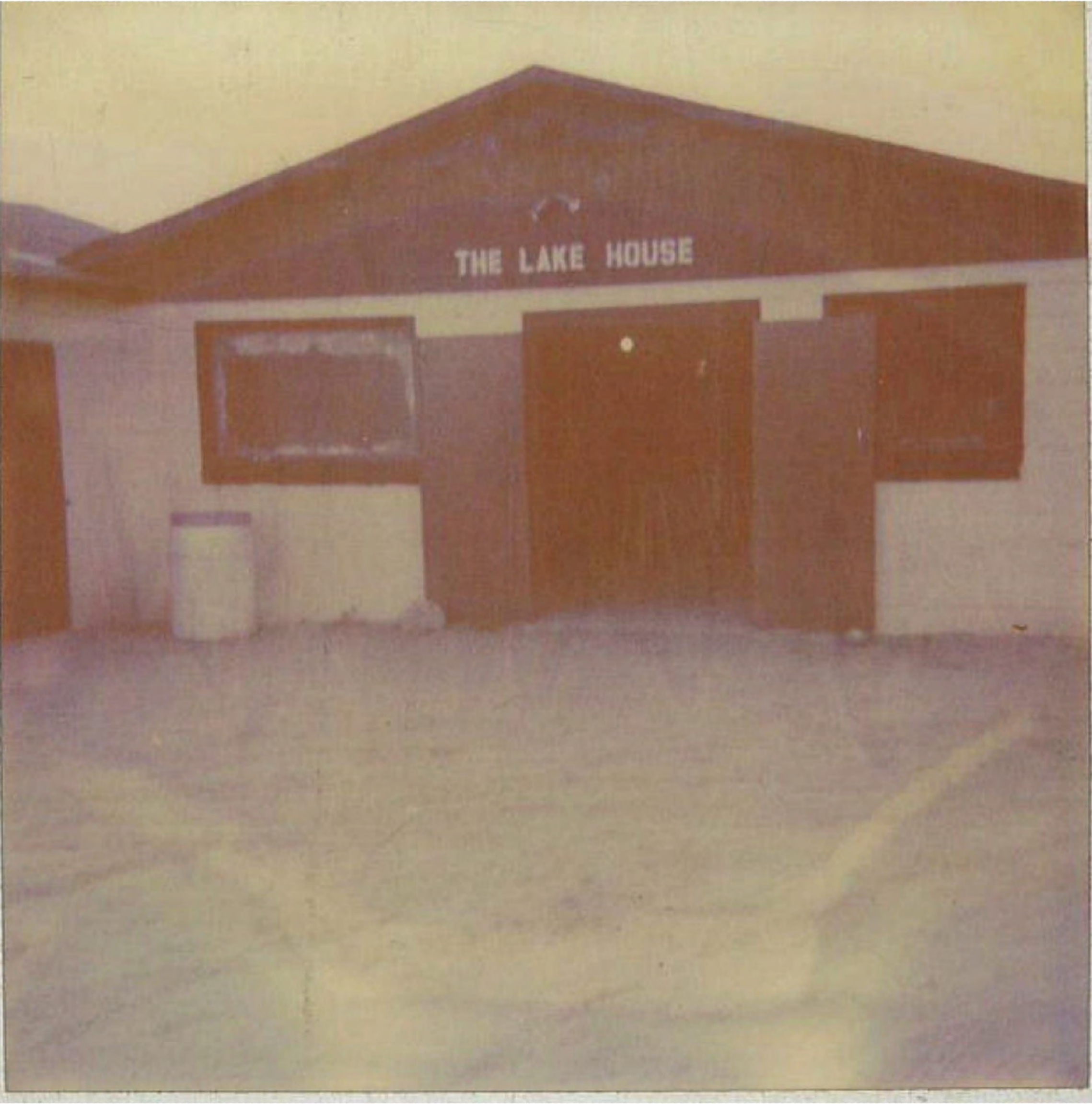




THE LACE HOUSE

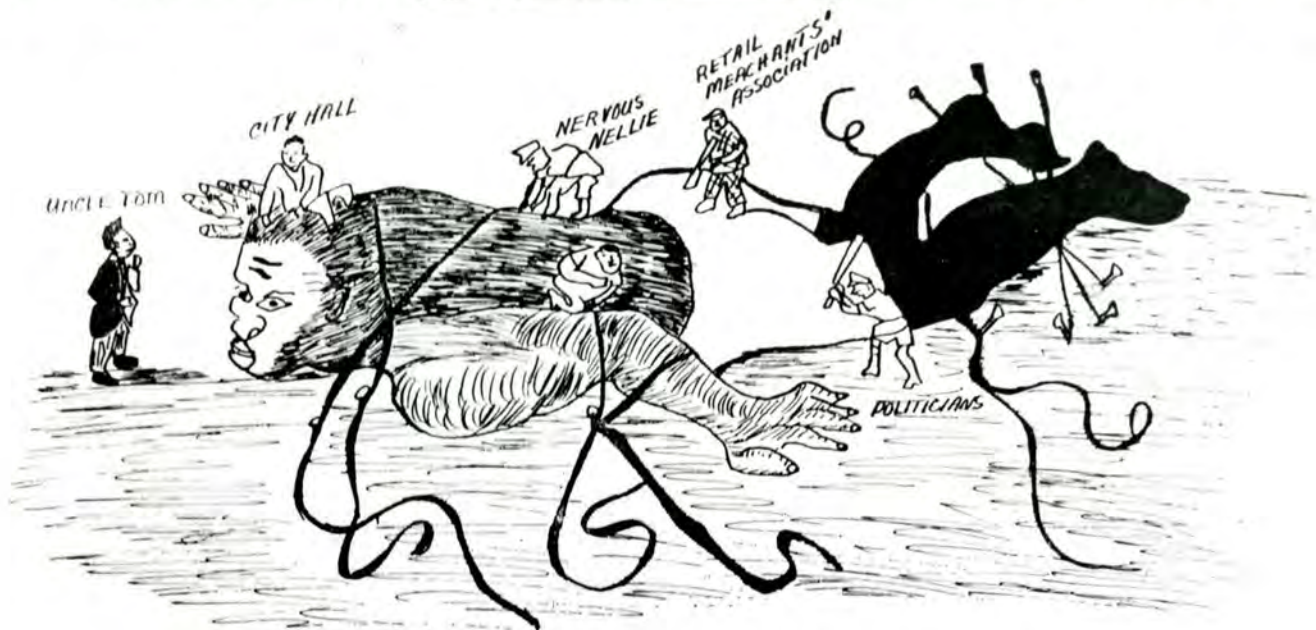
THE LACE HOUSE

THE LAKE HOUSE





THE EMERGENCE OF THE CHARLESTON NEGRO



I LAY IN GREAT UNEASINESS AT
LENGTH STRUGGLING TO GET LOOSE.

TO HELP ME!

**DON'T BUY GOODS OR SPEND YOUR
MONEY ANYWHERE WHERE THERE IS A SIGN
WHITE-COLORED!**

**DON'T BUY WHERE YOU CAN'T EAT,
CAN'T WORK IN THE OFFICE OR BE A CLERK!**

**DON'T BUY A CAR WHERE THERE IS A
SIGN FOR WHITE OR COLORED!**

DON'T SEE A MOVIE UPSTAIRS!

**DON'T SIT IN A DOCTOR'S OFFICE
THAT IS SEGREGATED!**

REGISTER AND VOTE!

**MARCH, SIT-IN, STAND-IN, WADE-IN,
KNEEL-IN, WATCH YOUR PUBLIC CONDUCT,
AND ATTEND ALL MASS MEETINGS.**

THE CHARLESTON MOVEMENT





The Charleston Movement: "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" Campaign

Photo shows 1963 de-segregation protest being held on King Street, in front of a targeted "Black List" store.

The Civil Rights era "Charleston Movement" advocated "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work!"

Photograph from the "Black Charleston in Slavery and Freedom" Collection, Avery Research Center.



Rivers

K. Burdon

M. Jenkins

L

A

P.C. Grimball

I. Dawson

Turnbull

Holmes

J. Rivers

S. Rivers

W. Rivers

Ilegore

M. Whaley

E. Whaley

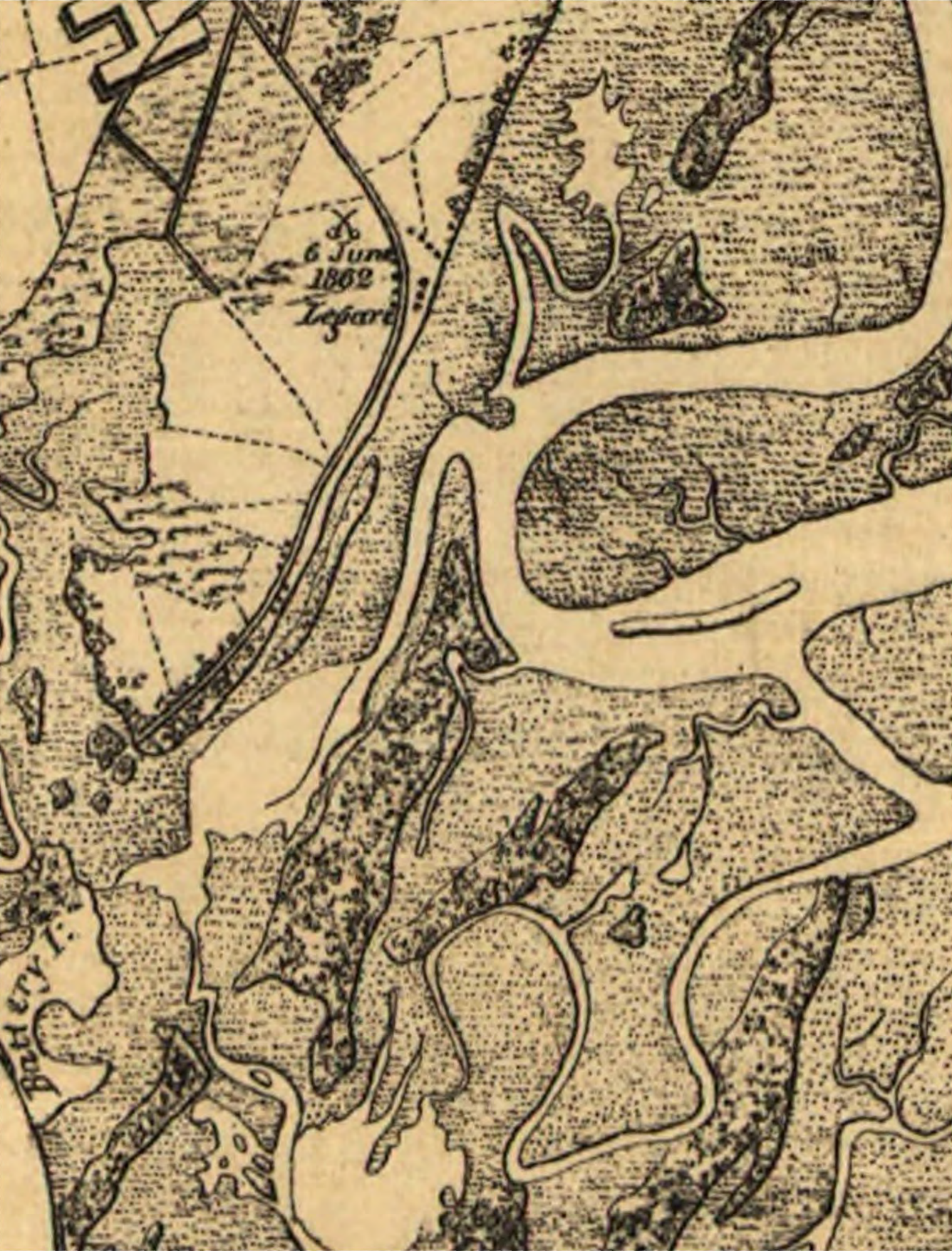
Cole's I.

FOOT HILLS

WAWAH RIV.

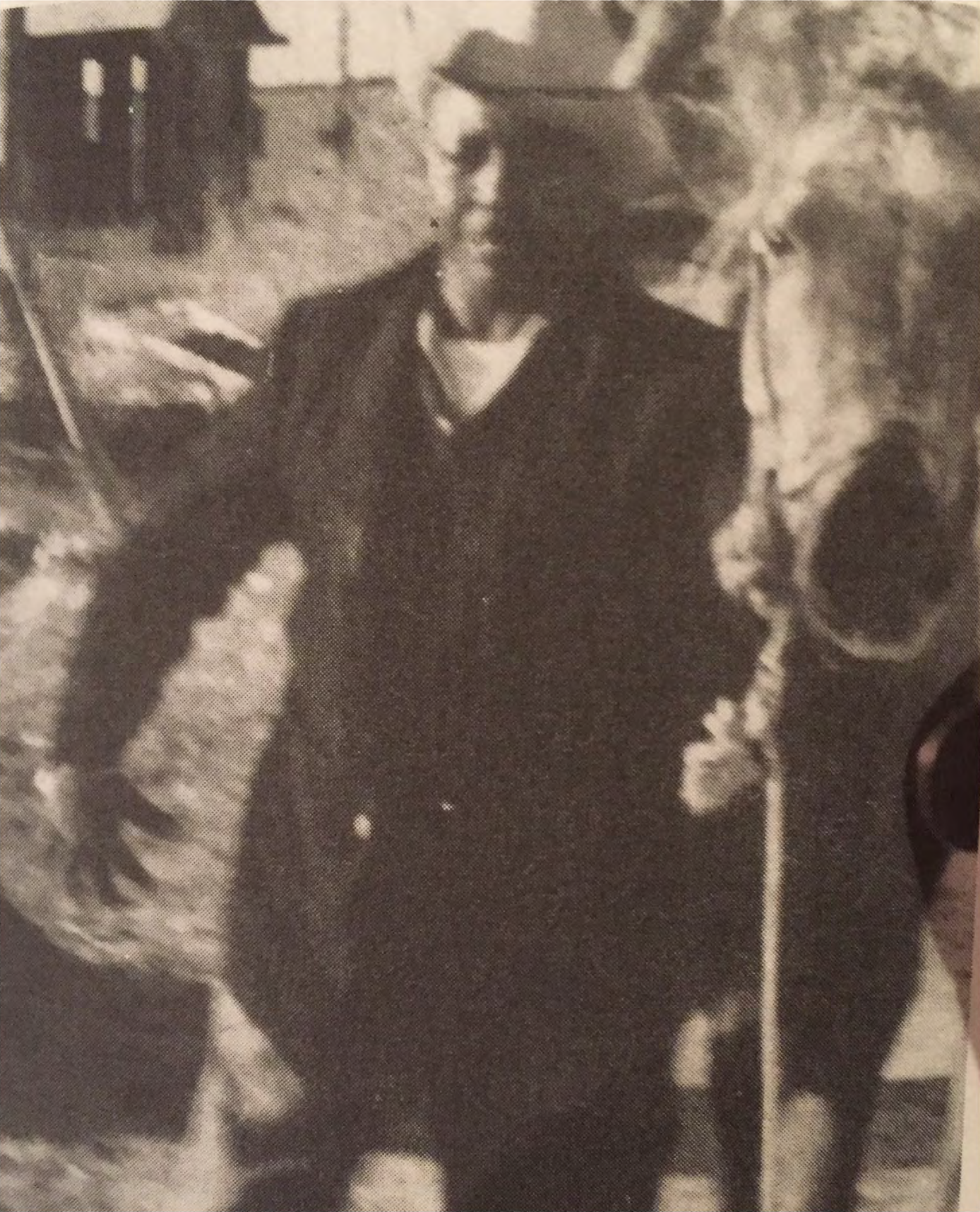
Fort

Church



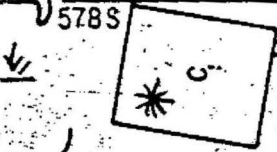
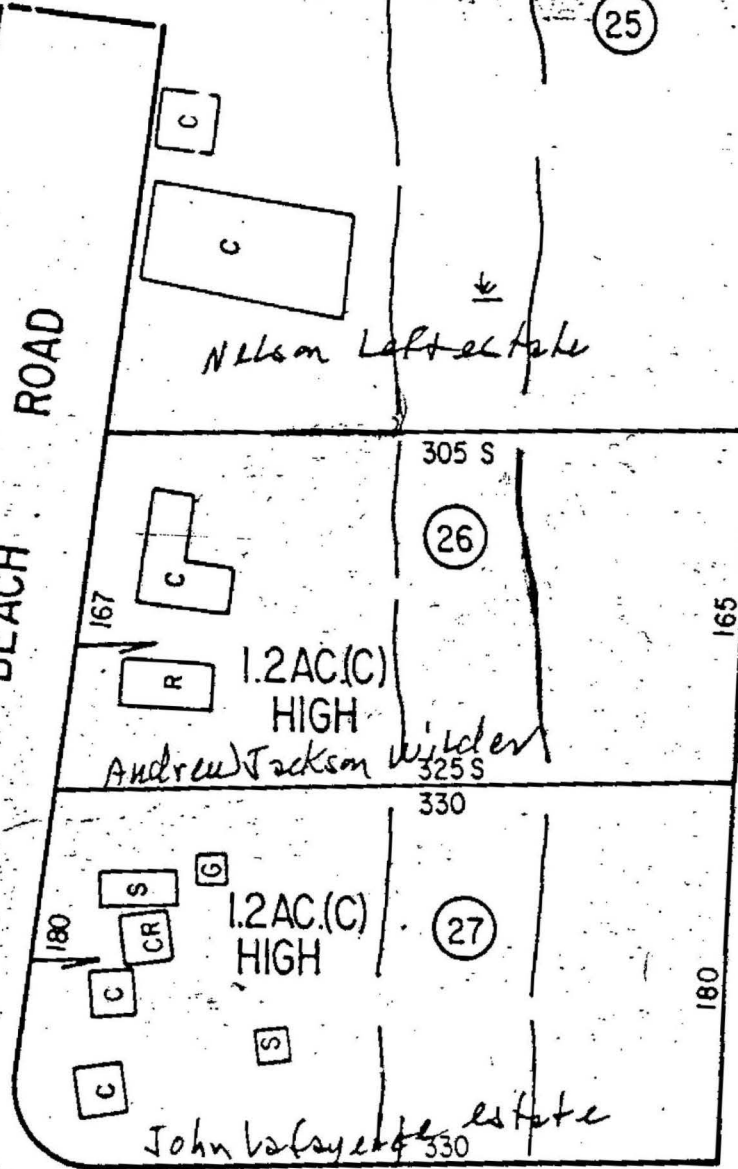
X
6 June
1862
Legare

Battery



SEE T

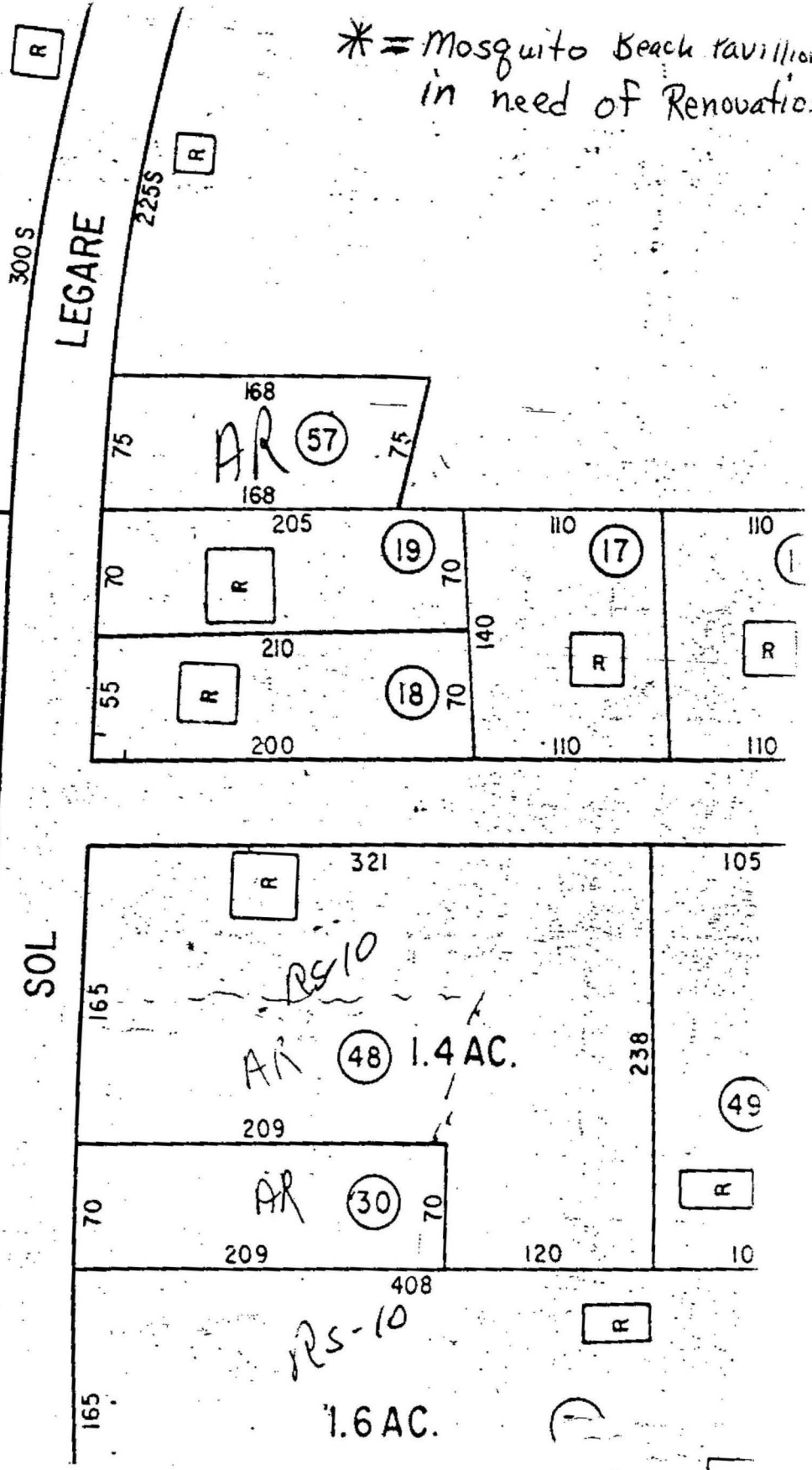
2.0 AC.(C) HIGH
0.7 AC.(C) MARSH



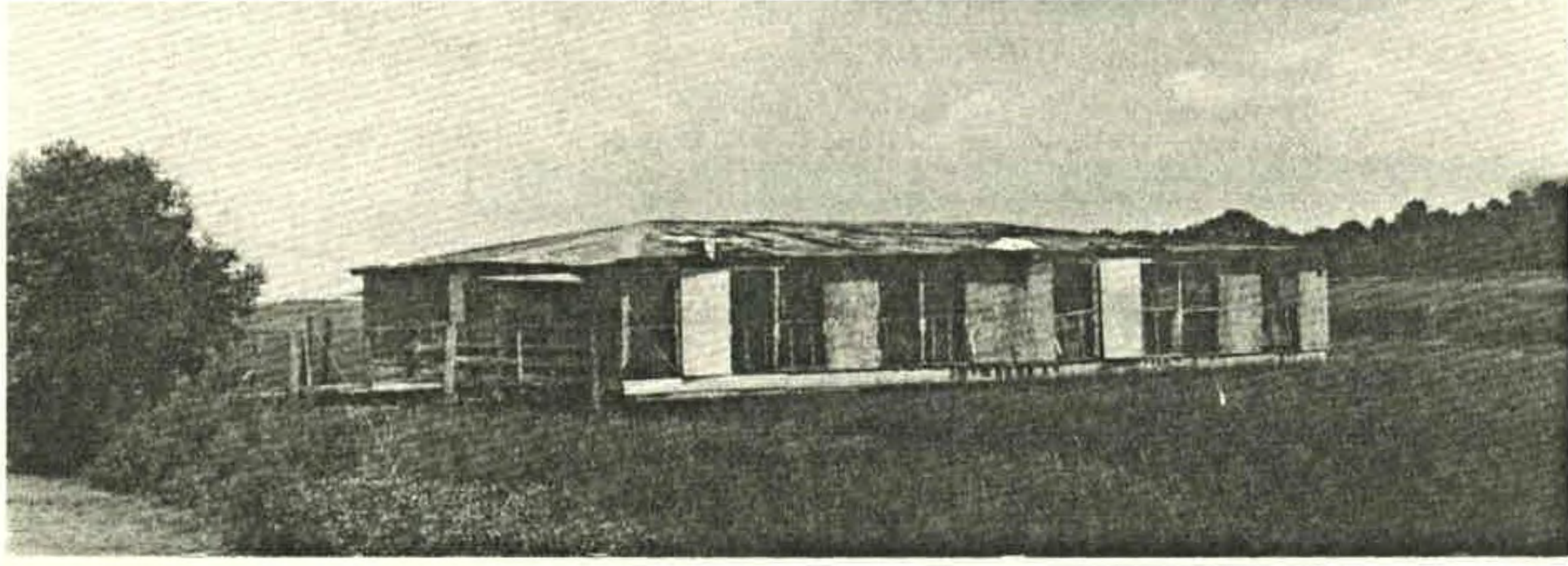
2.1 AC.(C) MARSH

1.9 AC.(C) MARSH

* = Mosquito Beach pavilion
in need of Renovatio.



100'









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Mosquito Beach Historic District

Multiple Name:

State & County: SOUTH CAROLINA, Charleston

Date Received: 8/7/2019 Date of Pending List: 8/28/2019 Date of 16th Day: 9/12/2019 Date of 45th Day: 9/23/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100004409

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 9/23/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary AOS: Entertainment/Recreation; Ethnic Heritage: Black; LOS: local; POS: 1953-1970
Comments:

Recommendation/ NR Criterion: A
Criteria

Reviewer Lisa Deline

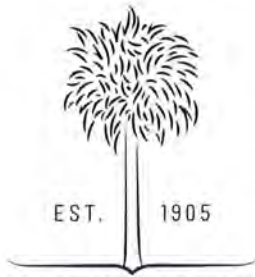
Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239

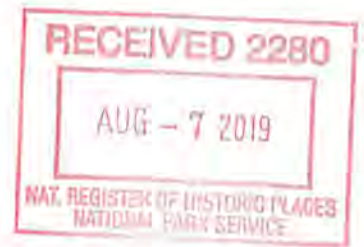
Date 9/23/19

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY



August 5, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for the Mosquito Beach Historic District in Charleston (vicinity), Charleston County, South Carolina. The nomination was approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance. We are now submitting this nomination for formal review by the National Register staff. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Mosquito Beach Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6179, or e-mail me at vharness@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Virginia E. Harness
Architectural Historian and National Register Co-Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, SC 29223