

EMORY SHAW CAMPBELL

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Emory Shaw Campbell was born on the then isolated island of Hilton Head, South Carolina, on October 11, 1941. He grew up observing very carefully the traditions of family and community which were essential to the sustainability of life on the island. His paternal grandparents were school teachers, while his maternal grandparents had little education, but were deeply committed to family and community stability. Emory learned at an early age the importance of education and participation in family and community activities. His parents were school teachers, too.

In 1956, after completing elementary and middle school on isolated Hilton Head Island, Emory attended high school in the nearby town of Bluffton. The newly-constructed bridge connecting the island to the mainland for the first time allowed him and other island children to commute daily via school bus -- as he watched the island change. Leading his class throughout high school, Emory graduated in 1960, Valedictorian of his class, from the then segregated Michael C. Riley High School, in Bluffton, South Carolina.

Emory faced the dilemma of leaving the island and finding a job in the urban northeast, where most high school graduates migrated, or accepting the challenge of his parents and teachers to be the first among his siblings to try college. He chose to pursue a degree at Savannah State College, in Savannah, Georgia. Commuting 40 miles daily to Savannah (forced to hitch-hike at times), he received a well-earned Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in 1965.

Although Biology and Chemistry were his main career focus, Emory spent much of his time during college participating in the Civil Rights Movement. He became convinced that medical science and social science were very closely related. He became more committed to a holistic approach to human and community development. His long-range goal was to help improve the plight of his family, achieve a graduate degree and eventually work with African-Americans in the Sea Islands.

Upon completing his Bachelor degree at Savannah State College, Emory joined the Department of Microbiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, in Boston, Massachusetts. He worked as a research assistant by day, but virtually every evening he spent tutoring high school students in Biology or helping to solve other community problems.

After several years of work in research science and immersing himself in social and cultural activities of African-Americans, Emory began to prepare for his return to the Sea Islands of South Carolina.

Two of his scientific research projects at Harvard were published in scientific journals. But his interest in his cultural heritage and equity in society led him to numerous cultural events and community-preservation meetings after day-long science research. He shared views with various Boston and national leaders and attended lectures -- some on the South African and Sea Islands' cultural heritage, which would later influence his decision to return to the Sea Islands.

An opportunity to attend medical school was presented to Emory in 1968. Instead, he chose to study Environmental Health Engineering at Tufts University, in Medford, Massachusetts. He believed that the urgent need of the indigenous citizens of the South Carolina Sea Islands was the skill to address issues related to preservation of their environment and their cultural heritage. Upon completing his Masters degree in 1971, he returned to the South Carolina Sea Islands to work with the Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services.

His marriage to Emma Joffrion in 1967, also a research scientist with an interest in cultural heritage, produced two children: a son, Ochieng (a name of East African origin meaning *Child of God*), and a daughter, Ayoka (named in honor of the Yoruba people of Nigeria). Ochieng is presently an engineer with NASA, and Ayoka is an attorney.

For nearly ten years, Emory led the Community Services Department at the health center in addressing the issues of the environment -- housing, water and sewage systems, and economic development. His Gullah heritage enabled him to immediately establish an extraordinary relationship with families on all of the islands: Daufuskie Island, Lady's Island, Hilton Head Island, St. Helena Island and others. The people with whom he worked soon gained a better appreciation for their cultural heritage and their environment. He traveled to islands along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, discussing issues related to preservation of the unique Gullah heritage in the face of rapid resort development.

In January of 1980, after a year-long deliberation, Emory accepted the position of Executive Director at Penn Center, on St. Helena Island -- one of the oldest education institutions for African-Americans in the nation. Founded in 1862, when African-Americans had just become refugees of the Civil War, Penn Center was known as Penn School until 1948. It was one of the few places where a high school diploma could be attained in the islands.

Emory immediately began reviving interest in the Center's importance to the heritage of the Gullah people. In 1981, he organized the now famous *Penn Center Heritage Days Celebration*, held every November. It has become one of the best cultural events of the South.

Drawing on his background in environmental science, he revised the family farm land program to include cultural and environmental preservation. He expanded the museum program to include research assistance to writers, photographers and film-makers. Among those whom he has assisted: Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, author of *Daufuskie Island: A Photographic Essay*; Julia Dash, a film-maker of *Daughters of the Dusk*; Patricia Jones-Jackson, author of *When Roots Die*; VertaMae Grosvenor of National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*; and the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon's *Gullah, Gullah Island*.

He has been a frequent contributor to national journals and news features, such as *Historic Preservation* and *Southern Living*. He has also appeared in several national films, including *Where Roots Endure*, a National Geographic Explorer II production; *Family Across the Sea*, a PBS special that documents his visit to Sierra Leone, along with 14 other people of the Gullah heritage, which illustrates the cultural connections; *NBC Today Show*, *60 Minutes*; and a number of area films on the Gullah cultural traditions.

He has been awarded the *Governor's Award for Historical Preservation* (1999) and was recently inducted into the *South Carolina Black Hall of Fame*. In 2000 he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Bank Street College in New York City.

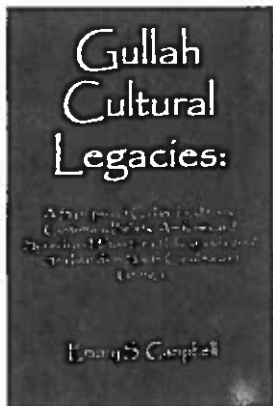
Through his Gullah heritage, community involvement and teaching efforts, Emory S. Campbell continues to influence cultural and ideal environmental continuity in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. His work reflects the pride and self-reliance of one of the most authentic cultures in the nation. And his work is enthusiastically related to the efforts of many who believe that community integrity is paramount to the advancement of humanity.

In January 2002, Mr. Campbell became Executive Director Emeritus of Penn Center, Inc. He maintains his close association with the Center, but his efforts are now focused on Penn's future financial viability through the establishment of Support Groups around the country.

Emory and his family live where he grew up, on Spanish Wells Road on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

Gullah guidebook

Former Penn Center director pens cultural manual



Above: Campbell walks along a dirt road that is reminiscent of the days when the Gullah culture reigned on Hilton Head Island. Left: The cover of Emory Campbell's book, "Gullah Cultural Legacies."

Thanks to Ayoka Campbell of Maryland for bringing us a copy of her father's new book about the Gullah culture on Hilton Head Island and all along the coastline of South Carolina and Georgia.

Emory S. Campbell of Hilton Head has self-published "Gullah Cultural Legacies" through his new Gullah Heritage Consulting Services. That is his new endeavor since retiring as executive director of the Penn Center on St. Helena Island.



The book is a montage of a culture that its quiet, 61-year-old author says has only recently started to be fully appreciated by the Gullah people themselves and by the newcomers who have swamped their native lands.

"For a long time, 'Gullah' and 'Geechie' were pejorative terms," Emory said. "That has changed tremendously."

The book touches on Emory's own shocking, and sometimes hurtful, discovery that his isolated island upbringing was different. He touches on how, as an adult working toward his master's degree at Tufts University in Boston, he learned of his culture's unique characteristics and its deep roots that reach into West Africa.

But the full story of the Campbell family

and the island before the bridge is yet to come in a longer book Emory is working on.

For now, he has put in print answers to a number of questions he frequently has been asked through the years, both as a leader of Gullah tours on the island and as director of the Penn Center for 20 years. The Penn Center formerly was the Penn School, the first school in America for freed slaves.

Within the 60 pages of what Emory calls "a guidebook" are glimpses of the food, language, values, skills, music, neighborhoods, religion and lifestyle of the freed slaves and their descendants who lived on the island in isolation from the Civil War to the mid-1950s.

The book tells the names of the boats that linked the island to the markets in Savannah and Beaufort, and the men who piloted them. It tells how to make Hoppin' John and how the people caught crab and "swimp" for the table and for the market. It defines many Gullah phrases like "Ye Yent," meaning "Is that true?"

The children of Emma and Emory Campbell illustrate how much things have changed in a generation. Ayoka, who wrote the book's introduction, is an attorney



CAMPBELL

in the civil rights division of the Office of General Council in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Her brother, Ochieng, is an engineer in Houston who has been to Russia to work with cosmonauts. Their great-grandmother, Julia Campbell, who is among those the book is dedicated to, was an avid reader, devouring every word in *The Beaufort Gazette* when it arrived days late from the mainland.

"I don't think we dreamed as a child we would be connected to the world, physically, the way we are," Emory said. "We dreamed through books. That was our connection, especially our geography books."

Emory foresees a Gullah culture that will endure, though it will continue to change. He foresees greater attention being paid to the culture. He credits the Heritage Library on Hilton Head for helping the growing number of African-Americans tracing their lineage and turning their eyes to the Sea Islands.

Emory said he wants his book to help the Gullah people and all those interested in the Lowcountry to dig for more knowledge.

"It's a stimulator, I hope, to thought about the culture," Emory said. "I hope it will motivate people to dig deeper. Hopefully, they will be interested enough to ask more questions. We talk about after

If you go

Book signings

- Nov. 23: Port Royal Bookstore, 11 a.m. to noon.
- Nov. 30: De Gullah Creations at The Mall at Shelter Cove, 2 p.m.

Special lecture

- Dec. 5: The Coastal Discovery Museum, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Book available at:

- Coastal Discovery Museum.
- Port Royal Bookstore.
- The Gullah Flea Market.
- De Gullah Creations at The Mall at Shelter Cove.
- The Penn Center.

the bridge and before the bridge. I hope they ask more: What happened after the bridge? How did that unfold over time?

"There could be several, or many, theses that could be developed from the terms or passages in this book."

Sea Foam appears Mondays. Share ideas by fax at 706-3070, or by e-mail at dlauderdale@islandpacket.com. All items and photographs published in *Sea Foam* become the property of *The Island Packet*.

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SECTION

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2002
THE ISLAND PACKET

Advertisement

Islander to receive education award

BY ERIN WALSH
THE ISLAND PACKET

Native islander Emory Campbell will be honored later this year for his work to preserve the Gullah culture with an award jointly sponsored by the National Education Association and the Center for the Study of African-American Life and History.

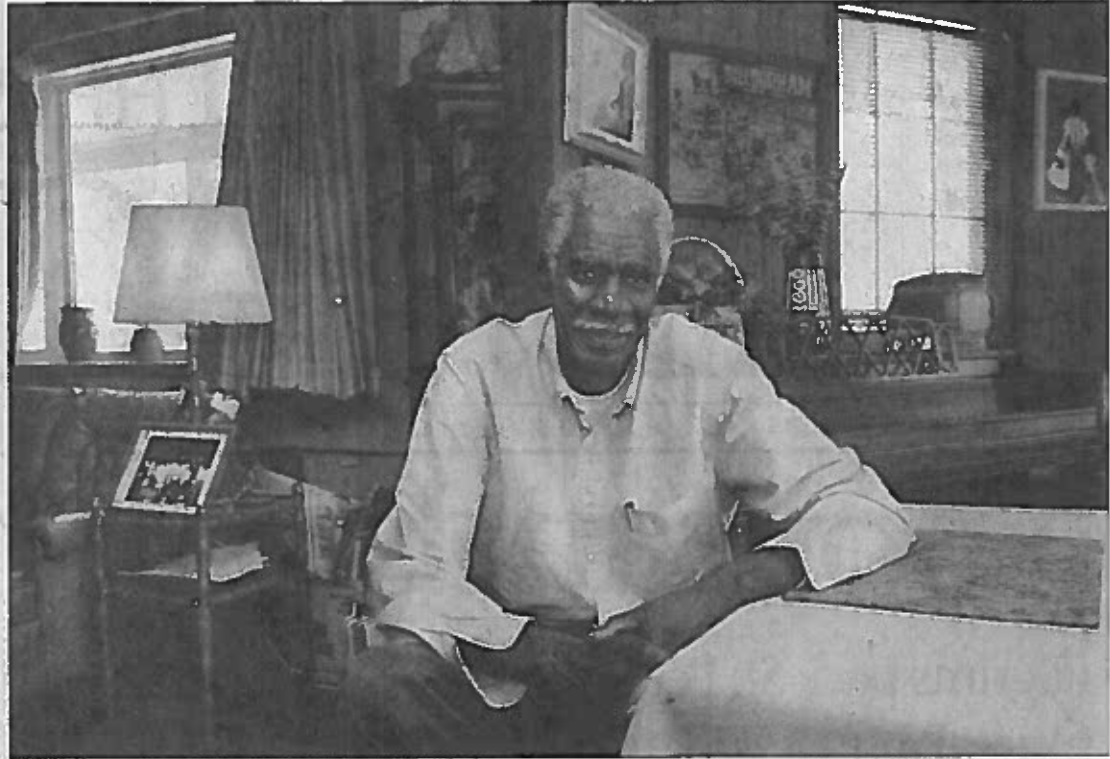
Campbell, the former executive director of Penn Center on St. Helena Island, will receive the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award at the association's annual human and civil rights dinner July 2 in Los Angeles, said Michelle Green, a writer with the association's human and civil rights department.

Every year, the group gives out 14 awards in different categories to honor education heroes, Green said. The Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award goes to individuals who demonstrate leadership and creativity in honoring Black History Month, further understanding of black heritage and make positive changes in a local community.

Green said Campbell was nominated for the award because of his work at Penn Center to preserve Gullah, the language, lifestyle and culture of a people with roots in Africa and the Southern Sea Island plantations.

The center was the site of the first school in the South for former slaves and later became an industrial and agricultural school for black men before desegregation of public schools. Today, the center has developed into a Mecca for continuing education, adult literacy programs, early childhood development, as well as cultural preservation.

"I think this award places the Gullah culture in the sphere of the academic community through the National Education



Jay Karr/The Island Packet

Native Islander Emory Campbell is the recipient of the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award for his lifelong work to promote the area's Gullah culture. From 1980 to 2002, Campbell served as executive director of Penn Center, working to preserve the language, lifestyle and culture of the Gullah people.

Association," said Campbell, who served as Penn Center's executive director from 1980 to 2002. "We are hoping it will promote Gullah culture through

are in danger of dying off.

"If those lessons are reinforced in the classroom, I think we will see an improvement in our current family life," he said.

"We are hoping (the award) will promote Gullah culture through the teachings to youngsters."

— Emory Campbell, Carter G. Woodson Award recipient

the teachings to youngsters, and, by doing that, we are hoping it will increase the visibility of the Gullah culture as it is today."

The 63-year-old Campbell said that some aspects of the Gullah culture, such as its unique dialect and the reverence of family elders,

Campbell said he was inspired to become an educator because his grandparents were among the first teachers on Hilton Head Island. His close-knit Gullah upbringing also instilled in him the goal of improving whatever skills he possessed.

Today, Campbell is the founder and main consultant of Gullah Heritage Consulting Services, which provides training, consulting and lectures on the history and preservation of the Gullah culture. He also is a tour guide for the native islander tour company, Gullah Heritage Trail Tour.

At the black-tie awards dinner in July, Green said, Campbell will receive a video profile produced by the National Education Association and a trophy.

In addition to the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award, Campbell received the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation and was inducted into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame in 1999.

Contact Erin Walsh at 706-8143 or ewalsh@islandpacket.com.



EMORY CAMPBELL

Coming Home

Article by Paul deVere

Photography by Anne

Artwork provided by
De Gullah Creations

“The military movements connected with the Civil War are well known. But the great mass of American people know but little, and so think less, of that other great event—the greatest in the history of the world—the emancipation of four million human beings held in bondage... A new race was born into freedom...”—*First Days of Amongst the Contrabands*, by Elizabeth Hyde Botume, Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1893

Emory Campbell got the “history bug” in Boston, Massachusetts. But when he was a young boy on Hilton Head Island, history was not part of his curriculum vitae. “I remember my teacher would hike us down to the old fort [Fort Walker] in Port Royal every spring, to that old steam gun mounted down there. He tried to teach us about Civil War history, about the sound,” Campbell recalled. Then he laughed and said, at least for him, the teacher did not succeed.

“I had grown up here in the 1940s and ‘50s and had no idea of the history of the Sea Islands and the importance of them,” Campbell said. On his mother’s side, Campbell’s family goes back five generations on Hilton Head Island. “I was in biology and chemistry, so I didn’t really buckle down to learn about history.” This from the man who, in 2005, would receive the National Education Association’s (NEA) Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award: “In recognition of 30 years as an activist for preserving the Gullah heritage,

protecting the environment, and improving his community’s living conditions,” the NEA statement reads.

But that is getting ahead of the story. In 1965, when Campbell graduated from Savannah State College with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology, he left his history behind, or so he thought. He got a research job in microbiology at the Harvard School of Public Health. Of his journey to the north, he said, “I had thought I wanted to accomplish a few things.”

He spent about 6 years in Boston to get those things accomplished. He wanted to help his parents build a house. The house was built. He had a brother who was a paraplegic. “I had seen all this miracle work that doctors had done around Children’s Hospital where I worked during the summer while going to college. I was watching these kids get better. I thought it would be nice if I could bring my brother up there, and I did,” Campbell said.

He also wanted an advanced degree. Tufts University, in Boston, gave him a fellowship. He earned a master’s degree in a very new field, environmental engineering. “I was one of the first Earth Day people,” Campbell said with a smile. The first Earth Day was in 1970, the same year Campbell got his master’s.

Boston also offered Campbell the opportunity to feed his seemingly unquenchable curiosity. “I loved to hear lectures. Harvard would have a lecture every night. My wife and I, even when

we were dating, on weekends, would go to museums, lectures. We heard lectures on African history, on African-American history. One weekend we went to the Charles Street Meeting House. There was an exhibit on the Sea Islands of South Carolina,” Campbell said. The Charles Street Meeting House was a citadel for Northern abolitionists prior to the Civil War.

“I began to think to myself, ‘These islands are really important.’ I started doing some research. I went to libraries and looked for books on the Sea Islands. One of the books that really caught my attention was *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*. It piqued my interest. From then on, I got very interested in the history of the Sea Islands. That’s when I started planning my way back home,” Campbell said.

What Campbell began “discovering” was what was really important to him, was a culture and heritage that began to develop when the first West African slaves landed on the shores of South Carolina in the 1700s. In a sense, what developed was a kind of parallel universe. Slaves who ended up on the plantations of the Sea Islands, from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Jacksonville, Florida, were totally isolated from the mainland, but not from each other. This isolation and common heritage created a unique culture on these islands. That culture was Gullah. And it was to that culture Campbell was born and raised.

Campbell knew he was headed back to the Lowcountry, he just didn’t know what

he was going to do there. "Sure enough, about that time, Tom Barnwell and others had started a rural health center (Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services). Tom called me and said, 'We need somebody down here to deal with the environment at the health center,'" Campbell said. He was going home—to a job.

With his growing interest in his own roots and desire to help others, the health center was perfect. "It allowed me to go into communities and deal with water, sewage, and housing. It allowed me then to really recapture and reconnect to the culture, visiting all those far away islands," Campbell said.

The needs of the Lowcountry's poor, Campbell knew, went well beyond health services. "We were stretching healthcare. We built the general store on Daufuskie Island as a cooperative. We were dealing with housing, rural development. Folks would tell us, hey, that's not health. We wanted to do something with education because the kids were not doing well in school. We wanted to solve all the problems of poor people on the back of health care," said Campbell. At the time, he was also trying to preserve traditional

Gullah communities that were being threatened by seemingly endless resort development on the Sea Islands, especially Hilton Head.

He had been working in healthcare for ten years when another opportunity arose. Campbell called it a "natural progression" in the way his life was evolving. He accepted the job of executive director of the Penn Center on St. Helena Island. Now a non-profit organization designed to promote and preserve Sea Island history and Gullah culture, it began in 1862 as Penn School, an experimental program to educate Sea Island slaves freed at the beginning of the Civil War. Over the years, it served many functions within the community. In the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King often met there with members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1974, it was designated a National Historic Landmark District.

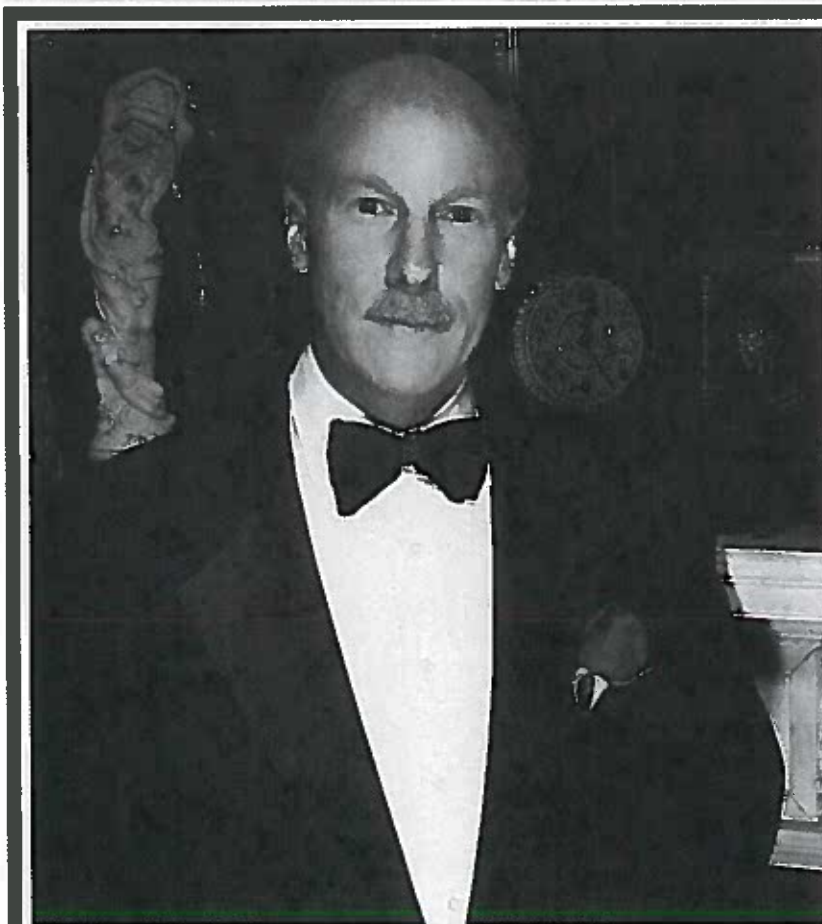
"When that opportunity came about, I said there's my opportunity to do something beyond health. Penn was an independent, free-standing institution. No government guidelines—or funding. So why not go over there and make a go of it, not knowing that I'd be starving," Campbell laughed.

"I always admired the school. My older brothers and sisters went to Penn School. In those days, when there were no bridges, they would go from here on a boat to Savannah. It took about a day to get there. Then they'd get a bus over to St. Helena. They'd stay there 'til Christmas. It was a boarding school. You'd get a letter, four or five days later, saying they'd reached the Penn Center," Campbell remembered.

"I had no money. We had to start off fresh. Folks had warned me about that. But we went, and slowly but surely gathered support—enough to get at least the physical place back and put some programs together, outside of health care, like after school programs and education. We did something with small farms, new crops, the 'you pick' is still going on St. Helena Island. We engaged Clemson University—we would brainstorm with them. We brought in broccoli, strawberries, sweet potatoes. We got the farmers inspired again, at least for a time," said Campbell.

"The first question I had was, 'How do we get people to know and recognize Penn Center and its value?' Nobody really saw it as being a significant place. My wife and I were there one weekend [at the beginning

(story continued on page 31)



THIS JUST IN!

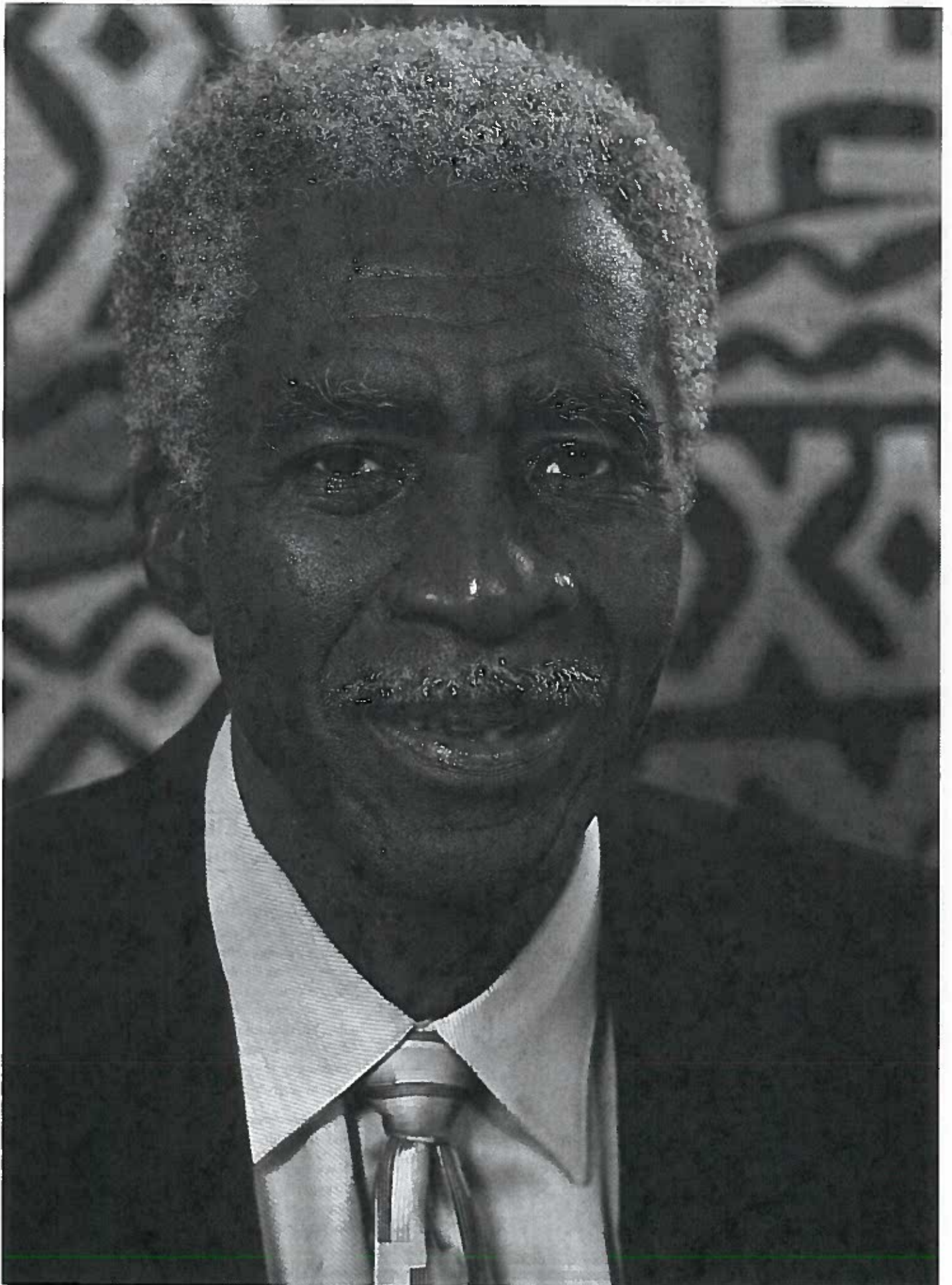


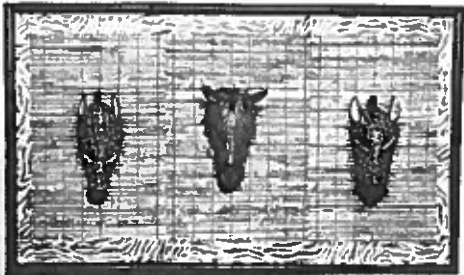
Charming Eligible Bachelor Seeks Lifetime Valentine!

Sea Pines, HHI, February 1, 2009 – Bob Johnston, debonair bachelor seen at well-to-do parties about town is seeking an effervescent companion with whom to share his life and *Bobmore Castle*, his current residence on Hilton Head Island. When asked what was most important in a long-term relationship, Mr. Johnston replied warmly, "I am looking for a sweet, slender and playful lady who is healthy; emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, financially and physically."

Applicants should share Bob's affable personality and lust for life.

If you are a sassy lady interested in meeting Mr. Johnston for future adventures, please email him directly at bjfedfirst@hargray.com. Photographs are most welcome, as you have seen his.





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> **Man/ Woman wooden sculpture** by Quasimah Boston \$18750

> **Drum by Larry Holman** (see De Gullah Creations in Shelter Cove Mall for price)

> **Zebra/ Giraffe/ Jackal wall hanging** by Beverly Ifill \$150

Kuba Cloth

Kuba cloth is just starting to become popular in the United States. Using the leaf of the raffia tree, the Kuba people of the Congo first hand cut, and then weave the strips of leaf to make pieces of fabric, often called raffia cloth. The process of making kuba cloth is extremely time consuming and may take several days to form a simple placemat size piece. The men gather the leaves of the raffia tree and then dye it using mud, indigo or substances from the camwood tree. They then rub the raffia fibers in their hands to soften it and make it easier for weaving. After they've completed the base cloth, the women embroider it. The designs are seldom planned out ahead of time and most of the embroidery is done by memory. The kuba people, who developed this and many other fabrics were very resistant to using European cloth; and for many years seldom used machine made fabrics. When researching this and other cloths that the kuba people developed it is not hard to understand why they resisted the change so much. Each fabric, each pattern, and each design in traditional kuba fabrics has great meaning. On the basis of what a person wore; you could interpret much about them. Social status, age, marital status and a person's character were just a few things a piece of cloth could symbolize.

Source: De Gullah Creations

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of Campbell's tenure] and I asked, 'How do you bring attention to Penn Center; how do you do that?' We thought of a celebration of the culture and the center. That's when we came up with the Heritage Celebration. That's brought a lot of attention over the last 25 years," Campbell said. Today, every second weekend in November, over 15,000 visitors from across the nation make the trip to St. Helena and Penn Center for three days of joyful immersion in the culture, art, and food ways of the Gullah people.

Campbell spent 22 years at Penn Center, revitalizing and helping direct the goals of the organization. One extraordinary project he was involved in was the translation of the Bible into Gullah, a feat accomplished in cooperation with the American Bible Society, and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

In the 1980s, Campbell helped reestablish the family connection between the Gullah people of the Sea Islands with the West African nation of Sierra Leone, where many slaves were imported by the British to coastal South Carolina. In 1988 the center hosted Sierra Leone's president, Joseph Saidu Momoh, for a "Gullah reunion." In 1989, Campbell, along with representatives of the Gullah people visited Sierra Leone. Campbell describes the emotional impact this "homecoming" had on him in his book, *Gullah Cultural Legacies*. The visit was also chronicled in the documentary, "Family Across the Sea," a SCETV production aired in 1990.

During his time at Penn Center, Campbell appeared in the national media on programs like "60 Minutes," "the Today Show," NPR, and PBS. On one PBS show, "NOW," the producers succinctly defined part of Campbell's mission. "Recently, historians, anthropologists, and preservationists have come together to realize that preserving a culture is akin to preserving an ecosystem. There are many interlocking parts to the whole. The Gullah Culture of the Lowcountry is such a system. It has a language, history, economic system and artistic vision found nowhere else. It is indeed, a heritage so rich no price tag can measure its value."

When Campbell retired from Penn Center, that just presented another opportunity for him. He and family members formed Gullah Heritage Consulting Services, which provides various organizations with services, products and programs, about the history, culture and preservation of Gullah heritage. Along with consulting, the Campbell family started Gullah Heritage Trail Tours, a narrated ride through the Gullah communities still identifiable on Hilton Head Island.

As Campbell became Executive Director Emeritus of Penn Center, another one of his "natural progressions" took place. In 2006, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor was designated by Congress. The corridor is a strip of land and Sea Islands that

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extends from Wilmington, NC in the north to Jacksonville, FL in the south. In 2007, the National Park Service named the corridor's first 15 commissioners. Not surprisingly, Campbell was one of the two from South Carolina. In May, 2008, Campbell was selected as chairperson of the group by his fellow commissioners. "Our task around the corridor now is to do an inventory of what is left of the culture that people want to preserve. Hopefully we can come out with a consensus over the next two to three years. We'll take an inventory and come up with a management plan for the corridor," Campbell explained.

What is important to Campbell about the establishment of the corridor is that recognition has finally been given to a way of life he has fought for so long and so hard to preserve. "First of all, it [the Gullah culture] is now recognized. Its uniqueness can now be elevated," Campbell said.

"The environment has always been so important to our culture. And our own environment made it better because we controlled it. I'm glad there are others interested in it, because it helps us to continue the culture, helps us to protect the culture. By that, I mean there are certain things that conflict now with the new development. The culture has always been able to sustain itself because we have consecutiveness among families. We live on the land a certain way," Campbell explained.

"Now, with the new development standards, where you have to have so much setback and roads that must be approved, even though it's your sister or brother living next door, you have to come under the same kind of scrutiny as anybody else. That causes the culture to become disrupted. And I think that if people admire the culture itself, and the traditions, we have a chance of getting more support from outsiders," said Campbell.

"We are always told 'there should be no discrimination.' I sat on the Beaufort County Planning Board for eight years, and that has always been the sticky point. How do you preserve this culture and treat somebody else differently? So now we have to agree on the diversity of cultures. Most governments have not come to terms with that yet. But how do you make policies to address diversity?" Campbell wondered.

That will be one thing the commission will face. "It's a tough road," Campbell admitted. But there was hope in his voice. ②

For more on the Cultural Heritage Corridor, visit: www.nps.gov/guce/

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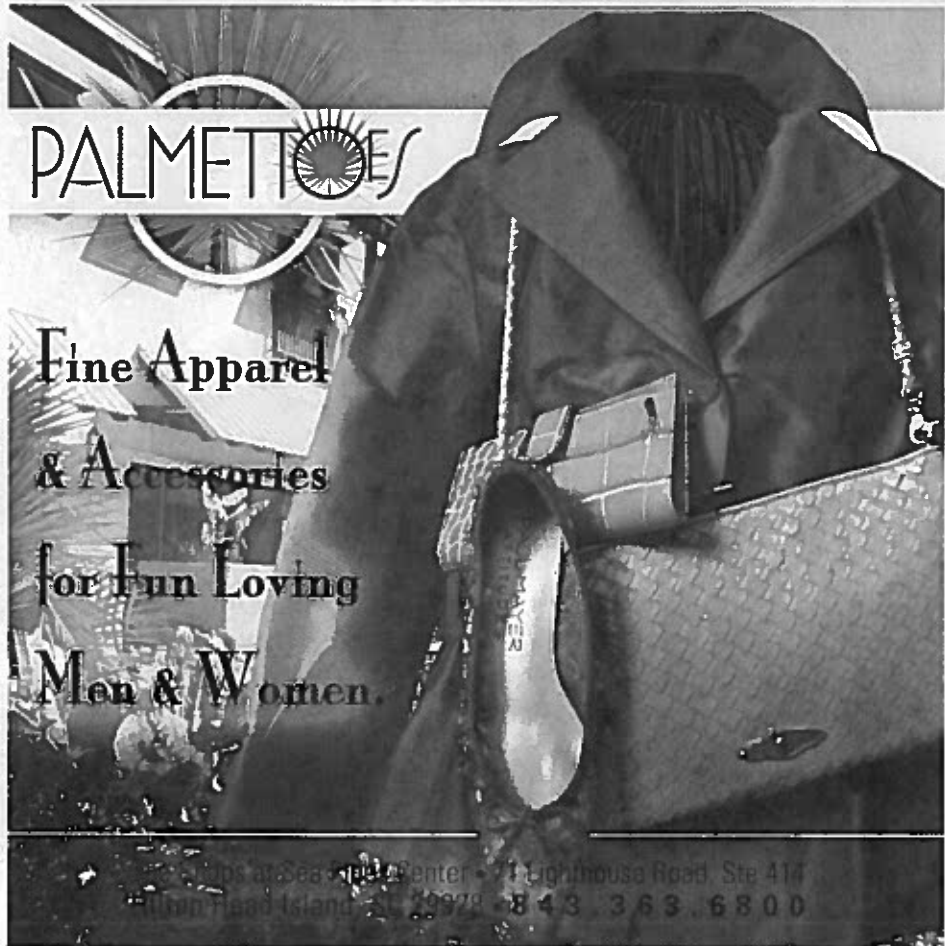


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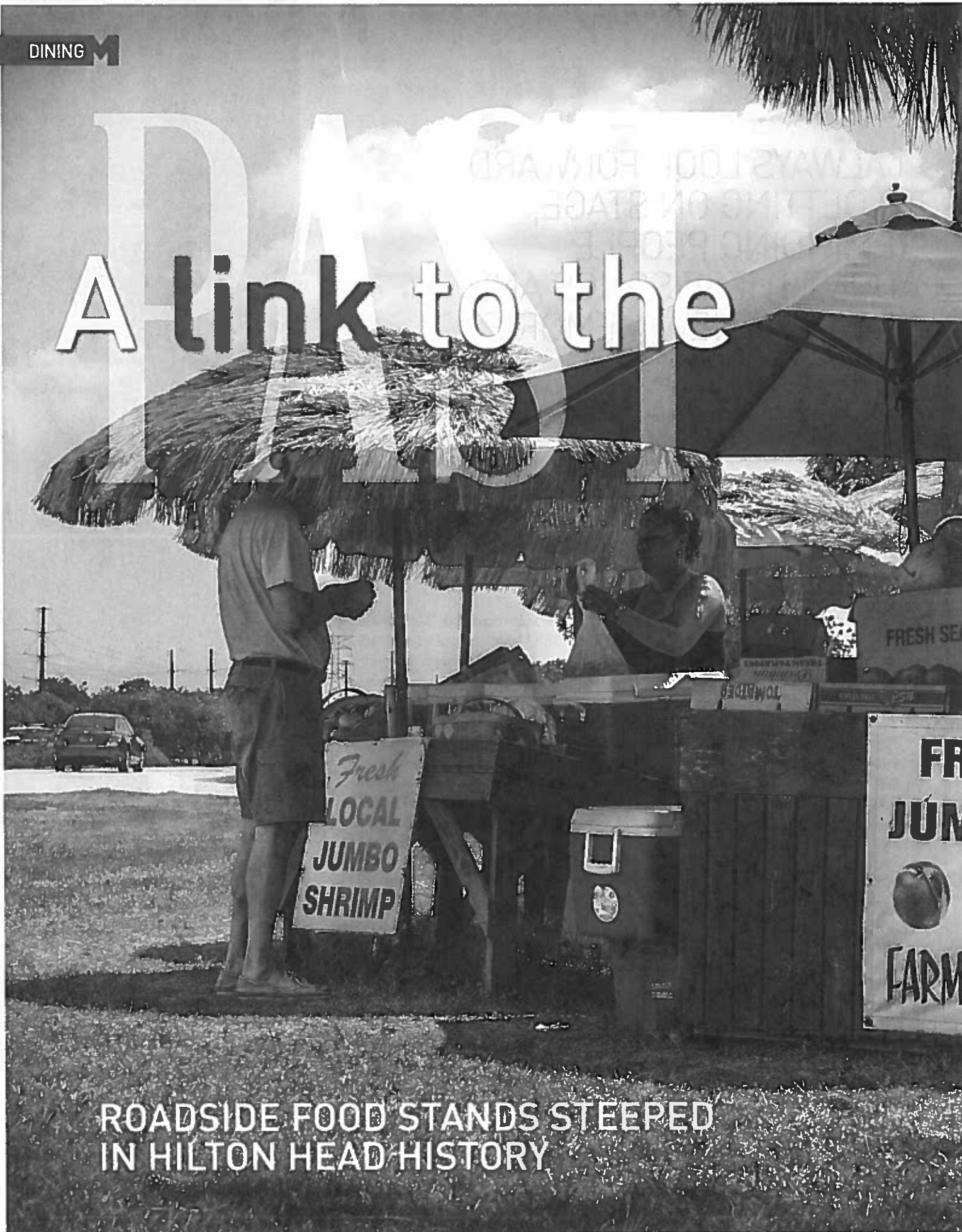
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STORY BY LANCE HANLIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNO DIMMLING

Following the Civil War, Union troops left newly freed slaves behind to fend for themselves. As property became available, many freedmen used their hard-earned money to purchase land in areas such as Baynard, Squire Pope and Chaplin.

Roots were planted.

Families such as Aiken, Brown, Campbell, Grant, and King raised generation after generation off the land.

Vine-ripened tomatoes, butterbeans, Vidalia onions, sweet potatoes, squash and more were grown in small fields, next to coops of chickens, pens of pigs and pastures of cows.

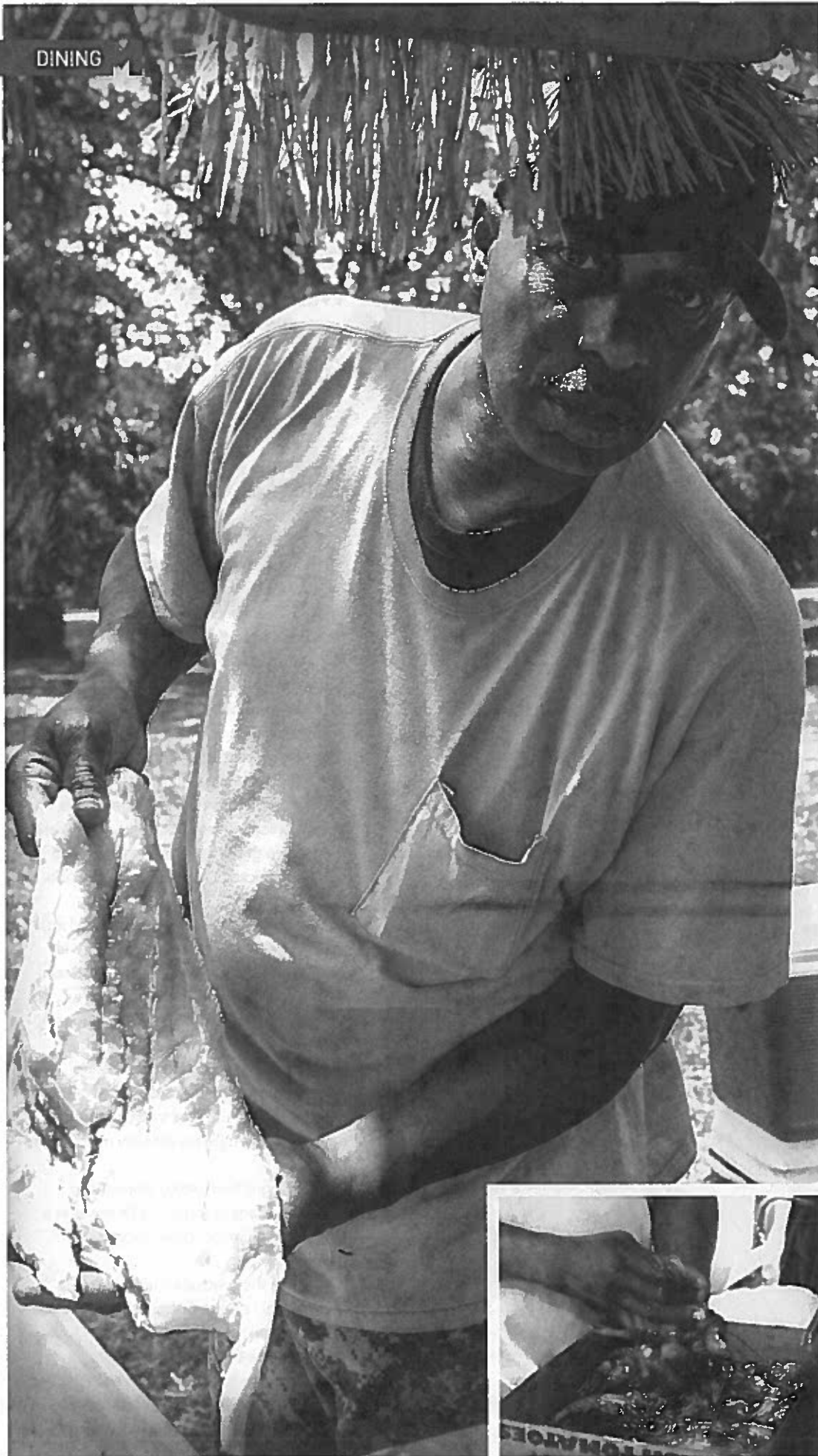
This agricultural island transformed into a resort destination starting in 1956 with the developing of Sea Pines Resort. Soon, other developments followed, such as Hilton Head Plantation, Palmetto Dunes, Shipyard and Port Royal, imitating Sea Pines' architecture and landscape.

Today, just a couple of the small farms remain. The culture and tradition of those native island families is still very much alive, though.

Street signs for Bradley, Burkes and Singleton roads along U.S. 278 serve as a testimony to family, community and self-reliance.

Many of the roadside fruit, vegetable and seafood stands that dot the island also honor Hilton Head's past.

Carolina Seafood, Spanish Wells Seafood & Produce, Garden Fresh Produce and Grant's Fresh Produce have been in families for generations and are still managed by family members today.



Wesley Campbell (left) operated as many as 12 roadside food stands on the island in the mid-1980s but is down to just two now – the one before the bridge to Hilton Head Island and another just over the bridge called Carolina Seafood, which is run by his wife Carrie. In the summer, his daughter Haley (above right) and his niece Serena Collins (above left) help out. His brother, Solomon Campbell, runs Spanish Wells Seafood & Produce with his wife, Della.



THE CAMPBELL FAMILY

For the past 25 years, Wesley Campbell has operated the stand sitting at the foot of the J. Wilton Graves Bridge to Hilton Head Island. Signs promote, "Fresh Fish Daily," "Fresh Local Jumbo Shrimp," and "Farm Fresh Produce."

Find baskets of potatoes, watermelons, tomatoes, peaches and red coolers stocked with shrimp, grouper and red snapper. On the weekends, Chef Rowland Washington of "We Island" Gumbo n' Tings stops by with his selection of Lowcountry seafood spices and products.

"When I'm looking for fresh seafood, this is the place I come to," Bluffton resident Chris Jones said. "Fish behind the glass at a grocery store can't compete with what he's got in those coolers back there."

Campbell, 59, started selling local produce from his bicycle at the age of 15, peddling house to house in Bram Point.

"It was stuff our parents and our uncle would grow in the summer," Campbell said.

When he got out of school, Campbell started opening fruit and vegetable stands. He operated as many as 12 stands on the island in the mid-1980s but is down to just two now – the one before the bridge and another called Carolina Seafood, located at 148 William Hilton Parkway, between the first and second traffic lights on the island.

That stand specializes in fresh peaches, tomatoes and seafood. It has been open for six years and is operated by Campbell's wife, Carrie. Over the summer, his daughter Haley and his niece Serena Collins also help out.

Wesley Campbell's brother, Solomon Campbell, runs Spanish Wells Seafood & Produce with his wife, Della.

"We specialize in crab cakes, grouper, scallops, Scottish salmon and local shrimp," Solomon said.

The stand, located at 556 Spanish Wells Road, has been open for 25 years. Della is a retired school teacher while Solomon retired from Suburban Propane before joining the family business.

"We've been very successful," Solomon said. "We have people that come to us from all over the United States and abroad."

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THE GRANT FAMILY

Estelle Grant Aiken was a teacher at Hilton Head Elementary for more than 33 years. She now works the Garden Fresh Produce stand off Squire Pope Road with her sister Lillian Grant King, a business major that also worked in education before getting into the family business. Known to some locals as "Eddie's Market," the stand has been an island staple for 25 years, serving butterbeans, peas, peaches, tomatoes, summer squash, jams, deviled Daufuski crab and their delicious homemade bread and butter pickles.

Items come from Aiken's backyard, King's farm in Ridgeland and other local farmers.

"Farmers markets are popular now but (roadside stands) got it started," Aiken said. "People can get fresh, local stuff at reasonable prices and you will find things that you normally wouldn't find in a supermarket. It's also a place to meet people and catch up on what's happening in the community."

Two more Grant family stands are located on U.S. 278, near Harold's

Diner. The one behind the first row of houses, sitting under a large oak tree, is Hilton Head Island's original roadside stand. It was opened by Solomon Grant Sr. and Gertrude Brown Grant 50 years ago and is the original Grant's Fresh Produce. The stand was being run by Solomon Eddie Grant Jr., but health problems have forced him to temporarily close it.

Cousins Julia Grant Thomas and Joseph Grant run the roadside stand next door, which is also called Grant's Fresh Produce. The stand offers some of the largest tomatoes you will ever see along with fresh watermelons, peaches, zucchini, squash, collards and peppers.

Selling local produce has been passed down from generation to generation in the Grant family but the tradition could soon end.

"My daughter and my sister's children all worked here when they were younger but they didn't like it, being out here in the heat," Aiken said. "Unfortunately, unless somebody steps up and says they want to do it, this may be the end of the line for us."



Sisters Lillian Grant King (top left) and Estelle Grant Aiken run the Garden Fresh Produce stand off Squire Pope Road. Cousins Julia Grant Thomas and Joseph Grant run Grant's Fresh Produce (above) on U.S. 278 near Harold's Diner.